



LOVE CHAT NEWS

from Abigail Dane

History happily ever after...

THE EARL AND THE BANDIT The Adventures of Ribbon Hood!

News and Events

Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention
Sheraton North, Towson, MD
September 18-20, 2025

Zane Grey's West Society Convention
Salmon River Lodge, Riggins, ID
September 8-11, 2025

Ft. Henry Days
Oglebay Resort, Wheeling, WV
August 30-31, 2025

Virginia Writer's Club Symposium
Program: "I've Finished My Manuscript.
NOW WHAT?"
Ashland, VA
August 2, 2025

Zane Grey Festival
Zane Grey House, Lackawaxen, PA
July 12, 2025

Roanoke Valley Christian Writers
Program: "Writing, Editing, Proofing and
Polishing Your Manuscript"
Roanoke, VA
June 19, 2025

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AbigailDaneRomance.com

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NOW WHAT?"

Series Poster

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Too often the urgent squeezes out the important, and life sometimes gets in the way of other things. However, *The Earl and the Bandit*, Book Four in the Whiteleigh series, is finally in print. The adventure continues...AT LAST!

Set in England in 1652, this story features characters from Books Two and Three, centering on the Seventh Earl of Covington and Viscount Merrivale's sister, Claire.

Despite the risk of hanging for it, a daring female highway bandit is robbing scoundrels of their purses. And their pants...

Hired to capture her, the 7th Earl of Covington has no idea the female he's chasing is his own house guest—the captivating Lady Claire. The woman he's falling in love with...

When Claire realizes she's his target, it quickly becomes a contest to see if she can outsmart him. But when he decides to take down an infamous local smuggling ring, Claire has to risk her long-held secrets to save his life.

While this book was more complex to write than Book Three (*Viscount*), all who have read it so far agree: "This is the best one yet!" I've noticed that my storylines and characters are becoming more complex as the saga continues. I'm often asked: "Is each novel complete?" YES! Each is a complete story, with the "happily ever after" ending obligatory in romances. Of course, I hope reading *one* book will leave readers wanting to read the *rest*.

Contrary to the common situation, I actually have a number of male readers who enjoy my stories, including a few male fans who are nearing 90. Last week, when one of these gentlemen received his copy of *Earl*, he read it immediately, then reordered the

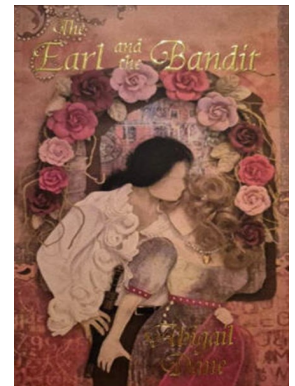
first three books. He'd already read them but had loaned them to someone and never got them back. So he ordered a whole new inscribed set. A few days later, I emailed him to thank him for his order. His reply: "Don't bother me. I'm reading!" Bless his heart, as we say in the South...

The Earl and the Bandit

Book Four in the
Whiteleigh series

The story of
Covington and
Claire.

Novel and cover art
by Abigail Dane.



A FEW OF THE EARLY REVIEWS

"WOW! I love it! The best one yet!" –Zen E., NY

"You've provided gobs of entertainment with this newest of the Whiteleigh series. Whoever said it's the best one yet is surely right. You are too...brilliant. We are loving this book."

– Donna and Bill K., FL

"I've read 1000's of books. I like yours the best. *Earl* as a stand-alone story...with social/moral themes and strong, independent women...will be a hit."

–Kathleen R., TX

"I finally got to *The Earl and the Bandit* last week and the minute I started it I wished I'd put my other commitments aside and got into it earlier. So entertaining, as with all your writing in this series. I know how much work you must have put into the research to build that convincing world, but you make it look effortless. And Claire and Elle are enormous fun as characters... Congratulations."

–Vicki H., New Zealand

As I receive new reviews, I'll post them at:

AbigailDaneRomance.com

The Earl and the Bandit Opening, Chapter 1

*South end of Bodmin Moor, Cornwall
A lonely road, just before dawn
5 September 1652*

The restless grey stallion was a hot-blooded creature with fine lines and long, slender legs. Powerful as the beast was, the lady perched astride controlled him easily with a light but firm hand on the reins, knees that pressed without gripping, and a calm, steady voice.

Outwardly calm while she waited for the coach to appear, the rider's nerves continued to fray like the ends of a rope twisted, stretched tight and giving way strand-by-strand.

And why not? Highway robbery was, after all, a hanging offense.

The air carried an unusual chill for a September morning in the north of Cornwall. The horse gave a low, impatient snort, its breath huffing into a cloud that hung in the air for a long moment before dissolving into the surrounding mist. Snuggling the sides of her long, black woolen cloak closer around her, the rider curled her gloved hands together and tucked them into her middle for warmth.

"Steady, Pike," she soothed, keeping her murmur low and silky for the creature's benefit. "His Lordship ought to be here very soon now. A moment to reason with the gentleman, a spry jog over the moor, then back in your warm stall with an extra portion of oats for your trouble, good fellow."

The stallion's withers trembled as she stroked him. "Yes, love. That's the way. Calm and steady until the moment we must fly. Very soon."

She hoped...

As if summoned, a great black coach trimmed in silver and drawn by two elegantly caparisoned blacks hove into view around a curve in the road. She leaned and squinted but could not quite make out the design of the wrought-silver crest on the door. Still, her informant had never failed her yet, and what other grand equipage would be about on such a lonely road at such an early hour?

Must be His Lordship.

The man she intended to rob...

To order the book, email me at:
AbigailDaneRomance@gmail.com



Original artwork: mixed-media collage created as a wrap-around cover for The Earl and the Bandit

The Earl and the Bandit: Book Cover Backstory

After contacting sixteen artists about a cover for my first book, I gave up. On the advice of an artist friend (one of the sixteen), I decided to do it myself. Though uncertain at first, I found an approach I liked. No wonder a friend has dubbed me "The Queen of Piddle."

I like to say: I'm not a FINE artist; I'm a FUN artist." Big difference. Being far less proficient with drawing and painting, I work from a strength: paper engineering. With tons of stickers, papers and other scrapbooking elements to work with, the design is the easy part. The hardest part is choosing papers, colors and materials. A challenge, but what former kindergarten student doesn't love cutting and pasting?

I create from an 18x24 posterboard base, which I photograph. I later place the finished piece in a shadowbox frame, to be hung on my studio wall. Though you can't tell from the picture above, Covington's sword is a metal miniature that he can actually remove from its scabbard, in case he should ever need it! The pink "ribbon" Claire is holding also has an important place in the story. The house hidden behind the arch on the cover represents Covington's estate "with its uncertain number of rooms." Other elements in the cover are also related to the story.

The coiffures are doll hair. Covington's shirt is real French lace from my remnant "stash." Jeweled stickers, paper roses, horse stickers, tiny charms, and more tiny embellishments finish the project.

The hardest part of this particular cover design was the stairs, I tried several unsuccessful approaches. Finally I simply drew the staircase, shaded it to simulate dimensional steps and railings, and added a lacy paper border from my scrapbooking materials pile to embellish.

Some readers have asked why I don't draw faces on my characters. I do add faint shadows to indicate features, but I like to let readers decide for themselves what the characters look like. If others are like me, when I read, I create faces and features from my own imagination.

And therein lies the difference between watching a movie and reading a book. When we watch a movie, we all watch the *same* movie—the one the director imagined for us. When we read a book, we may all read the *same* story but it's a *different* book for each of us, because our personal imagination supplies the details based on our own experiences and preferences. It is these unique details that make reading the special joy it is.

Abigail Sightings...



Abigail Dane at MANC, the Mid-Atlantic Nostalgia Convention, Baltimore, MD, 2023.

With TWO Green Hornets because you can never have too many of those...

We also had THREE Zorros. Same principle applies.

Upcoming and recent events:

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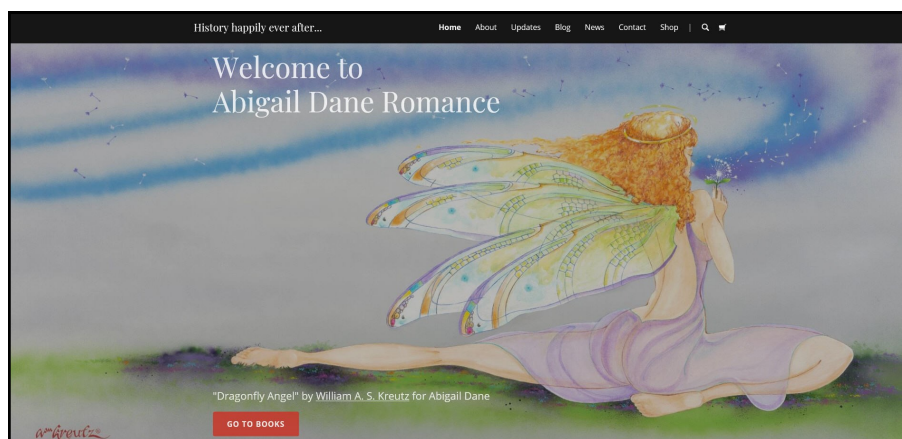
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Roanoke, VA
June 19, 2025



Welcome to AbigailDaneRomance.com

I'm still working on it, but with the publication of Book Four, *Earl*, I've been updating my author website. Some links and downloads are still works-in-progress but content is now accessible for both desktop and mobile.

My goal is to make the site easy for readers to find, access and navigate. Please take a few minutes soon to visit and let me know what you think of the content and features.

Examples:

About: pictures and info about the incurably curious, creative and easily -amused Abigail

News: news, reviews, awards, offers, programs, Abigail sightings and more

Newsletters: downloadable "Love Chat" newsletters, flyers and other fun stuff

Blog: Abigail's odd insights, stray musings and wacky ideas; more soon

Contact: online contact/comments form; and newsletter sign-up

The Earl and the Bandit Excerpt, Chapter 4

Cornwall, Merrivale Court
Home of George Merrick, Viscount Merrivale
25 October 1652

Regan said: "Don't be daft. We all want you to be happy. That is all we have ever wanted for you."

Odette said: "Have we not made every effort to find you a suitable wife?"

Claire said: "Horses."

"What?" asked their brother, George Merrick, Viscount Merrivale.

Claire, standing at the window overlooking the court circle in front of the manor, pulled back the curtain to watch as two spirited horses, a white and a chestnut, were reined in sharply at the front steps. Both beasts shook their heads and stamped their forelegs, then quieted as their cloaked riders dismounted and a groom arrived to take the reins and lead the steeds away in the direction of the stable.

The viscount was sprawled in his late father's favorite settee, his long legs comfortably crossed at the ankles. Rising, he strode to the window where Claire stood. At the sound of a light knock at the open door of the library, he turned.

"Horses, my lord," announced Foster, Merrivale's butler.

"Ah, yes, well, it is now well-established that we are being visited by horses. Do these horses, perchance, have riders?"

"Two horses, two riders, my lord."

"A pleasing balance, as visitors go." Always easily amused by his own wit, the viscount grinned.

A commotion in the hall outside the library signaled the visitors' arrival.

Claire's breath caught at the sight of the first of the two men. His dark hair, trimmed shorter than fashionable, might be black. Dark eyes, a deep blue that was almost black. The bronzed skin of a man who spends a good deal of time out-of-doors. Impeccably dressed, well-formed and hovering just above six feet tall. The man exuded equal measures of masculinity and menace.

The pulse at Claire's throat quickened and her heart leaped with something like recognition, though that was not possible. If she had ever encountered a man of his sort before this, she would surely remember it.

And what was it about him that evoked every prickly dream she had ever had?

Who is he?

"The Seventh Earl of Covington," Foster announced, as if responding to her unuttered question.



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Customized Personal and Professional Development

Interested in a workshop, keynote or training? Need help writing, editing, proofing, formatting, polishing or creating a cover design for your work-in-progress?

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TRANSITIONS UNLIMITED, launched in 1991 by Rosanne Vrugtman, PhD, is a multi-service organization:

- 1) a training agency for customized personal and professional development programs;
- 2) a consultancy for individual, group and corporate clients; and
- 3) a writing, editing, proofing, formatting and publishing company.

Dr. Vrugtman has earned five university degrees and her professional background includes careers in business, social service and education. She holds numerous professional certifications and has served in many roles on an array of community-, social service- and literary-based not-for-profit boards.

Rosanne and her wonder-dog, Pip, now live in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, where she teaches technical writing at UVA while writing award-winning historical romances as Abigail Dane.



Abigail Dane

“I’ve Finished My Manuscript. *NOW WHAT?*”

When I finished my first novel in 2013, I had no idea what to do next or how to get my book published. I had to do a lot of research and learn it all for myself. If you or members of your group are in the same place, let me help!

In the *Now What?* program, I cover an array of topics. The outline includes:

Traditional vs. Self-Publishing/Pros and Cons
 Easy Manuscript Formatting with MS Word
 Editing, Proofing and Alpha/Beta Readers
 Types of Editing and Typical Costs
 Author Website Development
 Print vs Print-on-Demand
 Print Marketing Aids
 ISBNs, Bar Codes and Copyrights
 Cover Art
 Covers and Fonts
 Jacket Copy/Back Blurbs
 Q&A and Final Word

Attendees from my most recent symposium presentation said they found the program particularly helpful because it provided very specific aids and advice. We discussed pros and cons of traditional vs. self-publishing and I explained why, despite having two publishers interested in my first book, I chose to self-publish. I provided examples of marketing/promotional aids I've created; typical pricing for various services; URLs to sites for ISBNs, bar codes and copyrights; as well as easy-to-follow step-by-step guides; helpful DOs and DON'Ts; and more.

From my “At Your Service” flyer:

SOMETHING I'VE LEARNED THAT YOU MAY FIND HELPFUL

Writing and editing are two very different skill sets. Most people do one or the other. Few do both. Fewer still do both really *WELL*. And even those who are good at editing typically find it difficult to edit and proof their own work.

DON'T RUIN ALL YOUR HARD WORK BY..

...settling for a masterpiece filled with errors!
Typical options for getting your work publish-ready would be to:

- 1) find one or more able friends to assist you;
- 2) hire a professional to do the work for you; or
- 3) hire an expert as a guide to teach you how to do it yourself.



MY ADVICE: KNOW WHO YOU ARE

If you're able and willing to do it all yourself, learn all you need to know to do it really well. If you're not that person, hire someone who is.

Questions? Need more info?

Contact me at:

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