



Ready for the Hero's Journey?



Hello

October is one of my favorite months, not just for the crisp fall air but because it's filled with conferences where I get to connect with readers and share my passion for writing. Lately, I've been teaching master classes focused on the Hero's Journey, particularly how to apply this classic storytelling method to genres like historical fiction, mystery romance, and thrillers. I love seeing students take these concepts and weave them into their works-in-progress, turning ideas into magic on the page.



The first picture is my eager students for my Writer's Digest Masterclass: From Concept to Hero, Crafting Protagonists through the Hero's Journey

The second picture is a panel discussion: You Can Write It All with - Jane K. Cleland, Vanessa Riley, Jane Roper. Off camera, the panel was moderated by Amy Jones of Writer's Digest.

The third picture and fourth pictures are my Master Class at CBLR: Waded in The Water, using the Bodies of Water/ Rivers of The Bible to theme your novel.

Teaching these methods not only helps me grow as a writer but also challenges my students to delve deeper into their characters' journeys, thinking critically about how their stories unfold from the first chapter to the last. This month, I had the pleasure of teaching at my third Writers Digest Conference, the Christian Book Lovers Retreat (CBLR), and now I'm gearing up for another exciting workshop at the Surrey International Writers' Conference.

Vanessa-ism Quick Writing Tip

One writing tip I often suggest is to "fast-write" the beginning of your book and focus on getting to the end. Why? Because the opening chapters carry a heavy load—they have to set the stage for everything that follows. If you're using the Hero's Journey, the beginning has to introduce the ordinary world, the call to adventure, the refusal of the call, meeting the mentor, and then preparing for the crossing into the journey. That's a lot to accomplish without a clear idea of where your story is heading.



For me, I do a lot of revision on those early chapters once I have the middle and ending solidified. By knowing the destination, it's easier to shape the opening so it best supports the entire narrative. So, don't stress about perfecting the beginning on the first pass—let your story take shape, and then refine!

There's something special about sharing these experiences and watching new stories come to life, and I can't wait for what's next.

Be Blessed,
Vanessa



Book Event

A Conversation at Gwinnett Public Library, Norcross Branch

[CLICK FOR MORE INFO](#)

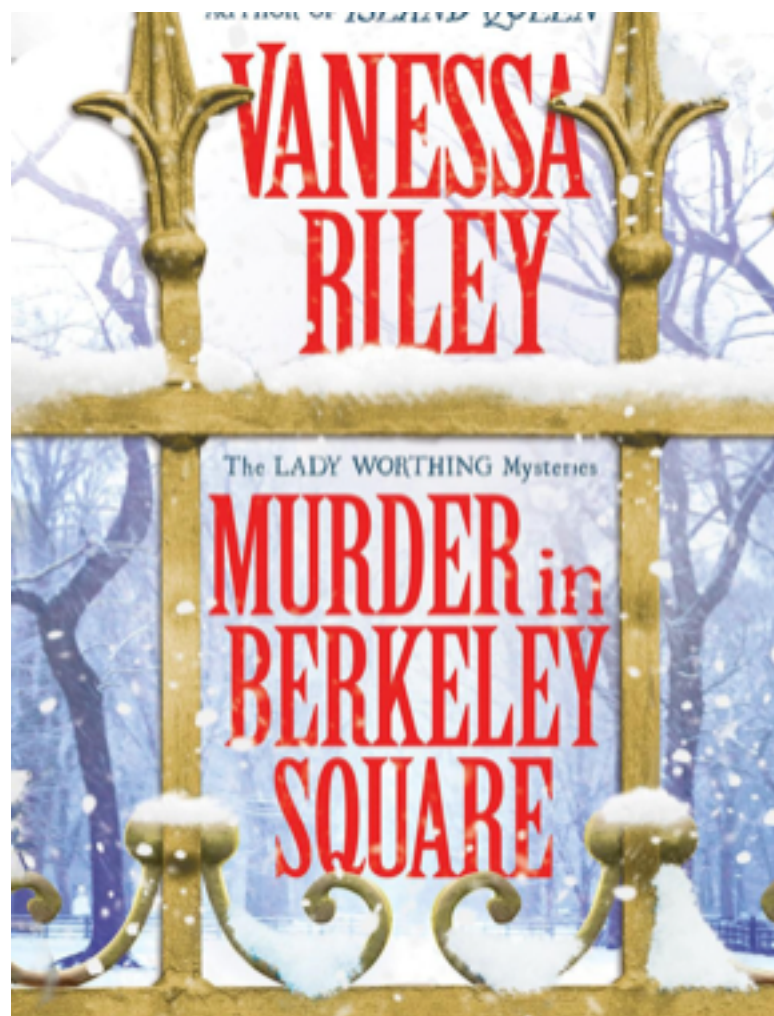
October 20 24, Thursday at 7 PM EST, Gwinnett public library Norcross branch is hosting Vanessa Riley for an author talk with Renata Denise the regional coordinator for the Jane Austen Society of North America to discuss riley's latest murder in Berkeley Square. The Book Bird of Avondale Estates is handling sales of *Murder in Berkeley Square*. Reserve your copy today from The Book Bird for an autographed/personalized book.

We are still celebrating the release of *Murder in Berkeley Square*, an homage to Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. This is Lady Worthing's third mystery—and it's a banger!

"Riley continues to dazzle readers with an inclusive, vibrantly fashioned historical setting while also gracefully tipping her literary cap to Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* (1940) in the form of a cleverly conceived, closed-circle-of-suspects plot and an inventive Regency-era rhyme standing in for the nursery rhyme *Dame Agatha* employed in her work." – **Booklist**

"Riley seamlessly interweaves edifying insights about the period's racial dynamics...Top-shelf atmosphere."- **Publishers Weekly**

"Lovers of Agatha Christie will find this puzzle both disturbing and delightful." - **Kirkus**



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