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100 Creatives 2013: Homer Starkey, Novelist

By Olivia Flores Alvarez Wed., Aug. 14 2013 at 7:00 AM [Write Comment](#)

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Homer Starkey recently checked something big off his bucket list, getting his first novel published. He had been working on *You Will Believe in Love* for a while, always stopping and then starting again. "Eventually, I said, 'Before I turn 40 I'm gonna write this thing and get it published.' Now I can check that box."

A graduate of the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program, Starkey didn't know that in the process of 'checking that box,' he would create a plot featuring a dominatrix (take another look at the heart on the book's cover - it's fashioned from a whip).

"The book revolves around two friends," Starkey tells us. "One's a perpetual optimist and the others a perpetual pessimist. They're would-be entrepreneurs and they try all these schemes to get money." Their latest scheme is primal scream therapy.

"One of them is in a relationship that's falling apart and the other one is getting into a relationship with seemingly the wrong girl." Enter the dominatrix.

Starkey originally conceived the project as a screenplay. "Then I realized that I didn't know anything about writing a screenplay," he laughs, "so I changed it to a play. Then I realized it had too many locations. There was no way this play would ever get produced. So I finally started it as a book. It's funny most people go from book to screenplay. I went the other way around."

The novel is set in Houston, a logical choice for the native Houstonian. "I grew up here, this is my town and this is what I know so it's set here. It takes place in 2002. That was a time when the whole country was trying to find itself, and even Houston was too. This is what the characters were doing. It was a moment in time that I wanted to capture."

Wait a minute, let's get back to the dominatrix. "My writing process is very organic. I don't go by outlines or anything. I have just a germ of an idea in my head and a story that I want to tell. And I throw myself curve balls from time. I knew I wanted one of the guys to get into a relationship and I thought, 'Well, what if this guy falls in love with a dominatrix? How would that play out?'" *You Will Believe in Love* is the answer.

What He Does: "I think I'll wait until I've written a few more books before I call myself a novelist. In the meantime, I'm happy to think of myself as a storyteller. The trick to figure out how I'm going to convey the story - is it a novel? Is it a play, a short story, a song?"

Homer Starkey

Why He Likes It: "I think it's so much of a challenge to write a novel and it's a marathon. You have to write and re-write and re-write. I love looking at a blank page and wondering, 'What's going to happen today? Where are the characters going to take me?' I like the challenge."

What Inspires Him: "I'm inspired by good art. I know that's a subjective thing to say, but I like reading about and meeting artists - it can be a dancer, an artist or a musician, just someone who's creating something because they just can't live without creating it, that inspires me. We're blessed in Houston with so much talent. It's such an unassuming city with so much talent here, I love that."

Starkey says there wasn't an incident that inspired the book. "Inspiration for the book changed over time, the reason I was telling this story changed all throughout the process. I wanted to do something that made people laugh. Then certain tragedies happened and I realized you can't just ignore those parts of your life. Eventually, I just put all my feelings in a blender and this is what came out."

If Not This, Then What: I've already had my dream gig. I used to be a teacher and I would do that again in a heartbeat if I wasn't doing this. Talking about creativity, teachers are some of the most creative people on the planet. If you can get a high school senior who has already checked out interested in Macbeth, that's a beautiful thing."

If Not Here, Then Where: I'd move out to the Texas Hill Country, specifically near Garner State Park. I fell in love with that area a few years ago. You can't go into Hill Country with an overinflated ego, you get put in your place. Not that I have an overinflated ego ..."

What's Next: Readers are already asking Starkey about a sequel to *You Will Believe in Love*. He says that's a definite possibility but first he wants to enjoy being a published novelist for a while. Told by Houston radio personality Danya Steele not to do book signings until he had developed a following ("You'll sit there all alone, looking pathetic. Don't do it."), Starkey has planned a book launch party instead. "It's not really a book signing, though I'll gladly sign a copy if someone wants. I've invited my Facebook friends, some other friends there. We'll play music, eat like a regular party."

Plans are also in the works for a soundtrack to the book (Starkey and some friends already produced one [music video](#) based on the story).

The launch party for You Will Believe in Love is set for 6 p.m. on August 17. Raspberry Rose Boutique, 2434 Rice Blvd. For information, visit Homer Starkey's website.

More Creatives for 2013
(In order of most recently published; [click here](#) for the full page).

- Jenn Fox, mixed media Shohei Iwahama, dancer
- Erica DelGardo, metalsmith
- Bob Clark, executive director Houston Family Arts Center
- Kerrellyn Sparks, bestselling romance author
- Lindsay Halpin, punk rock mad hatter
- Drake Simpson, actor
- Shelby Carter, *Playboy* model turned photographer
- David Matranga, actor
- Crystal Belcher, pole dancer
- Daniel Kramer, photographer
- Blue 130, pin-up explosion art
- Nina Godiwalla, author and TED speaker
- David Wilhem, light painter
- Tom Abrahams, author and newscaster
- Browncoat, pin-up pop artist
- Kris Becker, Nu-Classical composer and pianist
- Vincent Fink, science fashion
- Stephanie Saint Sanchez, Senorita Cinema founder
- Ned Gayle, thrift store painting defacer
- Sameera Faridi, fashion designer
- Greg Ruhe, The Human Puppet
- Sophia L. Torres, founder and co-artistic director of Psophonia Dance Company
- Maggie Lasher, dance professor and artistic director
- Jordan Jaffe, founder of Black Lab Theatre
- Outspoken Bean, performance poet
- Barry Moore, architect
- Josh Montoute, mobile gaming specialist
- Ty Doran, young actor
- Gwen Zepeda, Houston's first Poet Laureate
- Joseph Walsh, principal dancer at Houston Ballet
- Justin Garcia, artist
- Buck Ross, dilettante and director of Moores Opera Center
- Patrick Renner, sculptor of the esoteric
- Tomas Glass, abstract artist and *True Blood* musician
- Ashley Stoker, painter, photographer and Tumblr muse
- Amy Llanes, artistic airector of Rednurus Feil Dance Company
- Byvin Bering Dubrowski, executive director of the Houston Center for Photography
- Lydya Hance, founder and director of Frame Dance Productions
- Piyali Sen Dasgupta, mixed media artist and nature lover
- Dean James, *New York Times* bestselling mystery novelist
- Nicola Parente, abstract painter and photographer
- Cheryl Schulke, handmade leather purse-maker
- Anthony Rathbun, Alternative Lifestyle Photographer
- David Salinas, computer-less analog photographer
- Danielle Burns, art curator
- Alicia DiRago, Whimsybox founder
- Katia Zavistovski, contemporary art curator
- Ashley Horn, choreographer, filmmaker
- Pamela Stevens, scary book author
- Peter Lucas, film and video curator, music lover and self-described culture-slinger
- Ana MarÁa Otamendi, collaborative pianist and vocal coach
- Billy D. Washington, comedian
- Michele Brangwen, choreographer and dancer
- Kristin Warren, actress and choreographer
- Kelly Sears, performer and film maker
- Colton Berry, Bayou City Theatrics' artistic director
- jhon r. stronks,dance-maker
- Joe Grisaffi, actor, director, writer, cinematographer
- Jordan "Monster Mac" McMahon, artist, designer

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