



*Cate Holahan*

## 122: Writing Domestic Suspense

**Gabriela Pereira:** Hello, and welcome, word nerds, to DIY MFA Radio, the show that will help you write more, write better, write smarter. I'm Gabriela Pereira, instigator of DIY MFA, and your host for this podcast. Now, let's talk writing.

Hello. Hello, word nerds. Gabriela here, and welcome back to DIY MFA Radio. Today's show notes are over at [diymfa.com/122](http://diymfa.com/122), because it's Episode 122. Today I have the pleasure of interviewing Cate Holahan, who is an award-winning journalist, former television producer, and author.

Her second novel, *The Widower's Wife*, has been praised in a starred Kirkus review, and many other really great reviews; and it's "one of those rare thrillers that will really keep you reading all night" – according to Kirkus review, which is a big deal for Kirkus to say something that awesome about a book.

And let me just say, I am reading it right now, and it really is that gripping. So, Cate, welcome to the show. It's great to have you here.

**Cate Holahan:** Oh, thank you so much for having me, Gabriela.

**GP:** So, let's just dive on in and start geeking out over the craft of this book because I think there's so many juicy angles that we can talk about it from. So, the beginning of the book, one of the things that grabbed my attention was the choice of the narration, the way you chose to tell the story.

And for our listeners who may not be familiar with it, we have these alternating points of view; we have the third-person insurance investigator point of view – and that's set like a little bit in the future, I guess the present-day.

And then Ana Bacon, who is the victim, I guess, in the story; and that's a first-person point of view, and it's set a little earlier that year kind of leading up to the mysterious incidents surrounding her death.

So, I was wondering, how did you choose (A) which characters were going to be the sort of focal characters in the book to tell the story from? And then, why did you choose third-person for one and first-person for the other?

**CH:** Well, I had started off with this idea of Ana, that was really what drew me to the story – the character who's the victim. And I always knew I was going to tell her story in first-person because I wanted, kind of, that immediate connection with readers that I think first-person really develops because you're right there and you're in their head.

It's a very intimate voice to use, and I wanted that; I wanted this identification with who she was and her problems because I think that sometimes, especially, you start the book knowing that she's going to be the victim because Ryan is investigating her fall off a cruise ship.

I think it's a natural tendency to want to kind of distance ourselves from people that we know bad things are happening to or are going to happen to; and I didn't want that distance to be an issue for the readers. So, I wanted a first-person.



For the character of Ryan, you know, he's really kind of like a statistics math guy; and he's a little, he's guarded. And so, I thought that for someone like him, you know, 'close 3rd' worked better because – well, one, I think if we were actually in his head, there'd probably be so many facts and figures running all the time that it might get a little--

But you know, the way he was, seemed like it was more that you would be the little person on his shoulder rather than actually in his head. And also, that way, it clearly differentiated it because sometimes when you go from 'I' to 'I' and you're constantly switching, that can be a bit jarring.

**GP:** Absolutely. And another thing also, I mean, we've seen a lot of similar domestic suspense thriller books. I mean, that's kind of been the rage lately with *Gone Girl* and *Girl on the Train*; and especially like in a book like *Gone Girl* where you had the alternating 'Is', right, right.

One of them is the supposed victim, and then the other one is sort of the person that we think is maybe responsible. And so, what I thought was an interesting choice is that from the get-go, we know that, at least, Ryan believes that Ana's husband is somehow involved.

He's not quite sure to what extent he's responsible for her death, but there's definitely a sense that, like, this guy's not all great – and he seems a little too good to be true as the, you know, the widower, the grieving widower.

And yet, we never get into his head – at least up to the point that I'm reading to, we haven't had a glimmer into his mind. So, I thought that was a really interesting choice as well.

Can you talk-- I mean, obviously, without giving away any spoilers, can you talk a little bit about sort of why you chose to not go into his head – and also, sort of how you're bringing him to life on the page in other ways, for Tom?

**CH:** Right. Well, one is, I guess I didn't want to be too derivative because I think that I probably would've gotten really slammed if I was doing--

**GP:** Yeah, exactly.

**CH:** -victim and possible killer as the other. But I also think, you know, I wanted an investigator character. I wanted-- I like reading books where there's an investigator kind of dutifully dissecting the case and interviewing people, and he doesn't know the inner workings of all the character's minds so he's really trying to figure them out from an outsider point of view.

And I think that that's a perspective that's easy to relate to as a reader because we are outsiders, kind of, looking into these characters. And so, I really-- I knew I wanted to do investigator and victim – and not victim and possible, perpetrator.

I also think because there's a lot of, I don't know where you are in the book, but there turns out to be several people who could have kind of been the one to really facilitate the crime. And so, I don't think I would've been able to present all the alternatives as well if I was in her husband's head.

**GP:** And, you know, also I think when you-- You brought up an interesting point that like when the investigator, when we're sort of in 'investigator mode' alongside Ryan, it kind of puts the reader into the detective's shoes, right?



Like it makes us want to investigate along with Ryan. And kind of in the same way that like in a Cozy Mystery where you have the amateur sleuth; and then the reader tries to like figure out the crime, and figure out the mystery, and solve the case alongside the investigator.

It's sort of a similar feeling in this regard, which you don't always see in domestic suspense where you do have more of the like what happened, but you're in the roles of the major players as opposed to more removed investigator role.

**CH:** Right. And I think also, there was part of me that wanted to give the reader a bit of a break. I mean, Ana scenes are kind of emotional. She's in a really difficult place from the moment her chapter starts. She's facing, kind of, financial ruin, and she's struggling to get out of it; and she's responsible for a young child.

And so, Ryan kind of allows – in my view – the reader to get that little bit of a breath and start seeing facts dispassionately – and hopefully, it doesn't break the rhythm. I think what it does is, kind of, let you catch your breath and also still be gripped by the story.

**GP:** Exactly. And I totally felt that too. I think it would've been way heavy for a reader to just be either in Ana's point of view all the time or to be in an equally emotionally rot point of view, even if it was somebody else. So, I think that's a really good point of using a different perspective to give the reader a break, and kind of let us catch our breath as we follow the story along.

**CH:** And also, I just loved Ryan's, the way his mind works. He's such like-- He's so different from me. He's not emotional. He really weighs all of his decisions and the odds and the facts. He just has this encyclopedia of stats and statistics in his head, which I thought was really fun to play with.

You know, it's kind of, you do all this research for a novel; and here is the ways that I could sneak in all of these cool things that I had stumbled across in the research. So, that was fun.

**GP:** And I think also there is an element of mystery to Ryan as well. I mean, it's not clearly not as mysterious as what happened to Ana, but we get a sense that like, you know, he hasn't exactly had an easy life. He's had some sort of accident or, you know, injury that has left him limping; and we get that from the very first chapter.

So, we get a sense that there is more to him, but he's also kind of using the stats and the facts to kind of keep the reader at arm's length and sort of maintain that, sort of, his life separate from the lives that he's investigating. So, I thought that was really interesting points.

**CH:** That, I think becomes important because he's, you know, his wife left him and took their kid across country. And I think, so he's kind of coming from-- He's starting the book in a bit of an isolated, emotionally damaged place where maybe he wants to keep that distance.

And I don't want to put a spoiler in, but that becomes important kind of in how he develops; and then towards the end, what he does when he figures out what happened.

**GP:** I love that. So, let's talk a little bit about the setting for this story, because one of the things that I felt very strongly from the beginning was the house that Tom and Ana live in – and we kind of know that there's a weight around this house.

They have this mortgage that they no longer can pay, the house is being repossessed; and yet, it almost feels like the house is another character in the story. It really feels very present.



And you know, that very first scene that you see of Ana over the concrete table, and she and Tom are talking; and like, it was such a crystal-clear image. So, I was wondering, kind of, how you crafted that house and how you brought that to life as part of the setting for your story?

**CH:** Yeah, I guess, so here's where kind of life and art mix; and at the time, we were building our house, that I was writing this novel. So, I was thinking all the time about rooms, and the way a room would make you feel, and what's, and you know, the flow of a house – and how it changes, you know, just the energy of the occupants depending on how it's laid out.

And so, that was all kind of top of mind. I think that came into the story – in that, the house was really important to me because I was realizing in working to design my own house, just how architecture and settings and the layout of a room affects the mood of the people.

And also, I think a theme of the story is kind of, what's important to define your life and your lifestyle? And I think that you have these two characters who got in over their head with this idea of there were all these things, they needed a big house to have a good life.

They needed a lot of showy stuff, and they had to deal with how they react when that's all getting stripped away. And I think that Ana is able to kind of rebound and say, "You know, I don't really need all of this – I didn't have it growing up, I can live well without it."

And Tom is really, has a harder time. He grew up with more money. He's very attached to the things that he feels define him. And so, that's another reason why the house just became so important because it's also a reflection of who they are.

**GP:** And you know, it's interesting also how when crafting a setting, a lot of times, writers – especially, when they're first starting out, like beginning writers – will kind of throw in everything plus the kitchen sink.

And one of the things I loved about the descriptions of the house is how it kind of unfolded as the story went on. So, we kind of got to know that dining room really well in the scene where they're kind of arguing over dinner, but then we don't really see a whole lot of the rest of the house until another key scene. You know what I mean?

And so, like I think a lot of writers have a tendency to try to throw everything in, and describe the whole house from the get-go. And I think this was a great example of how you can kind of drip the details into the story as you go along. And in many ways, it makes it come to life to the reader more because you're, kind of, taking it in bite-sized chunks, as it were.

**CH:** Yeah, I totally agree. I also think that, you know, what I love about close settings, like houses is you can rely expectations. Like you can have your fight scene in a bedroom where it's supposed to be where intimacy happens or you can have a romantic scene in a bathroom. You can play with kind of the expectations we have for different rooms too, which I think was fun to do.

**GP:** Absolutely. So, let's talk a little bit about sort of how Ana and Tom react to the loss of their wealth; and this is particularly interesting to me because of Ana's heritage and her family. So, her family is from Brazil. Her parents are living in Brazil again because they were immigrants; and then they got, I guess, deported back and she stayed.

I am myself the child of Brazilian immigrants, so the very first thing that I picked up on as soon as I found out that she was from Brazil was, 'Oh my gosh, the details are totally right.'



So, can you talk a little bit about the research that went into this? Everything from the way her name is spelled, it's the Brazilian spelling of the name and not the Americanized spelling, everything from the way, like when her parents speak in Portuguese.

It's grammatically correct and it is correct Portuguese, like when you get snippets of them in Portuguese. So, can you talk a little bit about the research that went into that?

**CH:** Yeah, well, one of my very dear friends is Brazilian – is Brazilian, and now she lives here in the US. And my godson, he's American. His parents are Brazilian. And so, I used her to bounce a lot of ideas off of, and asked her to describe a lot of things for me.

Also, through our friendship, I think I've learned certain Portuguese phrases; and you know, she speaks to her son in Portuguese and my godson because he's growing up bilingual. So, there's some of that that I've picked up and learned. It's a beautiful language.

And so, also, I had someone to check all the Portuguese to make sure that I was being true to the language and being honest about a place that I don't have that direct attachment to.

One thing I can relate to is having parents that are immigrants. My mom is Jamaican, and came over here. So, I think that that experience is growing up as, you know, the first-born-generation American with an immigrant parent is something I personally related to.

**GP:** And you know, it's an interesting experience because I think a lot of people tend to gloss over, I mean, as the child of Brazilian immigrants, I find that especially in the US, Brazil is kind of the forgotten South American country, which is odd because it's such a huge country.

But a lot of times people just sort of forget that; it's not a Spanish-speaking country, that it's not just rainforest and soccer and carnival – it's, you know, there's more to the country than that.

So, I thought it was a really interesting choice because usually when writers have a character who is the child of immigrants in a story, it's not exactly the go-to country that people tend to choose to have a character from.

I was interested also if you could talk about, sort of, why you chose specifically Brazil for her parents' nationality, and how their background influences Ana's choices in the story, and sort of how her development as a character happens.

**CH:** Sure. Well, one, I love that Brazil, I mean, is as large, if not larger, than the US right? So, it has that diversity, and there's all these different experiences. I really-- I just love that about Brazil. So, I think that that was one of the reasons she just attracted me to the place.

I also, you know, her experience is her parents are undocumented immigrants who come over, and have a child in the US. I was trying to be true to a place where that actually, where there is a significant population that comes over.

I didn't want to pick a country where, you know, there are very few people that immigrate from that country to the US. So, I thought that I was being, kind of, honest in that way.

And as far as like her-- I'm a biracial person. I like the multi-ethnic character of Brazil. And since I, you know, as a writer, I tend to occasionally put in protagonist that share kind of that multi-ethnic heritage because that's what I know.



And so, by choosing Brazil, I was able to have a character that I could relate to like that. So, I think all of those things played into it. And also, I just love Portuguese; and I've been learning it through my friends. So, I felt like, let's do Brazil.

**GP:** It's also an interesting choice because Brazil is such a, there's such a huge dichotomy between rich and poor, right? And in fact, I think at one point, it was the country with the biggest disparity between the wealthiest of the wealthy and the poorest of the poor in the world.

And people don't know that because, you know, they kind of see Brazil and they either only see the favelas or they only see the, kind of, teeny-tiny percentage of the people in those huge homes.

And you know, as someone who grew up going back to Brazil on a regular basis and visiting my family, you know, I'd go back two times a year, at least, and you see that disparity in a major way. And of course, that totally ties into Ana's experience in the story because they go from having a whole lot of money to basically having nothing, but trying to live up to this image that they put together.

So, I thought that was a really interesting choice as well. I don't know that another country where you would get immigrants from, to the US would quite capture that same sort of disparity between wealth.

**CH:** That's true. I mean, I think Brazil has many, many things in common with the US probably because of its size; you know, it has the size to have the diversity of wealth and people that we have here in the US. And so, I think that that's one of the reasons that it appealed to me; it's, in some ways, similar to what I know.

**GP:** Yeah. It has some similarities, and then certain things that are totally different.

**CH:** Totally.

**GP:** But yeah, but it definitely does in terms of like being a melting pot in the way-- I mean, it really is; in some ways, it's even more so than the US right? Like in Brazil people won't even really distinguish between like racial heritage because it's just such a mishmash that no one really knows or cares.

And so, people kind of just go with it. Whereas, you know, so, in Brazil, it's almost even more than the US kind of just a mixture of people and cultures, which is kind of interesting.

So, let's talk a little bit about the setup for the story; you know, Domestic Suspense. I've already touched on this, it's something that's kind of gotten really big in the last few years.

And like you said, you didn't want to sort of follow the typical pattern of what we see in books where, you know, there's a marriage on the rocks and then things fall apart, someone dies. So, how did you-- Why did you choose this particular setup and, you know, was this your first foray into the thriller or suspense genre? And what about this genre really appealed to you as a writer?

**CH:** Well, this is my second book. My first book, *Dark Turns*, it was a mystery that happened at a very wealthy boarding school; and this dance teacher, uncovers a dead body and has to figure it out. I've kind of done the, I guess, more traditional like amateur sleuth-type of story before.

And so, but I really-- I love Domestic Suspense. It's what I read most of, and I really love that it's kind of become its own subgenre in thriller. So, I knew I wanted to write that because it's what I like reading.

And as far as what made me want to put that twist on it, was I think I wanted to add elements of the Police Procedural, and maybe bridge the Domestic Suspense with the Police Procedural a bit and play with that. And so, that appealed to me – and hopefully, I pulled it off.





**GP:** And it's interesting you mentioned the Police Procedural, but Ryan is not actually police, right? You chose-- You deliberately made him an insurance investigator and not a cop or a detective following up immediately after the death, right?

**CH:** He's an ex-cop. He had been in the NYPD Financial Crimes.

**GP:** But it definitely felt like a deliberate choice to have him be an investigator for an insurance company as opposed to, say, being a cop on board the cruise ship – like, that would've been a very different story had you framed it in that way.

So, can you talk a little bit about why you chose to have him be still a cop by training, but like not in that 'cop role' and not being able to do sort of cop things in quite the same way, and why you chose to do that?

**CH:** Well, one I think was because he was such a cerebral guy that I needed a type of police work that would satisfy his kind of fascination with odds and statistics – and really using kind of math and calculations to figure out how people would or should act in a certain situation rather than kind of judging people based on, kind of, an emotional profile of how they would act.

So, he's not-- He's not like an FBI profiler who looks and goes, 'Well, given this background, the person is likely to do this.' He's more a person going, 'What are the odds that this thing would even occur?' That's how he approaches his life. And so, I thought that an insurance investigator really, kind of, fit him more. I also-- You know, he's not a traditional, like, male macho guy.

He's a bit of a, like a nerd; and he's like-- Even physically, I think of him as kind of like a lanky guy that doesn't really go to the gym, especially since his leg, he hurt his leg; and before that, it's like he used to run. So, he was kind of this swell guy.

I guess, I think in a lot of thriller books, the police detective is kind of a guy who could beat someone up; and Ryan can't really beat anyone up, nor would he try to – he's not really, that's not who he is.

And so, I didn't think that his personality and the way I saw him as a character really fit with the typical police guy. And then, I didn't want him to, kind of, also be kind of emasculated by being in that world, but not kind of like a more macho guy.

**GP:** And, you know what else I think is interesting about him too is that like as an insurance investigator, it's kind of like he's looking to-- I mean, he's basically trying to make sure that the insurance company doesn't have to pay out this big insurance policy.

So, basically, like usually, cops are trying to figure out who did it, like why did this person die, but more importantly, like who killed them or who drove them to suicide or, you know, whatever that motivating factor was.

Whereas with him, it's almost like he's trying to disprove it; he's doing the opposite. He's trying to prove like if it is suicide or it was murdered, then they don't have to pay. It's almost like he's like the anti-detective, like his role is almost the flip of what a normal detective would be trying to do. So, I thought that was really interesting as well.

**CH:** Yeah, thanks for getting up on that. That also allows me to have him look into certain things first that arguably a detective wouldn't do; the detective would be immediately looking elsewhere.



And so, I think that that adds some tension to the story because then, you know, when you're in the Ana chapters, you find out things; and then there's that tension of like, 'Well, when is he going to do that?'

Whereas, you know, if maybe if he was a police officer, he'd have a certain, 'Well, clearly, you interview all these people first and these second, and these--' There'd be more of a procedure to it.

**GP:** Exactly. And I mean, I think this is just based on what I know about Police Procedurals from watching like Law & Order or something, but the minute you know it's a suicide, that's it, case closed; like, you just write it off.

Whereas for an insurance investigator, that's the beginning of the case because if you think there might be a suicide, that's when you want to get the proof so that you can then make your case so you don't have to pay out the insurance. I thought that was kind of an interesting angle as well.

So, can you talk a little bit about the supporting cast in the story? Because one of the things, you know, we have Ana and Tom are sort of the focal characters, especially in-- Well, Tom is kind of throughout the book because both Ana and Ryan have interactions with him.

But then we also have a whole host of like peripheral characters who are kind of fluttering around the edges of this relationship – and you know, like Ana's friends from work or colleagues from work and then the daycare center. And we kind of see different angles on those characters.

This is where we get a little bit of that Domestic Suspense, sort of, 'people are not quite what they seem' picture, where you get one version when Ryan interviews the person, but then we get a different view of the story when we have that scene with Ana. So, can you talk a little bit about how you crafted these characters and, sort of, how that works in the book?

**CH:** Oh, sure. Well, yeah, some of those characters are like my favorite characters. Well, there's his partner Vivian, his ex-partner when he was working for the NYPD, and she is that 'macho' kind of character; she pulls her gun quickly, she's more-- she's more of, kind of, the traditional police character in my head.

And I liked the fact that I made her an Asian woman. I thought she's kind of badass, and I enjoyed her. The daycare character is probably borrowed from my experiences in suburbia. But I thought Miss Donna, you know, she's a hardworking woman, but she's running a business and she needs the Bacons to pay their bills.

And if they enroll someone for a certain amount of time, that's the time they have to serve. You know, she sees them from the perspective of someone who's done business with them and hasn't felt treated fairly.

**GP:** Can I interject too?

**CH:** Of course.

**GP:** One of the things-- Like, this is a tiny detail, but it's like one of those things that really rang true for me as a fellow mom who has had kids in preschools and daycares. Before you get into like the school, school-level where they're, you know, in school, the teachers are Mr.-such-and-such [last name], Miss-such-and-such.

In daycare, they are Miss-first-name like Miss Donna or Miss Sammy or whatever. That was like one of those little details that was so true to me. But only like a parent who's had their kid in a daycare knows that that's what you call the teachers.

**CH:** That's right, because, well, they always feel like the little kids wouldn't be able to say the last name.





**GP:** Which is kind of hilarious because little kids can say stuff. I mean, come on. I know because my kids parrot back like the most awful things that I-- You know, exactly the things I don't want them to parrot back are the things they parrot back. So yeah, they could say last names, but it's hilarious.

**CH:** They can do that. And then, there's, don't know where you are in the book, so I don't want to kind of spoil it, but there's some characters of people that Tom knows that come in that Ryan has to interview, and they kind of come in. One is helping him out with Sophia, family, friends when his wife is missing.

And so those people have different views of the family as well. And then there's her nosy neighbor who I will fully admit was kind of an amalgamation of different people on various housewife reality TV shows. And I just was kind of like, 'You know what, I'm going to create the uber New Jersey housewife.'

**GP:** That's awesome. I love it. When I was in grad school, there was my next-door neighbor, I dubbed her 'crazy cat lady' because she literally was like the nosiest person and had these ridiculous cats that howled until all hours of the night. And I am so like saving up that character to use it a book because like--

**CH:** Oh yeah.

**GP:** -I need a crazy cat lady in one of my books.

**CH:** Definitely, and you have all this material.

**GP:** I know, right? So, tell me a little bit about what you have going on next. Like, do you have any projects in the works? Obviously, as far as you feel comfortable sharing them? I know different authors have, you know, don't like to talk about certain projects, but like, what do you have coming up next; and yeah, what do you see on the horizon?

**CH:** Yeah, well, I wrote another-- I mean, I really love Domestic Suspense so my next book is another standalone Domestic Suspense that's with my agent; and I'm really excited about it. I'm then-- I'm also working on a fourth Domestic Suspense book that deals with neighbors.

**GP:** Ooh.

**CH:** It's all-- It's a neighbor book.

**GP:** That kind of follows what we were just talking about with like, weird neighbors.

**CH:** Yeah.

**GP:** So, oh my gosh, that's going to be fun.

**CH:** So, I'm having a-- I have a lot of fun with the genre. I like the idea of playing with our most intimate relationships – and how well could you really know a person; and even when you know them really well, under what pressures can that person become someone else? And so, that's an interesting area for me to explore. I'm drawn to it.

**GP:** That's definitely a really fascinating, I think, angle for writing a story because a lot of times people, you know, writers are often told, "You need to put your characters in a bad situation – like whatever happens, make it worse." But it's what's really interesting is, what exactly pushes the character over the edge, because it's not necessarily always just a blanket 'make it worse'. Like it has to be the right kind of 'worse' to push a character to their breaking points.



So, I think that's a really interesting question to grapple with. So, I was also wondering like about your writing process. I mean, it seems like you've got a lot of projects in the works, but you also have a life and family. How do you juggle all of these things together?

**CH:** I know. I don't know how most writers do it, right, because it's difficult.

**GP:** Yeah.

**CH:** I drop the kids off and then-- Well, because, for me, personally, I had been a journalist and then when I had my second daughter; and my first one spoke Spanish, which was great – only I don't speak Spanish. So, that meant that she was just learning all her words from the nanny.

And, I kind of thought, you know, that's not necessarily the parent I want to be. And also, I had at that point had the kids and was trying to write books on the side and still work like a 10-hour day and commute an hour each way. And so, that wasn't working.

And so, I quit, and now I'm home with the kids; and when they go to school, I write from the moment I drop them off – so like 8:45 – until 2:55 when I have to run in my car like a crazy person and go collect them by three o'clock; and then I'm mommy until I put them to bed. And then, often, my husband works late and he has kind of an intense job, so I'll log back on and I'll write an edit until like 2:00 AM in the morning, and then I repeat.

**GP:** Wow, that's intense. But it's, you know, it sounds familiar, right? And it's kind of that constant juggling act. I mean, I know when I was writing the DIY MFA book, I would drop my son off at school, go around the corner to Starbucks because if I came home, my two-year-old daughter would be, you know, 'Mommy, mommy,' and that whole thing.

And so, that was the way I got it done, was to like clock in my hours, then go pick up my son – come home, be a mom; and that's sort of how you have to do it. So yeah, I totally hear you on that. So, I always end each interview with the same question, what's your number one tip for writers?

**CH:** I would say it is to just, write every day, because I think that it's easy to-- And it doesn't mean you have to sit down and write a whole chapter, but write down your thoughts, your musings, whatever it is, write every day – because if you just get that discipline down, then eventually your book is done.

And I think that the whole idea of writer's block – like journalists, you can't have writer's block. You have a deadline at the end of the day, and sometimes you have to write three articles in a day. So, don't ever kind of get with the romance of writer's block, 'Oh, I'm not writing because I have this block.' There is no block. Just keep writing and you'll write through it.

**GP:** I completely agree. In fact, I have been known to tell people there is no such thing as writer's block. Like there's no external thing that's keeping us, you know, preventing. It's not like writer's block reaches down and holds our hand as we are trying to write on the page. You know?

If we want to write, we just shut up and write. So, I completely, completely agree with that. So, thank you so much, Cate, for being on the show. This was such a blast speaking with you.

**CH:** Oh, thank you so much for having me. I really had a lot of fun. Thanks, Gabriela.

**GP:** All right, word nerds. Thanks so much for listening. Keep writing and keep being awesome.

