

# SUSAN MALLERY

NEW YORK TIMES *Bestselling Author*



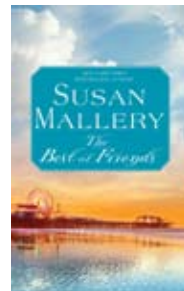
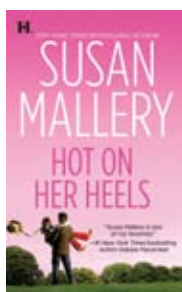
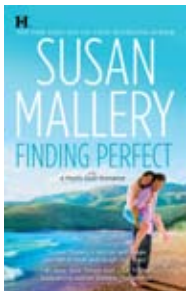
Recipient of the National Reader's Choice Award

## BIOGRAPHY

Susan Mallery is the New York Times bestselling author of over one hundred romances and women's fiction novels, and she has yet to run out of ideas! Her funny and sexy family stories consistently appear on the USA Today bestseller list and have landed as high as #5 on the New York Times list. She has won many awards, including the prestigious National Reader's Choice Award. Her books have been named to the Top 10 Romance Novels lists of 2007, 2008, and 2009 by Booklist, a publication of the

American Library Association, and she was the only author on the list all three years. Because her degree in Accounting wasn't very helpful in the writing department, Susan earned a Masters in Writing Popular Fiction.

Susan makes her home in the Pacific Northwest where, rumor has it, all that rain helps with creativity. Susan is married to a fabulous hero-like husband and has a six pound toy poodle... who is possibly the cutest dog on the planet.



For more information or to schedule an interview, contact assistant Jenel Looney at [jenel@susanmallery.com](mailto:jenel@susanmallery.com) or 512-876-6544.

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"Mallery's prose is luscious and provocative." —Publishers Weekly

"Susan Mallery's gift for writing humor and tenderness make all her books true gems." —Romantic Times

"Romance novels don't get much better than Mallery's expert blend of emotional nuance, humor and superb storytelling."  
—Booklist

## 2010 BOOKS



Welcome to Fool's Gold, California, the Land of Happy Endings. Fool's Gold is a charming community in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. There's lots to do and plenty of people to meet, especially women. Because there's just one tiny problem in Fool's Gold: the men don't seem to stick around. The women of Fool's Gold have to solve the man shortage problem... fast. Learn more about Fool's Gold online at [FoolsGoldCA.com](http://FoolsGoldCA.com).



### CHASING PERFECT – May 2010

Charity Jones loves everything about Fool's Gold, except its sexiest resident, former world-class cyclist Josh Golden. She's not about to take a chance on another bad boy, even if everyone else thinks he's perfect. But maybe that's what he needs—someone who knows the value of his flaws. Someone who knows Josh is only *chasing* perfect.



### ALMOST PERFECT – July 2010

Liz Sutton's secret first love Ethan Hendrix helped her through the worst of times. Until he betrayed her. Devastated and pregnant, Liz left Fool's Gold—forever, she thought.... Now Liz must return to face the man who doesn't know of their son's existence. Will desire spark a second chance at love?

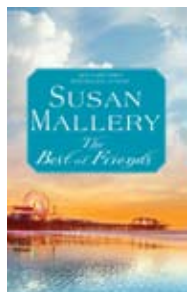


### FINDING PERFECT – Sept 2010

When Pia O'Brian's best friend dies, the woman leaves Pia three frozen embryos. Determined to do the right thing, she decides to become a single mom, only to meet gorgeous Raoul Moreno the very same day. Raoul can't get Pia out of his mind. Can an unconventional beginning really result in the perfect ending?

### THE BEST OF FRIENDS – October 2010

Susan Mallery's second women's fiction novel



In high school, studious Jayne Scott and wild child Rebecca Worden became unlikely best friends—a tie that endured even after Rebecca fled her family to live overseas. After Jayne's mother passed away, she became part unpaid assistant, part surrogate daughter, to the wealthy Wordens. But now, ten years later, Rebecca is coming home to L.A. to cause havoc for Elizabeth, the mother who all but rejected her. And Jayne finds herself pulled deeper into the Wordens' complicated family dynamics—especially when Rebecca's brother, David, returns as well.

David is the man Jayne always wanted and knew she could never have. But when he gravitates toward her in spite of Elizabeth's protests, her vow to escape the family's shadow is put to the ultimate test. And as lies are shattered and true feelings exposed, Jayne must decide where loyalty ends, and love begins. . .

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## MEDIA QUESTIONS

**Q:** Describe how you became a writer.

**A:** I was actually in college, studying to be an accountant, when I saw a local adult education center offering classes on “how to write a romance novel.” I’d been reading romances since I was about 13 and decided to take the class. I’d never written a book before, but thought I should start one before the class.

It was an 8 week class and by week 6 I knew this was what I wanted to do with my life. Unfortunately, I had that pesky accounting thing to get through. But I wrote while I was in college and when I graduated, I had to make a decision. I had a job offer with an accounting firm. But I really wanted to be a writer. My husband and I agreed I would give myself 2 years to sell, so I turned down the accounting job and started writing fulltime. That was May and I sold in August of the same year. I’ve been a fulltime writer ever since.

**Q:** What inspires your writing? Where do you get your ideas?

**A:** Ideas come from everywhere. Situations I find myself in, songs, movies, conversations I’ve overheard. (Okay, I admit it—I overhear those conversations because I’m intentionally eavesdropping. When you talk in public, you must realize a writer may be hanging on every deeply

personal word.) The idea starts with a spark. The tough part is building that spark into a novel-length story. Sometimes an idea doesn’t go anywhere, and I have to save it for another day, when it might merge with another spark and become something wonderful.

My 2009 series, Lone Star Sisters, was sparked with the question, “What would you get if you crossed Dallas with Sex and the City?” High drama, incredible family tensions, and a fun female friendship at its core. (Plus some pretty fabulous stilettos.) Then I looked for the sparks that would inspire me to create stories for each of the three Titan sisters and for their friend Dana.

The spark that led to the series based in the fictional town of Fool’s Gold, California, was a news story about the census. I thought of how interesting it would be if the census discovered that a town faced a serious man shortage. How would the women in town react? Would men begin to arrive in town by the busload, thinking there are women ripe for the picking?

The Bakery Sisters came about because of a story I heard on NPR about a child prodigy. A twelve year old American boy living in England, studying graduate level physics. While his life is wonderful, it’s incredibly far from normal. I kept wondering what his life would be like when he grew up. Claire, the first heroine, grew from that, which led to the three book series.

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## MEDIA QUESTIONS (CONT.)

**Q:** Describe your writing process. Do you outline? (Describe a typical day-in-your-life)

**A:** My writing process is fairly organized. It's probably my accounting background rearing its ugly head. I write every day and my goal is a set number of pages. Before I start a book, I do a detailed outline. I like to know I've worked out all the problems before I dive into the book. A typical day with me starts with e-mail, then pages.

My goal is to get my writing done in the morning so I can spend afternoons doing other things like answering fan mail, posting to Facebook or Twitter, or dealing with my website. I am always thinking four or five books ahead, so I might be reading a weird non-fiction book to give me background or doing research on the Internet. However, the pages come first. If it takes me until midnight, that's how long it takes. Of course if I'm done at 10 in the morning, then you can find me at the mall!

**Q:** What do you enjoy most about writing?

**A:** There's an element of magic that thrills me. When I hear something on the news and I know it's exactly the piece I was missing to make a book work. Or when I get an idea out of the blue. I've written enough that I can feel when

I have a great book idea as opposed to a single thread or character. Sometimes I listen to a song and know the feeling that song inspires will one day be a book, but I don't know what it is yet. There is something weird going on in my subconscious. I don't understand it but I've learned to trust it.

I'm also fortunate in that I actually like the process of writing. I would much rather write than edit or revise or even do research. Most writers "want to have written." They love everything but the writing. But for me, putting the words on the page is really fun.

**Q:** Who or what have been major influences on your development as a writer?

**A:** I've studied a lot of screenwriting and that's been a big influence for me. I have no interest in writing a screenplay, but I like the clean structure and the rules of it. I was living in Los Angeles when I first learned to write and there are all kinds of seminars and classes available there.

I try to study with experts. I've taken characterization classes taught by psychologists and setting classes taught by poets. I still study. 18 years and over 100 books later, I read about writing craft, buy DVDs on screenwriting and listen to workshops in CD in my car.

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## MEDIA QUESTIONS (CONT.)

But one of the biggest influences was taking the Myers Briggs personality test. I was stunned to discover I'm a very stronger "feeler" which means emotion is everything to me. Most people talk in terms of seeing or hearing. I speak about feeling. It helped me recognize my strengths and weakness as a writer. Character is my thing. The messier the better. So I go with that. It also pointed out the areas I had to work on, which I do.

**Q:** What do you read in your spare time?  
Which writers inspire you?

**A:** I'm a romance reader. I have been forever. I love the affirmation, the humor of a man and woman trying to get along. But I also happen to adore WWII thrillers. I can't explain it but give me a spy and some Nazi gold and I am so there!

**Q:** What is your advice for aspiring writers?

**A:** Don't give up. Talent helps, but there are thousands of amazingly talented writers who will never sell because they won't start the book or finish the book or submit the book. The ones who sell, the ones who have a career, are the ones who don't give up. Ever! You never know when the book you're writing is going to be "the one." How horrible would it be to give up on the very project that was finally going to allow you to

achieve your dream?

**Q:** What did you learn while earning your Masters in Writing Popular Fiction that surprised you?

**A:** A lot of things came together for me during the master's program. Most of them occurred while listening to a Donald Maass lecture. The program has a special guest speaker during every residency. Donald talked about structure and characters and while it was all information I'd heard before, it was still excellent to hear again. Then on the flight home, I read a Joan Johnston novel. Joan jams the equivalent of an entire episode of 24 into each chapter. Well, without the death and threats to the country. But it's fast-paced and full of oh-my-god moments.

Sitting on that flight, I read Joan and thought about the lecture and had a fabulous revelation about what I'd been doing wrong in my own books. I had just turned in a trilogy and had to call my editor and tell her I needed to make revisions based on what I'd figured out about my writing. She said I could have five weeks to make any changes. Books 1 and 3 weren't too bad, but book 2 was totally wrong. If you compared the original manuscript with the book in print you would see that exactly two scenes remain. I rewrote the entire book to make it right.

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## MEDIA QUESTIONS (CONT.)

While it was a lot of work, revising all that material in such a short period of time, it was the right thing to do. The trilogy was out in 2003 and is still in print today!

**Q:** How do you research your novels?

**A:** It depends on the topic. I love the internet for basic research, although I'm very careful about my sources. For some books, I'll do hands-on research. In one reader favorite, *Falling for Gracie*, my heroine makes wedding cakes. To help me figure out what's really involved with the process, I took a class on cake decorating at a local crafts store. It was a complete revelation. Talk about a lot of work—and something I have absolutely no talent for! But it was fun and allowed me to get the details right. Readers sometimes ask me what the Gracie's secret ingredient was for her delicious cakes. You know what? I have no idea... Gracie never told me!

For the second book of the Fool's Gold series, *Almost Perfect*, the heroine's brother is in Folsom Prison. As a general rule, I try to avoid going to prison—just part of my overall life philosophy—so I turned to the internet so I could get the details right when my heroine visited her brother. I'd been having trouble nailing down information from a reliable source, but some of my Facebook fans and Twitter followers came through with leads for me.

**Q:** Do you base your characters on real people or are they strictly fictional?

**A:** My characters are strictly fictional. Real people don't fit well into stories. However, I will include situations I've heard about or experienced, which can be fun. When I lived in Seattle, there was a day spa I visited a lot and I loved it there. So when one of my heroines turned out to own a day spa, I based it on the one I went to. In *Sunset Bay*, several of the settings are places I've actually been to, such as the café where Megan has brunch with her father, or the family home in Culver City.

**Q:** What are the major themes you explore in your novels?

**A:** I tend to write books about finding family in one way or another. The families are sometimes traditional, sometimes not. I think everyone wants to belong and for an assortment of reasons, some technological, some social, our way of life is leading us away from connecting with each other. But the need to bond is rooted in our DNA.

I've always believed the true measure of a person is who we love and who loves us. My characters are looking to belong. Along the way, they fall in love, which is pretty fun.

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## MEDIA QUESTIONS (CONT.)

**Q:** How do you handle a more successful friend?

**A:** It's one thing if a friend gets a promotion, but what about a superstar friend? Is it possible to keep the relationship viable? Or what happens if one friend suddenly scoots up the food chain, leaving you far, far behind? Or what if you're the one on the rise? Are your friends going to be happy about your newfound success? Are you really changing or is it them?

People get hung up on others' success when they believe the possibilities are limited. As if success is a pie and if someone gets a bigger piece, yours will have to be smaller. I believe success is infinite. We can all have as much as we want. I have a friend who is both an incredible writer and a brilliant business woman. She's hitting # 1 on the NYT list consistently and becoming an empire. Every time I hear about another amazing success, I get excited. Not just for her, but for me, too, because now there are even more possibilities.

**Q:** What is the common perception of romance novels (and romance writers)?

**A:** One of the most interesting thoughts about romance novels is that they weaken women, or that the women in them are

spineless and simply waiting for a good man to save them.

Most people who complain about romance haven't read one, or only read one twenty years ago. They don't know what they're talking about but that doesn't stop them from having a very strong, if uninformed, opinion. Most romances in general, and mine in particular, are about smart, articulate women with lives and strong personalities. While a man would be nice, they're more concerned about getting on with life, solving problems and being happy.

The other misconception is that romance novels are all the same. That all we do is write one book and then change the names over and over again. Which implies our readers are idiots.

What I love about romance is the variety. There are as many possibilities as there are people in the world. There is something for everyone. If you love rich historicals with the feel and texture of the past, there's that. If you want cutting-edge urban fantasy and female warriors who kill first and ask questions later, then we have that as well. Dark, brooding guys with scars? No problem. I tend to write about real people living in this world—women who could be your best friend or your sister. I like smart heroines with a bit of snark to them, because those are the women I like in real life. But there has to be a heart there as well.

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## MEDIA QUESTIONS (CONT.)

**Q:** How do you see the romance market changing?

**A:** It's expanding. There are more choices and that gives us more opportunity to appeal to more readers. The books are always changing because the world is always changing. For example, paranormal became very popular after the 9/11 attacks. I believe the reason is we want to feel there is someone or something stronger than us than can protect us. Vampires, immortal warriors and powerful otherworld beasts can take on terrorists and win.

Not that terrorists are the story line. I think this is happening in our subconscious. Western culture supports the idea of the good guy winning. But with our real bad guys so elusive, we need more powerful heroes. Having said that, there is also a huge increase in inspirational romances, where everyone is firmly mortal and faith is affirmed.

It's all about connection and feeling safe. Of wanting to belong.

**Q:** Why do you think your novels have struck such a chord with women of all ages? Do you write with a certain reader in mind?

**A:** I believe there are universal themes we all connect with, especially as women.

The need to bond, to create a family unit is biological. Romance novels affirm our desire to love, to have a mate, to have children. There is power in the ability to love fearlessly. Power in overcoming adversity, whether it lives inside ourselves or comes from an external force.

Most women adore a good love story. Terminator is one of my favorite movies ever and from my perspective, it's not an action adventure thriller—it's a love story. Kyle Reese came across time for the woman he loves. That's pretty powerful stuff. Most of us know that any movie or book or TV show is improved with a spark of romance. It speaks to who we are, regardless of age.

Having said that, I do write with a specific reader in mind. She's a mother with three kids and her husband is out of town. All three kids have the stomach flu, her washing machine is broken, and her husband won't be home until the next day. She finally gets the kids in bed and has an hour or so for herself. She fills the bathtub to relax, grabs my book and sinks into the warm water, prepared to get swept away. My job is to make her forget her aching back, the pile of laundry and the exhaustion dragging her down. My job is to make her laugh, cry and keep turning the pages, even after the bath water gets cold. My job is to make her believe that happy endings really do happen to everyone, especially women like her.



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## MEDIA QUESTIONS (CONT.)

**Q:** Of all of your heroines, who is closest to your heart?

**A:** I have heroines I admire tremendously. I wrote a book called *Accidentally Yours* about a single mom fighting for her sick child. I have heroines who struggle against all kinds of adversity, because I believe that in fiction, characters must earn their happy ending. But the ones I love the most are practically ordinary. They're smart, funny, caring women trying to make sense of a crazy world. And at the worst time possible, they happen to fall in love. It's never easy, but it's always worth it.

**Q:** What's next for Susan Mallery?

**A:** I'm very excited about the Fool's Gold series, which is a first for me. The Fool's Gold romances are an ongoing series of books set in the same town, which will keep going as long as readers keep asking for more. So far, we have three books in 2010 – *Chasing Perfect*, *Almost Perfect*, and *Finding Perfect* – and three (untitled) releases for 2011. After that, who knows?

Each story is self-contained, a standalone, so readers don't have to worry about reading the books in order. They can just hop in

any time and then catch up later on the books they missed. Some of the same characters will reappear from book to book, which creates a true sense of community. I hope readers will love returning to Fool's Gold again and again, as much as I've enjoyed stepping back into the town each time I start a new story.

I can't imagine ever running out of story ideas in this town! A tourist town known for its frequent festivals and parades, Fool's Gold sits on the shores of picturesque Lake Ciara in the Sierra Nevada mountain range. Boating, biking, and wine tours in the summer...fall foliage...a world-class ski resort for winter sports.

I've got some fabulous extras planned to help readers feel like a true part of the Fool's Gold community. My team and I have created a tourist website, [www.FoolsGoldCA.com](http://www.FoolsGoldCA.com), with a map of the town, ads from local businesses, city news and weather, and some fun ways that readers can interact with me and with each other. Plus reader freebies such as a downloadable cookbook with Fool's Gold Family Recipes, and a one-of-a-kind knitting pattern for a puppet, which was designed after my real-life toy poodle.

My second women's fiction novel, *The Best of Friends*, will be released in October 2010.