**What is a Manuscript Consultation?**

A manuscript consultation is simply having a professional writer or editor read your work and bring to attention any stylistic or substantive issues: plot holes, character inconsistencies, world building problems, mixed metaphors, confused theme, problems with pacing, etc.  
  
All consultants operate somewhat differently, but my process is to read the work in hard copy, and then read it a second time while penning notes in the margins. I typically then sleep on my thoughts and transfer what notes I still agree with - and what new notes time has conjured - into a digital copy. My comments include ideas or inspiration, potential areas for improvement, and highlighted passages I’ve adored or compliments regarding artistic choices that have hit just right.  
  
I always meet with the writer prior to sharing my notes electronically. The writer decides whether they would like to meet via Zoom or in person, and we go through the story and the notes together, brainstorming, debating, and problem-solving. Each consult lasts about 1-2 hours, and it’s a lot of fun! I enjoy when writers argue the choices they’ve made - this is usually the heart of whatever issue we’re tackling: not in the wrong artistic choice being made, but the choice being not well enough communicated and built up in the text. The conversation really comes to life!   
  
In 2024, residents in Sherwood Park, St. Albert, and surrounding areas can book FREE manuscript consultations with me through the libraries’ Writer in Residence program. Simply email [regionalwir@gmail.com](mailto:regionalwir@gmail.com), and please try to adhere to the submission guidelines below. I can’t wait to read your work!

**Manuscript Submission Guidelines: 2024 Regional Writer in Residence, Katie Bickell (Strathcona County Library & St. Albert Public Library)**

Please send manuscripts of no more than 4000 words to Katie Bickell at [regionalwir@gmail.com](mailto:regionalwir@gmail.com)

Please submit no more than one short story, children’s book, novel or memoir chapter, essay, or longform creative nonfiction at a time.

For shorter forms, like poetry and flash fiction, please submit no more than 5 pieces at a time.

* All genres are welcome! Literary fiction, sci-fi, romance, murder mystery, horror – I want to read it all!
* All mediums are welcome! Please feel free to submit short stories, flash fiction, chapters of novels or memoir, poetry, children’s literature, essays, or creative nonfiction – whatever form you are writing in - as long as the work does not exceed the word count of 4000 words, and as long as you submit one long form piece at a time, or no more than 5 short form pieces.
* Ideally, manuscripts should be typed in 12 font, New Times Roman, and double spaced. Please include page numbers when possible.
* Please include your name and contact information in either the header or footer of each page when possible.
* Please submit your work in either Microsoft Word or as a Google Doc.
* To ensure availability for all patrons seeking manuscript consultation, writers may only submit once in a three-week period.
* With respect to program funding and fair accessibility during times of increased demand, priority will be given to residents of Strathcona County and St. Albert, and to writers who have not accessed the 2024 WiR Manuscript Consulting program prior. All writers are invited to register for the variety of online and in-person courses offered by the 2024 Metro Writers in Residence program to support their creative growth. Program offerings can be found on the Strathcona County Library, St. Alberta Public Library, and Edmonton Public Library websites.
* I welcome work written on all subjects and themes (including all those human experiences that are more emotionally difficult or uncomfortable to write and/or read about) but hate speech and/or harassment will not be permitted.

I am available to meet in-office or on Zoom on Wednesdays 11:30am – 2:30pm, and on Thursdays 3:30pm – 7:30pm.