

# SPOTLIGHT



August 26, 2016

I once went to a writers' workshop where the author presenting insisted on using the 3-act structure; most commonly associated with screenwriting, it involves breaking a plot down into succinct parts. I hadn't heard of it before and while he was able to provide plenty examples of movies and novels that did indeed use that structure— even ones I enjoyed— I found myself resistant to such a formulaic approach. It made everything too predictable, too cookie-cutter, stripped of any magic.

It came to mind again most recently while reading Annelies Pool's excellent novel, *Free Love*, which looks at woman named Marissa who has entered Alcoholics Anonymous. Of course, with someone entering AA or any sort of rehab, you just know where the plot's going to go: there's definitely going to be a relapse before this gets better. But, without trying to give too much away, Pool doesn't go this predictable route and yet the book still held my attention and still had an honest-to-god plot. Major kudos to her.

Set right here in Yellowknife (with flashbacks set in Hamilton, Ontario), I was also very impressed with the delicate but accurate balance Pool struck while reflecting the beauty of the place and its people, yet not denying some of the social issues. Less familiar to me were the behind the scenes of AA meetings and I found them fascinating, especially the familial bonds that develop. Actually, I should be more specific: the *healthy* familial bonds. In biological families, we don't always have the unconditional love we deserve.

Annelies Pool, on top of her game with *Free Love*, will be teaching Yellowknife Public Library's Memoir Writing 101 course beginning this October.

John Mutford

Public Services Librarian