

HOW TO PULL OFF AN ALL-NIGHTER ***(Writing, that is)***

By Stephanie Bond

You've procrastinated. You've been audited for the RWA Golden Heart contest. Or you've been offered the chance to fill a last minute slot at a publishing house. Regardless of the reason, your deadline is tomorrow and your only chance of finishing your book is by staying up all night and writing as if your career depends upon it. Having pulled off one or two (or forty-seven) all-nighters myself, I thought I'd pass along a few tips:

- For you coffee-drinkers, keep plenty of brew available. If you're decaffeinated, ice water is good (and the bathroom breaks keep you active).
- Turn on every light in the room to help fool your body into thinking it's daylight and you're supposed to be awake.
- Wear comfortable clothing, but skip the pajamas unless you're a glutton for punishment.
- Stretching is good; stretching out on the couch is not good.
- 2-minute breaks of walking around the room, lifting your knees and opposite arms will get the blood flowing again.
- Wash your face and hands often to stay alert; occasional self-slaps are also invigorating.
- Keep telling yourself how good you will feel tomorrow when you're finished.
- Keep telling yourself your book is a colicky baby who needs you to stay up all night.
- Don't give in to the temptation to take a power nap; you won't wake up until next week.
- Turn on the radio so you don't feel like you're the only person in the world who's awake; if a good song plays, an impromptu lip-synching concert is permissible because you're the only person in the world who's awake.
- Keep snacks nearby to lift your metabolism; dried fruit is best, but Pop-Tarts will do in a pinch.
- Lighting a citrus or mint-scented candle will help to keep you invigorated.
- Chewing gum will keep your mind active.
- Remember that the creative muse is sensational in the wee hours of the morning.
- Remember that as a writer, you must experience pain.
- Remember that one night of missed sleep never killed anyone. ~SBond