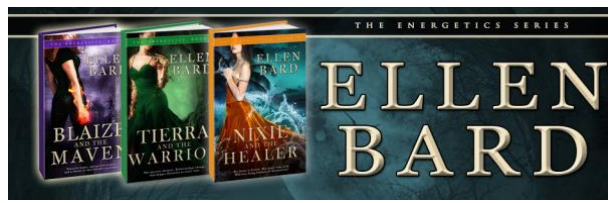


## 1. Talking Points

- Ellen Bard left the UK on a three month sabbatical to travel after 12 years working 60-hour weeks as a management consultant. She hasn't lived in the UK since.
- For the last 7 years she's been based in Thailand, and has worked in 20+ countries across Europe, Asia and the Middle East, including China, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. She's worked with clients from 40+ countries. Her travel and multi-cultural experiences feature heavily in the books, which so far include locations such as Egypt, Thailand and Canada as well as a multi-cultural set of heroes and heroines.
- Despite a fairly conventional upbringing (she's the daughter of a Vicar, and grew up in a country parish in Essex in the UK), she lives an unusual life, spending half her time traveling and working with her consultancy clients, and half her time writing.
- The Energetics features a unique magic system based on the Chakras. The book draws on 15+ years of yoga experience and studies of yoga philosophy, including her year spent at a Yoga school on a tropical Thai island.
  - **"I've actually studied chakras for a long time, so I found the bedrock idea of this book to be a fascinating one. I don't think I've ever seen the chakra system used in such a way as the basis for a magical world. The author has clearly given this much thought, as the concepts are sophisticated but accessible."** *ReadingFanaticReviews.com*
- She enjoys new experiences and trying unusual things – she studied Krav Maga in Ireland the UK for five years, and she's currently experimenting with Muay Thai and boxing. She draws on these experiences for the fight scenes in the books.
- She adores paranormal romance, the genre she writes in, and gets through 80 or so books a year.
- She's a Chartered Work Psychologist, and also writes non-fiction, and recently, with UK publisher Watkins, launched 'This is for you: A Creative Toolkit for Better Self-Care', under the name Ellen M. Bard (<http://ellenbard.com/this-is-for-you/>).
- Her psychological experience and insight allows her to bring depth to her characters so she is able to present a diverse range of heroines and heroes that don't conform to traditional tropes.

For more on her personal story, you can read some of her pieces on the Huffington Post or Tiny Buddha: <http://ellenbard.com/press/>



## 2. Q&A With Ellen Bard

### 2.1 About Ellen

#### **You're British, but you live in Thailand. How did that come about?**

I was based in London, working 60-hour weeks for a management consulting company. I enjoyed my job, but was handling two chronic health conditions at the same time, Crohns Disease and chronic pain in my right side from a car accident 10 years before. I had a two bedroom flat in the suburbs, a car, a good salary, and all the trappings of 'normal life'.

The promotion opportunity I had been waiting for came up – and I had a heart-sinking moment. What I'd been working for wasn't making me happy. I didn't want the promotion.

I took a weekend away and reassessed my values and priorities, and instead of going for the promotion, resigned to take what I planned to be a three month sabbatical.

I never went back.

I found myself in Thailand, and built a new life that was more aligned with who I am. I discovered the Digital Nomad community and became Digital Nomad-ish. I took time for self-care, and started writing. That led to a desire to write books, and six years later I have three novels and one non-fiction book published, have created a successful freelancing business working across South East Asia and the Middle East, met the love of my life, and my life looks quite different all round!

For more on my personal journey, read: How a Tangle With A Bulgarian Juggernaut on a Snowy Motorway Changed My life: <http://ellenbard.com/how-juggernaut-changed-life/>

#### **Why Thailand?**

It took a while for me to fully shift my life here. At first, I kept extending my trip – by a month, then three, then six. It took nearly two years for me to realise I wasn't going back, and to sell all my possessions from my two-bed in the London suburbs and rent out my flat. I've visited many countries since I left the UK, mainly for work, but there's something about Thailand that really clicks with me – the people are so friendly, the climate is lovely and warm, there's a great diversity of geography from beaches to mountains, and I love the food. When I met my partner, here three or four years ago, who is very rooted here, I realised that was it, Thailand was my home now.



**With four books plus work in 20 countries, you sound like you're working just as hard as in the UK. Have you ended up recreating the life you left behind?**

You take your personality with you wherever you go, and it was only in a year where I took 120 flights and got so sick with strep throat (for the third or fourth time that year) that I nearly collapsed during a work engagement that I realised that perhaps I needed to pay more attention to my own self-care despite living in paradise.

I do work hard, but I also have a lot of play and fun in my life. My partner keeps an eye on me – we share an office and when I'm working in Thailand naps feature in our days quite often. My health is a lot better, but I still take seven different medications to function and keep my pain levels down, as well as making sure I exercise and eat right. Mindfulness is also a big part of my life and helps in this area. My lifestyle gives me a lot of freedom and I have to make sure that works for me and not against me.

I've had panic attacks since I was 15, and dealing with two chronic health conditions before I was even 30 also contributed to experiencing mental health issues. While I was in the UK I tried to power on through all my health issues, whereas now I try and give them space without indulging them, and accept them as part of my imperfect self.

**Are there any other downsides to living in Paradise?**

I don't miss the life I had, but I do miss my family and friends in the UK, and funnily enough, I miss the National Trust and scones! The UK does afternoon tea like nowhere else.

## [2.2 About the Paranormal Romance Series: The Energetics](#)

**What made you start with a six-book series rather than just one book?**

The world and series came to me one day in a yoga class, where I was learning about yoga philosophy and the Chakras. I couldn't believe I hadn't come across a fantasy world that used them somehow in their magic system before.

I knew I wanted to write a series because I wanted to draw on the differences in the Chakras to show six very different women, and demonstrate how we can be strong in diversity. I also love the Nora Roberts family style romances, where there is a strong network of friends and family at the core, and knew I wanted other types of relationship as well as the key romance to be a part of the books.

**What's unique about Nixie and the Healer and The Energetics series?**

When I created the energetics series I wanted to write books with awesome heroines, who are without doubt the equal of (which does not mean the same as...) the heroes in the books. But I also wanted to show how you can kick butt in different ways – Blaise, the heroine of Book 1, is smart, but her favourite approach to problems is to take immediate action, and she's not afraid of using her physical training. Tierra, the heroine of Book 2, has



a gentler, more supportive approach, with an intuitive understanding of people which she uses to work out solutions to issues. Nixie is more of a happy-go-lucky free spirit, with a tendency to avoid responsibility and seek out variety and fun, and she brings a lightness and a charm to difficult situations, as well as an innate creativity.

Of course, like all of us, they can be blind to some of their own faults...

The magic system I created for the series is also fairly unique. Having been a yoga student for the last fifteen years or so, I based the magic on the energies of the Chakras, which has been great fun and enabled me to incorporate aspects of yoga and meditation into the books.

### **Where did you get your inspiration from?**

Everywhere! For example, some of this book is set in Egypt, which I've visited both for work and pleasure, and I love its sense of history and sense of place. Other key locations in the series (so far) are Thailand, America and Canada, all locations I know well. I've been a (poor!) student of the self-defence system Krav Maga for a number of years, so some of the fighting style is based on that. I started classes in that when I was living in Dublin, Ireland, and attended a class with an all-male, all-Polish class – I found out later when I joined they had to switch the lessons to being in English from Polish!

I also have a pretty unusual lifestyle – I live in Thailand, and as well as writing fiction, I have a personal development blog, and a travel blog. I publish non-fiction, in the self-development genre, as Ellen M Bard. I'm also a Registered Occupational Psychologist, and work as a freelance management consultant in countries all over the world – just in the last year I've been to Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, China, Dubai and Saudi Arabia amongst other places. My day-to-day life therefore provides a good dose of inspiration too.

I consider myself a magpie, who draws from all the things around me, whether that's culture, people, books, history, or anything else. I have an innate curiosity about the world.

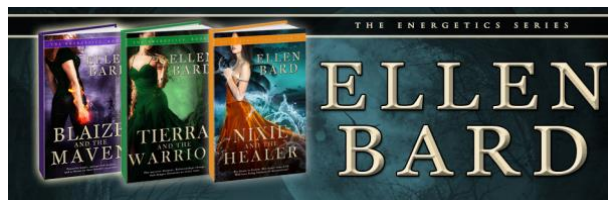
### **What's next?**

I'm currently writing Cara and the Hacker, the fourth book in the series, and then there will be two more for which I have the bones of the story plotted out. Then I have already started creating a new series in parallel, for which the first book is drafted and book two is plotted out, for when The Energetics is all done. I have no shortage of ideas!

## [2.3 About Writing](#)

### **How did you start writing?**

When I first came to Thailand I decided to write a travel blog as an efficient way to share what was happening with my friends and family back home. I also did the twelve week self-



study course 'The Artist's Way' (one of my favourite books). This introduced me to the discipline of morning pages, which is 1000 words of free writing every morning. This practice helped me to be a productive. In many ways, it was also a form of meditation and processing of what was going on with me.

These practices brought out a side of me I didn't even realise was there, and I progressed to creating a website on self-care (which eventually led to the publication of *This is for you: A Creative Handbook for Better Self-Care*). At first, I wrote blogs and articles online, and then after discovering National Novel Writing Month (NaMoWriMo), where you have to write a 50k word novel in a month, I tried that. I was able to write over 100k that month (that will never see the light of day!) and it lit something inside of me, and I knew I wanted to try writing more seriously. That led to *Blaise and the Maven*, the first Energetics novel.

### **Why do you write? Is there a message in your books?**

I write the kind of books I love to read – my fiction is designed to be fun and enjoyable, to be an escape into another world, whilst also portraying healthy, balanced relationships. This is a fine line in romance as there are trope expectations, and I like to play with them a bit. I like my heroines to bring as many strengths to the table as my heroes, and I want them to work together to solve problems, rather than have the women be rescued all the time. If there's a message, it's about empowerment through diversity, that we all bring different strengths to the table whatever our gender, and that we all struggle with our own issues.

### **How does being a Chartered Psychologist help you as a writer?**

One of my specialisms with clients is personality and behaviour, so that helps me to flesh out my characters. I also run training and coach people, and so that helps me to see the kind of issues different people find challenging, so I can bring realism to the characters (whilst giving them magic powers, of course!).

### **Do you have any unusual writing habits?**

I write all over the place, and my laptop is critical to make sure I can take everything I need with me wherever I am. When I'm travelling for my consulting work I could be writing in the evenings in hotel rooms, whilst in Thailand I share an office with my partner. I bounce a lot of ideas off him. I also write at home, and in cafes. Or waiting for the doctor, or a friend to meet me for dinner. Basically, anywhere, anytime.

I use two key tools to write - mind maps, which is how I usually begin collecting ideas for a book, and Scrivener, which is the tool I actually write the content in.

### **You seem to read a lot. How do you get through so many books?**

I've always been a reader. I'm an introvert and was always happiest reading in a corner when I was young. My parents were once called in to see my primary teacher because I was



reading too much in class. We lived in a large, rambling Vicarage when I was growing up, and my parents had a library of about 5000 books, and they didn't believe in censorship, so I was allowed to read whatever I wanted to. It was a joy.

These days I read between 80-100 books a year, mainly focused on romance and personal development, but I'm fairly open in terms of genre. I'm a wide reader, and also enjoy science fiction and fantasy, crime, and books about writing. Then my partner and I are usually reading a book together about some aspect of Thailand or Thai culture (this year I've given myself the project of learning the Thai alphabet, but I think it will be another decade or so before I am reading in Thai!).

I usually have one audiobook on the go, as well as a non-fiction book and a novel. I have an e-reader but do also read the occasional physical book. I don't speed read, but I do seem to suck in the written word quite quickly. I log my books on goodreads:

<http://goodreads.com/ellenbard>

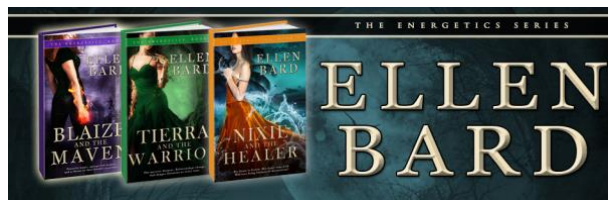
### **Which authors, or books have influenced you?**

My favourite author in the paranormal romance genre is Ilona Andrews. I adore the Hidden Legacy series. Nora Roberts is also very inspiring in the way she is able to write so many quality books in a short time - her output is astonishing. I also enjoy Laurell K Hamilton, Shelly Laurenston and Patricia Briggs to name a few.

### **How has writing paranormal romance affected your enjoyment of reading it?**

It's enhanced it. I know some people find that if they get to know a genre too well, they can't enjoy it, but I don't have that problem, luckily! I still love it as much as ever, only now I can appreciate the writers and their technical skill even more.





### 3. Reviews

#### 3.1 Blaise and the Maven

79 reviews

4.4 Star Average on Amazon

[https://www.amazon.com/Blaise-Maven-Energetics-Book-1-ebook/dp/B0169QIDKW/ref=cm\\_cr\\_ar\\_p\\_d\\_pl\\_foot\\_top?ie=UTF8#customerReviews](https://www.amazon.com/Blaise-Maven-Energetics-Book-1-ebook/dp/B0169QIDKW/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_pl_foot_top?ie=UTF8#customerReviews)

*The story works extremely well in addition to the romance. Yes, there's a romance there, but there's plot there that exists above and beyond the romance. I have found a lot of paranormal romances have a plot line in addition to the romance, but it often exists just to further the romance – and you can tell. It's generally shallow, under-developed and with plot holes you could drive a double decker bus through. Here the plot and the romance weren't co-dependent on each other...**I actually really like both characters – they're very well realised with their own histories and viewpoints and their own very discernible opinions and voices.** They're very well realised and not just in terms of their romance.*

FangsForTheFantasy.com

*I really loved that while this is the first book in the series and the underlying villain is still out their plotting, the romance aspect of the story was resolved in the best of ways. **I feel like this was the perfect blend of magic, action, danger and romance.** I was reading about the other books in the series after I finished this story, and I was pleasantly surprised to find that the next book features another group of main characters (both of which I love from this story!) to find love and kick evil in the ass.*

Smada's Book Smack <http://smadasbooksmack.blogspot.com>

#### 3.2 Tierra and the Warrior

46 reviews

4.6 Star Average on Amazon

[https://www.amazon.com/product-reviews/B07H1RXKSR/ref=cm\\_cr\\_ar\\_p\\_d\\_viewopt\\_srt?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=recent&pageNumber=1](https://www.amazon.com/product-reviews/B07H1RXKSR/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_viewopt_srt?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=recent&pageNumber=1)

*Yes! I have been waiting and waiting for this book to come out. Finally! And I have to say that the second in the series is just as good as the first, except I liked it better. But that's only because I LOVE me a good friends to lovers story. And I already had an interest in Tierra and Fintan.*

*I read the book straight through in about two days because once again the plot is a real page turner. And I was so interested to find out more about the over-arching plot about the prophecy. Plus, I also absolutely adore that the author includes the chakra system into her magical world. That is just so cool to me.*

*Sigh. And **the romance is definitely swoon worthy, the pacing perfect, the tension so well done.** So, if you like romance, adventure, magic, and a fascinating plot, then you will love this book.*

R.A. Rock, Author of Dystopian Romances The Forbidden Minds Series

*We're back in the world of the energetics as the prophecy continues to be revealed. This story centers on Tierra and Fintan, whom we met in the last book. Both Blaise and Cuinn (the romantic couple of the first book) are still present, so we see how their story continues to evolve within the greater one. Much of this book has to do with the friends-to-lovers romance of Tierra and Fintan,*



which is unfortunately unrequited for Tierra who has loved him for a long time. Fintan is clueless about this until near the end of the book, and it is fascinating to watch Tierra as she struggles mentally with this. Their interactions, too, are sometimes quite humorous. I love Tierra as a heroine. At times, she overestimates herself, like in her ability to keep herself safe, while at other times she underestimates herself. She is compassionate and genuinely cares for others, yet she can be very strong when she wants or needs to be.

I like how this series is unfolding with a gradual reveal of the prophecy and all that is involved. **I adore this world where magic and power are based on the chakra system. I've studied the chakras for a long time, and I really appreciate this author's knowledge and attention to detail in re-imagining how this system can be used in a magical setting.** I enjoyed learning more about the guilds and this world in this book. Just like the first book, this one has its own natural arc within the greater series arc, with a natural end that points to more to come. I, for one, look forward to the next installment.

ReadingFanaticReviews.com

### 3.3 Nixie and the Healer

34 reviews

4.6 Star Average on Amazon

[https://www.amazon.com/Nixie-Healer-Energetics-Book-3-ebook/product-reviews/B07SQZB9RG/ref=cm\\_cr\\_dp\\_d\\_show\\_all\\_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all\\_reviews](https://www.amazon.com/Nixie-Healer-Energetics-Book-3-ebook/product-reviews/B07SQZB9RG/ref=cm_cr_dp_d_show_all_btm?ie=UTF8&reviewerType=all_reviews)

**There are so many things to like about this series. I've read and enjoyed every book so far.** Because the author has woven such a complex world with its own codes and laws, the books are really best read in order so that you can fully understand what is going on.

As a longtime student of the chakras, I absolutely adore how the author has incorporated the concept into this series. She's made the bedrock for much in this world. But it makes so much sense in the way that she has ordered it, and it gives structure to both the characters and the plot. I love how this series, unlike others, really weaves in the characters from the previous books even though each book focuses on a new couple. The overarching ongoing plot regarding the prophecy, which is slowly being revealed, and all that must be done truly lays at the heart of each book. I love seeing more about how the lives of those characters already known are progressing and how they impact the next part of the story.

Jamie BJ, Amazon Top 1000 Reviewer

*Nixie and the Healer* is the perfect third book in this series written by Ellen M. Bard. These books really read best read in consecutive order so I would recommend starting at the beginning, but this book does stand on its own.

**This series is refreshingly different from your usual series out there,** which I like the most about it. The author continues to come up with an imaginative plot that has a continuous thread going through the three books to date. She knows how to weave a nice little web around her readers and slowly untangles it at her leisure. The pace of the book is just right, with something happening at all times leaving you never bored nor rushed through the story...This book was fantastic and I really liked where this overall plot is going. There were a lot of secrets revealed yet we found out that there are lot more that we don't know anything about and I for one can't wait until the next one is coming out. Absolutely love this series. It has so much to offer, more than just action but also a lot of depth and emotion and that I really enjoy!

Ramona P, Amazon Vine Voice