



As The Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing
& writing from

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What's Happening?

As I write this, it's still winter, but I think springtime might be just around the corner, so I couldn't decide which heading picture might be right. Therefore, I decided to do both. When in doubt, cover all bases.

I am relieved to tell you that the legal problems are behind us. I had a couple of very stressful days, getting things resolved, but they are resolved. I'm not happy with how it turned out but I am happy that it's over, so I'm counting it a win for us. Now we can truly "move" since our old house is in the past. It took eighteen months to get it done, but it's done!



Now that our legal burden has been lifted, I am finally feeling some creativity again. I think that whole thing sort of weighed on my mind and I didn't even realize it. I am slowly getting back into a creative groove, working on the Dream Series and trying out plot ideas for *Dogged*, about a woman with a ghastly fear of animals.

When I say "try out plot ideas," I mean just that -- my plots don't always come fully formed, but have to be tested, rather like a recipe. I start with my main characters and try to flesh them out, figure out what their background is and what motivates them (besides solving the mystery and trying to keep from being killed). I do all of that as I work on the first few chapters, because it's in those chapters that I (and my readers) start to know the characters.

I tend to agonize over the first chapter a lot, because finding the right starting point is critical. The old rule of thumb is "Start the book on the day things changed" but sometimes I have to start just a tiny bit earlier. I can't tell you how many times I worked on a manuscript only to go back to the first chapter, delete it and start the book at Chapter 2 or 3.

For *Dogged*, I started with a scene between the main character and her mother. The mother says something like, "I didn't realize I raised such a prim daughter." And the main character

thinks, *You didn't really raise a daughter, though, did you? I mean, running off was so much more fun than staying home with me.*

Wow. Where did that line come from? All of sudden I had a lot more going on than a typical mother-daughter relationship. And it made the mother character far more interesting, far more multi-dimensional. All because I was just throwing out ideas for how to start the book and that popped into the conversation.

So stay tuned and see where I'm at next month on this book. You never know what kinds of twists and turns might happen.

[In Other News](#)

By the time you read this, *Righter* should be out and available for downloading via Amazon (or you can order the paperback, if you're so inclined). Like most of my other books, I plan to leave it at Amazon exclusively for a month or two then I'll publish it via other venues after that.

This is a book I plotted long ago at one of my retreats and it didn't turn out the way I plotted it. This has a somewhat complicated plot because it's about a man trying to right an old wrong that happened decades earlier. This is less of a romance and more of a classic mystery than any of my other books, with a big plot twist at the end.

I had a few *Victor/Victoria* moments while writing the book because I am a woman, writing as a man who is pretending to be a woman. It was certainly interesting to look at a writer's conference from a totally different viewpoint!

[What's Next?](#)

Amazingly enough, I have no travel scheduled for the next month. I just mapped out my travels for the year, and I have March and April with no travel. After that, I have a trip almost every month through November. So I'm going to take advantage of a bit of home-time and work on some garden plans, maybe tackle some small remodeling projects, and get a whole bunch of writing done. I have an old book that I want to re-release and I need to decide on cover elements for it before sending off a request to my cover artist. I'd like to release that one this summer if I can.

I'm making good progress on the Dream series so I want to continue that while I have momentum. I have *Dogged* to work on and if my writing habits stay true, that will take me about ten weeks of intensive effort. By then, the edits should be back for a book I sent to my beta reader, and (hopefully) I'll have edits from my Wild Rose editor for a book with them.

So glad I don't have any travel scheduled! I'm going to need all those "free" minutes!

