



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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What's Happening?

I have a cover!

I like it -- the book takes place in a pub, so the images are appropriate. I wish there was a bit more blood on the beer mug, but hey -- it's okay.

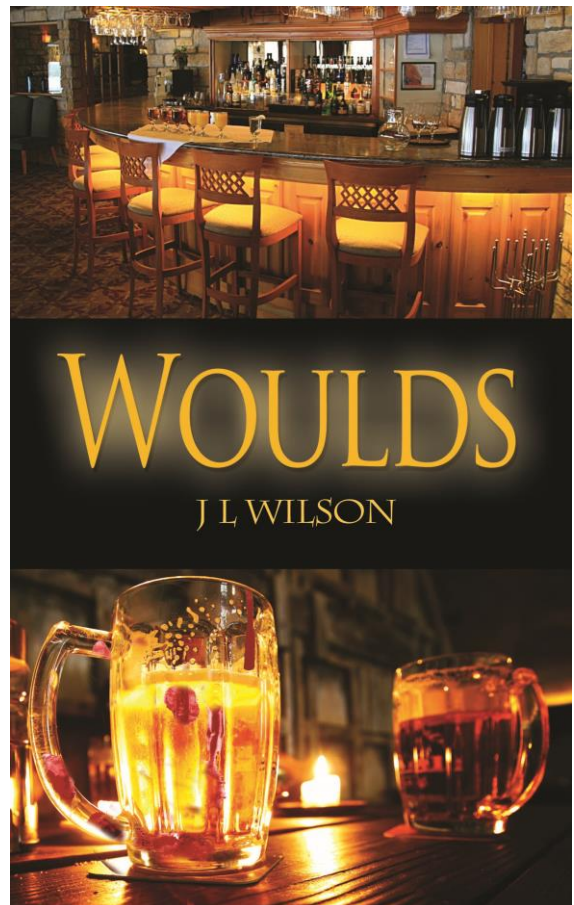
And I have a release date! October 10 the book will be out. I expect it'll be ready in pre-release a week or so early, but that's never a guarantee.

This is my Robin Hood book, and I kinda wish they used my tagline on the cover: *What if Robin really was a hood?*

But apparently taglines are not used on covers anymore. From what I was told, so many people buy content online now, that the covers aren't really that important. At least, not as important as they used to be when they were eye-catchers in a bookstore, trying to lure readers to pick up the book and read.

But overall, I like the cover. The pub is co-owned by Tucker Frye, my female protagonist, and her friend, Alan Dale. John Smalley appears in the book, along with Sheriff Knott, Richard and John Fitz, Marianne Archer, Guy Gibson, and of course: Rob Huntington.

Tucker gets pulled into a murder investigation when her nephew, Will Redman, is killed. Will worked in a chicken "factory", a facility where chickens are forced into egg production. He was an animal rights activist gathering details about the inhumane practices at the factory and about the salmonella outbreak linked to the facility.



I did quite a bit of research for this book, not only into Robin Hood, but into those kinds of chicken facilities. Needless to say, my outrage comes through in the book. John Smalley and Tucker are both "locavore" advocates and John has an organic farm. They have definite ideas about that chicken facility!

I'll write more about the book and its genesis in the next newsletter -- as we getting closer to release day.

In Other News

I did a bit of traveling in June and July. In June I attended the Master Gardener conference in Minnesota. I didn't get to attend the workshop I wanted (designing gardens for the elderly and disabled), but I did get to talk to the presenter and attended another workshop of his that talked about a lot of the same things. I had fun hanging out with fellow gardeners and comparing notes, plus I got to see my Minnesota friends, so it was all good.

In July, I went back to Minnesota to join a friend to fly out to Denver for the Romance Writers of America national conference. It's been a long time since I attended one of these enormous conferences (about 2000 people attend). The last one I attended was in 2007.

My, how times have changed! It used to be this conference was *the* place to spot big-name authors like Nora Roberts, Julia Quinn, and others. We were there for four days and I didn't spot any big-name author (but maybe they came later, after we left). The world of publishing has changed so much--it's no longer essential to have an agent (although it's still a good thing), so pitching your book to agents and editors didn't have as much intensity as before. In fact, I didn't see any nervous authors waiting to pitch. It was all very low key.

Another thing that struck me was just how many authors are independently published. I think probably half of the workshops there were geared toward people who self-publish, and the majority of presenters are self-published. Years ago, that was considered low class and the realm of the desperate author. Now it's commonplace.

I did attend some good workshops that I found very valuable. I plan to hunker down in the wintertime and review my notes and listen to the recording I purchased of the workshops. Who knows, maybe I'll find a spot of wisdom there that I can use!

Oh, and I wrote another book in June and July. Yep, this is my *Beauty and the Beast* story, the one with the handicapped heroine. The words just seemed to flow off my fingers and into my computer. The book truly wrote itself. As always, I wonder if it's any good (is the heroine believable? Does the villain make sense? Is the plot okay?) I'll let it sit for awhile then I'll review it to find out whether it's okay or not.

What's Next?

Another trip in September to give a talk to some area writers about my wiki project, then in October a gambling trip. I haven't decided on which book to write next ... but I'm sure I'll figure it out sooner rather than later. I'm getting that itch to start writing 😊