



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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What's Happening?

As I write this, the snow is flying and the wind is howling. Those tulips in the picture are optimistic, to say the least. But I know spring is on the way. It just got sidetracked. Sigh.

The last time I wrote, I was talking about Book Three of the Classics series. And here I am, editing Book Four. Sometimes it feels like nothing really changes, hmm? My Peter Pan book released in February and I'm hoping to have another book out later this year. I just finished edits for *Woulds*, my Robin Hood story. Again, like with Peter Pan, I had to be careful about copyright issues.

Copyright? Robin Hood?

Yep. There are movies, there are famous books (Howard Pyle) and then there's the 'real' Robin Hood, which is based on folklore and myth. I used those stories as much as possible in creating my fictional characters:

- Tucker Frye, a female bartender
- Will Redman, Tucker's nephew, who is working undercover at a chicken factory
- Rob Huntington, manager at a local factory
- John Smalley, a farmer
- Marianne Archer, Rob's wife
- Guy Gibson, a wealthy retired stockbroker
- Richard Fitz, a ruthless CEO
- Alan Dale, Tuck's co-owner in the pub

I went back to original source material for this story, reading legends and comparing all the different stories about Robin Hood. One of the elements in the plot is factory farming and how inhumane it can be. Will was working to gather data about a salmonella outbreak that resulted in deaths, all caused by filthy conditions at a chicken/egg factory.

Tucker is an advocate of "eat seasonal, shop local" and I was able to incorporate some of her philosophy into the book. And it helped that Richard was a nasty SOB who cared more for profits than humanity. I'm hoping the book will be out late this year. Once I get the final edits

finished, I'll need to decide what to submit next. I have two or three manuscripts ready to go, but I need to get writing again! I have an idea for a new mystery based on *Beauty and the Beast* (not the Disney version, but the classic fairy story). And I'd like to write another angel book using the characters I created in *Save Her*. I have plots simmering in my mind and I'm busily jotting down ideas.

In Other News

I had hip replacement surgery in February and as I predicted, I was up and dancing within a few days. Okay, maybe a week or two, but really, my recovery was remarkably easy. I stayed overnight in the hospital one night and found that a very interesting experience. As I expected, I was interrupted often for medication, but overall, it was okay. I had surgery at noon one day and was home by mid-afternoon the next day.

It took me a few days to get accustomed to handling a walker, but once I did, I got around the house just fine. Within a week I had transitioned to a cane and in another week or so, I was moving without any aid. I started physical therapy about three weeks after surgery, and I'm wrapping that up now. I'm back to my regular exercise routine and other than a bit of stiffness and soreness when I overdo it, I'm feeling almost normal.



I lost out on Writing Time while I was recovering. I just didn't feel like digging in to my plot while I was coping with growing new muscles, so now I'm trying to get caught up. I'm working on Book 8 of the Dream Series, and I'm about half-done with it now. I set a goal of one chapter a week, and I'm back to where I need to be to wrap it up by mid-year. Let's hope there are no more diversions to stop me!

What's Next?

I have a few speaking engagements coming up, talking to writer groups and library groups. And I'm very busy with my Master Gardener duties. I chair some committees, so I need to budget time for that.

My next big project is to transfer a Wiki I maintain from one computer hosting group to another. I've maintained it for years, tracking all my characters, plots, locations, and details for the Dream Series. It's like a giant computer notebook full of sticky notes, with all the information I need to work on a multi-book series.



The hosting group who manages it now is closing, so I need to shift everything somewhere else. It's like setting up a new website from scratch, but I can export all the data I have and (hopefully) import it into a new site with a minimal amount of effort. I expect to spend most of May working on that in what little spare time I have.

And let's not forget, we *may* have spring sometime and I might get a chance to work in the garden, now that my hip is healed. Time to dig in the dirt!