



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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What's Happening?

So far, so good -- I am healthy and all the folks around me are still healthy. I went back to work in the office a few weeks ago; we all have separate offices, so I'm able to distance myself from others and we're all careful about using hand sanitizer, masks, etc. I confess, I've always been a Hand Sanitizer Crazy Person and use it extensively, so other than the face masks, life continues as usual.

And I survived our Plant Sale! That's my big news for this newsletter. The Master Gardeners switched their plant sale to a 'virtual' sale and it was a crazy amount of work. I worked several long days and weekends but we all survived even though it was colder than you-know-what and wet during the days when people came to pick up their plants. But that's behind us and I can look forward...

Sort of. We're still not sure if we'll be able to have the normal events we have this fall and next year. So I'm coming up with Plan B, my Pandemic Panic Preparation document for all our events that we normally have. If I have one strength, it's being able to pivot and figure out how to make things work, so we'll manage, I'm sure.

As many of you know, I spent a few years in my youth protesting, attending rallies, and being occasionally being chased by police. Today's protests are a breath of fresh air for me. People are finally looking around and seeing a world they don't like and they're looking at ways to fix it. I don't know about you, but I can't believe we're still protesting this shit after all these years. Maybe this time we'll get some stuff changed. Now if we can just get the Equal Rights Amendment passed, I'll know we've finally learned something. It still boils my blood that we even need an E.R.A., much less that it hasn't passed.

And that's my political statement for today. ☺

On a similar note, I delayed releasing *Adventures in Retirement* because I'm taking an online course right now about depicting diverse characters. Some of those stories feature diverse people and places, and I want to make sure I'm doing it right. Or not doing it right. I think I've handled it well, but there is always something to learn. So I'll release those later.

In Other News

On the writing front, I'm working on final print proofs for *Mazed*, which will be releasing this year. I did receive my cover art and I Am Happy. Whew.

A central part of this book is (duh) the maze but it's also the blue rose that the heroine has nurtured for years in hopes of selling it to a Big Flower Company. And of course, I need a touch of blood there on the rose.

I'm starting to think about covers for my Big Series. I'll have 14-15 books all total and I want them to have a unified feeling. So I'm playing with ideas for how I want them to look. I think I know what I want, but I'm browsing through Amazon and checking out covers that catch my attention and trying to understand why they did.

I also got the rights back to the penultimate books in the series. The Wild Rose Press published these a long time ago as the New Human Trilogy. I re-read them and want to tweak them just a bit to fit in with the series as it is today.

So I asked my publisher if I could have the rights back. There are also some basic writing changes I want to make (things I've learned since I wrote those) and a couple of plot points I want to re-work based on the Big Series.

What's Next?

I don't know if you remember, but I was editing an old book that I wrote. It was going to be a "bridge" book between the initial Big Series and the final books. I finished that edit, set it aside for a day or two and realized that it just wasn't going to be good enough.

So I'm writing an entirely new book and I have no doubt I'll end up writing an entirely new book for the final book in the initial series. I reviewed it and I'm not sure it's up to snuff. The Big Series has a "voice", a tone. Those two books had a different tone and it just didn't match.

I need to make them feel cohesive, so I'll be drafting two new books this summer. And you know what? I'm happy to be doing it. When I was working on the edits, I didn't feel engaged by those characters. But once I tossed out that plot and really sat down to think about the characters in a different context, I discovered a new plot, new sub-plot, and new motivations for all the characters.

As soon as I did that, the voices came back. Before I was just moving the characters around on the page. But now they're in my head and I can write their story. That means it was the right thing to do. It'll keep me busy all summer, I'm sure. Busy and happy!

