



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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that defy categorizing

What's Happening?

I had a *very* productive trip to Minnesota to brainstorm with my writing group. I got a lot of good ideas for a couple of books I want to write and I got feedback on ideas for promotion, submissions, and more. I also won a bit of money at the casino, so it was a big win all around.

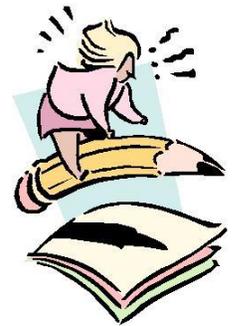
When I got back I immediately began writing my next book which will be based on *The Scarlet Letter*. I want that wrapped up by the end of the year and so far, it's going really well. I'm using the child, Pearl, as my main character. The story takes place in today's world (not the Puritan world), decades after her birth and I frame her father as the whiny cad he really is.

I just realized that the 'hero' in *Frankenstein* was also a whiny character who never accepted responsibility for his actions. Interesting! I wonder if that was a theme in the 19th century.

I do a lot of reading and some of the 'Big Name Authors' I've been reading go into a LOT of detail on government agencies, types of guns, ammunition, tactics, and other elements that add a feeling of 'reality' to the book. But I find myself skipping over that detail. I mean, I know the hero was in a war and is now something of a super-soldier because of his fighting skills. Do I really have to know exactly where to exert pressure on someone's throat to make that person pass out? Or do I need to know, for several paragraphs, how a sniper takes aim and what goes into making a shot?

In my *Scarlet Letter* book, I'm going to have some Federal agencies involved. Do I need to go into detail about the Secret Service and their procedures? Would the FBI really get involved in a case like this or would another agency take over? Or can I kind of skim past some of that and aim for 'makes sense but might not be true.'

These are the things that an author considers as she crafts her books. I think I will continue as I've done before – try to add just enough facts to round out my characters but glide past the worrisome details. In other words: aim for plausible but maybe not 100% realistic and factual. Don't let the facts get in the way of the story.



In Other News

I belong to a couple of national author groups, and one of the groups, The Authors Guild, recently did a survey of its membership regarding sales figures. AG is comprised of several thousand published authors in all fields (fiction, non-fiction, and so on). Several best-selling authors are on the board and are members. A summary of the income survey was recently released. It's quite short, so if you want to read about it, the link is here:

<https://authorsguild.org/news/key-takeaways-from-2023-author-income-survey/>

The main points in the survey might surprise you: median income for authors was \$10,000. For those who also have other author-related work (teaching, speaking, etc.) that figure goes to \$15,000. The median income for all authors (part-time as well as full-time) was \$2,000 for books and \$5,000 for total writing-related income. Figures for those who self-publish were somewhat better and in terms of genre, some did better than others.

I've filled out surveys from various organizations over the year and these figures are consistent with what I've seen. Yes, there are some self-published people who make a six-figure income from their writing. As far as I know, most of them have a side hustle of teaching, blogging, coaching, and other writing-related work. It's hard to tell how much income is from the books or the personality behind the book.

I suspect a lot of income is siphoned away from authors by piracy sites. I know that ALL of my books can be downloaded for free (albeit illegally) from various sites. Sending desist letters is a losing battle because the book will just pop up somewhere else tomorrow. That means not only do I lose revenue, but I do not get reviews of my books. A review on Amazon is essential for a book to be seen by new readers.



Makes you think, doesn't it? We're probably not in it for the money...

What's Next?

Now that the release date for *Heir* is approaching, I want to submit another book to my publisher for publication next year. I try to mix up the seasons for release, so I might go with my Frankenstein book. Although I do like my Sleeping Beauty one, so that might be next.

And speaking of *Heir*, it's available for pre-order now if you're so inclined. I have a link for the Amazon site: <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0CHG3FM36>

We're taking a little road trip soon so I can verify some of the details in one of my books. I have my characters on the road, wreaking havoc here and there. I want to verify that what I wrote is plausible. After all, Google maps can only tell you so much.

Then I want to work on a query letter to target agents for my series. I think that and the upcoming holidays will keep me busy. It will soon be time to wrap up another year in publishing – and to look forward to what's next!