



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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books that defy categorizing

What's Happening?

The end of another year in publishing!

I started this whole journey twenty years ago. That's when I decided to sit down and actually learn how to write a novel. And here I am with book #42 set to release next year. I finished all the final edits on *Thorned* and I have a release date -- March 18.

People often ask me about the whole publishing process. It varies a lot depending on the editor and the publisher. For me, the normal process starts with me submitting a complete manuscript plus a synopsis to my editor.

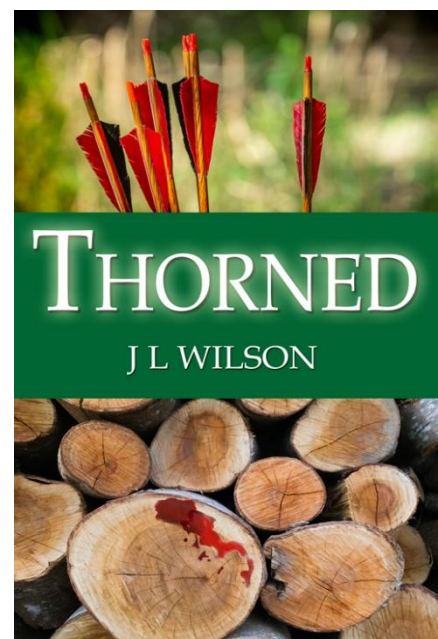
As you know from my other newsletters, a lot goes into that "complete manuscript" phrase: I write it, I let it sit, I edit it, I let it sit, I re-read it, I edit it ... then I write the synopsis (argh!) and I submit.

I don't have to submit to the publisher, but I can go right to my editor, which means the process is a lot faster for me. If someone is new to the trade, they usually submit to a general email address (because almost all publishers use electronic submissions now).

The synopsis is usually about one or two pages long. It's hard to summarize an entire book in a couple of pages, but I've done so many of them that I don't have too much trouble. I also include the text I want on the back cover of the printed book and any 'blurb' kind of text that can be used for promotion.

I send that to my editor and then I wait to see if she'll accept it. This is a bit nerve-wracking because no matter how many times I do it, I am never 100% sure that a book will be acceptable. It often takes several weeks before I hear back.

If a book is accepted, I get a contract from the publisher. Again, contracts vary a lot between publishers. Mine is relatively straightforward. It's ten or twelve pages of legalese that details



royalty rates, life of the rights (that is, when I can request that rights be returned to me for a book), obligations of author and publisher, no use of AI in a manuscript, and so on.

After the contract is signed, I have some tasks to do before we can start the editing process. I have to fill out the cover art form, indicating what I want to see on the cover. That takes me a few days because I want to find the right kind of art to include, plus I like to determine what colors I want for the middle banner on the book. All of my Remembered Classics books have the middle banner and I like it to be unique.

When all of those forms have been filled out and sent in, I typically will receive my cover art within a few days. As I've mentioned before, I have no options when it comes to the covers. My publisher creates them and unless there's a BIG error, that's it. So I spend a lot of time going through photographic art at various websites to make sure I get what I want.

And now the editing process begins. I'll get an email from my editor with a rough schedule. I typically have one or two editing passes, then the manuscript comes to me as a galley proof, then it goes to proofreading, then it goes to galley editing. At each stage I have to read and approve the manuscript or submit changes to be made.

Then the manuscript is submitted for production and I get a release date. In the case of *Thorned*, I signed the contract in early August and I received my release date email in December. So it's about five or six months from start to finish.

In Other News

I did a workshop at a local library in early November to kick off NaNoWriMo. I talked to people about my writing process and how I take a book from idea to finished product. It's always fun to talk to aspiring authors and to answer questions.

I'll do a follow-up workshop soon to talk about the publishing process. I'll cover the many ways to publish work: find an agent and submit, or self-publish, or use a publishing service. The whole endeavor can be overwhelming to beginners and I try to simplify it for them.

What's Next?



I'm busily working on *More*, which is my next book in the Remembered Classics series. This one is based loosely on *Wuthering Heights* and I am determined to give Catherine and Heathcliff a Happily Ever After in this book. ☺

I started writing it in late October and my goal is to have the draft done by the end of the year. I wanted to wrap it up earlier, but I was diverted by other things, so I think it's feasible to finish it by December 31.

After that I want to review my series, get going on cover art design, review and then submit a new book for my publisher, and decide what the next book I write will be.

And of course, it's the holiday time of year. I hope everyone has a great season no matter how you celebrate. I'll see you in a couple of months for another year in publishing.