



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

J L Wilson

Author of mysteries, time travel, romances, & other books that defy categorizing

What's Happening?

Before I get into news, here's my yearly "opt out" info:

I send my newsletter to people who requested it, either by giving me their email address or by signing up via Yahoo in my once active Yahoo group. All my newsletters are posted to my website if you ever want to go back and look at them.

If my personal email is hacked, I'll do what I can to prevent anyone getting your email address. My website is part of my blog on Google and as such it uses Google's privacy policies. If you don't want to hear from me, send me an email and I'll remove your name from my email list.

Okay, on to 2026!

What's coming up this year? I'll have a book coming out on March 18. It's available for pre-order right now on [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble](#) and possibly at other spots. I haven't checked Apple, etc.

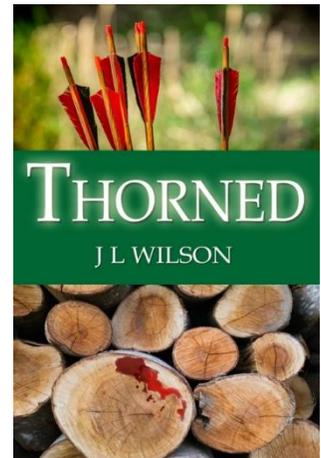
As soon as I had a release date, I submitted another book to my editor for consideration. I chose *Crowned*, which is my MacBeth book. As always, I was biting my nails until I knew if it would be accepted or not. It took a week or two, but I got word it's a Go!

The next phase will be working on what I want for the cover art, the blurb, and all the Stuff That Goes Into Getting a Book Ready.

I chose a business setting for my MacBeth story, using a hostile takeover attempt and a murdered CEO as the central pivot points. It was fun and edifying to research business practices here and in Scotland (where my fictional company was formed).

I also threw in a Highland Games scene where people compete in various contests (hammer throw, etc.) while wearing kilts. And of course I had a lesson in how to correctly pleat a kilt and all the accessories that go with an authentic Scottish outfit. Great fun.

I also finished my rough draft of *More*, which was my story that used some themes from *Wuthering Heights*. I chose to not make my Heathcliff and Cathy batshit crazy like they are in the original story (strong language, I know, but they really are obsessive and icky).



No, my Cliff and Cathy are simply actors who are starring in a streaming series based on my main character's book. The story takes place on a book tour, something I have never done. But I follow several authors on social media (mainly BlueSky) and they've posted snippets of video and other info about their tours.

I started to think, "Hmm, what would happen if somebody decided to target an author who is on a tour? Why would someone do that? How could they mess with the tour? And why?" Those are the kinds of questions I almost always have when I start considering writing a book: who is the main character, what kind of trouble can she get into, why is she in that trouble, who gets killed, where is she, what does she do for a living ... and so on.

I usually percolate a story for a few weeks before I have a good sense of what I might be writing about. I develop background information for the characters, get an idea of settings, work out what might happen in the plot, and generally just *think* about it all.

After about a month, I'm ready to start actually writing. I always work on the first few chapters then, inevitably, I stop and decide I need to block out at least three-fourths of the book so I know where I'm going. I'll grab a pad of paper or a notebook, pick up one of my fountain pens, and start jotting ideas. I'm very superstitious about this -- it has to be the *right* notebook and the *right* pen. I'm a creature of habit.

Once I have a better sense of where the book is going, I write. Every day, several hours a day. I sit down in the morning, look at what I wrote the day before and edit a bit, then I write more, often late in the afternoon. And in four-six weeks, the book is done. It usually takes three-four months total, from percolation phase to The End.

And that's how you write a novel ☺

In Other News

I finished my workshops at the local library and now I'm meeting with various attendees who've come to the workshops. We get together now and then for coffee and to talk about writing. It's fun to connect with like-minded folks.

I also signed up for a writing conference in July. I used to go to these conferences every year but got out of the habit during the pandemic. So I'll be looking at airfares, etc., in the next few weeks. I'm looking forward to it.

What's Next?

I'm working on cover designs for my series, which I plan to publish next year. Yep, that is my 20th year in publishing so I thought it would be nice to release 15 books to celebrate my anniversary. I hope to have the covers ready by the end of summer then I can start getting the formatting, etc., done and upload the books. Busy times ahead!

I'll probably write one more mystery this year. I usually write two a year, but this year I think I'll just do one in the fall -- but that might change if I get a good idea. And I'm sure I'll have edits coming for *Crowned*. Always busy and enjoying myself while I'm at it. Win!