



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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What's Happening?

I had another successful outing with my book brainstorming buddies. I had a good time visiting family and friends and, of course, gambling a bit in between deciding how to murder somebody. I think I'll let my idea simmer a bit in the background, but I have some definite thoughts on how I'll write a Goldilocks book.

I also took time before my trip to review a couple of finished manuscripts, trying to decide what to submit to my editor next. I re-read *Souled* (my Dracula book) and *Frankly* (my Ai-themed Frankenstein book). I checked all the files, made a few minor changes, then I tackled the synopsis for each book.

These are hard to write because it's a totally different kind of creativity than that used to craft the book. The best time to write one is when the book is still fresh in my mind, so I wrote two synopses in one day. That was a mind-numbing experience, believe me.

I'll decide in a week or two which book to submit. I'm leaning toward *Souled*, which has a Halloween theme and the plot has a few twists and turns that are unique. Now that I have the synopsis done for each book, I can easily decide which to send off. Wish me luck!

I've also been spending a big chunk of time on the four-book set I'm drafting. Those four books will be the prequel to the series I want to release next year so while I'm drafting the first novel in the set, I'm making little changes here and there to my series. Just minor things, little mentions of events that will be occurring in these books because they come before the series.

I may hold off on the series release until I finish up these prequel books. That means I might start the whole kickoff mid-next-year, rather than January like I planned. Once I finish the prequel books, I may do a re-read of the entire series again.

Or maybe not. I feel like it's Finished (with a capital F) and these minor changes I'm making are not substantially changing the structure of the series. They won't affect the plot or the characters, they're just adding to the details. So I think I could go ahead and release the books as long as I'm happy with the covers.

I'm trying a new way of writing with this four-book set. I write in chapters, rather than one long manuscript. So I have individual files for chapters which I later merge together into one long file.



In the past I've written chapters that are usually around 5000 words in length.

By doing this, I can easily visualize where I am in the sequence of the book. For example, if I'm at chapter 3, by that time I want to have certain actions to have occurred: a body should be found, hero and heroine should meet, the bad guy should at least be seen (if not known as the bad guy).

However, I've been reading a lot of novels that have shorter chapters and I find I like that. I thought I'd give it a try on this new series and I'm enjoying it. Having smaller chapters gives me a chance to split up action into smaller chunks. I used to have one chapter that would encompass an entire scene in one location and then start the next chapter at a new time or location.

Now I'm splitting up that scene into smaller sequences, not worrying as much about having a hook to pull the reader forward. It's very satisfying to write an entire chapter in one sitting. I used to take 2 or 3 days to finish a chapter, but now it's a day or two at the most.

It's an experiment at this point but I'm enjoying it. It's giving me a fresh way to look at my writing process. I'm always willing to try new things to keep the whole experience fun and fresh. If it works I may try it for some of my mystery stories.

In Other News

One of the advantages of my trip was that I was able to meet in person with my cover artist for my series. We hammered out some ideas for the series and I think I'm getting very close to being ready to call them done.

The hardest part of all this is finding the right images for the background on the covers for the books. I want a central image on each cover, but in the background I want an image that reflects the feeling or events of the books.

There are *so many* sites where I can buy images. I want to make sure I don't use any that are AI generated. Having *anything* associated with AI is a big problem right now for authors (a long story that maybe I'll talk about later). I'm spending a lot of time just looking at images and trying to envision them in the context of my books.

What's Next?

I hope I can wrap up getting my series ready for publication. This means I'll be uploading the text with the covers, then downloading a version for me to review. I'll also be creating print versions of each book, so that's a whole different process. And while that's going on, I'll be writing a new book, submitting a book to my editor, and doing promotion for my backlist of books. In other words: I'm sure I'll be busy. I'll report back at the end of the year and tell you how it's going!