

As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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books that defy categorizing

What's Happening?

I mentioned the last time I wrote that I was in the process of redoing a book in my big series, starting over again from scratch. Whew. That was a huge project and it is done! I've shelved that book to re-read later this year. I *think* I nailed it, but we'll see. I will need to re-read the three books in that trilogy to make sure they all have a similar 'feel'.

But that gave me some motivation to think about where I want that series to go. I've been waffling about whether to find a publisher for it or whether to self-publish it. I decided 'oh, what the heck' and I started researching where I might submit it for publication.

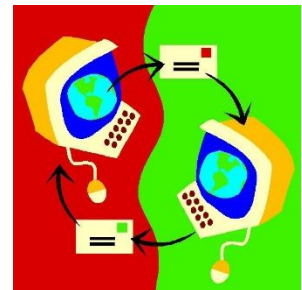
Most large publishers require that an author have an agent. It can take a long time to find an agent and it's almost as daunting a task as finding a publisher. That would add at least a year to what could be a year-long search for a publisher (assuming I could even interest an agent in representing me and the agent would send out the series for consideration and an editor would answer).

So I did some more research. I found five publishers, four of which are smallish presses and one is somewhat larger, who will accept futuristic fiction without an agent. I did a bit more research into the four smaller presses and while I think they would be okay, I decide to shoot for the moon and focus on the largish publisher that will accept manuscripts "over the transom" (tossing a manuscript into the slush pile, that is, sent in without an agent's rep).

The publisher had a detailed list of what I needed to submit, so I spent a week or two putting that together. I had to do a synopsis of fifteen books, put together a query letter, polish the first book in the series to send it in, and, well, get it all together.

Then I clicked 'send'.

It may take months before I hear anything from them (if I ever do), and that's okay. If I don't get a response by the end of the year, that tells me I should go ahead and self-publish the whole series. In the meantime, I'm going to keep plugging away at cover ideas so if I do self-publish, I'm ready to go.



That was a BIG item off my list.

Next I turned my attention to getting ready to lead the five creative writing workshops at a local library. I'm doing five Saturday mornings where I talk about the details of writing--creating characters, figuring out time and place, how to set up a book, how to plot a book, and a lot of the nitty gritty that goes into the work.

The final workshop, to be held after Easter, will be a deep dive into publishing and self-publishing. I'll talk about ways to find a publisher, how to find a cover artist, how to upload a book for self-publishing, and some of the pitfalls involved.

I took the notes I'd made for the previous workshop and I expanded on everything, updating the information with more details and lots of examples. The first four sessions are behind us and I think they are going very well. I have a small but very committed group of aspiring authors who seem to enjoy the information.

In Other News

One of the fun aspect of the workshops is that I decided to write a new book while I was leading the classes. So I've been keeping my 'students' informed of my progress while we have the class. I'm showing them how I developed my characters, what my characters look like and where they live, some of the plotting I've done, and at every class I share my progress.

My goal is to finish *Matched*, this new book that's based on Jane Austen's *Emma*, by mid-May. It's going along nicely now. I know my bad guy, I know my secondary bad guy, and I know who is killed, where he's killed, why and how. I even have a really good idea of the final scene in the book.

Now to write the rest of it.

What's Next?

A new book will be coming at the end of June!

Yep, my Red Riding Hood book will be released on June 30. I don't have a pre-order link yet, but I'll put one at my website when it becomes available.

Now that I have a release date, I need to review the books that I have drafted and figure out which one will be next. I am leaning toward *Thorned*, which is my Sleeping Beauty book. It's set immediately after a derecho sweeps through the town and a body is found amongst the downed trees.

Or maybe I'll decide on *Beans*, which is my Jack and the beanstalk story. I need to reread that one because I finished it recently and I'm not sure it's up to snuff. I'm sure by the time I send another newsletter, I will have decided.... I hope!

