



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?

I look back on the summer and realize I've accomplished a big chunk of work. I did a major review and edit of the 17 books in my Endless American Dream series. I took my time, reading each and every word. I was surprised by how much I found to edit. New habits have crept in that I didn't know were creeping. So that took me quite a while to find those and correct them.

I've written 3 books which could be considered prequels: the Celestial Service books. Then there are the 9 book in the main series (3 volumes, 3 books in each volume). I have 3 books set far in the future, hundreds of years from the end of that 9-book series. And I wrote 2 books that were between the big series and the far future.

The problem was, when I reviewed those 2 books (the "interim" books, I call them), they didn't quite work. I wrote very rough drafts of those a long time ago, and in an attempt to use some of those drafts, I lost the thread of the story.

I spent the last two months rewriting those books. I'm still not sure they're exactly what I want, but they're getting closer. However, I realized I needed another book to make 3 books that would follow on to the big series. There's a Major Event that takes place 83 years after the big series ends, and I felt I really needed to document that.

I didn't have a good sense of the characters I'd need for it, though. This is a multi-generational series, so I have family trees worked out for everybody. It was a matter of figuring out who I wanted to focus on for that in-between book. That led me to do some sitting-down and thinking about how I wanted to talk about that Major Event.

I decided to set the new book before the Major Event occurs, to show how things led up to that moment. I decided on characters I wanted to use and spent a few weeks thinking through how this society would look. It's 80 years after the end of the big series. It's 20 years after the end of the first "interim" book. There's been a lot of technological advances, a lot of changes in society's structures. I spent a lot of time saying, "what if?" and imagining what might happen.

I kept thinking about how much our society has changed in the last 20, 40, 80 years, and I applied that to the future of the society I created in my big series. I tossed in a bunch of political upheaval, some major wars and I finally discovered the book I wanted to write.

I'm several chapters into the story and it's shaping up to be exactly what I thought I needed. It's a bridge between one group of characters and another, and it sets the stage for what will come hundreds of years in the future.

I am having a huge amount of fun writing it, too. Win-win!

In Other News

I'm still planning to self-publish some older books on the new distribution platform and I have them all done, ready to go. I think I'll be publishing them in November. And I still want to consider some novellas for my big series as a way to fill in some details. I'm going to experiment with that over the wintertime to see how it works out for me. A new type of writing, so that'll be intriguing.

I'm going to spend November's NANOWRIMO (National Novel Writing Month) transferring the data I've accumulated for my series to a new tracking system. I currently maintain a private website with a LOT of information (hundreds of characters, details about locations, plot points, maps). I want to move it all to a new medium that (I hope) will be easier to manage.



I'm going to use NANO as my time to focus on getting that all done. It means learning new software (Oh. Joy) and a new product, but I think I'm up for the challenge. The website is getting tricky to maintain (long story but it's a software issue). I'm hoping the new method will be much more straightforward. I'll need to do some training and research before I actually sit down to transfer data.

What's Next?

My Snow White and the Seven Jocks book (*Mirrored*) releases in January, so I have a bit of time to plan for promotion. I should have a live link for the book in my next newsletter in December. I still haven't decided what to submit next. I'm going to wait until January to send in either *Shoed* or *Aired*. I'm leaning toward *Aired*, but I may change my mind between now and then.

I'm also taking my annual road trip to meet up with my author friends and brainstorm new books! ☺ I've had a couple of short road trips this summer, but this is the first one I've taken in a while. I'm looking forward to it- I hope to get ideas for my Dracula book, and maybe Little Red Riding Hood (an amazingly gory story, if you read the original. I have ideas on how to make it work).

After that, I'll hunker down for the winter and settle in for writing, editing, NANO, and the holidays. They'll be here before you know it!