



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?

There have some days lately when I've felt like one of those umbrellas at the top of this newsletter! It's been so windy here in the Midwest. I have to keep reminding myself it's normal for April, but it's hard to forget the derecho in 2020 and those winds that did such destruction. I wonder how long it'll be before I can really put that behind me?

Well, on to happier news. I have a new book coming out this year with my publisher, The Wild Rose Press. *Aired* is my Jane Eyre book in which Charlotte Rochester meets John Aire and sparks fly.

I was a bit worried about this book. I don't know if you're aware of it or not, but 'cultural appropriation' has become a hot topic in the publishing world. That's where someone not of that culture (i.e., Black or French or whatever) writes a book that takes advantage of that culture. Some authors have been accused of that and since I use some Jamaican themes in my books (just like in *Jane Eyre*), I was a bit worried.

I've added an Author Note at the first which I hope will set any complaints to rest. That's gotten me thinking about other books in which I've written about things I really know little about (culinary arts in *Beached*, acid attacks in *Mazed*, pub ownership in *Woulds*.) If I only wrote what I've actually experienced and have seen, then my books would be very few and far between.

One thing I've always strived for is to have books that might not be totally realistic but they are at least believable. I don't know all about military tactics or legal implications of inheritance, but I do try to do research and make whatever I write seem believable. That's one reason I've never written historical fiction. First of all, there's a LOT of research involved to make it believable and secondly, there is a cadre of people (fellow authors, mainly) who roundly criticize anyone who gets something 'wrong'.



Now, I happily endorse critiquing someone who uses current day slang or obvious gaffes about clothing, class, or transportation in historical books. But I'm not so well versed in the time periods to be able to criticize someone for the errors that I've seen discussed. I don't know when Napoleon invaded wherever, or when the British government adopted a law regarding whatever. But I've seen some authors just eviscerated for getting a fact like that wrong. So I stay away from historical fiction and create a world that I hope is believable for my audience.

I try to give my readers a bit of escape and I try to create worlds that make sense, with characters who act in ways that seem reasonable given their circumstances. I'm sure the little details I sprinkle in are not 100% correct, but I hope they at least move the story and the characters along in a way that feels right.

In Other News

I'm having fun doing my Throwback Thursday posts on Facebook in which I describe one of my books from my backlist. It's been interesting to revisit my books, some of which come from long in my past. <https://www.facebook.com/jayeAtplay>.

I finished my draft of the Little Red Riding Hood book and to my surprise I began a new book that came out of nowhere. I was in the bookstore, looking at Cliff Notes (or whatever they're called now). When I do a classic romance, I like to read the base book (like *Jane Eyre*) plus use Notes to help me get some details right.

I was browsing through the Notes section and came across *MacBeth* and I thought, man, that might be a good story. I haven't done any Shakespeare stories and that one just screams mystery. I bought the Notes, went home and read them and the play and lo and behold, I came up with a book. I really didn't plan to write another mystery this year, but I am having a great time writing this one.

It helps that I've been listening to recorded books from the library (listening while I do some needlework in the evenings), and one series I'm listening to is set in Scotland. So now, yep, I have a hero who is Scottish and the heroine has ties to Scotland and it's all about a hostile takeover in the business world.

Where do these ideas come from? I don't know, but I'm having so much fun writing this. I'm about a third of the way through the book and it's going fast. I hope to wrap it up by the end of May then I'll move on to reviews of the books I want to publish later this year.

What's Next?

I'll be reviewing the books in my Big Series so I can get that ready to publish. I plan to do a bit of travel now that the pandemic is easing up. Since we moved we have a much smaller garden, so I won't be doing as much of that as I have in the past. And that's okay. I'm ready for some low-stress garden work. Plus I'll be writing, doing promo, and, well, who knows? It looks like an interesting spring - as long as we don't get blown away first!