



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?

Since I wrote to you a month or two ago, I finished that manuscript I was working on in the middle of July. This is my monster book, based on Frankenstein. I had to 'find' some characters for my story because, really, there are only three or four main characters in the novel and most of the ones who are there were sad individuals.

I did what I often do and I turned to the author for more inspiration. I went back and forth with my heroine's name, and finally ended naming her Maire (pronounced 'Mare' or 'Mary', depending on your inclination) Godwin (Mary Shelley's maiden name). I used "Bish" as her nickname (for Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley's husband).

I flipped back and forth on names until I got to about chapter 6 which was the halfway point for me. The hero was simple. Henry Clerval was the only male character in *Frankenstein* who showed any honor and humanity. So I have Henry Clavell, who looks uncannily like Henry Cavell, the actor.



How about that?

Once I had the characters figured out, I had to get the hook in place. Why did these two people meet? Where are they? Who are their friends? What is the end scene (how would the villain meet his end?) For that matter, who was the villain? An obvious villain was The Monster, but shouldn't Dr. Frankenstein be considered a villain as well? Who else should be included – friends, family, and ... who?

I went down a somewhat split path for this. In the far past my heroine and her then husband banked their 'product' (ovum and sperm) at an IVF clinic in the expectation that at some point in the future they might want to have children.

What she didn't know was that the people who ran the clinic were unscrupulous and... Suffice it to say, Henry gets pulled into her life because he's helping the clinic track down all the people who were clients there years ago, long after she gave up the rights and allowed the clinic to use her ovum.

I also wanted to bring in a topic that's hot right now: artificial intelligence. AI is a creation in much the same way The Monster was a creation. What might happen if an AI entity is created and it decides to attack its master (the way The Monster attacked Frankenstein)?

This book gave me a chance to revisit discussions about artificial intelligence because my Bish Godwin is a professor of Computational Intelligence at a fictional college that I created. During my college years, I worked at a couple of universities and because they paid for tuition for staff, I was able to go to college and get four degrees in wildly different fields.

My first degrees were in literature, my undergrad degree in British fiction, my graduate one in American fiction. Then I got two degrees in computer science, the undergrad one in system design and the graduate one in information processing. I took several artificial intelligence classes during the course of that degree and I decided to revisit the research while working on this book.

The question of whether an AI system can be built that might surpass its human creators is a very hot issue right now. I delved into it just slightly but I do touch on it in this manuscript. I'm sure I'll need to tweak it a bit as technology changes. I just hope that the AI bots haven't taken over the publishing industry before I get it published!

[In Other News](#)

My latest book, the Rapunzel story, will be released in November. I may have a link for you in October when I send out my newsletter then. All of my books are at my Books2Read site (or almost all – some print editions don't show up and I'm not sure why).

<https://bit.ly/JLWbooks>

[What's Next?](#)

We had hoped to make a trip in July to visit family and friends, but bad luck intervened. One of our cats became ill and eventually had to be euthanized. And around the same time my husband took a tumble and messed up his shoulder. We took that as a sign that we were not meant to go far from home on a road trip. We compromised and did a short getaway just to do a spot of sightseeing and relax away from home.

I decided I'm going to wiggle my toes into Real Publishing Land and send out a few queries to agents for my Big Series. I'm waffling back and forth on that, but I think, 'oh, what the heck, why not try?' After all, I have 15 books ready to go. That might catch somebody's attention, right? I think I'll give that a try this year and if nothing comes of it, then I can always self-publish. Win-win, right?

And that little illustration there tells you that it's getting close to the time for a casino and brainstorm outing! That's coming up in late September. In October we'll have some family coming for a visit, then my husband and I plan on an outing or two. It's going to be a fun time. It'll be a great way to end the summer and head on into fall. ☺

