



## 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?

It might finally be spring, although I expect another snowstorm or cold spell to land on us. I guess you could say I'm cautiously optimistic that this unseasonably warm weather will stick with us.

Every year for Lent I resolve to try to improve something (rather than give up something). I view it as a chance for me to sort of reflect and think about what I'd like to focus on in the upcoming season. I'm not a religious person but I think it's just a good reminder.

I resolved this year to thoroughly review the series I've been working on. I used a new technique to do so this time – I created a PDF file of the manuscripts and I reviewed it on my new tablet, which mimics how it looks on the printed page. I found that this gave me a very 'Real World' kind of experience and helped me to see the words in a whole new way.

I was surprised by how much time this took. I literally read every single word and considered how it sounded, whether it was repetitive or not, and if it helped enhance the character or the plot. Once I'd done all the reviews, I edited everything. This was the first 12 books in the series that I worked on, so figure one book a week. The final three books in this series have already been published and I've done a thorough review of them already.

I got done the day before Easter, and for the final book I know I have more work to do. I don't often leave a book 'unfinished' like that, but I felt I had to. I need to revisit that book with a fresh perspective. When I wrote it, I tried to do a rewrite of a much earlier plot and I don't think it hit the mark. I need to really focus on that book later this year so I can view it as a whole new work, not a rewrite of something I did in the past.

My next mission is to work on the covers. That way, when I decide to release the series, I can do it without a lot of fuss and bother. I'm getting to the point where I can "let go" of these characters. They've been with me a long time and I love coming back to them, but it might be time for them to go into the world. But first, the covers and that final book. I have 15 covers to envision. That will take some thought.

## In Other News

I finished the final galley edits for my Rapunzel book and I will be getting my final page proof in early May. That usually is simple to do, but it might be tricky because I did make a few last-minute edits during the galley review.

I don't have a release date yet. I assume it'll be later this year, possibly in the summer. I'd like to play around with some various promotional ideas for this one. I need to map that out and get ready for release, even though I don't know the date quite yet.

I'm also considering attending a couple of virtual conferences this year. I signed up for one that takes place in November and is billed as a networking/vendor showcase for self-published authors. I'm looking at a couple of other ones as well.

At one of my recent writer meetings (virtual with my group from Minnesota) there was a lot of chat about conferences and book signings and what works to sell books. I've always had a very laissez-faire attitude about selling, but some of the ideas that were bandied about were interesting. I may let that percolate in my brain for a time.

Now I'd like to get working on a new book. I'll tackle either *The Scarlet Letter* or *Frankenstein* next. I need to read up on each book, the authors, and the time period when they were published to see if it stirs up an idea for me. I call that my Incubation Phase of Novel Creation and I haven't delved into one of those for a few months. Right now I'm leaning toward Frank, but that might change in the next week or two. I like to try to envision my characters first and figure out their history before I get too far along in the plotting.

## What's Next?

I still need to play around with [https://www.amazon.com/author/j\\_l\\_wilson](https://www.amazon.com/author/j_l_wilson)), which is my Amazon author page. And I need to work on print editions for all of my self-published books. This might be tricky because some already have print versions of the older editions. I need to replace those older ones with newer ones (there's always something!)

I plan to take a trip to Minnesota in May or June and hang out with my author friends there for a couple of days. I'm also starting to think about a major road trip this summer with my husband. We tentatively plan to drive out to visit family in Pennsylvania and take our time coming home, maybe veering north to go through Canada. Plans are nebulous right now but I expect that will take a bit of research to determine a route.

And there's writing, of course - the thing I always come back to, no matter what. I am anxious to get going on a new book. It's been a few months since I had a challenge...

