



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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books that defy categorizing

What's Happening?

I have that umbrella picture in my heading in hopes it will bring us some rain. We need moisture BADLY and rather than do a rain dance, I'm adding water images wherever I can. Who knows? It might work (fingers crossed).

I started a new book at the end of April. I began doing research, working on the history for the characters, and getting road maps, house plans, and other background information for what I need. I started writing in May and I'm about 2/3 done right now. Since I've retired, my writing habits have changed. Now I spend an hour or so each morning writing, then another hour or two in the afternoon. Before, when I was working, I would do most of my writing in the evenings, but now I can actually "work" during the day on my publishing stuff.

This is my Frankenstein book, and I wanted to make sure to include artificial intelligence since that's very big in the news now. I have some background in AI because one of my college degrees is in Information Science. As part of my degree work I took AI courses as well as many courses in physiology and biology – how humans process the world.

To prepare for writing the book, I checked out *Frankenstein* from the library in audio format and listened to it while I did the sewing I do for donations to the local hospice (I make lap robes for patients in wheelchairs). I read the book a long time ago but listening to it gave me a new insight into the characters and the plot.

One thing that really struck me was this: Victor Frankenstein was a whiner. He never accepted responsibility for what he did, both in the creation of the monster and then later, when he turned his back on the creature. Throughout the book he bemoaned his fate and how he was tormented by this creature (which, I admit, is extremely vindictive when the creature goes about murdering everyone Victor loves).

But the creature, too, was a victim. He had a horrible appearance but he wanted to fit in. When he was rejected by humans, his anger drove him to make sure that Victor would never have a happy life. In other words, "if I can't be happy, neither can you." This gave me food for thought as I started to decide how to plot my book.

I also did a great deal of research into the author of the book, Mary Shelley. She was a unique individual and her husband, Percy Shelley, was both a blessing and a curse to her. They were constantly moving, almost always bankrupt, and he was a notorious womanizer. Plus he died young and left her penniless. What a guy.



As you may know, Mary Shelley wrote the novel during the summer when she, Percy Shelley, and Lord Byron were in Italy. They had a competition to see who could write the best horror story. An interesting aspect of that event is they were there in the "year with no summer". There was an eruption of a volcano in Indonesia, which caused a change in global climate. Snow fell in June, crops failed, and temperatures remained abnormally cold for the entire season.

The Shelleys and Gordon (Lord Byron) were forced to stay indoors for most of the summer because of unseasonably cold weather. Thus they came up with the idea of a race to see who could write the best story. From that came *Frankenstein*. Mary Shelley's book is considered by many to be the first true science fiction novel. I think she won the contest.

I have most of my book mapped out in my head, so now I just have to sit down and write it. I want to finish it by early July because we'll be taking a vacation then. I'd like to take some time away from the computer. Wish me luck!

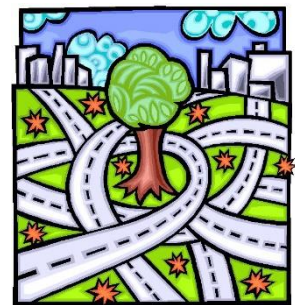
In Other News

I recently made a brief trip to Minnesota to visit friends since I haven't been out of town all winter. I have several different groups of people that I like to visit when I go there, so it was a busy few days. The weather was perfect and there was very little construction getting there, so I count it as a great trip.

I went through a couple of rounds of galley edits on my next book, *Heir*. I should be getting a release date soon. Then I'll need to decide what book to submit next. I think it might be my Red Riding Hood book, but I'm not sure. I'll need to do some reviewing and editing before I decide.

What's Next?

As I noted above, we're planning a road trip in July, so that will be the big event for me in that month. We hope to make a bit of a swing through several states and maybe Canada, but it will depend on Canadian wildfires, I think. I don't want to spend my vacation wearing a mask and breathing smoke.



By the end of summer I also want to have good drafts done of the covers for my series. I've let that languish while I'm writing, but I need to get that finished. Other than that, I'm just going to do a bit of gardening, a bit of reading, and a bunch of writing. A perfect summertime combination!