



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

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books that defy categorizing

What's Happening?

Before I get into news, here's my yearly "opt out" info:

I send my newsletter to people who requested it, either by giving me their email address or by signing up via Yahoo in my once active Yahoo group. All my newsletters are posted to my website if you ever want to go back and look at them.

If my personal email is hacked, I'll do what I can to prevent anyone getting your email address. My website is part of my blog on Google and as such it uses Google's privacy policies. If you don't want to hear from me, send me an email and I'll remove your name from my email list.

Here we are, a new year and all kinds of weirdness coming out of our government. Oddly enough, that's made me more anxious than ever to get my series ready for publication because I blow up the world in those books then I get to recreate it the way I think things should be done.

It's very satisfying.

As I mentioned before, I'm doing reviews of the 15 books I wrote. I got to the fourth trilogy (book 10) and I realize it just was not right. I had taken pieces of previous drafts and tried to rework it into a new book. But it just wasn't hanging together, especially compared to the previous books and compared to books 11 and 12, which I think are really tight and smart.

Sigh.

I think when I wrote this draft of book 10 I was viewing it as a transitional book, one that bridges the gap (generationally speaking) between what happened in the original 9 books and what was coming in books 11 and 12. In other words: I didn't treat book 10 as a standalone book.

What to do? Tear it up and start over. Yep, that's what I'm doing now. I sat down and really tried to get into my characters, decide what was important in the plot (I had WAY too many plot points going), and figure out a way to make things move along in a more logical way.



It took four or five days of just sitting and thinking, jotting ideas and letting images flit through my brain. And that's when I remembered a key rule that I need to keep in front of me:

It's not what you want the story to be. It's what the story is.

In other words, I tend to want things to go well for my characters, but sometimes the plot dictates that those characters will need to go through a lot of crap to get to where they need to be. I need to pay as much attention to the story as I do to the characters.

With that in mind (and that rule printed on a sticky note and stuck to my monitor), I was ready to dig into my rewrites. I jotted down a general plot outline and began editing. So far I've eliminated one plot point, two chapters, and I've rewritten about half of the entire book.

My goal is to wrap it up by the end of February, finish all other edits to the series by the end of March, then maybe work on cover art in the springtime, getting everything ready to go by the end of the year.

[In Other News](#)

I finished the draft of my Ugly Duckling book by my arbitrary deadline (December 20). I think the book came together very nicely. I'll do a re-read of that in a few months.

I also finished reviewing and doing edits from my editor on my Red Riding Hood book and I expect it to release later this year. I want to submit another book for consideration, so as soon as I finish the edits to Book 10, I'll review my "books in waiting" and decide on what to submit. I think it might be my Scarlet Letter book.

[What's Next?](#)

During the summer I want to write another book and work on promotional ideas. I may also set up a brainstorming session with some friends for the summertime. That's an idea I've been kicking around in the back of my mind. And of course I'll have my regular fall brainstorming outing in the fall in Minnesota.

I'll be teaching a series of classes on writing at a local library this spring. It will be an expanded version of the overview classes I taught last year. I taught similar classes when I lived in Minnesota, so it's a matter of taking those notes, reviewing them, updating them, and adding what I've gleaned on my own author's journey.

The world of publishing has changed so much since my first releases in 2007. Wow, it's hard to believe I've been at this for 18 years. I'm at 40 books right now still in print, with #41 (*Reddy*) coming out in a few months (<https://tinyurl.com/y4bzhavp> lists all my books).

Let's keep our fingers crossed for the future and stay positive. We're in for some bumpy times ahead. 😬

