

As The Author Learns

*Bits and Tidbits about the Publishing Process
from J L Wilson, soon-to-be published author*

What's Happening?

You won't believe this, but ... I signed more contracts! I just returned a contract to Ceridwen Press for *If Not For You*, another romantic suspense. This one is about a woman (Layla) who's a software tester for a small software company in Eagan, Minnesota (yeah, yeah, I know - life imitates art, eh?) She gets into trouble when she opens a letter that wasn't meant for her - or was it?

And I sent in a contract for a reincarnation time travel novel set in Northfield, Minnesota, during the 1876 Jesse James bank robbery ("the great Northfield, Minnesota Raid"). And <drumroll, please> this is **one** of **six** planned books for Ceridwen. They want the entire series!! Well, I mean, they've *said* they want it but I'm guessing I've got to write the books first. The series is called 'The History Patrol', and it's set in the future, where people use a time travel device to go back to the past and resolve reincarnation ... issues, I guess you could say. The next book in the series will be set in present-day (2007) then the next one will be in 1934, in St. Paul and involve the Dillinger gang. I've written the 2007 book and am starting research for the 1934 one.



See my web site (<http://www.jayellwilson.com/>) for excerpts and the most up-to-the-minute information or my blog at <http://jlblog.blogspot.com> where I whine about daily life.

More about E-Publishing

Well, I think I've finally got this E-thing figured out. It all depends on where you buy the books. Here's an example: Let's say you buy the Ebookwise reader from ebookwise.com (\$125 and about the size of a trade paperback). It has a backlit screen, controls to change the pages, etc., like I described in my last newsletter. Here you are with your brand new reader. Now what do you do?

You can shop on ebookwise.com or fictionwise.com. You'll see a lot of books you can download and in different formats -- HTML format, .lib format, .rb format, .pdf -- there's many you can use. Some books can only be downloaded in 'secure' format, which means you'll need to enter a code to open the book once it's downloaded and stored on your reading device.

This is where it can get tricky. If you buy from Ebookwise or Fictionwise and you have one of their readers, it's pretty straightforward -- just buy the book and it's put in 'your library', which is an online area where your purchases are stored. You hook up your device, establish a connection to the computer, and press a button or two on the device and the books are downloaded.

But my books from Cerridwen and Triskelion are not sold through Ebookwise or Fictionwise. They're only sold on the Cerridwen or Triskelion web site. So you need to figure out how to put those books onto your nifty device. To do that you need another piece of software from Ebookwise, called The Librarian. You can buy it on the Ebookwise site and store it on your computer. It converts those book formats (.lib, .rb, and .pdf) for use on your reader.



I know, I know - why don't they just sell my book on the Ebookwise and Fictionwise site? It would be so much easier, wouldn't it? Well, there's a charge for that, and it chips away at profit, for my publisher and for me. It's a lot easier (read: cost-efficient) to store the books on the publisher's web site rather than go through a middleman.

So we have to jump through this tiny hoop to get it to work. Trust me, once you've downloaded a few books, you'll get the hang of it. I've put instructions on how to do all this on my web site at http://www.jayellwilson.com/efaq_how.htm. So check it out when it comes time to download.

What about that Murder Conference?

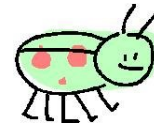
This was the first non-romance writing conference I attended, so I wasn't sure what to expect. And it started oddly. My critique partner, Kathy, and I flew in to Chicago on Thursday afternoon, expecting the conference to start at 9:00 on Friday morning. But we found out that it didn't start until Friday afternoon -- I'm not sure if we misread the info or what, but we had some time to kill (kill, get it? A murder conference? Okay, sorry).

While we were waiting for the shuttle to the motel from O'Hare, we struck up a conversation with a nice librarian-looking lady, who was also going to the conference. She gave us her name but I didn't quite catch it. We asked if she was published, and she said, 'yes, 16 books' and I about fainted on the spot -- that's a LOT. We chatted on the way to the hotel and it turns out her reservation was goofed up, so we gave her our phone numbers in case she needed a friend if they couldn't get it straightened out - just trying to be a good Samaritan, right?



Kathy and I checked in for the conference then went to our room and unpacked. When we read the conference program, we found our mystery friend was the keynote speaker, Nancy Pickard. She's won big awards like the Edgar (the Oscar of mystery publishing), and is a Real Professional. And there I was nattering on about my meager little e-book contracts! Boy, was my face red when we saw her in the bar later. But she was very nice and very approachable during the two days of the conference.

The hotel was a bit rundown, more 'seen better days' shabby, if you know what I mean. It was right off the Dan Ryan Expressway and we had a great view of the freeway (and a good earful, too). I tried the swimming pool but there was a dead bug floating in it, so I used the fitness center, where 2 of the 3 exercise bikes were broken, and the elliptical machine had instructions only in Spanish, resulting in a very vigorous workout.



The conference was small (150 people or so) and was interesting. How often do you go to a workshop entitled "Writing about Monsters" where you learn how to describe psychopaths? Or "From Rippers to Cozies: The State of Mystery Today." When we got back to Minneapolis there was a goof-up with the luggage and our bags sat on the tarmac for an hour, resulting in frozen items because the outside temps were well below zero. I don't recommend frozen deodorant: not pleasant.

What's Next?

I'm spending March gearing up for promo for my June book. I'm discovering with e-books that you can't do promotions too far in advance. E-book fans and readers want things *right now*. If you do promotions too far in advance people lose interest. So I'm going to focus my efforts on the May timeframe.

I've been doing research about places where I can advertise. E-book advertisements center on online items like contests, chats and banners, which are those floating ads on a web page, or cover-ads, where my cover art will be

displayed on a page (I haven't seen my covers yet, so I may not want to advertise them. We'll see when the time comes).

This is all relatively inexpensive (for example, \$30/month for a banner ad), but I've got to find someone to design it for me (also relatively inexpensive) then decide which web sites to use -- The Romance Studio? Romance Junkies? Mystery Junkies? These are web sites that do reviews of e-books, and for a price you can advertise on their site.



My publisher sends my book to many of these sites, and they also send my 'blurb' (back cover copy) to some sites and those places can ask for a full copy to review. A good review can make all the difference in the world for sales, because reviews are a good form of promotion. So I'm lurking on these web sites for the next month or so to see what kinds of reviews they write.

I'm also considering doing a web site re-design since I'll have two series (at least) going now - my romantic suspense books and my time travel books. So I'd like to split up my site and have two different areas that describe the books. But that takes a lot of time, so I may hire someone to do it. I'm still investigating that.

In April I'm going to Sleuthfest, a mystery convention in Miami. Some events I plan to attend are a fingerprint workshop, a talk by a medical examiner, a discussion of interrogation techniques, a seminar on 'Guns, Knives, and Other Fun Things,' and 'The Mystery in Mysteries: Clues, Misdirection, and Satisfying Endings'. It's something to look forward to as we shiver here in the frozen North.

I'm also working on rewrites of my 2007 time travel book, (which I call 'a reincarnation gone wrong'), plus I'm reading about gangsters for the next book. I just finished edits on two more romantic suspense books which I submitted, and I got a request from a *third* publisher for another book, which I promptly sent off. That means I might have four or more books out this year.

I need either (1) more hours in the day or (2) a clone.

Or preferably both ...

