

LAURIE LOVEMAN – WRITING INTERVIEW

When did you first realize that you were a writer?

I've kept a daily journal since 1958, so I've been in the habit of writing most of my adult life. My actual writing "career" began in 1980 when I became a newsletter columnist. I have since written many magazine articles, however, in the past fifteen years I've concentrated more on writing fiction. I also have a website focused on fire safety in barns (<http://www.firesafetyinbarns.com>), for which I've written extensively.

How do you structure your day for writing?

Since I work full time, my writing is "squeezed in" whenever I have time (and inspiration) to research and to plot. Sometimes I write at midnight, sometimes at 4 in the afternoon, but I am always scribbling notes about possible scenes, etc. and playing scenes in my head.

Do you prefer pen, typewriter or PC?

I use my PC for most of my writing, but sometimes I'm happier with spur-of-the-moment scratch paper and a couple of pencils. I do many scenes with paper and pencil then enter them on the PC for later revision.

Do you have any advice to fledgling authors?

Stick with it. A rejection slip is only one person's opinion. There are a lot of people in the world who will be interested in what you have to say. Don't ever let one person, especially someone who doesn't even know you, get you down. Keep writing.

What have you learned from writing in general?

I have learned the absolute joy of allowing my thoughts to flow, thereby giving life to my characters, who in turn, enrich my life by sharing themselves with me.

What have you learned from writing your latest book in particular?

Demise of the Horse Fairy, the fourth book in my Firehouse Family series, has to do with gangsters during Prohibition and the Great Depression, so I had to do quite a bit of research on that era. As a result, I've really learned how to do research efficiently, without allowing myself to become overwhelmed with collecting too much information.

What did you hope to accomplish with your latest book?

I want to make my readers aware that our current economic situation is not a "first time" occurrence. In the 1930s, actions against immigrants from Mexico were carried out by the government, and farmers unloaded livestock they could no longer afford to feed. Starving horses were for sale in all the auction barns; in my latest book, some of these horses are rescued.

What are the biggest problems you've faced as a writer?

Publicizing my books—the whole marketing process—is the toughest part of writing, in my opinion!

Who are your three favorite authors and why?

I've often said that if I was marooned on the proverbial island, I'd want to have with me all the books written by several of my favorite authors. My favorite is Frances Parkinson Keyes, who has always been able to spirit me away to New Orleans (my favorite city in the US, thanks to her) and make the past come so alive I'm really there! My other (currently) favorite authors are James Patterson, Jonathan and Faye Kellerman, and Clive Cussler, who also quickly take me to places and adventures sometimes far different than my own day-to-day existence! Okay, I guess that's more than three, but I keep discovering new authors I like on a pretty regular basis.

What three things do you wish you'd known before you started writing?

For all three, I'd like to say I wish I had known how exciting it is to delve into history, and to research all kinds of different topics. In my case, in writing about medical care in the 1930s, I did not read medical texts published after about 1938, so I didn't inadvertently write about something that was yet to be invented or discovered!

What are your dreams or goals as an author?

I have no special dreams as a fiction author, however, I have the dream and goal, in writing for my website, Fire Safety in Barns, of helping people to prevent fires in their stables and other animal housing facilities. I feel that if the information I provide on my website can save the lives of animals, I will have made a contribution to our society.

What's one "do" and one "don't" about writing you would like to tell aspiring authors?

Stick with it. A rejection slip is only one person's opinion. There are a lot of people in the world who will be interested in what you have to say. Don't ever let one person, especially someone who doesn't even know you, get you down. Keep writing.

What was the best advice you've ever gotten about the writing/publishing industry? How about the worst?

The best advice? Don't let the slow motion of the publishing houses frustrate you.
The worst? Write what you think your readers will want. While that's true to some extent, your writing should always be a joy to you first of all.

Where would you most like to travel?

Nowhere! I love being at home. A friend created a beautiful pond in the ravine behind my house; I can walk down there and be anywhere my mind can take me. I have never enjoyed traveling—the aggravation of packing up and getting there nowadays, is just not worth my time.

Is there anything weird or wild you do that would surprise us?

Well, sometimes, when a scene's bouncing around in my head, I have been known to discuss it aloud with my characters. No problem if I happen to be by myself. . .

How do you rest or relax?

I find it hard to just “loaf.” I always have to be doing something, but I'd have to say the closest I get to relaxation is writing in my journal or reading all the great stuff by other authors.

Did you go through traditional publishing? If so, did you go direct to the publisher or through an agent? What advice would you give an author searching for the right agent?

I have worked with an agent, but I found the traditional manuscript submission process to be much too time-consuming. Life is too short to waste on waiting for someone else's opinion.

What one thing in life do you know for sure?

If you have two nickels to rub together, either your car or your teeth will need extensive repairs. I don't know how these two entities know this, just that in my life, that's what I can “count on.”

If you are at work on another book, can you preview it for us?

I am reviewing the many daynotes I took while I was with the Shaker Heights Fire Department in the early 1980s; the material is still pertinent to the fire service today, so I may move forward with a nonfiction book about my experiences there and the “family” I found in the firehouse.

How can readers contact you? (email, website)

I have a website, www.laurieloveman.com, for my books, which I will shortly be updating, but I can always be reached at lloveman@windstream.net.