

A Day in the Life of an Un-Published Writer Debbie's Story

by Tami Brothers

The average person wouldn't remember me from one moment to the next. At five feet three inches tall, I'm pretty unforgettable. Well, except for the hair. Most people do remember my hair. Because of it, I've been compared to many things throughout my life. A matchstick. A fireball. A cherry popsicle. An atomic bomb. That last one probably had something to do with my short fused temper, but I'm adding it for good measure.

Needless to say, if one person in the office where I work had to describe me, the only distinguishing characteristic would be the mop of red hair on top of my head. Not something I want to go down in history for. And as the youngest of seven children, I truly want to be distinguishable.

Right now, I'm sitting in my newer model VW Bug – not unlike hundreds on I-75 - waiting to go inside the hotel for the April GRW meeting. I'm one of thousands out there who want to become a published author. But, I do have one thing going for me that so many others don't. Beside me lay a stack of papers. Because of them, I'm almost giddy as I wait for 10:30 to get here. Of course, that could be fatigue. After all, it was 3 o'clock this morning when I finally put the finishing touches on my first completed manuscript. YEAH!!! Note the word completed!

My first COMPLETED manuscript!!! Sorry, can't quit writing that.

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I spent the rest of the morning printing it out. In fact, I thought I was going to be late today because I wanted to make sure I had a copy for each of my five critique partners. But that’s getting away from the point.

I’m not memorable. Yet. I want to be. I dream of it every night. I know. That sounds way corny, but it’s the truth. I can write it here since I’m the only one who will ever read this. As a writer, I hope to finally put my stamp on something. I want other people to pick up a book, see my name on the cover, and say to themselves, “All right! Another Debbie Smith book!” This is my hope. My dream. And until last month, one that was destined to never happen.

Why is that? Well, for the past year I’ve been on a spiraling roller coaster ride with my writing; one without any stopping points. The problem is I couldn’t focus my attention on just one thing. I want to do it all. I want to write chic lit and paranormal and romantic suspense. And! And! And! See? I can’t even write a note in my journal without getting carried away. But the one constant was that I had never completed any of those stories. Not a one! Almost like that chip commercial, ‘betcha can’t eat just one!’ That was me. Forever destined to go from idea to idea without seeing it through. I would get bored before the story was finished.

Thankfully, the March meeting was exactly what I needed to get me past this. With Kate Seaver being snowed in up north, the panel of published authors filling in for

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her was a huge help. They gave tips on the query letters we sent to Kate. Mine was one of them!!! Their advice, along with Kate’s tips, helped me to see that I could actually send my story to an editor. Talk about the wow factor. Until that day, I hadn’t even realized I was dreading this step. It was then that I realized my fear of failure was keeping me from typing ‘the end.’

I know. My critique partners have been saying the same thing for the past four months. But for some reason, this was the moment it finally sunk in. And that is when I realized I needed to actually finish one of my stories. This resulted in a whirlwind month for me. Now, with the pile of papers sitting beside me, I can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Okay! Okay! I know not to expect this first book to become published. Don’t think I haven’t stressed about the rejection letters. At least I finally have something I can submit. As soon as my critique partners look this one over, I’ll polish it and send it off to Berkley.

Yeah!!! Then the waiting begins. I’ve already given myself the pep talk about taking baby steps. If I get a rejection, at least I’ll qualify for my Pro pin. That’s something.

All right *Debbie*. Enough with the negative thoughts. YOU HAVE A COMPLETED MANUSCRIPT! Give yourself at least another day to relish this. Okay, a week tops. (grin) Then I’ll start the rationalization of ‘what ifs.’

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It looks like my time here is up. I’m headed in for the Virginia Ellis Critique Workshop. I submitted the ShopGirl story. I can’t wait to see how it’s received.

Oh boy. My stomach is twisting. Breath *Debbie*. It’s just a critique. I know, a critique by a published author. Again, baby steps. Breath in. Breath out. Whew.

Okay. I’m good. Wish me luck.