



Welcome

Happy April! My favourite month.

I was quite sure I'd done everything to avoid the dreaded winter lurgy, and I probably did. Unfortunately my daughter and hubby like to share, so despite my efforts, I did end up going down like a sinking rock. Unlike Covid when we all fell over at the same time, this time my immune system waited until my brood were sufficiently recovered to wrap me cotton wool and provide copious coffee, soup, coffee and crisps - all necessary to keep my mind and body functioning. I'm not a fan of antibiotics, but with my plate overflowing with publishing stuff, and the ever stressful day job, I gave in. My cough was scaring the animals and keeping me awake, and anyone close to me knows I'm not a team player when I'm tired.

I'm better, and catching up with everything, which is exciting and nerve-wracking. Our weather has been challenging, but every now and then a break in the rain provides the perfect opportunity to

"What we need is not the will to believe but the wish to find out"

William Wordsworth

"The very least you can do in your life is figure out what you hope for. And the most you can do is live inside that hope. Not admire it from a distance but live right in it, under its roof."

Barbara Kingsolver

get out with my trusty sidekick Olly, to stretch his legs, and my brain. I like fresh air, and the forest nearby is my go to for every mood. I may be a northern hemisphere spring baby, but I think I'm a winter child at heart.

I made sure to be healthy enough to not miss my monthly critique group, and it's been a busy time for my fellow writers too. Our mentor and group facilitator Cathy Eden published her children's book, and what a beautiful book it is. A garden world with fabulous characters (of many species) is both a delight and an adventure. 'Quinella's Pipe' is a book for children and adults, and should be on everyone's Christmas list. Melina Lewis

@melinalewisauthor published her book 'The Playlist'; a story of two characters inadvertently thrown together on a journey, and as the title suggests, the story works hand in hand with the most amazing playlist of music- very clever and entertaining.

I have been buried in editing and proofing; every opportunity, and in any location I can grab. I approved the cover design for book 1 last week and I love it! The final manuscript is in the capable hands of my typesetter, and if I've missed a comma, a colon or a full stop, so be it. Checking +87000 words is not fun!! I'm sure some OCD grammar police will find something, and I'll deal with it. A cover reveal is planned, and a release date has been set - woo-hoo!!

However, I will say that writing is a joy, publishing is a whole other story, and I have a hugely elevated

admiration for every author out there.

I finished Alice Hoffmans' 'The Dovekeepers' and sat staring into space with the book clutched to my chest. The level of research that she embarked on is insane and inspiring.

So, next time you hear from me I will have a Book 1 to share, and an update on 2 and 3.

Until then, stay warm and dry if you're in the South, and enjoy the rare blast of heat in the North. Remember "There's no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing."

Thank you for that ditty, Billy Connolly :)

Love

Ally

xx

I hope you enjoyed the prologue and are looking forward to more of 1800's Scotland.

This-my debut series-has come together, back to front.

I've been told I'm a pantsner—works for me. My brain loves to plan, list and schedule—then forget and start again. Writing my first book was the most

cathartic and joyful experience, flying by in a frantic bashing of keys, after which I thought I was done. Not so fast. My lofty writing friends, and characters, turned me around and sent me backwards. This put book one on the back burner while I got to work—and here we are, ready to launch!

A series of five is on the way. Ok, only 1 and 3 are complete, but 2 is halfway, 4 is started, and I just know there's a 5.

As a newbie, self-publishing seems the sensible thing to do. Horror stories from the #amquerying souls tell me I can do without the trauma.

I'll pop into your mailbox every 2 weeks, but feel free to pop into mine.

If you enjoy historical fiction, tenacious women and spooky forests, stick with me, it'll be fun.

'Till next time

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