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The Bottom Line of Living and Writing

Below is the complete, tweaked version of my blog originally posted at the link above.

The Bottom Line Of Living And Writing

With three published books under my belt, I feel as if I should be able to ease into some 'established author' comfort zone. But the truth is, writing is like any line of work – you have to produce in order to get paid. For the small percentage of authors who can make a comfortable living from their books, it's a no-brainer where to focus their time. But for the rest of us, writing to be published can sometimes be a luxury afforded only by those who have a reliable alternate source of support, whether an understanding, hard-working spouse or a full-time job.

I found this out the hard way. I'd written Love Me If You Must, Kill Me If You Can, and Kiss Me If You Dare when newly single, living off an advance, settlement money, and whatever miscellaneous income I could muster from my bed & breakfast and vacation rental home business. I was certain my mystery series would wow the multitudes and royalties would come pouring in, supporting my children's food, shelter, and clothing habit.

But last fall, I found myself without the income I desired and grasping at anything that might produce an advance. I drove my agent crazy with half-baked ideas, uncooked proposals, and raw one-liners.

The Big D --Desperation -- rarely acts as a catapult. More often, it starves our minds, sending us down rabbit trails that don't pay off. I knew I had to do something different if I were going to continue writing.

So I did that drastic, last-resort thing. I got a job.

The relief was immediate. A barrage of desperate ideas slowed to a trickle of well-defined thoughts. I now leave my agent in peace while I write a novel in a new romantic mystery series. I get a sound night's sleep knowing that I'll have electricity to recharge my laptop and enough new ideas to charge up my story.

I don't write this as a bucket of cold water in the face of hopeful authors,

but rather as a reality check for creative minds that sometimes veer toward optimism like a racecar with a blown tire. Slow down. Recalibrate.

Maybe for now your story takes a sideline to the bottom line. Embrace it. Put the emotional drama on the page where it belongs while you tend to the matters of daily living. Your reward will be the book contract that's waiting just ahead.