

April News



Image by kalhh from Pixabay

Hey {{ contact.FIRSTNAME | default : "there" }}. Did you miss me?

Gosh! It's been such a long time since my last newsletter I could hardly remember how to get started again.

So, how are you? I hope you are all keeping well and busy.

Sad news

I start this newsletter with some sad news, actually.

Readers of the blog and anyone following the Facebook page may have already seen this, but my mother died last week after a very long battle with Alzheimer's. We'd been warned to expect the news since mid-February when she stopped eating, so I suppose we were half waiting for the phone call. Even so, you still hope that there might be some miraculous cure or an equally miraculous recovery. Personally, I think she'd been in a living hell for the past 10 years, possibly longer, so at least she no longer has to put up with that.

Mom joins my dad, who died 5 years ago. They are survived by their 3 children, 6 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild.

In case you don't still follow the Facebook page or the blog, the links are [here](#) and [here](#) respectively.

Now on to other news...

Camp NaNo

I *was* taking part in April's Camp NaNo, and I *was* doing fairly well. Until the dreaded phone call finally did come in last Thursday.

Aside from the writing, I was also in the middle of a massive edit, proofreading the first pdfs, or galleys as they used to be.

Now, last Thursday was the day before the Easter bank holiday weekend, so there wasn't actually a lot any of us could do about our mom, although my sister did get the ball rolling by making an appointment with the registry office. Even so, it did knock the wind out of my sails and I couldn't get going again on the writing. I haven't really got going on it since, either, and after a whole week missed, I'm not sure it's worth me getting back in the saddle.

This is the second year on the trot that my Camp NaNo has been brought to a premature end. Perhaps the Cosmos is trying to tell me something.

I do still intend to write *The Fool*, which was my chosen project for this month. And I do still intend to try and follow the *Save the Cat Writes a Novel* process. So I'm going to have a think and either carry on with it anyway, or start again when the July Camp comes around.

In the meantime, I also have other projects I'm working on, just as soon as I get going again.

Writing projects

Here are the projects I want to make inroads into over the coming months:

- *Project Management for Writers: Gate 3* - this is book three in a five-book series, and I'm writing it from scratch
- *Catch the Rainbow* - this is the semi-historical semi-dual timeline book initially set against the Birmingham pub bombings of 1974
- *Diary of a Pussycat* - this is the second of my writing diaries, to which I'm currently adding the bonus exercises
- *The Beast Within* - this is the sequel to my Marcie Craig mystery novel *Night Crawler*

Aside from these longer projects, I'm also working on short stories - or I *have been* and I *will be*. So I'm far from idle at the moment.

Editing projects

I currently have just the one editing job in, and it's the screen edit I'm in the process of doing. I have asked the author for an extra chapter, though, to tie up some loose ends and to tie in with the opening, and he's working on that right now.

This is the book I was working on last week, and I found it easier to concentrate on that and get it done rather than write anything new of my own. I think it must have been the mechanical aspect of it. Saying that, it did drag on and I did end up working late into the night, but nothing like the shifts I was putting in for the ghostwriting...

... which brings me on to...

Ghostwriting

I'm not doing it any more. (Hooray!)

I mean, I did enjoy it, it did show me I could write a full-length novel (12 of them, in fact), and I did learn a lot. But it was starting to take up far too much time and the client was starting to ask for more work for the same money. There was a bonus short story I always wrote at the end too for the subscribers to the 'writer', and that shrank from 3,000 words to 2,000 words suddenly and I wasn't compensated for the sudden drop in income.

So I'm not doing it any more.

Currently reading

I'm currently reading *The House Keepers* by Alex Hay.



I've been 'currently reading' this for far too long, but I'm reading it for NetGalley, so I need to get a shake on with it.

I like the story and the idea, but it's a bit *Upstairs-Downstairs*-meets-*Ocean's-Seven*, which is how it's billed, so no surprises there. It's just taking a bit of getting used to.

I do need to crack on with it, though, because in the past 2 days I've been approved for 5 more books on top of another one I was sent last week.

These last 5 books are from Storm Publishing and I applied for the books because I'm interested to see what they're publishing. The company has evolved out of Bookoutre and they've brought several of the staff across with them, and it was Bookoutre who gave me some good feedback regarding *The Fool*. So the plan is to research what they're publishing and then hopefully have something to fire off to them once I've finished reading and reviewing.

Next newsletter

I did intend to write a newsletter every month, but that hasn't been possible with the amount of work I've had in recent months. I'm not going to promise a monthly newsletter from now on, but I will still aim to get one out at least every month if I can. But if you're not expecting it, then it won't be late.

Over to you

Which brings me on to wondering what you'd like me to tell you about in future newsletters.

- Do you read the short story?
- Are you interested in my work processes?
- Would you like to know when I'm looking for beta readers?
- What kind of freebies would encourage you to stay as a subscriber?

- What else would you like to see?

You can email me at diane@dianewordsworth.com with your replies, and thank you in advance.

Here's your free short story

I know it's a bit late, but we are still in the Easter fortnight, so I thought I'd share this one with you. It's one of my own personal favourites, and probably my fastest selling story from germ of idea to submission to sale (it took less than 2 days!). I hope you like it.



Wordsworth Shorts

- Diane Wordsworth -

the easter egg hunt
a thomas & ellie short story

Thomas stood at the garden gate and glanced one last time along the road before dashing in for his tea. Meal times were so much nicer now since they'd moved house. He couldn't remember the last time his mummy had looked as happy as she did these days. She'd started to cook his favourite meals from scratch again, instead of making do with boring, plastic supermarket food.

Yes, life was so much better now, but he did miss Michael.

Michael was Thomas's best friend, his only friend in fact.

Whenever Thomas felt sad or scared or very lonely, Michael would always make him feel better, chatting away about anything that made the real world disappear. Michael was a nice distraction from all the horrid things that happened, so Thomas didn't have to think about anything that upset him or made him worry.

Most of the time Michael would tell Thomas adventure stories, stories Thomas also remembered being told a long time before. Stories about pirates or astronauts or cowboys and indians. Sometimes, however, they did touch a little bit on life.

"What will you be when you grow up?" Michael would often ask.

"I'm going to be a gladiator or a soldier or the world's strongest man so I can keep Mummy safe," Thomas would reply, drawing on the remembered tales. "What will you be?"

"Maybe an archangel, Gabriel or Michael," and they would laugh about Michael wanting to be someone with the same name.

Michael could natter on about everything and nothing for hours. They would talk about their favourite football team, pop star, cartoon hero. They would talk about the new boy at school whose mum still made him wear shorts – at the age of six! – and laugh, grateful that their own mums didn't do that to them. Or they would talk about the exotic, faraway holidays that Michael enjoyed where he'd meet Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves or Sinbad the Sailor or Captain Pugwash. Thomas and his family didn't have any holidays, so they couldn't talk about those.

"What's it like to have a real dad?" Thomas asked Michael one day.

"It's great. He takes me swimming, or plays cricket with me, or helps me with my reading."

"I wish I had a real dad," Thomas sighed. He didn't want to do anything with his step-dad. Thomas hated his step-dad. But he wished he still had a real dad.

"I bet your real dad never hurt your mum—" Michael had started a few times, but Thomas always managed to change the subject.

"What are Easter eggs like?" Thomas asked Michael the last time he saw him. He'd heard of them and knew that Easter was coming, but he'd never seen an actual Easter egg.

Michael's eyes widened in surprise. "Don't you know?" Thomas shrugged and shook his head. "Easter eggs are great. They're made of chocolate and have other chocolates inside, like Smarties or chocolate buttons. And they're brightly wrapped in shiny, colourful foil. Have you really never had one?"

"I've had chocolate loads of times. Mummy sneaks me some when *He* isn't around."

Thomas watched his friend's face set as the other boy nodded with determination.

"I'll get you one," he said. "You can have one of mine."

It was Easter now, but there was no sign of Michael. They'd been at the new house for only a couple of weeks, although it seemed like forever to Thomas. He would be starting a new school once the Easter holidays were over. He wondered if Michael would also be at the new school, but then he realised that Michael probably didn't even know

where he was. Thomas and his mummy had crept away one day while *He* was at work.

"We're going on a big adventure," said the kind lady who had come to help them move house. She gave him a smile and a wink and a ruffle of his hair. There had been no time to tell Michael.

"What's up with you, soldier?" asked Mummy cheerfully. He liked it when she called him soldier.

"Nothing," he said, tucking into home-made fish fingers and proper fried chips.

"No sign of him then?"

"Not yet. But he'll find us."

"How do you know?" Mummy passed him the tomato ketchup, but he didn't want to smother the taste of his delicious food.

"He promised me an Easter egg. He won't forget."

Mummy frowned, slightly puzzled, but then she smiled again. That made Thomas so happy. She hadn't stopped smiling since they'd got here and he'd stopped feeling scared all of the time.

"There's an Easter egg hunt down at the miners' welfare hall on Sunday," she said. "Would you like to go?"

"Yes please," he replied, happily stuffing his chips between two slices of bread and butter. "Do I get to keep any?"

"Yes, you keep all the ones with your name on."

"Cool."

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Easter Sunday was bright and sunny. When they got to the welfare hall the garden was already teeming with children carrying baskets filled with colourful, shiny Easter eggs. Some of the children were even the same age as Thomas. He never had any friends at his old house, apart from Michael, and he didn't know where to start or what to do.

Thomas recognised the lady who had helped them move house as she came to greet them.

"You made it, then?" she said to Mummy.

"We did," replied his mother.

"I got your message," said the lady, then she ruffled Thomas's hair just as she had the last time he saw her. "I have someone who wants to meet you," she said to him as a girl about his own age ran to join them. She had a basket filled with Easter eggs too, and she had an empty one for Thomas.

"This is my little girl, Ellie."

"You must be Thomas," said Ellie, handing him the empty basket. "Here."

"Thanks. How do you know?" he asked.

"Come and see," she said, dragging him by his free hand.

Nestled in the grass, tucked behind a bench, Thomas could already see the brightly wrapped Easter egg glinting in the sunlight.

"All of the eggs have names on," Ellie explained. "This one has your name on."

Thomas reached down and picked up the glorious object. He knew how to read his own name, could read quite well in fact, but he couldn't quite make out the last word.

"See?" said Ellie. "It says: To Thomas From Michael."

"Wow," he said, turning towards his mother who was watching him carefully from the other side of the garden. She was still with Ellie's mum. She smiled again and gave him a quizzical look, shielding her eyes from the sun.

"Who's Michael?" asked Ellie.

Still with his eyes on his mother he said: "Michael used to be my imaginary friend." He saw his mum laugh again at something Ellie's

mum had said to her. She looked so young and so happy. Then he turned back to Ellie, his new friend and his first real friend.

"He *used* to be your imaginary friend?" she asked.

"Yes," Thomas agreed. "I don't need him any more."

the end

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## **Diane Wordsworth**

Rotherham, England

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