

I just got back from the National Conference and, as usual, I'm inspired to write my butt off. It's always like that. This time it wasn't because of the rousing speeches, though I heard one. No, it was because my editor saw me in the hotel lobby and asked me to meet with her. I was thrilled. We hadn't arranged anything beforehand because I'm what I'm calling "between" contracts.

I've not had a contract since I turned in the last book in my vampire series. Since then I've written and self-published a novella and have been working on book eleven in the series that I plan to self-publish too. I've sent my agent two vamp proposals which she hasn't been too optimistic about. The paranormal market isn't exactly thriving at the moment. So when my editor pushed for a meeting, I was eager to the point of becoming stalkerish. When could we meet? Where? Any time she could squeeze me in? Wherever she wanted. I wasn't about to miss this opportunity.

Then I started thinking. If paranormal wasn't thriving, what could I write that my editor might want to see? I came up with an idea and passed it by my agent who I love and who I did have a scheduled meeting with. I'd been dreading the meeting. Being an insecure writer, I'd been sure she was going to dump me. I hadn't made her much money lately and this is a business. However, my agent loves me back. Go figure. And she loved my new idea. I had a new brand and it was commercial. She helped me brainstorm a few things to flesh it out and I left her feeling like I might be on the right track.

So here's some backstory: My first two published books were contemporary romantic suspense. This was way back in the day. Then in 2002 my now editor bought my first and only Regency historical. This was the book of my heart and my Golden Heart finalist. That market got soft and paranormal got hot. So I proposed my Real Vampires series and that same editor had changed houses. She bought the series in 2005 and we've been together ever since. That's a lot of history. And it's good history. She told me at our meeting that she wants to work with me

again because I'm a nice person. Wow. Guess it pays to turn in work on time(usually) and do it with courtesy. My manuscripts are clean too with little editing required thanks to a dynamite critique group. And now I was willing to write whatever she suggested. She LOVED my new brand and concept. Brainstormed with me to flesh out characters and plot. She claimed she couldn't wait to see a short proposal from me and wanted to do a trilogy. Oh, yes, three books. I left her floating on air(me, not her).

So I'm sitting at my computer, squeezing in time to write this article for you because I'm eager to get those three chapters and the synopsis done for my new series. I don't mind leaving vampires for a while. I can always continue to self-publish those books. And my editor knows I can write contemporaries because I started there. Yes, the market is getting saturated and may explode soon. So what? I'm proving I'm flexible. Are you? Or do you stubbornly stick to what you always write? Are you still beating that same old horse you rode in on? Or did you listen to a workshop that got you excited to try something new? Maybe you read a good book that piqued your interest in going in a new direction.

I told my editor up front that erotica wasn't for me and she was okay with that. She has a stable of authors who hit the New York Times with the extra steamy stuff. But she told me what she did want from me and that she had confidence I could deliver it. I also asked her for a list of authors I could read that had the tone and voice she liked so I could stay on the right track. Then I made sure I got those books and read them. It helped. I'll soon see if this homework paid off. The proposal will go to my agent first because I trust her judgment. If she thinks it's ready, she'll pass it on to my editor. Then, who knows? One thing I do know. None of this would have happened if I hadn't gone to RWA. Thanks for the conference.