

# A death in the family



It's hump day of "Writing Week" on the JMD blog as we continue to celebrate the upcoming conclusion to writing Book 2 of the Jeremy Shuttle Adventures.

Now, read on...

When I get involved with creating things, it is with a personal investment of possibly unhealthy proportion. Whether it was in my art days, my professional years in Corporate America or now as an author, I take a special affection to the things I create, warts and all.

It's a long-standing rule that a writer shouldn't "fall in love" with his words. That is, he shouldn't be so proud or attached to a particular idea or piece of prose that he cannot step back and cut it out; if said cutting would actually make the story better. Just because something is clever or original, it doesn't always mean it will serve the story well. In some cases, the clever idea overpowers or interrupts the flow.

To a different degree, the same can be said about characters in a story. While it's generally accepted that the protagonist or lead in a story, especially a series, is unlikely to be killed, it's not always wise to apply the same rule to the supporting characters. Conflict and loss are powerful drivers of change and change is a powerful driver of character.

As I come to the end of the second book, these creations of

mine have become dear to me. I enjoy their unique personalities and the interaction of those personalities. The story is well served by their presence. Thus I am loath to consider killing one of them.

That's not necessarily a terrible thing. As the creator of the story and the universe within, I have the power to make everything just as interesting with everyone alive and (reasonably) well. It was difficult to me to fathom when a comic book professional made Superman kill. Sure, the subsequent stories created great tension based on the emotional conflict of that decision, but it also removed the most unique aspect of the character; the resistance, in an increasingly violent world, to cross that line. It seemed to me, that being the creator of the universe the character inhabited, the writer could have simply written a different result.

So, I don't *need* to kill any of my characters. If I am a capable creator, I should be able to write an exciting tale without anyone having to die. But (and isn't there always a "but"), people *do* die. To simply ignore that because I've grown to like these characters might be as bad as falling in love with a piece of writing or clever scene (which, by the way, I had in Book 1, before ultimately coming to my senses and cutting it entirely).

I've said all along that the book tends to write itself. I often times look at myself merely as a court reporter. Thus, if the tale takes me there, I cannot "correct" it, simply because I can't bear to see a character disappear.

In either case, these creations populating my book have become quite dear to me. If the story ends up going there, losing one will almost be like a death in the family.