

Working up my cover story



It's time to go undercover. Or, more precisely, into the cover.

The next step in preparing the book for release is designing the cover and writing the cover copy. Fortunately, I get aid in the first task, though nothing I can use right away.

When I imagined the cover for Book One of the trilogy (What if?), I always knew I wanted the sketchbook to play a big role in the cover, since it was the driving concept through the story. My thoughts were very literal. Perhaps Jeremy under his tree drawing, with all of his adventures peeking around or through the branches. Maybe, the sketchbook, with images springing from the pages. As I said, literal.

Thankfully, the designer that worked with my publisher had more creative suggestions that only needed a little tweaking from me. He came up with the brilliant cascading sketchbooks, that not only proved prescient, as the story turned out, but created a wonderful "link" for each succeeding book. I have no concerns over the graphic depiction that will ultimately adorn Book Three. The designer doesn't begin work until the final manuscript is submitted and I need to provide him with one other piece of information, the back cover copy.

Call it a teaser, a blurb or any other name; at its heart, it is the "commercial" for the book. Like TV spots, you have seconds to grab the reader's attention and convince them to read further, with the ultimate goal of interesting them enough to buy the book.

You would imagine that, after 600 pages of Jeremy and his adventures, writing a couple of hundred words should be a no-brainer. The truth is quite the opposite. It's agonizing trying to come up with a way to capture everything that goes on within a book in just a few short paragraphs. This is especially so in my "wrap up" installment, where everything and anything can (and a lot of it does) happen.

I've got some time to think about it, since I'm not doing any editing or writing until all my previewers have finished their reading. I'll need the time, because this part is hard. It's almost comical that, after four years on this series, the toughest writing assignment I have is working up my cover story!