Lisa Heartman – Frequently Asked Questions

What is your favorite part of writing a story?

I really enjoy developing characters. I like delving into their lives, figuring out who they are and how they will react to the situation I’ve plunked them into. Just like all of us, these fictional characters have quirks and likes and life experiences (if only on paper) that make their reactions unique to them. They do the right thing or what they think is the right thing (which can be the wrong thing), and then they have to face the consequences of those decisions.

What is your least favorite part of writing at story?

My least favorite is probably all the work that goes into the story before there is a story. Before I start writing the first chapter, I research topics that I will be touching on and plotting where in the story to drop clues, along with what those clues will be. Research and plotting are important aspects of storytelling, but it can be time consuming when all I really want to do is put words on the page.

What do you love about telling stories?

What I love about telling stories is the same thing as I love about reading them. For me, it’s about being taken on a journey, experiencing new things, meeting new “people” and understanding how very different and the same we all are. It’s the emotional rollercoaster, adventure at a safe distance, and lessons learned that I just can’t get enough of.

How do you come up with your stories?

It depends on the story. Sometimes I get a character stuck in my head and I want to know who they are and how they got here. Other times, it’s more of a “what if” scenario that pops into my head. Either way, the story is what helps me answer those questions.

When did you start writing?

When I was young, maybe eight or nine, I asked Santa for a typewriter for Christmas. I guess I knew back then, but I didn’t pursue it until much later in life. I started writing seriously about five years ago.

Do you have a favorite author?

Not really. Any author that can make me laugh or cry gets thumbs up from me. I read mostly contemporary romance and romantic suspense, but I also get into some paranormal, historical, and fantasy because of friends. I love when someone starts a conversation with “I just read the most amazing book, you have to check it out.” and I’m on my phone looking it up.

Who are your major competitors?

Everyone and anything else that entertains. It’s not just other authors; it’s movies, television, amusement parks, drinks with friends, and family game night. I’m asking someone to choose my book over all these other forms of entertainment, some social some not. That’s a big ask. Because of that, my story and characters have to be fun and exciting and believable enough to get their attention and keep it for three-hundred or so pages.

What advice would you give to new writers just starting out?

My first piece of advice would be to tell them to go for it. If you want to write, do it. I didn’t write for a long time, because I didn’t think I was any good. But here’s the thing, it doesn’t matter if what you write is good or not, first drafts are supposed to be awful, it’s what you do with the draft that makes you proud. My second piece of advice I would give is find your tribe. There are writing groups all over the country. Some meet in person and some are only online, but find a group that you are comfortable with and join. For me, that was Romance Writers of America®. Writing is a lonely job. Having a community of like-minded individuals to talk to, run ideas by, discuss challenges, and celebrate wins is important.

How much time do you spend writing each week?

I still work a full-time job, so I write mostly in the evenings and on weekends. I clock an average of 14-20 hours a week on my writing business. It’s not all writing time, but the majority of it is putting words on the page. The rest of the time I’m editing, brainstorming, plotting future chapters, researching, marketing, answering emails, and working with various vendors.

What is your favorite color?

Dark purple. Amethyst is my favorite, but I like all the rich, deep gemstone colors like Ruby, Emerald, and Sapphire.

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