

Author Interview

with Dale Robertson



1. PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF INTRODUCTION, INCLUDING YOUR NAME, THE GENRE(S) YOU WRITE IN, PREVIOUS WORK AND WHERE YOU ARE BASED.

Hi. My name is Dale Robertson and I live in the South West of Scotland. My work firmly has its feet in the horror genre - it's an area I love (not just books, but films and video games as well). I started off with self publishing a short story called Dobson Drive. I then did another short story called Skee-Bo. Both of them received decent feedback which gave me a shot of confidence to continue writing. I progressed to novellas – Nine till Five then The House that Jack Built, both of which I published in paperback format as well as ebook. It's nice having them on my bookshelf, and on the dark days when I feel I can't come up with the goods, they are a nice reminder that I can.

2. WHICH OF YOUR BOOKS / PIECES OF WRITING ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF, AND WHY?

I would say my first, Dobson Drive, as I had finally put pen to paper and wrote something. I'd thought about it for a while (and procrastinated even longer), and was proud of myself when it was complete. Even though it's only a short story, I like it a lot (as it's set in a real place where I pass daily) and I'd like to go back and do a sequel. Or maybe a prequel. I'm not sure yet, but I could see it being part of a series.

3. HOW LONG ON AVERAGE DOES IT TAKE YOU TO WRITE A BOOK?

Wow, this is a tough one. It depends on my frame of mind. Sometimes I'm really in the mood to get some words down, as my head is about to explode with thoughts of whatever story I've imagined, so I scribble away furiously trying to get everything out. Then other times, if I've had a busy day at work and just want to relax, or the kids want me to play, or my other half has had a rotten day, then I'll put writing to the side.

Nine till Five took me 6 months from start to finish (first draft to publishing) and it's only 20k words. I'm not sure if that's slow progress or not. Everyone's circumstances are different.

4. WHAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF YOUR ARTISTIC PROCESS?

Formatting the Word document to fit the Kindle criteria. I've done it plenty of times now, but between each book there's such a gap in time that I generally forget what to do. It doesn't come automatically, but thankfully there are a few websites that I consult to help me. They are a godsend!

Writing is the easy part! Ha. Ok, maybe not easy but certainly easier than other parts of the self publishing process. I find anyway.

5. DO YOU READ YOUR BOOK REVIEWS? HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH BAD OR GOOD ONES?

Of course I do, I like to know what people think of my work. Generally the reviews have been positive, I've had no really bad reviews (yet!) but everyone has a different idea of what they want from a story so a review is just that particular reader's thoughts. I have to take it with a pinch of salt. If there's any constructive criticism in the review then I use that to try and improve my next piece of work.

6. WHAT DOES LITERARY SUCCESS LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

Having people who enjoy my writing and look forward to when a new book is coming out.

7. HOW MANY UNPUBLISHED AND HALF-FINISHED BOOKS DO YOU HAVE?

A handful. Some are half written in my notepad and stopped at a random point as I wasn't sure where to take the story next. They are always there for me to go back to though, which is nice.

I have a couple of complete short stories which I'm not sure what to do with. Maybe wait until a suitable anthology comes up, or I'll maybe keep them for a collection of my own short stories.

8. WHAT WAS THE BEST MONEY YOU EVER SPENT AS A WRITER? (E.G. SOFTWARE, SELF-HELP BOOKS, MARKETING BOOKS ETC.)

Best money I've spent is on editors. There's nothing worse than reading a book that is full of typos and errors. The odd one here and there, I can forgive (especially if it's novel size) but if a book is littered with them, it's really off putting. I don't have fancy software – I just use Word. Iain Rob Wright is a very generous (successful!) horror writer who has set up a course that takes you through all aspects of self publishing – it's called A-Z of Self Publishing, and it's all FREE. There are some great tips and stuff for even the most experienced writer.

9. DO YOU WANT EACH BOOK TO STAND ON ITS OWN, OR ARE YOU TRYING TO BUILD A BODY OF WORK WITH CONNECTIONS BETWEEN EACH BOOK?

Each book stands on its own.

10. WHAT ARE COMMON TRAPS FOR ASPIRING WRITERS?

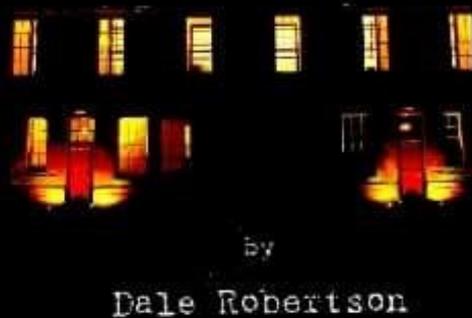
Procrastination. It happens to everyone (not just aspiring writers). I remember when I first thought about writing a story; I messaged lots of authors for tips. They all came back with the same thing – put pen to paper and get some words down. It's such a cliché, but it's so true. You're never going to hit the ball right out of the park on the first draft so don't even try. Get something down on paper, get it complete, leave it for a week or so, then go back and refine it. Rinse and repeat.

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Nine Till Five



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