

[Narrator] Welcome to The Wrighter's Way podcast, where we celebrate writers who have completed their books, and inspire writers who haven't. Join Laurie and her guests as they talk about writing, books, and life in-between chapters.

[Sponsor Narrator] Sponsored by Creative Wrighter. Are you ready to publish a children's book? Find out now, at [creativewriter.com](http://creativewriter.com).

Laurie: Hi everybody, this is Laurie with The Wrighter's Way podcast here with Allison. Thank you so much for coming to talk to me today, Allison.

Allison: Hi, thanks for having me.

Laurie: You're welcome! And you said you've just moved or you're on your...

Allison: I did just move, just spent the last four hours in fact cleaning up the old place and getting settled in.

Laurie: Oh, okay. Was it a big move?

Allison: Yes. Yes. Very big move.

Laurie: But you're all settled now, after four hours you're good.

Allison: That's right, we're good.

Laurie: Okay, so I don't know that much about your background. I know you have some, I think you said romance novels and you have some early reader type novels.

Allison: Yes.

Laurie: So I'd love to hear your story.

Allison: Well, last year in January, pretty much exactly a year ago, I was on medical leave and I was sitting at home and I was bored stiff. And my son and I had been writing, not necessarily writing, but telling stories together for years, from the time he was little. And they started out actually when I was little. My father started, we would go camping when I was four, five, six, seven, and he would tell these stories. So when my son came along, I just continued it. Now my dad's stories were about a girl. My son's stories we added a boy in because he was a boy and the stories kind of developed. So, I was sitting at home about a year ago and I said, "You know what? I'm gonna write this a book. "Maybe it'll just be for me, maybe it'll just be "for the family, but I'm gonna write it down." So I started pulling out, I mean I had notebooks and Post-it notes and note cards and scraps of paper with just all kinds of different notes and stories and things and I started putting them together and I'm like, "I have more than one book

here." So I got online and I was doing advanced reader editing for another author and I asked her, "You know, what do I do with this? 'How did you get started?'" And she sent me to some online resources and within I think, March, I published my very first book. And it was just a simple children's picture book. I did "Operation Mozzarella." It was one my son and I wrote together about two mice and getting in trouble. And I'm like, "This is really cool." And then I kept going. And so 12 months later, I have six romance novels, two novellas, four children's books in one series, and my very first early reader that I wrote.

Laurie: Holy! 12!

Allison: About six others in the works. It just kind of snowballs.

Laurie: I can kinda see the children's books but how did you get out six novels?

Allison: Well I was working nights and... there was about a four hour section in the middle of the night where nothing was going on and so I pulled out my computer and started writing and I did it for a couple of months and I ended up with three books and the rest have been just fit in on nights, weekends, around everything else, but it's just kinda worked together. I now have a collaborator on my second romance series. So we write them together and kind of feed off each other's energy.

Laurie: Which helps, yeah.

Allison: It does. It helps a lot.

Laurie: Cool! So once you dipped your toe in, you just like fell in the pool.

Allison: Yeah, pretty much.

Laurie: Well your dad had been telling you stories,

Allison: Yes.

Laurie: but did you feel like you were a writer, like are you someone with journals full of your stories or...?

Allison: Well, I am. You know, back in sixth grade I won some writing awards and I wrote for my school paper all through middle and high school and so I guess I kinda was and didn't realize it.

Laurie: Yeah.

Allison: And I do, I have all kinds of notebooks and journals with stories and stuff in them. And my son and I are working on, he's got a LitRPG he's doing and we're doing a space opera together and so he's kind of getting into it as well.

Laurie: Yeah.

Allison: And so we go to dinner and a story ends up on a nap-- we don't plan it this way

Laurie: Yeah.

Allison: but suddenly we have three napkins of story outline.

Laurie: Cool. Are you still working?

Allison: I am.

Laurie: You still work nights and do you still write?

Allison: Yes.

Laurie: Okay, like just always?

Allison: Just always.

Laurie: Just always. That is really, really cool. So you were bored.

Allison: Yes, pretty much.

Laurie: You thought, Why not, and then... it all came out.

Allison: Now here I am, a year later.

Laurie: Yeah, that's just incredible. What have you... Has there been any big ah-hahs or big lessons or... ?

Allison: Well, the writing is the easy part, which I never would've guessed when I started. Getting the stories down is the easy part. Finding the online community with the resources has really been life-changing

Laurie: Yeah.

Allison: Because there's so much more that goes into it with the marketing, and the getting the word out there to people, and finding your audience, and, "Well do I want to do this "in paperback, but wait I

wanna do it "in library so I gotta learn hardbacks." And everybody's going to audiobooks these days and so learning how that works and how to navigate it has been challenging.

Laurie: Yes. Yes. Have you done it yet, just refresh my memory, the audio?

Allison: I have... I just got my email today that Findaway Voices has got my first set of narrator suggestions so that's as far as I've got.

Laurie: And you're doing--

Allison: I submitted a book a week ago.

Laurie: Yeah, okay that--

Allison: And so we're casting in progress, I met some really great people with some film background that know a lot of starving artists that want to get into it so I'm also auditioning a bunch of people outside of Findaway and so it's... We're gonna kind of see how this goes.

Laurie: For the kids books or for the romance?

Allison: Well, both actually.

Laurie: Okay, wow!

Allison: I'm gonna try and do some of each and see what happens.

Laurie: It's all in.

Allison: When you go on a long car trip you need audio books for your kids.

Laurie: Yes, yes it helps so much!

Allison: And in the adult market 40% right now is kind of where audio versus CD and paperbacks so there's a large market out there that I'd like to explore.

Laurie: Yes, wow! Okay, look at you with the statistics.

Allison: I learned those last month.

Laurie: Yeah, just recently. Okay, really cool. What has been the hardest?

Allison: The hardest? Um, time management.

Laurie: Oh.

Allison: Because balancing the writing, which is what I really want to be doing, with everything else. Submit something to KDP to Amazon and they reject it, well you gotta go back and figure out what's wrong and it's... Getting everything to time it, your pre-orders, I'm really struggling with that aspect of it. It's not the part I necessarily like but it's important because I can write them but then nobody will see them. And I really think they're fun stories. So that's been part of it cause I'd love to just spend my days sitting and writing but, I can't. I have to do, I guess you can call it the business side of it.

Laurie: The business side of it? Yeah. Which is not always fun for some people but...

Allison: No. But it's important and some people are really good at it I just happen not to be.

Laurie: I actually prefer that side to the writing so...

Allison: Oh, okay.

Laurie: Yeah, we're a good team. Has there been one thing in particular that has really helped you? Like, is there any one thing that sticks out?

Allison: Um... well I think I've mentioned the online community before and there's different ones. There's a really wonderful, where I met you, the kids book community, that's been huge in helping me kind of find my way. There's another one that's been really great for writing my adult books and... having that resource where I don't have to do the research and start from scratch has been pretty amazing. I actually started writing my first novel back in 2013 and didn't know what to do with it.

Laurie: Yes.

Allison: So...

Laurie: That sounds familiar So let's just tell people, when you find the Facebook groups that are great resources there's a search button and you-- Right? You should --

Allison: Yes, there is!

Laurie: You're just asking like you say, I didn't have to start from scratch and so, that's so true. There's a plethora of information in all those groups but people don't take kindly to you when you go on and you say...

Allison: Yeah, you find it.

Laurie: "Hi! "How do I self publish a book?" Right?"

Allison: Exactly! Yeah, don't ask that question.

Laurie: Don't ask that question.

Allison: Find a group search and start looking by topic and what I started doing is saving, like the best posts or the ones that have the spreadsheet to help you calculate your revenue, or... this is the list of places you can advertise your book for free and I started saving those and you can name your different folders. I have a marketing one, I have a children's book one, and I save things to those folders so I can go back and when I need that information it's there.

Laurie: Oh, that's a great tip. Folders. I save it all. So you've been at it for a year...

Allison: Yes.

Laurie: You're like on fire here, I always ask people is there anything really fun that you've spent your profits on because I've heard some fun answers.

Allison: Well I just got back from a trip to Bali.

Laurie: Ooh!

Allison: It was a lot of fun, well except when the monkeys started stealing things from my back pack but other than that it was a great time.

Laurie: Did it open your back pack?

Allison: Yes, he actually did. He opened it and started taking things. I was down on the ground taking pictures of another monkey and all of a sudden there was a monkey on my back unzipping my bag and taking stuff out and the friend I was with was taking pictures of the monkey taking stuff out from me.

Laurie: Oh, that's funny. That's funny, good story. I would say Bali is very fun.

Allison: Yes, we had a great time.

Laurie: So, I'd love for you to share the name of your books. Now one of them is the pen name so are you okay to share that?

Allison: Absolutely, they're all under a pen name.

Laurie: Okay.

Allison: I have, the very first one I wrote is "Operation Mozzarella" my son and I wrote it together. So it's actually him on the back.

Laurie: Ooh!

Allison: And, my grandfathers name was Grant and my name is Allison so I did that for my kids books. And then I have the series that I wrote for him. I've got, this is my little, if you look on Kindle and Kobo and Apple and all that it's actually, the eBook is up there for free. It's my little short story it's about 3,000 words and then, sorry I don't have a better copy, but, these are all my artist proofs so they got the big stripe across the front. "The Adventures of Ren and Frog" are the ones that we wrote together and some things, like "Sailing in the Storm" he and I actually did this. We took sailboats out cause we live on the ocean. And we got upside down and started floating off into the middle of no where. So a lot of these things are based on, either the stories my dad told or things that we've done together.

Laurie: Actual, real life adventures that you survived.

Allison: And, I was really, really, lucky to find a wonderful artist that... Oh, there we go. That made these stories really come alive in pictures. She's got these great images in both the eBook and the print books, I hope you can see that. Color images. And then I also wanted them to be kind of learning, so she does some wonderful black and white illustrations too where she shows the animals and things. This is Rattler, he's the main character in one of the books or actually in all the books. And they've got glossaries and all kinds of things to go with them so they're kind of fun.

Laurie: So they'd be great for teachers of what grade do you think?

Allison: Probably grades two and three. They could go lower if you got precocious kids, they could go higher if you've got kids that don't really like reading because they're really short chapters. My long books, like "Missing in the Mountains" and "Lost in the Mangroves" they're about 10,000 words but they're 10 chapters and each chapter has a color image and a black and white image so they can be done in short settings for those reluctant readers that you have to kind of encourage them cause then they're gonna say... They read one chapter, the story is in three, they gotta keep going to find out what happens. Do they find the missing kid? Do they save the turtles? You know, that kind of thing?

Laurie: Yeah.

Allison: They gotta keep going.

Laurie: That's--

Allison: Kept it moving along so...

Laurie: Yeah. I love it. And I've had the pleasure of reading them so I know that they're great.

Allison: Thank you.

Laurie: What advice would you give to yourself like 14 months ago?

Allison: Well, in the beginning there were a lot of people out there that offered "Hey, here's a course on writing romance, "here's a great resource" I would probably hold off until I find some people that tried them cause there were a few things that I tried that didn't really come to be as... what they were talked up to be and so I spent some money I shouldn't have. I hired some people to do some marketing for me and they spent more money than they made. So just, if you learn to do it yourself first, when you get to the point you're ready to hire people then you know what they're supposed to be doing. I did it backwards,

Laurie: Right.

Allison: So I was going back and I'm learning all those steps now.

Laurie: Yeah.

Allison: So probably start slower than I did. You don't have to write 13 books in 12 months your first year of writing.

Laurie: You don't. People will be like "No, I can't do that "I'm already done before I started" You, I think, are an anomaly.

Allison: Yup.

Laurie: Which is great, because everybody sort of strives to be able to write fast and get that many out there but...It's not always feasible.

Allison: But definitely, learn to do what you need done. Cause as you get into it you will need... Even if it's somebody just manage your social media presence, you're gonna need somebody but you gotta know what they need to do.

Laurie: Right. What works and what doesn't.

Allison: Right. What works, what doesn't so you can say "No, I'm not spending my money on that. No, I want you "to spend your time doing this"

Laurie: That's great advice because if you're a good copywriter you can sell anything. There's a lot of people --

Allison: That's exactly right.

Laurie: Selling a lot of things. I did the same as you, I bought all the things and then I finally gotten to a point where I realized that--

Allison: Yes, exactly, and I'm going back and I'm like this is worth it, this is worth it, this is worth it, and these are not.

Laurie: And these are not. But that's, sometimes I buy a course or whatever and if I learn one thing...Then I feel like --

Allison: And you do.

Laurie: Yeah, and you --

Allison: Every person you talk to, whether they're successful or they're not successful, you will learn something. Whether it's what to do, what not to do, whether it's a hint that really helps with something you're having trouble with... because somebody out there has done it before.

Laurie: Yeah, I agree. So that was our parting wisdom, now your website and... so we said Grant Allison, do you have any of your romance--

Allison: I do, it's Allison Lafleur, A-L-L-I-S-O-N-L-A-F-L-E-U-R.com That is my other one, for my romances. And I've got... six or eight up on that website. I have one coming, the second book in my second series comes out Wednesday so it's kind of exciting.

Laurie: Ooh, that's exciting! Cool.

Allison: That's one written with my co-author so we're really excited and we're getting all our marketing and social media lined up this week.

Laurie: Nice, and are the other two already, or I'm assuming it's a series of three but are the other books already written? Knowing you.

Allison: Well we have two more that are almost done. My first series is a billionaire romance series. I have four written, two novellas, and two more to come out. Cause I'm kind of doing a six-book series there and this ones probably gonna end up with six books so we've got three written, second one comes out Wednesday and we've got our first novella that's gonna come out probably the week after, kind of a Valentine's Day thing.

Laurie: Awesome! Is your goal to write and not to work at your job?

Allison: That would be wonderful. That is kind of my goal, I... or at least to cut back. Health insurance is kind of important, my kid likes to go to the doctor occasionally. Even just cutting back would be fabulous.

Laurie: Yeah, and not working in the middle of the night, or not writing in the middle of the night.

Allison: Exactly.

Laurie: Is the quality the same?

Allison: Yes.

Laurie: Is the quality of writing the same when you do it in the middle of the night?

Allison: My editor does notice occasionally when I fall asleep while writing. She's like, "yeah you were totally not with it."

Laurie: Oh, that's funny.

Allison: But some good stuff does come out. My second book I wrote was much better than the first and it was actually written at night. Now I don't know if it was the learning curve of just writing and you know, the patterned story telling, or what it was but it was significantly better than the first book I ever wrote.

Laurie: Well that's good! That shows that you're learning and growing and that's how it should be, right?

Allison: Yes, yes. I'm ready to go back and re-write the first one.

Laurie: And lots of people do that so go for it. Sounds like you could do it in a day

Allison: Maybe...No

Laurie: Maybe two days--

Allison: It'll take a little longer than that but it's coming.

Laurie: Well thank you so much for chatting with me today and sharing your stories and your advice, your great advice.

Thank you for inviting me. I've enjoyed it, it's been fun.

Laurie: Fairly painf- painless, I almost said painful. Fairly painless, right? Painless. Okay, I'll talk to you soon.

Allison: Okay, thanks a lot!

Laurie: Bye.

Allison: Bye.

Allison: [Narrator] You've been listening to The Wrighter's Way Podcast. For show notes, links to guests' information, and to learn more about The Wrighter's Way, check out [Lauriewrighter.com](http://Lauriewrighter.com). Until next week, enjoy this chapter of your life.