

Introduction: [00:00](#) 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.

Laurie: [00:18](#) Hello everybody. Welcome to the Wrighter's Way Podcast with Laurie Wright and today with my friend Kelly Grettler. Hi Kelly. Thank you so much for doing this with me. We're still pretty new, so ironing out some kinks, but I'm happy to be here.

Kelly: [00:35](#) Thank you so much for asking me. You're my first official podcast, so I'm excited.

Laurie: [00:39](#) Oh Yay. And I'm super official. So will be great.

Kelly: [00:42](#) Yes you are!

Laurie: [00:46](#) Yes I am, yes I am. So for anybody tuning in for the first time, or listening for the first time. This podcast is all about motivating the 80 percent of people in the world who want to write a book but haven't yet. So Kelly and I were once just like you and I want Kelly to share her story today so that you see how how it's accessible now for everybody. So Kelly, just tell us a little bit about your background and a little bit about your books.

Kelly: [01:17](#) My background s I'm born and raised in Virginia and I've always loved writing ever since I was a kid and just would write in journals. I would do great on papers and I just knew I wanted to write, but I didn't really know how I could do it for living, cause I didn't go to college, so it just was kind of more fun for me and nothing else. And then once I started having kids, I started writing down some of the stuff that I would just, I don't know, I saved it. I put it in Word and I put it on my computer and knew that I loved it and knew that I believed in it, but I didn't know what to do with it. So it sat in word and life went on and couple years ago, not even two years ago yet, and I think it's right under two years I figured out how to publish all those old stories that I wrote. So that's kind of me in a nutshell. I know

Laurie: [02:09](#) That's my story too. I wrote it in word because it was before Google Docs.

Kelly: [02:13](#) I still don't use Google docs. My kids teach me about it the other day and I was like, sorcery, I don't understand.

- Laurie: [02:21](#) Google docs is awesome, but Word is good too, Word is the standard and that's how I did mine too. And then it just sat there.
- Kelly: [02:29](#) Right? Yes. I still have some old stuff there and I'm like, Ooh, maybe I need to publish that one now.
- Laurie: [02:34](#) So yes. So what was the first book you published and what was your, like was there one big push motivation wise, like what actually made you take that step?
- Kelly: [02:47](#) To actually finally published it? Well, my first was underneath The Mimosa Tree and I wrote it back in 2003 when my... Now Jonah is 15 ... when he was an infant. And I adore that book and it's just, I believe in that book. I mean, I don't do many things right, but I feel like I can write a rhymy rhyme pretty good. So anyway, I love that story and I think it's when I started working at the preschool about four years ago, I went back to work at a preschool and I was surrounded by little kids again and I was just always telling them stories and I remembered, Hey, I'm kinda good at that. And so I kind of pulled those old stories off my computer and I don't remember how it began, but I just was like, you know what? I think I googled it. I was like, come on. Like I just, I don't even remember. I honestly don't remember what gave me the push. I think I had time, my kids were older and I just have a little time.
- Laurie: [03:45](#) So it must have been something inside you that really wanted to try it out and really do it.
- Kelly: [03:52](#) I think so. I think just being around the little kids and I love to make up stories to little kids and I mean, I don't want to say it's lying, but I love like when I was at the preschool just making up stories. Like I tell people what I used to tell my kids about, like the garbage disposal. I'd be like, Oh, there's a monkey in there that'll, that'll eat your fingers if you put your fingers. So I just love to kind of scare kids sometimes, like tell them stories. And when I was at the preschool I was like, oh, that's right. I'm actually kind of not bad at this. And so that May...
- Laurie: [04:22](#) And that might sound bad to somebody who doesn't know kids. But kids love to be scared.
- Kelly: [04:26](#) Oh yeah.
- Laurie: [04:27](#) They love it. I used to teach kindergarten and they would ask me around Halloween, I would tell them spooky stories, spooky-

ish, you know, and they would ask for them over and over and over all year long because they love it.

- Kelly: [04:39](#) Oh yeah, yeah. They like lining up and I'd one would be like running down the hall and I'd be like, Oh, you don't want to run because you know what happened to Billy? And then they'd all be like looking up at me and they go, what happened to Billy? It's just fun for me. And so I don't know. I don't know. A storyteller at heart.
- Laurie: [04:56](#) Oh, I bet you're great. Are you still at the school?
- Kelly: [04:59](#) No, I was there for two years and then I when I would get off every day, I literally would just stare at the wall for three hours, so I was trying to pick up my kids because being around that many three year olds, I just needed the silence and I feel like I wasn't getting anything done. They just are exhausting. So if I was gonna try and write my books. I could not be at the preschool too because I need. I need to figure out which ones. So I love kids, but they were so draining and I'm old now. I don't know how to deal with a lot of children in for that amount of time. I can do it for a little bit of time and then I'm like, okay.
- Laurie: [05:34](#) That's exactly how I feel too. I'm past the age where I can handle that.
- Kelly: [05:42](#) I can handle storytime. I feel like I can rock a good story time and then I get back in the car and I'm like, that was so much fun because I don't have to teach them and I don't have to make them line up or be quiet or anything.
- Laurie: [05:54](#) Yeah. So true. Okay. Tell me a little bit sort of your mindset and how you felt before you finally published that first book. The Mimosa Tree. So tell me like how you felt and then I'm going to ask how you felt afterwards.
- Kelly: [06:10](#) Well, right before I published it, I was almost at an, at a depressing, sad, low with my thoughts of becoming an author career because I had gone pretty far in with a, with an illustrator to the point where it was all ready to go and she and I started to butt heads on little things and she was trying to kind of take control of the book and it was becoming a thing. And so finally I just decided, well, she decided we had reached an impasse and I said okay. And we parted ways and there I was with my story in word and no pictures anymore and I was devastated and I thought this might never happen for me and my friends kind of built me back up a little bit and said, why don't you illustrate it?

What's like, just just do it Kelly? And so I just did and then I kind of became a best and did it super fast, probably faster than I should have once I figured out how to do it. It's like once you figured out how to do it and nothing can stop you. Now that it's been two years and I really know what I'm doing and I'm kind of getting traction, I want to go back and re-illustrate that book. Now that I've got better software and I just want to give that book what it deserves. So either I'm going to find an illustrator or I'm going to go back, but my friends told me not to do that either. They're like, no, that's your first. Keep it, keep it raw.

Laurie: [07:35](#) That that's hard. I love that. Once you figured out how to do it, there's nothing stopping you. Nothing holding you back. I love that.

Kelly: [07:43](#) Well, it's so true. I would get up at like three in the morning because I knew it was waiting for me to work on, so I was like, I don't want to wait until my alarm goes off. I want to get up now and work on it because...

Laurie: [07:52](#) Isn't that wonderful? So now afterwards you have this passion and you get to do it every day.

Kelly: [07:57](#) I do, I do. I know I have a bunch of plates in the air and I kind of work on a bunch of stuff all at the same time. So yeah.

Laurie: [08:06](#) So you went from sort of almost depression about this never going to work. It's never gonna happen for me. And then how did you feel after you figured it out? You got it done? You published it.

Kelly: [08:17](#) That first moment when I got the proof copy and that. Oh, that's like giving birth, isn't it? Like, you know that feeling? It's such pride. I don't know. It was really like giving birth. I couldn't believe it. I remember I was in tears because I published on Facebook. I was like, look, it's here. Look what I did. And so many people were pouring in with, wow, that's great. We're so proud of you. And I just was crying. I think it's because it was a release because I had been so gung Ho on just get it done. I get it done and once it's done I just cried. I was just crying.

Laurie: [08:46](#) Oh, that's great. I love that. Okay. Um, how long does it take you to write a book and you can talk about it now. You have eight books published?

Laurie: [08:58](#) Yes, I just published my eight. Most of them except for two. I actually wrote a long time ago when my kids were little and

then two of them I wrote within this last couple years, but it doesn't take me very long because they're children's books and they kind of flow pretty easy.

- Laurie: [09:15](#) You said you sort of have this natural rhyming talent that not everybody has.
- Kelly: [09:19](#) It's a weird talent. I think I started doing it when I would sing to my kids when they were little. The hush little baby song.
- Laurie: [09:26](#) Yeah.
- Kelly: [09:27](#) And I would just be rocking them at night and singing that song and I was trying to keep up with it and I didn't know the lyrics so I would just sort of test myself to keep it, keep the flow going with all those rhymes "Mama gonna buy you a diamond ring" and then I would keep going and I would, I would get like a little stressed out if I couldn't come up with a rhyme in time for that next line.
- Laurie: [09:46](#) Yeah.
- Kelly: [09:46](#) So that's how I got good at it. And so now I just make up rhymes like crazy all the time. I know it annoys my kids now that...
- Laurie: [09:56](#) Because they're 15.
- Kelly: [09:59](#) 15, 16 yeah. Everything is ew. Yeah.
- Laurie: [10:02](#) And so for people watching who are considering doing the illustrations themselves, you use the computer, you use software, how long does it take you to illustrate?
- Kelly: [10:14](#) That? Probably takes me a couple months. Probably. One illustration will take me a couple of days and then I don't have a passion for it. I've always loved coloring and art and stuff, but I'm not passionate about it. Like I am with my writing, if I start to decide to write a book, it's all I do and think about like I wake up in the middle of the night with a good line and I want to write it down. But illustrating it's like, oh, I have to get back to doing that one picture. Like it's just not passionate. So I, I don't, I don't Gung Ho with my illustrating. I'll be like, I'll sit down with my coffee and I'll be like, okay, I'm gonna do this. It takes me a little bit longer.
- Laurie: [10:49](#) That's a little bit more like work.

Kelly: [10:52](#) Yes. But it's fun work. It's way better than being in accounts payable.

Laurie: [10:56](#) So yes. Yes.

Kelly: [10:59](#) Where I was years ago.

Laurie: [10:59](#) Okay. So what advice would you give to somebody just like us, but you know, five, 10 years ago, what advice would you give to somebody who, who is considering maybe moving forward with their book?

Kelly: [11:12](#) I would say don't wait, don't wait, don't wait. Just go ahead and start right away. Or if, if life is getting in the way, don't worry. There's no time limit. Like you can wait. If worse comes to worse, you can, it'll happen for you. You don't have to worry if you're 50, you don't have to worry if you're 70, it'll happen. It's there for you when you're ready for it is kind of.

Laurie: [11:38](#) I always feel that too. I'm very, I'm a very impatient person so I want it now and it's so frustrating. It's like you say outside influences, slow you down or get in your way, but that's really good advice and it's true and I definitely have learned to slow down because it will be waiting for you. You're right.

Kelly: [11:58](#) Right? Don't rush it. Like how I ended up rushing the Mimosa and now I'm looking back at some of those illustrations and I'm like, oh, I shouldn't have rushed it like it. But it's fine. It's fine.

Laurie: [12:10](#) I feel like that's a really good lesson. And I've been there too, but now, you know, on the other side of it, now we're able to look back and say, you know, it worked out okay. And that's like one of the, like you said, I don't do a lot of things right. I don't believe that about you, but you know, it's just we're human, we make mistakes and this is all new territory and so it's interesting to see you can still sell your books and still do an okay job. Even if it wasn't perfect and you maybe didn't, you know, didn't do everything. Right. So.

Kelly: [12:35](#) Yeah, and I mean, I didn't know what I was doing. I was just kind of trudging along through the mud trying to figure it out and I wasn't letting life get in the way. But you know what, I just thought of a great analogy. I love to put my life in analogies. It reminds me of making pancakes. You know, that first pancake is always kind of messed up and it tastes good, but it's just this random odd pancake in that sense.

- Laurie: [12:57](#) So I usually burn mine because remember I'm impatient so I have it on high and then I'm like, oh yeah, I better turn that one down.
- Kelly: [13:06](#) That's how my husband cooks. He puts all the burners on high and then cooks like onions and then our curtain smell like onions for four days after he makes something. Yeah.
- Laurie: [13:14](#) Onions are delicious. Delicious. Yeah, that's me. We'd get along. Okay. What can you share now, you've shared so much already, but have you really learned any great lessons? I feel like you have. You've already kind of talked about some lessons you've learned, but anything else that you want to add along the way through the process?
- Kelly: [13:33](#) Great lessons. Probably the most important. That first big one that I did is I would say do not enter into your authoring career with a partner that your. That's a friend that you're going to just split everything down the road and this is going to be the two of yours careers for the rest of your lives because creative, I think anything that's creative, there's gonna be some head butting, there's gonna be some different things and maybe you're not going to make a whole lot like with royalties. How are you going to split your \$2 and thirty four cent royalty with your, with your part-? I don't know. My advice would just be keep it business. Even if you are friends with someone that's going to illustrate your book, keep it very business, you know, say this is what I'm going to pay you. Thank you for your illustrations and this is now you know, I'm moving forward with my book because I don't know if it's gonna work out as a partnership when you're doing books.
- Laurie: [14:28](#) Right. So have a contract in place and maybe look really hard at whether or not you want to do a royalty share of your \$2 or just pay them upfront for the illustrations. And I know that that is a dilemma that a lot of people have because they have a picture book because they know the big expense is going to be illustrations,
- Kelly: [14:47](#) Right.
- Laurie: [14:47](#) And they might not necessarily have that thousand, 2000, \$3,000, whatever it is that an artist is asking and should be asking. Right? Yeah. And so I, I think a lot of people probably seriously consider that royalty share, but do you want to be spreading your \$2? Do you want to be splitting your \$2,000,000? Like either way...

Kelly: [15:07](#) And if they, if they feel that they're in it 50 percent with you the whole way, they're going to start putting their spin on. I dunno, I just think a book starts in the mind of the author and you've got that vision, you know what you want for your book. And when someone else starts telling you, I think it should look this way, which is what the big publishers I hear try and do.

Laurie: [15:25](#) Yeah.

Kelly: [15:26](#) It's, it's, it's something, some little part of you dies inside. When they when something about your book, your baby gets twisted up and everything and starts to look the way someone else wants it to look. That doesn't feel good. And I, this whole journey of mine, I've only wanted it to be good vibes only. And if I start to get a twisted up vibe, I just pushed everything away for a little bit. I'm like, no, I don't want that. So that's my biggest, I think piece of advice.

Laurie: [15:51](#) I love that. And I love that you brought up the traditional publishers because you and I are both self published and what that means is we got to choose, we made all the decisions about our words, our art for better or for worse, for right or for wrong, right? We learned that we got to make all those decisions. And you're right with traditional publishing, you sign your rights away so they, they own your words and they pick, you know all your things, unless you have some bargaining power and you end up with maybe a better contract than most. But yeah, that's a huge thing to consider. So glad you brought that up. Okay. Something fun that I like to ask everybody is personal and maybe little tacky, but I think it's really inspiring. So, how much money have you made? And you can tell me in dollar signs. And the reason that I'm asking is because what I want people to hear is that it's possible to make some money and what you spend the money on because that for me, is so fun. Like I have cleaners coming to the house this afternoon from my book money and it's life changing for me because I don't like cleaning the house. So. So yeah. So have you made any money? How many dollar signs and what's like the best and the most fun or your favorite thing that you've spent it on?

Kelly: [17:04](#) Well, yes, I've made money. I'm still so excited that anybody is willing to pay for a book that I wrote like that. To me that's super exciting and I, I will say that I've made four dollar signs, like I made it past the triple digit. So that's exciting. I'm not very good at tracking it because I just, I'm old and I don't know, I just don't want to do business things. I only use the right side of my brain anymore. So I've got some that will go into this one bank account. I've got some that goes into our checking. I make cash

over here. So I just, I don't know. And here's an example of one reason why I don't track it as the other day I was at some event and I ended up making just 40 bucks. I just had two twenties and I come home and I'm like Yay. I sold know however many books. And I walked in the door and I've got my money and I'm like Yay. And I walked past our chalkboard in the kitchen and it says I owe Johnny and Joanna twenty and 20 dollars each. I just walked over to my kids and I handed them. The one son is so sweet. He's like, you can keep that money and go withdraw the money that you owe me so that you can keep the money you make on your authoring. So it's in my wallet and I think I'll use it for kettle corn at the next Friday night game. So I just do little things. I just still mom with my money. I haven't done anything in particular, although I did tell you, hold on, hold on. I bought This the other day, which is. It wasn't even expensive. It was like 30 something bucks or something. But it's a press. It presses and puts, ex Libris Kelly Grettler. It looks very official and it's fun and it was kind of like a splurge. I would never have bought something like this if I, if I didn't use my actual authoring money because then...

Laurie: [18:49](#) And that's gorgeous. So that embosses on envelopes right? Your name and that. Yeah, that's beautiful. That's a good spend.

Kelly: [18:58](#) It is a good spend. It's better than kettle corn.

Laurie: [19:02](#) Kettle corn is so good too. That's awesome. Okay. So on the screen, I have your latest book up A Monster's Bad Rap. So why don't you just share with us a little bit about the book and where people can find it.

Kelly: [19:15](#) Okay. Well A Monsters Bad Rap is brand new. It just released on September first and I got a... she's actually a friend of the family. Natalie Cohen is a super talented. She's only 16 and I got her to illustrate it for me because I kind of wanted to encourage her and inspire her because I've known her since she's four and she's always been super talented at illustrating. So I let her kind of work with me on this book and I'm very proud of her and it's a story the story comes from. I got the idea back when I was little and I had a closet monster that I was scared of and I would sleep with the door open and the light on and I just was scared of the closet monster and at one point I don't remember when my family always used to, this is why I lie to kids and make up stories to kids because when I was little at one point my family who among other weird things that they would do to like mess with me, they started giving me Christmas presents from the closet monster. But in what it did is it made. And also I had a green lady that lived under my bed. I was scared of her and...

Laurie: [20:19](#) Did she give you birthday presents?

Kelly: [20:19](#) Yeah birthday presents. So what it did is it made me not be scared of them anymore. I was like, oh, they're kind of Nice. Thank you for my fabulous friend, closet monster. So it, it kind of made them not scary anymore and I going based on that, I came up with the idea of this book on how to sort of disarm the monsters in our closets and make them fun or kind of like if a kid at the preschool would have said, oh, I'm so scared of the closet monster, I'd be like, oh, it's not going to hurt you. He just in there trying on trying on your shoes. Like don't worry he's... So that's, that's what they do in this book is there and they're trying on all your clothes and your shoes and they're, they don't, they don't want to bother you. They're just in there having their fun.

Laurie: [20:57](#) So that's awesome. I like that a lot. Okay. And tell us really quick, I mean you have eight book. You might as well tell us about your books. You mentioned that the Mimosa Tree was your first one.

Kelly: [21:09](#) Yes. Closet monster I actually wrote back then and then I have the four seasons, which the seasons spring, summer, fall, winter, and all my books rhyme in kind of like this flowy, sorta rhymey way. I mean I can sort of talk like I'm so humble, I don't ever like to say anything. Like, Oh, I look good today. I don't like that kind of a person, but I will say my books, my, my rhyming is good. I'm proud of how I write. It's the one thing besides my kids that I'm proud of. So, so the rhyme, they all rhyme ike that. Also, oh, Sweet Tea by the Live Oak Tree is probably my really, really best one. I'm super proud of that book, that one I had professionally illustrated by this wonderful girl named Denise Muzzio who did pastel watercolors. It's gorgeous and it's flowing rhyming book that takes you kind of full circle of life. It starts with a little girl, kind of the idea of what can you imagine a live oak tree has seen throughout its life, like what has taken place underneath those branches? And it goes from different scenarios. And this girl grows up and it's just this flowy, Rhymey, beautiful story. And I love that one. And I'm proud of that. When I get to read that one in Barnes and Noble, it's on the shelves and our local Barnes and Noble right now.

Laurie: [22:27](#) Yay way to go!

Kelly: [22:27](#) I know.

Laurie: [22:28](#) It's like every author's dream.

Kelly: [22:31](#) It is. That is truly the dream. Once that happened, I kind of didn't know what to do anymore. I was like, okay, I'm done. I've done it.

Laurie: [22:37](#) I've got the book on the shelf. And then ...

Kelly: [22:40](#) Pen drop. Oh. I have another one called Not Nap Time. That one. That one is so funny and cute and I love that one. I was inspired to write that one not too long ago. Last year I wrote it, my son, I was talking to him, I said, what's your earliest memory? And he said, I remember being up in my room. I don't know if it was nap time or I was on a time out, but I remember pulling my curtains off the wall and he said, I remember being scared. And I, I think I have a slight memory of that to walking in and being like, what did you do? So I wrote a story about a little boy that doesn't want to take his nap and he's up there like throwing his stuffed animals on the floor, pulling his curtains down and have kids. By the time we go up to check on them, they're like laying on the floor. They're pants are off. They're like sleeping in a pile of their stuffed animals. And so that's what that story is about.

Laurie: [23:29](#) That's adorable. I love that. That's awesome. Well thank you so much. I feel like people really identify with you and your story and how you're a mom who, you know, you didn't finish college and you don't have like a writing degree, English degree and all that and you made it happen and you're doing great at it and you love it. And I think that's huge. So anything that makes you want to get up at three in the morning,

Kelly: [23:57](#) Like I really need to stop getting up at three in the morning

Laurie: [24:02](#) Because then when you want to sleep and you're not going to be able to.

Kelly: [24:05](#) Right? Yeah.

Laurie: [24:06](#) Yeah, yeah. Well thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Kelly and I met online. I don't even remember how um, but, I think on instagram.

Kelly: [24:19](#) Oh yeah, because you, I think I was probably doing a search, a hashtag search on writing or writers or something. I found you. Yeah. And you were so inspirational. I remember what it was. You had this first thing where you were like, write a blurb about yourself. I think it was like a little challenge and then that's when I came up with Kelly Grettler is a mother, a wife who

illustrates and writes or whatever it was. And I still to this day, have that on my website. I was like, Laurie inspired me so much.

- Laurie: [24:51](#) That's right. I had forgotten about that. That seems like so long ago. So if anybody wants to do that, the challenge I think is to write an interesting bio and not I was born in Manitoba, Canada. Yeah. Try to make it interesting and I love reading books where people do a an interesting like funny bio, even if it's all made up. I love reading books like that because you usually just skim over the bio, but I love those ones that catch my eyes. Same with the dedications sometimes. Really Funny Dedications, right? Like to the English teacher who said I would never be able to write it a full sentence or something like that.
- Kelly: [25:32](#) Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Dedications are fun. I always play with ...
- Laurie: [25:37](#) Lots of fun we can do. Okay. Well thank you.
- Kelly: [25:40](#) Thank you. I wish we could have coffee together.
- Laurie: [25:44](#) We should have ...
- Kelly: [25:45](#) If you're ever in south Texas.
- Laurie: [25:48](#) Okay. Bye Kelly.
- Kelly: [25:50](#) Bye Laurie.
- Introduction: [25:52](#) 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. Until next week, enjoy this chapter of your life.