



When Life throws you Lemons (My Story continued)



When life throws you lemons, it may take you some time to transform them into lemonade. It seems that my wonderful, new publisher was about to throw a lemon into my process of publishing my new storybook series. After publishing *Kissing Kirkland* and having a successful book signing, I never received another completed work from him – even after waiting patiently for over a year.



The next book my publisher was to complete was *Anxious Arlene*. I had also just found a local illustrator, Jessica. Though *Anxious Arlene* was in the publisher's hands, the illustrations for that book had not yet been completed. I'd arranged for my publisher to illustrate this book as he had the previous one, so I told Jessica to begin working on a different book. I also asked him to let me know if he needed Jessica to do the art work for *Anxious Arlene*.

Six months had passed. Nine months passed with no word. During the meantime, my illustrator had completed the illustrations for two new books. It became increasingly difficult to get my publisher to respond to my emails, when at one time, he would communicate with me on a daily basis. This publisher had already completed three different books for me, *Appetizers from the Word of God – Are You Hungry*, Volumes 1, 2, & 3 in addition to *Kissing Kirkland*. I'd been more than pleased with his work. However, I became increasingly concerned this time. An entire year went by before he let me know that he was unable to complete the illustrations for *Anxious Arlene*.

Without going into more crazy details of how the next three months went back and forth trying to get my publisher to communicate with me in order to get the next book printed, I decided, very reluctantly, to sever our contract. I was reluctant because I knew God had brought us together and to this very day, I continue to pray for him and his company because even though he was unable to

follow through on our contract, he did start me on the road to publishing my storybook series, as well as helped with strategies that allowed me to believe that reaching for a vision as large as this one, was possible. Even though I had signed a legally binding contract with him, he released me from it with no trouble or additional fees attached. He still holds the printing rights for the Appetizer series and for Kissing Kirkland, but I did finally find a reasonably affordable way to move forward; however, not without first having to swallow some very bitter and expensive lemons.

I ended up losing over \$600 and had to begin a new contract with a new publisher. I actually signed with two sister companies, one to complete the English volumes of my books and the other to complete the Spanish. These companies would not give me an up-front estimate of what the books would cost the public before they finished their draft. I signed the contract for them to complete three books at a time because the cost to me was less expensive this way than to do it one at a time. I was required to pay a third of the fee down and had to sign an agreement for them to withdraw the remaining amount from my bank account over the next two months.

Once they finished the draft (which was beautiful), they let me know the suggested retail cost of the books and the fees they would charge in order to print the books for resale. They wanted to sell the books for around \$21 for a 20-40 page book. The first of my storybook series was already published and selling for \$13.95 on Amazon and \$12 if purchased directly from me. All of the books in my series are generally constructed the same and are reasonably of the same value, so I wasn't about to put these new storybooks out in the marketplace for such an unreasonable price to the public.

I attempted to reason with the new publishers to lower the price of the book, but they would not budge. I told them I didn't want the draft they'd completed and even though they had a third of the money already, I didn't want them to complete the other two books. They informed me that I would need to go through some lengthy processes to get a refund, but that they would probably be deducting the next two payments while I waited for that process to complete. I let them know that I wasn't paying them any more money, and I didn't.

I ended up closing out my checking account and opening up a new one so that they wouldn't deduct any future funds, which I let them know I would do up front. I also sent them a letter explaining the situation about my dissatisfaction with their pricing and how I could not and would not accept the storybook they had completed for me. I lost my initial deposit of \$600, even though I could have accepted the completed, beautifully designed storybook they had finished. However, if I had accepted that storybook, the cost of that book would have been outrageous and that company would have had printing rights to it. So I had to eat that bitter lemon as well and just let it all go.



I believe that in my shock and grief from not being able to keep my first publisher, I rushed into finding the first affordable company I came across that wanted my work. I should have insisted on knowing the final retail cost for the finished product or at least a close estimate, before I signed any contract or paid any money. I now know that any company that's not willing to reveal those details to you that you should just move on. My mistake – my loss! Any lesson learned that requires a loss of money, is always a painful one; nevertheless, a lesson that will never be easily forgotten.

Stay with me through my next blog to read about what company I finally went with that has now gotten me to the point of publishing and printing nine more within my storybook series; all within the one year of following all of that drama.



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