

## **So, you want to be an author?**

**presented by Kristy Placido**

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I started *Robo en la noche* knowing that I wanted to write a book set in Costa Rica

I surfed the internet looking for ideas or news stories about CR

I happened on the website for Amigos de las Aves

I read everything I could find about them and about bird poaching

For *Noches misteriosas en Granada* I already knew I wanted to write a book about a student studying in Spain and having a paranormal experience. I visited the city of Toledo with a group of students and started thinking about one particular student, Kevin for the role. He was outwardly very perfect yet inwardly had many struggles. He also had many interesting quirks such as being rather clumsy and being horribly afraid of seeing blood. While in Toledo, my friends from Spain spent the day with us and we discussed the tortured history of the city and the belief many people have of supernatural presences there. My story began to take shape. I was staying that week with a woman named María Jesús who was sweet but a bit quirky in her own right. Her son had a falcon which he used for hunting. The scene with the rabbit paella was straight from my own experiences!

Later, after the trip, I stumbled upon Washington Irving's *Cuentos de la Alhambra*. As I read it I realized that Granada was where my story needed to be. When I read about the young man who hunted with his falcon and the story of the three princesses, these stories began to combine in my mind and intertwine with the characters I had already imagined. I realized I could make Irving's characters come to life once more!

### Suggestions

If you don't know where to start look online. Look for news stories, charitable organizations, cultural traditions, and then think about who the people might be who are involved. Does a story jump out at you? Maybe you already have a story in mind. Where would be a logical place to set it? Think about the culture you might like to integrate.

- ❖ Story driven
- ❖ Character driven
- ❖ Setting driven

I wrote descriptions of each character in detail—age, appearance, experiences, personality. This allowed me to stay true to each character as I wrote.

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I outlined the basic storyline chapter-by-chapter

I began writing chapter-by-chapter

Carol and I discussed how I should limit vocabulary and also how to insure appropriate numbers of repetitions. We discussed which words students would most likely already know by that level and added only a sprinkling of new words each chapter and made sure each new word was repeated several times.

When I worked on revisions, I carefully tried to use cognates whenever possible, going through and simplifying the language over and over.

When I got stuck I spoke with my own students and they gave me tons of feedback and ideas. They are not afraid to speak up if something doesn't resonate with them!

I always kept my own students in mind while writing. My greatest satisfaction comes from writing something THEY enjoy.

Make sure to keep some conflict or suspense for the end of the book. Think carefully about how you will reveal details or unfold events.

Rather than writing the character's thoughts, try to have your character dialogue with someone.

Don't be afraid to scrap ideas and rewrite. My best ideas come after having written for a while.

Talk with people you trust about what you are writing. Sometimes talking out loud about your story helps your ideas to solidify.

Write every day. Don't put off writing until you have ideas. Just write. Flesh out ideas even if they don't turn into anything. You will be glad you did it!

Publishing options:

Before sharing your work, make sure you copyright it. Simply writing "Copyright ©year by author name" is enough. Save it in your computer also.

Send a manuscript to a publishing company. Be prepared. If they like it, you will still most likely need to revise it to meet their standards or expectations.

Self-publish.

My first novel was rejected and never published. My other books were revised many times. Don't get discouraged. If you enjoy writing, keep going, and keep sharing with your own students!