



Author James Weems Newsletter

romantic comedies that will make you laugh, cry, and fall in love.

JAMES WEEMS AUTHOR

Newsletter #006—September 19, 2023

This novel is getting INTENSE! (NO) Film at Eleven!!

In this issue:

- A final, not-so-fond farewell to August
- Yep, things are getting INTENSE. A few small clues...
- Special sneak peek at CHRISTMAS BONFIRES, a Phoenix Rising Holiday short story
- Want to know what books I read when I'm not writing?
- Catching up with—or being caught by—the editor-in-chief
- September and October thoughts

We survived August's "dog days" after all! (The editor-in-chief wants to know when the "cat days" are.) It was a close one—there were too many days here with temperatures "feeling like" 100 degrees or higher. Now, I make no secret of the fact that I love warm weather, but I think high temperatures "feeling" like 100 might be overkill. There's something to be said for staying indoors and writing! Which brings me to the novel....

Like I said last newsletter, I've gotten to almost 50% complete. The first draft continues to creep toward the magic "halfway" point, and Ravynn and the group are still having a blast on their first tour. There's a couple of intriguing twists as the group moves from Montreal to Paris and then to Rome. London is next, with a tantalizing offer hanging in their grasp. That is, if Ravynn doesn't mess things up with his personal worries, and if external influences don't mess things up for the group....

Last newsletter I mentioned the Christmas short story I have started. It's another *Phoenix Rising* story, again set in New Orleans and the bayou country of Louisiana. The story's title is inspired by the Cajun tradition of bonfires along the rivers and bayous so *Papa Noel* (Santa Claus) could find the good boys and girls to deliver their Christmas *cadeaux* (gifts) to the proper houses. Hopefully I

will have *Christmas Bonfires*, a *Phoenix Rising* story, finished by Christmas, and you'll be able to enjoy a ride on the paddle-wheeler up the Mississippi River to see the bonfires on either levee while music from famous New Orleans-area performers plays, then take part in the Christmas Eve to Christmas morning Reveillon "dinner" at Hank and Pearl's place. Yep, Benji and Ravynn are returning to the scene of Benji's birthday celebration. Good times await! (And perhaps a wee bit of bayou Christmas magic for us all) Though, given the time factor, the book might become a Christmas 2024 book.... Just sayin'. The novel takes priority, you know?

You may or may not believe this, but I don't spend ALL my time writing. It's true. Besides writing the novel scenes, the Christmas story, all my other rough ideas for stories, and these newsletters, I am a pretty rabid reader as well. I'm not big on sad stories, though I have read quite a few of those in my life. I don't generally enjoy dull "textbook" type writing—I had ENOUGH of that in elementary school, high school, and four full years of college. Whenever I pick up a book these days, it better grab my attention pretty fast, or I put it down, fast. (And believe me, my goal with my writing is to make SURE you're entertained!)

With that said, I'm always good for Agatha Christie, especially Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot. And Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*—I've read the "trilogy" at least 3 times, the *Hobbit* twice. *Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle is another group of stories I'll keep re-reading until I can no longer hold a book. These days, as a "budding" author, I'm reading a lot of romance novels, as well. You have to see what your "competition" is doing, right? (Though I don't consider it competition. The authors I've talked to have all been very welcoming and supportive!)

If you want to read a book I've enjoyed, I'll name a few. I'm not doing this to earn a commission or anything. These authors don't even know I'm plugging their books! Anyway, some of these tie in with the "musical" theme of my novel (sort of) and some of them are just really good. If you want a good read, any of them work.

- "Smoky Mountain Dreams" by Leta Blake: this one's set in the Great Smoky Mountains, near Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, and features a theme park LIKE Dollywood. It has some connections to music, obviously; it also ties to an area where I lived for a while (and where one of the characters from my novel "hails from")

- "The Front Runner" by Patricia Nell Warren: okay, this one's DEFINITELY not my "usual" kind of romance. It's one of the first gay romances I ever read, and it doesn't have the happy ever after that most gay romances have, but

DAMN, is it powerful. It's more sports-related, but at its heart, it's a story of two guys falling in love and trying to make it work.

- Alexa Land's "Firsts and Forever" series (20 books): Starting with "Way Off Plan" from 2012, continuing through to a 2019 Christmas novella, and spawning two spin-off series of novels ("The Firsts and Forever Series" and "The Castaways"), these books are pure magic to me. All are set mostly in San Francisco, all feature a family of lovable gangster types (headed by the grandmother, a pint-sized spitfire who debuts in the third or fourth book, if I remember correctly). It's LOL-city. And HEAs all around....

With that, it's (past) time for Editor-in-Chief Angel to have a glance at what's happening, and put her pawprint indelibly on the words here....



This will be the only newsletter for September.... Your NEXT message from me will be October 10. You realize what that means, right? There will be a SECOND newsletter—on October 31... Halloween, or as we all now know, **Benji's** birthday! He just MIGHT drop by to celebrate with us....

See you in three weeks!