



Author James Weems Newsletter

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

JAMES WEEMS AUTHOR

Newsletter #009—November 21, 2023

Happy Thanksgiving Week....

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Here it is, the last half of November already. Sheesh, weren't we celebrating the beginning of 2023 like two weeks ago? It sure seems that way! Okay, maybe I exaggerate a bit. But this year has flown by. But we **have** accomplished a few things this year, and the biggest and best is just about within reach.

So here's the scoop (I know, most authors save the "big news" for the end, to keep you reading, but I *can't* wait): the novel is now sitting just **four** scenes from being a completed first draft. And that's as I write this newsletter. By the time you get this, I might be writing those magical words, "~~Where's the beef?~~" err, "The End." It's been a fun journey, from the moment Ravynn St. John stepped out of my head and demanded I tell his story, through writing half a contemporary romance and backtracking to rewrite it all as a romantic comedy, all while Benji found *his* voice and the guys showed me their individual personalities.

Along the way, a prequel was hatched, followed by my first-ever Christmas story. All focusing on a group of characters that I hope you love as much as I do, and a place as magical and mystical as it claims to be—New Orleans and the bayou country of Louisiana.

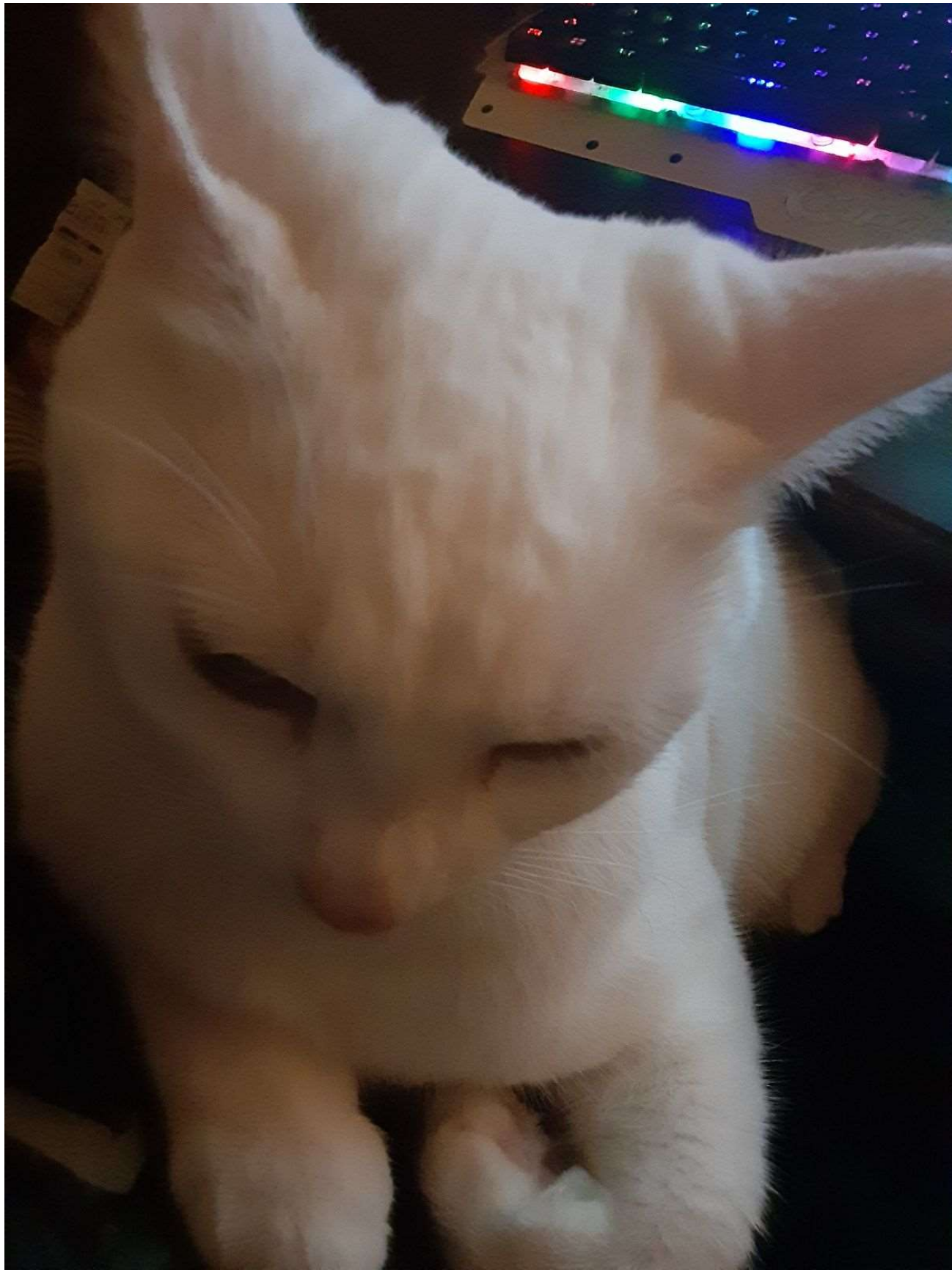
You might be thinking that I'm focused on New Orleans a lot. Well, the prequel and the Christmas story **would** give you that impression, but I promise you, the novel is going to expand Phoenix Rising's universe considerably! The novel

covers the group's first World Tour, which covers ten cities in the United States, Canada, and Europe. During the tour, the guys and their support, manager Greg and assistant manager DC along with Davey Rhodes and his road crew warriors, will travel from the west coast of the US to Canada, cross the Atlantic to tour stops in France, Italy, and England, then back to the east coast and finally home to Atlanta, with some new friends and new relationships along the way. Remember, this is a romantic comedy, so there will be laughs *and* love along the way!

I've already given you a pretty hefty view of the novel's story, so we'll shift gears here. After all, it's the unofficial start of the holiday season, so let's talk turkey, okay? (Sorry, I couldn't resist tossing that in.) This time of year, with the weather getting colder (which I am *not* a fan of), it's a **great** time to curl up under a blanket with a warm beverage (hot toddy, anyone?) and a book.

If you haven't read it already, grab a copy of **Christmas Bonfires: a Phoenix Rising Holiday short story**. It's a quick, *free* read. You can click the link below to get a copy of the regular edition—no email or anything required. If you'd prefer the **illustrated** edition, reply to this email with your preference (epub, mobi, or pdf) and I'll shoot you a copy. Just as a caution—the file sizes for the Illustrated edition are much larger than the regular edition (epub: regular 2.44Mb, illustrated 97.8Mb; mobi: regular 520Kb, illustrated 7.11Mb; pdf: regular 2.01Mb, illustrated 10.5Mb). Other Christmas and holiday-themed gay romances I have read include three from Alexa Land—**Hitman's Holiday**, **Comfort and Joy**, and **Making Merry**. The first two are part of her *Firsts and Forever* series. The third is a crossover between the *Firsts and Forever* series and the *Castaways* series. You can probably enjoy them as stand-alone books, but they'll be even better if you read the full series. If you'd prefer a fun Christmas romance without worrying about a series of books, **Christmas Bubble** by Ana Ashley should have you bubbling over with joy. (Excuse the pun!) It's a fun read with great characters. My last Christmas-themed book is a heavy hitter. Heavy, because it pretty much hits every emotion. I think *that's* why I like it so much that I have an ebook copy *and* an autographed print copy of the book. I highly recommend R. J. Scott's **The Christmas Throwaway**. It's a helluva read – you'll cry (at least, I did), you'll smile, you'll swoon, and by the end, you'll hopefully love the book as much as I do. Please understand, I'm not getting a cent for recommending any of these books—I enjoyed reading them, so if you want to find out what I read, here you are. If you *do* read any of them, drop me a note and let me know your thoughts—or, better yet, let the author know, by leaving a brief review at Goodreads or Amazon. Independent authors sink or swim based on reviews because so many people base their purchase decisions on those reviews! (Please be kind to my fellow authors!)

Since Benji took over the last newsletter, the editor-in-chief hasn't made an appearance in a while! She's been very busy chasing the other cats here at the house, or sleeping, or making herself comfortable in my lap just when I was about to try to write a stretch of the story. I have been able to capture a shot of her in her favorite, or second-favorite, spot....



As you can see, she's gotten to be quite a big girl! I would weigh her and measure her to give you her vital statistics, but my scales have died (again... so much for technology!), and waving a tape measure around a cat like Angel is a good way of watching it get eaten or at least shredded. For the record, she weighs at least 10 pounds and is about a foot and a half long, from nose to her hind legs (with her tail extended, she's close to two and a half feet)! She will turn twenty months old December 1, 2023. That's 1 year, 8 months, which means her birthday is April 1. Don't *even* call her an "April Fool" or she'll show you just **who** the fool is!

Looking ahead, with the novel nearing "complete first draft" status, here's what's ahead: first, the scenes will be compiled into chapters; 74 scenes will turn into somewhere around 20 to 30 chapters, probably. We'll see how it works out. After that, it'll get thinned out—the book right now is over 100,000 words, which would be an **awesome** science fiction fantasy novel, but this is a romantic comedy. So, it needs to be closer to 50,000 to 70,000 words or maybe less.... Some of my words will get cut. It's a given. (Though, they might stick around for an "outtakes" or "bloopers" collection.) Once all the cutting and re-editing is done, there's going to be a chance for early readers—"beta" readers who will be reading the book to catch all or most of the bad bits, like a guy walks through a door that doesn't exist or something; and then once all those bad bits are fixed, ARC readers—**advanced** readers who will get the book before its "official" release, in exchange for giving an **honest** review of the book. Pretty sweet, huh? The advanced reader gets a free novel to read and just has to post a review. I've done it myself; it's pretty cool. I encourage you to consider being an ARC reader if you enjoy reading, don't mind giving an honest review, and don't want to spend *any* money on a book. There are limited numbers of ARC reader spots available, so don't assume you can delay about it, if you get the opportunity.

The next newsletter will arrive in your inbox on December 12, 2023, and will be the final newsletter for this year. The year has flown by, and I hope to have an update on the novel with MAYBE some projections of its future then. See you in three weeks!