

## Sandy Reay, Author

### January 2023 Newsletter

#### Resolutions.

**My recycled resolution: don't steal cheap pens**



Photo by Bill Patterson



### **The Little Girl with a Book**

I found a photograph of me when I cleaned out my parents' house. I couldn't have been more than two or three years old. I don't remember the dress or know what hill I'm standing on. I'm holding an old hardback book, not a thin one with pictures, but I have no idea what book or why I'm holding it. I wasn't an early reader like my older sister—she learned when she was four and sick. Mom sat by her bed and read to her, day after day.

Once, when I wasn't much older than I look in that picture, the lights went out and the skies grew dark. The wind blew over a huge tree that crushed the front porch of the house across the street. It howled and shook our house. Daddy called it a hurricane. I asked my mother to read to me. She told me to ask my sister. My sister sat close to the window, reading in what little light leaked through the rain-soaked glass. I begged her to read to me and sat close to her—as close as she would let me.

Mom took me to the library to find books. Dad took us to thrift stores. I prowled the dusty shelves of worn hard-back books and studied the faded colored pictures on the covers to pick out what I wanted to read. Twice a year, my sister and I got gifts. We told our parents what we wanted. They bought one

thing that was similar to what we asked for (within our budget) and something we needed. Sometimes, Mom slipped in a used book (a thrift-store find or hand-me-down).

The first year my sister went to college, Mom gave me two new paperback biographies: Jenny Churchill and Isadora Duncan. The covers were bright and shiny, they smelled like ink and adventure, and the spines had no vertical age lines. I was the first person to read them.

### **The Sinister Umbrella**

I'm writing *The Sinister Umbrella*, a novel about a young woman whose life is destroyed in a car accident and her struggle to build a new life. It's a young-adult horror story, with a twist (or three).

I have several alpha readers and critique partners who give me feedback. After five chapters, I stopped writing in third person. The almost-unanimous vote selected the first-person snarky voice, and that character is a lot more fun to write.

Here's the latest feedback on the first five chapters:

You do a good job starting with the little girl's dream world this little girl doesn't want. I like the way you handled the tragedy better this time around. Enough to totally change her life and the tone of the story, but it doesn't drag on this time, rolling right in to interaction with Terrence.

– Owen

Wow! Very cool.

I am loving this new point of view! The overall story was fluid and kept my interest. Excellent structure. I love the new snarky voice of Zizanie and how you've created a new level of tension with this accident and trip to the hospital. Looking forward to the next installment.

– Marlene

This piece has real heart.

– Bob

Looks good so far

– Ron

DANG.....A REAL PAGE TURNER,(ITS DIGITAL EQUIVALENT ANYWAY) THIS AND YOU PATIENTLY FLESHED IT OUT WITH LOTS OF DETAILS TO MAKE IT SEEM REAL. GOOD WORK.

– Tom C

It's not too late to become an alpha reader. Just reply and tell me you want to read. Then you can tell me what to write, and why.

### **My monthly (I hope) email.**

Any time of the month is still monthly. This makes three out of three "late" emails. And my obituary can include "the chronically-late Sandy Reay."

I signed up for an 8-week writing class from Lighthouse Writers. Two hours of class time each Wednesday. That's not much time at all. Another recycled resolution: finish the memoir. I hoped the class would inspire me to do that. [\*\*\*You Are the Road that Led Me Home\*\*\*](#) has been in progress for ten+ years. Now, I'm learning new writing techniques that help me put emotion in words when the subject's painful and my first reaction is to pull back. And I'm still in one monthly critique group. And “refreshing” a bathroom. And redoing all the black and white art on the big wall in my office. And working on my taxes. And ... Thanks for your patience with me.

**If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply and put “unsubscribe” in the subject or text,** before the next email. I won't send another. Unless you reply after the next monthly email, which should be around the middle of February.

#### **Necessary blah blah**

I add content to my website at random intervals and mention what's new on the home page. You could check out [my author website](#) to see what's new. For those of you who are worried about the “Not Secure” message at the top: that means I didn't pay for a certificate because I don't do online commerce. All my websites display information. I don't collect or save your information **unless you choose to email me**. (I've been building web sites since 1998; I keep 'em simple and watch out for suspicious files on my server.)

[Sandy Reay, Author](#)—ideas to encourage creativity, where to find inspiration, short stories, micro & flash fiction, true stories, works in progress, and a long-overdue memoir

[Colorado Sandstorm Music](#)—songs and poems written and co-written by “Sandy Reay and Friends” with an online Cowboy Poetry Book: [Another Horse to Saddle](#)

[Colorado Sandstorm Productions](#)—info about all the other websites plus concerts and songwriting workshops by national touring songwriters, including Buddy Mondlock and Dan Navarro

[AcousticByLines](#)—when and where you can hear musicians, co-writers, and find Sandy (sometimes)

[YouTube Sandy Reay and Friends songs and poems](#)

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