



Lunch and Learn Series

Trelani Duncan

Informal Greeting

I am probably the most arrogant, humble, timid, courageous, fragile, thick-skinned, intelligent, yet ignorant black girl that you will ever meet.

I love life and I love learning. I learn from everything: internal and external, young and old, black and white, foolish and wise. Yet the more I learn, the more that I learn just how little I know.

I am Joan, Maya, Toni, Lynn, and even Monica. I am Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte, and Miranda. I am a wife, a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend, and a student and God forbid, should any of these titles be terminated then I will write about it.

Therefore, I am a writer.

And I write to style the familiarities of black women in such a way that it is relatable to everyone and in doing so, I strive to gift my readers what I love to experience while reading which is *feeling*.

What made me Write...

- o A horrible book
- o Roughly 50 first-story drafts
- o Big Circle: Writing, doubting, quitting, etc.
- o Conference
 - o Networking, advice, testimonies, new like-minded friends, etc.
- o Critique group, mentor, classes, and publications

Black Writer's Reunion & Conference 2012





Writer's group

The KSA's of Writing

- o Knowledge:
 - o Reading EVERYTHING (sci-fi, fiction, nonfiction, romance, thriller, etc.)
 - o Read as a writer
 - o Why I did or did not like that book?
 - o Attending workshops, classes, and conferences
 - o Research
 - o Write what you know
 - o Even in fiction, true elements are necessary

o Skills:

- o Practice, practice, practice
 - o It doesn't make you perfect; it makes you better!
 - o Regardless of your English grades, anyone can be a writer!
- o Read how-to books, listen to the audio tapes
 - o Stephen King "Memoir of the Craft" and Jewel Parker Rhodes "Free Within Ourselves"
- o Keep a journal
 - o Write about everything, everywhere
- o Pay attention
 - o The way people walk, talk, change of seasons, etc.

o Abilities

- o Battling writer's block
- o Battling doubt (myself and others)
- o Excusing excuses
- o Committing myself: I'm going to do this regardless!
- o Finding a balance
 - o I have a husband, two kids, school, and work; how am I going to do this?
 - o Found that nighttime worked best for me and setting realistic goals: 500 words per day

Completed Manuscript

- o 500 words per day
 - o Sometimes more, sometimes less, sometimes none at all
- o I'm done!
 - o Now what?
- o Converting 300+ page Word document into an actual book

Find a publisher?

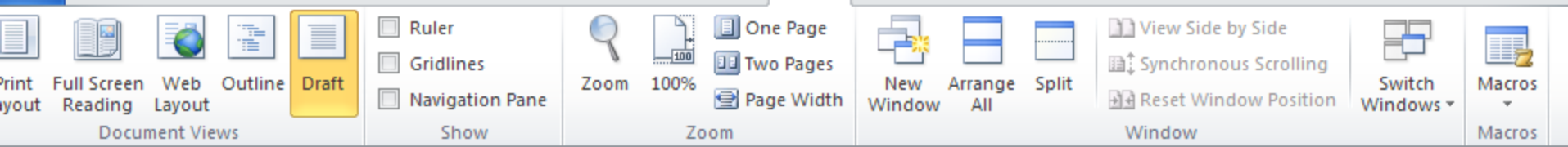
- o Submit query letters, manuscripts
- o Wait for at least six months for a response
- o Be rejected at a rate of 20:1 (at least)
- o Reading contracts with a microscope to ensure that I'm not being cheated
- o All costs (editing, conversions, printing, book cover, etc.) are covered
- o Burden of marketing is shared

Or Self-Publish?

- o No submissions
- o No waiting for a response
- o Less intimidating contracts
 - o There will still be some
- o Book is 100% mine, 100% of the time
- o I pay for *everything*
- o Marketing is my job alone

Decision: Self-Publishing

- o KSA's taught me everything I needed to know
- o An editor: \$700
 - o Even though I made A's in every single writing class
 - o Met through a conference
 - o Results were invaluable but hurt my feelings a *little* bit
 - o Good working relationship with editor



ahead. There was always a ~~nine-nine-to-to~~-five pushing me one way and a man pushing me the other, ~~way~~-leaving me stagnated in a cage of dependence. I was sick of it and before I knew it, my thoughts had turned into grunts, which turned into mumbles, which turned into a cutting, cussing fit.

———“Shantelle? Everything ~~alrightall right~~ in there?” John knocked on the door in that hesitant “should I?” kind of way.^[EG2] “Or do you need big daddy to come in there and make everything ~~alrightall right~~?” He-he chuckled.

———Why are words coming from his lips? Better yet, why is his ass still here?^[I] jumped out of the shower like a crazy woman, swung the door open, and laid it down flatly just how low down, dirty, and cheap I thought his low down, dirty, and cheap ass was.^[EG3] He left so fast you would’ve thought that the finger that I had mashed in his forehead was a pistol.

Chapter 1

———Had I known that I was going to lose my job nine hours later ~~it’s-a-good-chance~~ ~~that~~-I would’ve played the John/prostitute role just a little while ~~longer~~. The morning had started off as any other one. I waltzed in the office ~~just~~-a tad bit late, which in my opinion was not ~~late~~

Self-Publishing Cont...

- o Book cover/typesetting: \$675
 - o Compared prices, read reviews
 - o Selfpublishing.com as recommended by another author
- o ISBN: \$100 per
- o Author photo
- o Bio and blurb

Self-Publishing Cont...

- o Registering company: So Fundamental Publications
 - o Creating a name and logo
- o Printing: \$721 for 100 books
 - o Make sure it looks like a book that I would read
 - o Make sure it looks like a book that was pulled from Barnes and Nobles' bookshelf
- o Finished product



Marketing

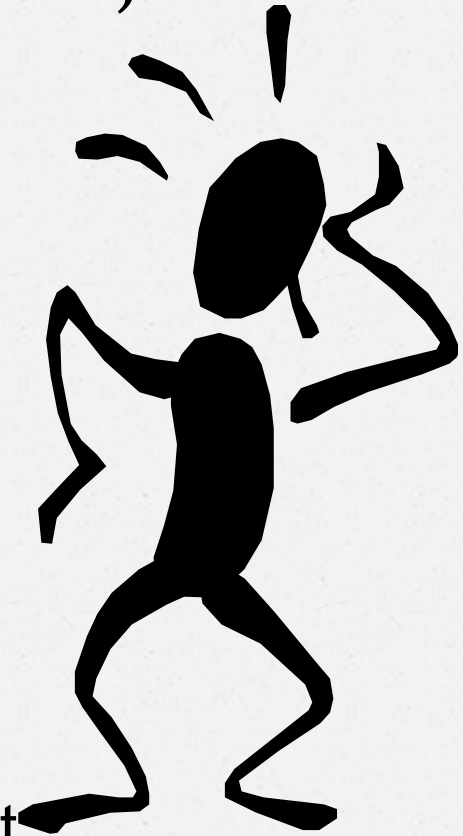
- o Means everything!
- o Started before book was even published
- o Researched ways to market
 - o FB, Twitter, Amazon, Smashwords, BN.com, my own website, festivals, conferences, etc.
- o Book release party
 - o Celebration not only for me, but my family and friends. I was back (temporarily)!



Release party: December 2012

Should've, Could've, Would've...

- o Been more patient...
 - o Editor time
 - o Costly errors
 - o Embarrassment!
- o Avoided that vanity company...
 - o Too good to be true
 - o Prey on self-publishers
- o Purchased 10 ISBN's from the start
 - o Purchased one only to have a "duh" moment



Success!

- o Having a published book
- o My own thing
 - o Make my own schedule
 - o Make all executive decisions
- o Family and friends are proud
- o It can never been taken away from me
- o I have mentors and such, but I'm also my own motivation

