

Hollywood Author Keeps Getting Better All The Time

Posted by [Zach Hill](#) On 07/09/2021

HOLLYWOOD, Md. -- "Everything I do is acquiring a skill that I can use later," says local author Theresa Ford. The Hollywood, Maryland resident, who writes under the names T.L. Ford and Harriet R. Thorne makes it a point to keep learning new things.

While she's been writing since her days at St. Mary's Ryken High School, her drawing skills were, "pretty much limited to tornadoes and stick figures." When she published her first book, *Lawful Good Thief*, back in 2012, she also designed the cover. However, she couldn't put the face she wanted on the cover because she didn't know how to draw one.

Theresa decided she wanted to change that.

"I signed up for drawing tutorials online. I read books on drawing, worked on exercises, and watched endless YouTube videos. Drawing is apparently a learnable skill," Ford said. "You can go from stick figures to drawing something that makes people go 'wow,' if you really practice and learn the techniques. Now, I'm president of the Color and Light Society of Southern Maryland. I do watercolors and digital art."

The cover of her second book, *Stealing Magic*, looked much more like she wanted. Theresa even recently published a two-volume set of art cards. "The art books were my COVID project. I looked at it like, 'As long as I'm stuck here at home, I'll put my stack of art cards that I doodled and turn them into a book.'"

Getting Better All The Time

Over the years, Theresa worked for defense contractors as a technical writer and programmer. She says technical writing helped improve her fiction writing and that her third book, *Colony One* took her craft to the next level.

Her first two books were light, easy-to-read fantasy. *Colony One* is more substantial. Theresa says, "Colony one is a very heavy book with a lot of deep discussion. It explores how we get from where we are now to living in space." The book is also illustrated with her artwork.

Theresa also helped her father finish an autobiography called *Educating Gramps*. and published a thriller called *The Sound of the Light* under the name Harriet R. Thorne.

She had plenty of new projects lined up, too. There's the audiobook version of *Colony One*, another science fiction book in the draft stage, and an outline for a literary RPG book. The literary RPG genre is based on video gameplay, something Theresa is familiar with. She taught herself to program video games and contributed to the online game *Ancient Anguish*. Programming the game helped her learn how to plot out a story. "You had to create a backstory and your characters had to be able to speak and have a story."

She'd also like to write a book to help teach people the basics of creating databases. "I have three or four other outlines partially finished in various genres. They're going to sit until they say, 'I want out of your head, write me now.'" It's almost obsessive when the stories in your head want to get out."

You Can Do It

There's no telling what other books could come next, Ford goes where life leads her.

"I collect my ideas from life," Ford said. "Every book has a new skill that I'm showing off whether it's obvious or not."

She has two pieces of advice for aspiring writers.

You can do it, regardless of your skill level. You can learn it. You can go forth and do it.

Grow thick skin. Not everyone likes everything. If everybody liked everything, there would only be vanilla ice cream.

Ford says what matters is learning as you go through life. "Everything you do today affects what you can do tomorrow. You may be awful at it today, but you can succeed. You just keep acquiring skills and moving forward. Everything I do is acquiring a skill that I can use later. Like a game, picking up the item I need for the next adventure and then sharing with others to help them acquire the same thing."

Theresa is part of the Creative Writers of Southern Maryland Meetup group that gets together virtually every Tuesday at 7 p.m. EST. Both experienced and beginner writers can drop in at <https://www.meetup.com/Southern-Maryland-Creative-Writing-Meetup/>

You can check out her website here: <https://www.cattail.nu/>

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