

1. Time management: How do you manage 5 kids, 6 pets, a husband, jobs, and still have time to write.

-- first, my first book took almost 15 years to bring to publication, and three covers to really make it work.

-- after that, the ideas came pretty regularly, either through my own reading and studies, even movie and tv watching for story, character, setting, and plot ideas.

-- So time management. Let's dispel some common myths with writing:

1. You don't have to write every day, and if you try to hold yourself accountable to that, you will only make yourself feel bad. Some days are just not conducive to writing and that is OK. What do to do instead?

A – think about other book ideas or how to develop your characters or story more – that is part of writing.

B -if you can, take notes on A

C – edit instead of write! If you have more than one book in the works, editing is still a necessary part of the process

D – set weekly goals instead of daily to take the pressure off.

E – find those pockets of time. Even if I'm watching TV with the kids, if it's brain dead TV, I have my tablet and keyboard in front of me, typing when I can. It's not great writing and will need revision, but you can't revise a blank page (see C)

F—take advantage of dictation. I walk several days a week, and for many of those walks, I have my phone tucked by my chin and my dictation software on (there are some great apps and many are cheap). Then use google drive or email and upload the dictated text. I've written the majority of a few books this way.

G – take advantage of tech – if you have a large computer that you write on, it's a problem to write in the car while waiting for something if the computer is at home. Use a cheap tablet/keyboard or a cheap laptop/chrome book or see F.

H – grab writing resource books, like the Emotion thesaurus books, or for romance writers, The Romance Writer's Phrase book – to help you get past areas where you are stumped. These books can help prime the pump when it seems dry.

2. My writing schedule is a bit odd right now as I'm teaching from home due to Covid, and two of my kids are my step kids and aren't home 4 days a week, and my other three are adults. I didn't really get into writing aggressively until my youngest girl was 16. I also have ADD, so I find it difficult to do nothing. I have to be active, doing something, most of the day.

3. However, here is what I do during the week:

Morning – wake up and take meds/workout/walk/ breakfast in that order.

Late morning – either grading or writing. I try to do 2 hours of this, and it helps clear my afternoon and evening as necessary.

Lunch – I do some cleaning, have a light lunch, and take a break.

Early afternoon – Another round of either writing or grading, whatever I didn't do in the morning. I try to do some of this outside on the patio to get sunlight, fresh air, etc. It helps me find my zen some days.

Late afternoon – lately it’s been naps. We’ve had a rough 2021, including my stint in the hospital in late April, and my recovery has been a bit slow. If I get a good night’s sleep, I usually don’t need the nap. I try to do some self care, stuff just for me (something I enjoy doing) or work on my marketing.

Dinner around 5 or so.

After dinner – hang out with the hubby for a bit, maybe watch some TV with him. He has to be up at 4:30 am for work, so he goes to bed early.

Then I’m back on the computer. This is my big push, once everyone’s done for the night. I’m a night owl, so I’ll be up until midnight or one am easily.

I usually logged into my classes and grading. Then I take a break from that and do some revision or editing, then back to grading. (ADD remember?)

At about 9:30-10 pm, I grab my tablet and keyboard (the keyboard is a bit smaller and I can type upwards to 1500+ words in a hour on that bad boy) and try to write until midnight or later.

Here is a link to a great resource on writing routines:

https://blog.bookbaby.com/2021/04/writing-routine-10-tips/?utm_campaign=BB2118&utm_source=BBNews&utm_medium=Email#li=MA1-ac1295470a0faee0c251b2c4b6b6bac6&cs=MA1-f3561882203731643357f0bf80282a68

2. How did you stay **motivated during CoVid?** Do you participate in an accountability group of any kind?

-- some of the things I previously mentioned contribute to my motivation. I have two of my kids work for me as PAs and editing, which does lighten my load and make it easier for me to focus. Knowing they are knocking at the door, waiting for work, keeps me going.

-- I belong to some great writing groups on facebook: Alessandra Torre Inkers, The new romance café, and 20booksto 50K and my regular go-to sites that I check in on almost daily. I belong to a myriad of other groups for writing help, blurb help, newsletter swaps, Bookbub swaps, book cover ideas, writing and marketing tips, and the like.

-- With the groups, my own social media following and newsletters, I let my readers know what I’m working on. You shouldn’t make promises to your readers that you can’t deliver on, so that keeps me accountable to the people who matter most in this process – my readers.

-- And my hubby. I was married before to someone who was very critical of my writing, and nothing will shut down the desire to write than someone insulting you about it. My hubby is an avid audiobook reader and does his own writing, and has been all in for me on this process from the very beginning. I also help write, revise, edit, and publish/promote his books, so he loves to see what I do so we can do the same for him.

3. How did you end up writing about historical fiction in Scotland? How do you do **research?**

My family heritage extends back to the British isles on my mother's side, and when I married my first hubby, his last name is Dalrymple, and I was all in for that Scots heritage. IT's not the best last name, I've learned – evidently Dalrymples have a long history of treason against the Scots – most notable the earl of Stair (of which I am outlining a book series).

As a result of our own historical connections, I felt a deep connection to the history. Then I read *Outlander* in 1993 on a whim (back when it was a nothing text, cheap paperback purchase only!) and saw the movie *Braveheart* a year or so later, and started researching Robert the Bruce as a result of the film. I loved Gabaldon's writing style and wanted to write in a similar vein in the time of Robert the Bruce, and since I was still in grad school at UCR, I had access to amazing resources in the library. A trip to Epcot and their Britain land in 1995 meant my previous hubby and I could do more research specifically on the Dalrymple heritage, and it all just grew from there.

Unfortunately, I have to use a lot of film, photos, and drawings for my books, as I've not had the chance to travel to Scotland yet. The hubby and I were supposed to go this year, but we had to push off a vacation from last year to this year, so if we can swing it, we might try for next year.

However, I do own my own kilt from my grandfather's clan – Clan Lee, that my mother and I made in the 1990s. For Christmas this year, my hubby gifted me with a small section of estate land in Wigtownshire, Scotland, with thus granted me the title of Lady Deerwester-Dalrymple. The plot is just a few miles south of Galloway Forest park in the lowlands of Scotland near Ravenstone Castle. I'm hoping to visit it when we go.