

Changing Genres

I had been characterizing myself as a mystery writer, because that's what I thought I was writing. *Development*, my first book, was at least in part, a mystery. (Who stole Hank's money?) Some called it more of a "moral tale," or a family saga, both of which are true, but it is still a mystery. And with *Carrie's Secret*, my second book, I deliberately set out to write a mystery. Crimes are committed and the reader tries to figure out "whodunit."

Okay, fine so far. I felt I had cemented my identity as a writer of mysteries. But now I'm well into writing my third book, *Empty Luck*, and it turns out it is not a mystery at all, not by any means. We know "who dun" various crimes. There is no mystery there. Instead, there is the suspense of wrong-doers trying to escape being caught, the risks they run, and the consequences they face. All are elements of suspense writing, perhaps more accurately known as thrillers, and clearly not mysteries.

I suppose I could wedge a mystery into the story. That's worth considering. Someone could be killed and we don't know the killer, or an unexplained disappearance could take place, something along those lines. I'll have to think about it. Meanwhile, I feel it is only correct to change my online persona from "Paul Backalenick, Mystery Writer" to "Paul Backalenick, Mystery & Suspense Writer."

Who cares, you ask? Really, why do genres matter? Why do you have to put your writing into a category? The only reason I can think of is to help sell books. A genre helps readers find what they are looking for. We all have our favorite categories, and hey, I want my books to be found, so that's why I try to accurately classify them by genre. 'Nuff said.