

# Random Thoughts



Welcome to my winter newsletter.

I hope you managed to get some rest over the festive period and spent some time with friends or family. Aside from the (often) overindulgences of the season and the contrasting (grim) realities of work and family life, this time of year can often feel ponderous and slow. The spirit of 'new year's resolutions' is a well-established tradition, encouraging reflection and the setting of goals for the year ahead. However, this can become synonymous with avoidance, frustration and defeat, and the subsequent feelings of (self-imposed) failure.

More ancient traditions celebrated the new year later in the month, when nature starts to awaken from the winter slumber and the days begin to lengthen. Imbolc, around the 1<sup>st</sup> February, is seen as a time of rebirth and renewal, and this can often engender more optimism in completing projects and deciding future aims. Having seen the daffodils poking through the earth and a carpet of snowdrops on a recent dog walk, I certainly feel more optimistic that spring is around the corner.

Regarding my own yearly goals, it looks like 2026 is going to be a busy one. I have a duology coming out shortly, with the first book currently undergoing a copy edit/line edit and the second book due to go for a manuscript assessment in a couple of months (see my [Autumn 2025 newsletter](#) for the different types of editing). I'm hoping the first book will be available around late spring/early summer, with the second due before the end of the year – but that may be Imbolc's optimism!

I'm also hoping to return to the Dragonslayer-verse this year, starting a new trilogy which continues from where The Druid saga finished. There's a certain character who has been nagging me to tell their story...

Remember to check my socials for updates on these projects through the year.



## *Questions and Answers*

*How do you deal with writer's block?*

Authors are often asked this question, and I always find the answers given by various authors, in various genres interesting. Perhaps the first place to start is determining what it meant by 'writer's block'.

I think the common image associated with writer's block is a distressed author staring at a blank page or empty computer screen, with the cursor flashing forlornly. 😊 There have certainly been times when I have struggled to know what comes next and have cursed that cursor for its silent judgement. Invariably, those times have involved me trying to get the characters to do something their personalities wouldn't do, or place them in a situation which is not appropriate for that story or that place within the story. Taking the dog for a walk in my adored forest will typically allow my subconscious to percolate, and I will have generally seen the error of my ways by the time I get back to the car.

If the question relates to a lack of ideas, I think I'm like many authors where this is not usually the problem, often having too many ideas and not knowing where to start or how to coherently put them on paper. Russell T Davies (he of Dr Who fame) calls it a 'mental soup', with ideas floating around in the giant soup bowl of your creative consciousness, just waiting for you to scoop them out. I can relate to that. My head is full of snippets of unformed ideas and dramatic scenes, with proto-stories for at least another nine novels! 🤪

## *Recent Reads*

Just a quick couple of recommendations.

I like to read a non-fiction every now and then, and I have recently read *Legenda* by Janina Ramirez. Not only an interesting read about 'forgotten' female players in European history, it also looks at how these women have been used to promote political ideals that may not reflect their own. Worth a read.

In more familiar territory, S A Chakoborthy's *Daevabad* trilogy (and companion book) is a masterpiece. I was completely obsessed with the wonderful writing, the beautiful imagery and the likeable characters. Warning: it will rip out your heart and stomp on it before the end – essential requirements for a good story. 😊

That's all for now. Don't forget to follow me on my socials for regular updates – just click on the appropriate image below:

