

## **PODCAST 72: THE TWO MILLION DOLLAR FIRST TIME AUTHOR – WITH CHLOE ESPOSITO**

Speaker 1: Two writers, one just starting out, the other, a bestseller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson and their amazing guests as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James Blatch: Hello and welcome to the Self Publishing Formula podcast with Mark and James. Ensnared in our home here in Salisbury and we have an exciting new author on this week, do we not, Mark?

Mark Dawson: We do indeed. We have Chloé Esposito, who I remember how I came across her to start, whatever, I reached out to her publisher. She's got a big, very, very big launch out.

Two or three weeks ago it actually came out with a book called Mad, followed by another book called Bad, and then followed by a third book called And Dangerous to Know, I think, is the trilogy.

And as you just discovered when you spoke to her, she's had a bit of a rollercoaster ride in terms of her writing career and then a really amazing last year, 18 months or so I should think.

So a little bit different this week. We're not talking to a self-published author, we're talking to a traditionally published author with lots of interesting stories to tell that I think will be useful for everybody.

James Blatch: Yeah, definitely. Somebody who's gone through and got a deal and quite a lot of publicity, part of the Faber Academy in London. Getting onto that course is something. And then winning through to a contract at the end of it.

Hopefully we'll have two authors from that Faber Academy on this year. We're working on the other one in the background.

Before we get to the interview, just a chance to remind you that we have launched an account on [patreon.com](https://patreon.com), which is your chance as a listener to the podcast to support us in our work and make sure that the podcast keeps going, that we can keep going.

If you go to [patreon.com/spfpodcast](https://patreon.com/spfpodcast) there are three levels of rewards available. All sorts of things available to you, including the opportunity to win a premium course from Self Publishing Formula, an opportunity to have your name, have a shout-out.

It's going to be a little while before the first names are shouted out. I think we might add something onto the beginning of next week, actually, when it comes time to edit.

Because where we're sitting now, we're recording a bit of a batch for the summer and we're delighted to have your support for the podcast. We feel your support anyway, but this just takes it an extra step and bonds you to us in a good way. So that's [patreon.com](https://patreon.com) P-A-T-R-E-O-N dotcom forward slash spfpodcast.

Let's hear from Chloé Esposito and I think I mentioned in the interview, my wife picked up this book, which we got an advance copy of in the house and read it in a day and a half. She consumed it. And put it down and said, "That was filthy!" to me. But in a good way. I think she absolutely loved it and I think she's going to be a huge author.

Chloé, thank you very much indeed for coming onto the SPF Podcast. We're delighted to have you here. We want to first of all say congratulations because you've got a fantastic deal. The industry is very excited about your book.

We're going to come onto that in a little bit and I know why they're excited about it.

Just fill people in on your journey to this point, and we should say that we're a day ahead of publication today, aren't we?

Chloé Esposito: Yes. The book hits the shelves tomorrow in the UK. It did actually come out yesterday in America, which is insane. My friend just sent me a photograph of my book on a shelf in Hong Kong.

James Blatch: Ah!

Chloé Esposito: Which, I don't even know that it had come out in Hong Kong. So that's really exciting. Yeah, so thank you so much for having me. I'm delighted to be here. It's really exciting to talk to you.

My journey, well, it's been a bit of a rollercoaster to be absolutely honest with you. I guess I could just start at the beginning as I always wanted to be a writer. I mean, I remember being five years old and writing stories and wanting to be Enid Blyton, which clearly hasn't happened.

But just loved reading forever. I'm an only child, so I guess I didn't have anyone to play with at home so I always had my nose stuck in a book. English was my favorite subject at school. I was a real geek about it. I used to love writing essays. That weird kid that's like, "Yes! Another essay to write. Love it!"

And then I went to Oxford and did an English degree and really wanted to write novels. I started writing novels. Wrote hundreds of chapter ones. And then just never finished them. I wrote a couple of plays at Oxford. Had a play put on at the New Writing Festival, which was really fun. Then I went into fashion styling. Completely randomly. I've had like three or four careers.

I worked at fashion magazines for a couple of years. Then I taught English literature at a girls' school in London. Then I was a management consultant for four years, which was like-

James Blatch: Death. Death by nine-to-five.

Chloé Esposito: Definitely not my passion. Oh my gosh, I was writing business reports for CEOs and HR directors. Very, kind of corporate. Very serious.

When I turned 30, I rebelled against that and thought, "I'm going to write something really fun instead."

I think Mad is like the opposite of a business report for me. Like, the novel I wrote on the Faber Academy was me, like letting my imagination run wild and just having fun with it.

James Blatch: Okay, so I'd agree with that and we'll definitely come onto the book. It's definitely not Enid Blyton, I should say.

Chloé Esposito: It's not for kids.

James Blatch: No, it's not for kids. So the Faber Academy, you mentioned. Just for those of us who aren't fully aware of how this operates, explain that.

Chloé Esposito: Faber Academy is a wonderful creative writing course in Bloomsbury in London. I applied for their six months Writing a Novel course, which I completed in 2015.

They also have an online Faber Academy, if you can't get into London. And it's one evening a week for six months. And it was just the most fantastic thing for me. I loved it.

The teaching was great. Richard Skinner, the director of the Faber Academy, was my tutor, and he is something of a legend in terms of getting people published. I think the Faber Academy have had over 40 people published in less than 10 years, which is a really great hit rate for a creative writing course.

The thing that it really gave me was the confidence to put the time and effort into writing a novel. To believe in myself and to just really go for it. I had amazing students on that course.

All of my colleagues I was writing with were just dedicated, passionate about writing. Until very recently, we kept meeting up every week, one evening a week, to do our writing group. Because we just didn't want the course to end. We were like in denial that it was over. So it was, I really recommend it.

James Blatch: I've got quite a lot a few questions about your writing changed in that, but we'll come onto that in a bit. Just to get to the story of where we are today.

At the end of the course, you have this almost like Britain's Got Talent, X-Factor thing for writers.

Chloé Esposito: Yeah. It's terrifying. You have to stand up on a podium in front of about 50 or 60 agents who've all come to this agent's day and you read an extract from your novel. And then all sit there judging you.

James Blatch: Do they ask you questions and pick holes in your idea?

Chloé Esposito: No, they don't. So that what they do is they listen very politely. Actually sometimes they're sort of texting and not paying much attention.

James Blatch: Brilliant.

Chloé Esposito: But they've all received an anthology of the students' work, which Faber sent out before the event, so they can read, think it's a 2000-word extract of your novel and they can read the synopsis and your biography.

So they come to the event thinking, "Oh, I'm interested in this sort of genre," or, "I really like the sound of that novel."

I was really, really lucky because after that agents' day I actually had 21 agents offering to represent me for Mad.

James Blatch: Wow.

Chloé Esposito: Which, I was so overwhelmed by. It was like a dream come true.

James Blatch: Okay. So that's amazing.

From where we're sitting now, if you have any figures in from the States? Have you any indication of how the launch day went?

Chloé Esposito: Oh, gosh. I've got no figures yet. It literally, it hit the shelves yesterday in America.

James Blatch: Okay.

Chloé Esposito: And, you know, I was on the phone with the MD of Dutton, it's the Penguin Random House imprint over there, and my publisher called me and my editor called me and they were just all bursting with excitement about this launch. So it's just amazing.

James Blatch: Yeah, and there is, without question, there's a lot of industry excitement about this. So we want to say congratulations and wish you

good luck from here with that. We're going to be brilliant to follow your story.

Chloé Esposito: Thank you.

James Blatch: So you're writing. Now, you went to Oxford and I'm wondering whether you set out to write, like perhaps a lot of us, at the beginning, who, we adore our great writers. For me it's people like Ian McEwan. And you think, "I want to write a book like that."

And then at some point, you realize, "That's Ian McEwan writing. That's not me writing." And write what you know and what you like. So was that your journey as well?

Were you trying to write The Great British Novel at some point?

Chloé Esposito: Oh, gosh, of course. Yeah, absolutely. I wanted to write this really beautiful literary novel. I wanted to be like the new Virginia Woolf or something.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Chloé Esposito: I've written something really, really, really commercial, that's really fun and entertaining and it's not going to win the Man Booker Prize. But, apparently, that's important too. That's a good thing to do as well. You know, just write something entertaining.

James Blatch: Many people would argue it's the most important thing to do, actually. So you've written a book that's very Zeitgeist.

This is the book, and I showed this on our podcast a couple of weeks ago, we were recording. It's very cleverly done. Very cleverly commercially done for you as well.

Not only is this a book that's published. It's the first of three, and there's the inside sleeve, and I'll put that in front of my camera there so Mad is book one, Bad and Dangerous to Know.

So just set the scene. We've set up as this not being Enid Blyton. You've got sisters.

Do you want to just set up the plot at the beginning? Because I'm wary about giving spoilers away.

Chloé Esposito: Oh, absolutely. Mad is about this girl called Alvina Knightly, who is a total train wreck. I mean, you know those people whose lives are just a car crash? She's just failing at life.

She's living in this really filthy flatshare in Archway, in London. She's in this dead end job that she hates. And then one day, she get fired for watching porn at work, and then has sloppy flatmates kick her out.

But Alvie is an identical twin. Her infuriatingly perfect twin sister Beth lives in this glitzy, glamorous luxury villa in Taormina in Sicily. She's married to the guy that Alvie's in love with. She's got this beautiful baby boy. She's richer than Alvie, more successful than Alvie. Alvie thinks she's more beautiful but they're identical twins.

Anyway, so Beth invites Alvie to go and stay with her at her villa in Taormina. And reluctantly Alvie agrees to go. But when she gets there, her sister asks her to swap places with her for a few hours so that she can go out unnoticed by her husband. Then all hell breaks loose.

It's not a spoiler to say that tragedy strikes and Beth ends up dead at the bottom of the swimming pool. Alvie's still dressed in her clothes and everyone thinks Alvie is Beth. So it's really about this evil identical twin who steals her sister's perfect life.

How long can she get away with it for? Is her life really that perfect? What is it that's going to give her away? And you can expect lots of sex, lies, twists, and murder. It's a real rollercoaster ride of a novel.

James Blatch: It's terrific fun. I should say my wife is probably more suited to the genre than I am. Read it in a day and a half.

Chloé Esposito: Oh, she didn't really?

James Blatch: She completely devoured it. And she was halfway through it, looking at me, saying, who's Chloé Esposito again? I mean, it's kind of a, really, that's happening? Wow. By the end of it, she was like chatter chatter chatter all about it. And obviously is going to be reading *Bad and Dangerous to Know*. Following on.

Chloé Esposito: Fantastic.

James Blatch: I can see how this is working. It's a bit, I don't know, jaw-dropping's not quite the same word. It's kind of oh-my-god moments quite often in the book.

One thing I wanted to ask you about is, the fact that Alvie is not a really likable character right from the beginning. I'm not sure. Her journey, obviously, is an intriguing one.

But that's quite a brave thing to do. And you say it's very commercial. But actually that's probably one of the things a lot of people would say, "You've got to make your character sympathetic." And people wanting to be with them.

Alvie's not really likable, is she? At the beginning.

Chloé Esposito: No. I feel like you need to identify with certain aspects of the character because obviously part of the journey when you're reading is

you imagine yourself as the protagonist going through what they're going through.

But I don't think characters have to be likable. I think actually the most interesting characters in the literary canon have been the villains. I'm thinking about Iago, Lady Macbeth, more recently Amy Dunne in *Gone Girl*. I mean, pure evil. But fascinating and intriguing.

I didn't want Alvie to be likable. I think for me actually it was a bit of a feminist statement about this woman who goes on this journey to become this sort of badass and empowered anti-heroine, who isn't nice. She is difficult. But people are saying they love to hate her.

James Blatch: Yes. You know, okay, I mean that definitely works, doesn't it? In literature and drama.

Tell us about the writing process for the book. Tow different in this in my hand here. In fact, this might not even be the final one because this is a pre-production one.

Chloé Esposito: This is the final one.

James Blatch: Oh, there's the final one.

Chloé Esposito: It looks exactly the same, but this is the hardback.

James Blatch: Oh, okay, yeah. Right. Very nice.

How different is this from the draft you had in your hand that you read out, at the Academy?

Chloé Esposito: At the end of the Faber Academy, I had 55,000 words. I had to keep writing and finish that draft before I could submit it to the, the

full novel to the agents. And when I did submit, it was just over 80,000 words. The copy that is being published is something like 115,000 words. I spent about six or seven months editing it with Penguin. With my editors in New York and in London. And we put in some new twists. We developed some scenes and some characters. But essentially it's the same story. It's a much better novel now than it was six, seven months ago. But yeah, the real, the plot was there and the structure was there and everything.

James Blatch: What was it like? That process for you? Because not everyone takes to the editing processes? Well, people take to it in different ways. Did you enjoy that? Were you quite happy for people to say, "Scrub that. Change this."?

Chloé Esposito: Do you know, if you do a creative writing course where you get peer reviews and you get feedback every week, you're so used to people saying, "This works. This doesn't work. I hate that. Cut that." Whatever.

You get a really thick skin. You can't be precious about it. You've got to kill your darlings. I was absolutely fine to take feedback and edit it and make it better. I wanted it to be the best possible novel.

Having said that, I much prefer the creative process when you're writing the first draft and you've got a blank piece of paper and you can just let your imagination run wild.

I really enjoy creating the scenes. Creating the characters and the story, more so than looking at the same passage over and over and over again and changing a word or the punctuation mark.

James Blatch: What a great way to get into the writing process, with the constant ... We've been talking about this on the podcast quite a lot. There's another podcast about how the Bestseller Experiment, where

they're working chapter by chapter, scene by scene, and rewriting it until it's better and works.

I've decided to work with my editor on my first novel in a similar way. Chapter by chapter. She's a bit taken aback by this. Wants to read the whole book and give me feedback on pacing.

But I'm learning how to write. I'm just thinking for a lot of people listening to this who are writing, maybe, earlier in their careers. Even if you just had one other friend who's doing the same thing and you read each other's. And constantly gave feedback.

That gets you into that culture that you're talking about of thinking about it, not from your tiny little thing that only you know about and you're scared for people to see. But a more commercial book that needs to be shaped and changed.

Chloé Esposito: You absolutely have to get immediate feedback. For me, my writing group was so invaluable. Because every week I could share new material with them and get immediate feedback about what was working and what they, you know. You share ideas, you swap notes with each other. It's so helpful.

I would encourage all writers to join a writing group. For me, I can't just sort of sit on something and not show anybody. I'm quite a sociable writer. I get quite lonely.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Chloé Esposito: I'm just on my own with my laptop all the time.

James Blatch: And that is how you write it? You're at home, on your laptop. Every writer likes to know how each other, how we approach things and write.

Do you have a routine? Do you write in the morning? Afternoon?

Chloé Esposito: While I was writing the novel, I was working four days a week. And I had a, she was then two, and then three year old daughter. I was just crazy busy.

I was quite often writing in the middle of the night or just stealing 15 minutes, locking myself in the bathroom and trying to finish a scene. It was intense. But, you know, I really wanted to do this course as well as my job and everything.

Then when I knew that I had a lot of interest from agents and that I had to really work in finishing the novel, I did stop working to just be a full-time writer. So now I'm really lucky that I can work full time on my writing. I have a lot of writing dates. I'll go to the British Library or I'll go to the Southbank Centre at the Royal Festival Hall and then Ember's Lounge and meet other writers that I know and we'll just sit next to each other in silence and write. Rather than sitting alone at home and write.

But if I'm under a lot of pressure for a deadline, I'll probably just go to a café and write there.

James Blatch: Yeah, that's a really good tip, as well. Keep each other honest in a way. Make sure you're there and you're writing. So the book is ready to go.

Two and three are sketched out in your mind, or just vague ideas at the moment or written?

Chloé Esposito: No. So two is, first off written. I've got my editorial notes back from Penguin. I'm, I say I'm in the process of editing it but actually I'm doing a lot of, like journalism and press and PR stuff and that, so I'm not editing it. I should be editing it.

It's hard balancing the launch and editing. So I'm supposed to have that finished by the first of August.

James Blatch: Okay.

Chloé Esposito: Fingers crossed. And then, *Dangerous*, ideally will be finished by January. Because I've got a baby coming in January.

James Blatch: Ah, congratulations.

Chloé Esposito: I'm trying to get at least the first draft written by the time the baby comes. Thank you.

James Blatch: Yeah. So, and the deal you got. How did this work? Because normally that's, I think that is normally a one-book deal, after the agents' open session.

Did you always sell this to them as three books?

Chloé Esposito: Not initially. Initially I had in my head this one book but when I finished writing the book I knew that it had to be a series and a trilogy felt right. I just knew that I had to continue telling her story because she goes through such an arc and such a transformation in the first book. It was just like, "What's next for Alvina Knightly?" What is she going to do now that she's ... I don't want to give away any spoilers.

James Blatch: No, right.

Chloé Esposito: But now that she's changed. It had to be a series.

James Blatch: I love to use the word intriguing. It's a brutal book as well. I mean, things happen bang, bang, bang like this. It's surprising.

And the sex is in your face in there as well. The sort of thematic nature of the book, the tone of the book is really out there.

It's a rollercoaster is a good word.

Chloé Esposito: Yeah. That was really important to me. I would, as I said, I just wanted to write the most entertaining book I could. And for me, that's like outrageous, it's sexy, it's violent, it's got like twists and a great plot and it's quite cinematic.

I write in quite a visual way. So as I'm writing, I can really see the scenes and see the characters. It's almost like there's a movie projector in my head. When I was choosing an agent at the end of that process, it was so important for me to be represented by an agency that had those links with Hollywood and the movie industry because I was just so passionate about this being a movie. I'm still kind of pinching myself that is going to be.  
James Blatch: Where are you with the movie?

Chloé Esposito: I'm getting the screenplay this week from Jade Bartlett, who Universal have hired to write the screenplay. She's a fantastic young up-and-coming really talented screenwriter.

I'm an executive producer on the movie so I'm going to get to look at screenplay and give some feedback on that. And we'll get that perfect and then my producer, Mike De Luca's going to go out and get a director for the project.

James Blatch: I'll tell you what I'm interested in. This is maybe a personal thing, because Mark Dawson and I both used to be BBFC film classifiers. We used to work in Soho Square.

Chloé Esposito: Oooh.

James Blatch: Next door to Bloomsbury Books.

Chloé Esposito: Cool.

James Blatch: Watching films and giving them certificates. So we think a lot about tone and approach. Now, out of interest, how are they going to go ...

I'm presuming, they aren't going to go in the kind of Fifty Shades let's make it an 18? Let's make it full-on.

Chloé Esposito: Definitely. The first conversation I had with Mike De Luca, who did produce Fifty Shades of Gray and he produced Se7en and The Social Network and those are great movies.

He was just saying what he loved about Mad was that it's provocative and audacious. And you were saying Zeitgeisty about this badass anti-heroine and all the kind of terrible things that she gets up to.

So we don't want to tone it down. We're going to go for a director that is totally in line with that vision that Universal have as well for this sort of R-rated shocking movie. I really loved what David Fincher did with Gone Girl, so I'm thinking if it has that kind of tone, then I'll be really excited.

James Blatch: So that is David Fincher's producer, isn't it? Is David Fincher attached to this?

Chloé Esposito: Not yet, no. We haven't got a director attached yet. We're getting the screenplay first. But Mike's really good friends with him, so we've got our fingers crossed.

James Blatch: Wow. How amazing would that be?

Chloé Esposito: That would be amazing. I know. But there's loads of great directions. If it ends up being someone else I'm sure we'll be happy as well.

James Blatch: Yeah. Sure. That's a really good choice. I'm so pleased that you haven't had anybody, at least so far, from Universal or somewhere else saying, "Let's try and broaden this out to a kind of 12A audience," which is always tempting commercially for them because it's a big commercial category, but this book's story does not work toned down, I don't think.

Chloé Esposito: No. I agree.

James Blatch: The devil's in the detail, and there's a lot of detail. So, your journey now, you're talking to us, and I know we're going to have to let you go because you've got a lot of other things and editing to do.

At the moment this must be mental.

Chloé Esposito: It's completely insane. Honestly, it's just nonstop back to back interviews, journalism, launch party tonight in Mayfair, tomorrow night in Reading at Vanguard, which is a fantastic event that Rich is going to organize.

It's for new writers to share their work. I've got another party that I'm doing. Sort of local unofficial launch party.

I'm in the Daily Mail tomorrow. I've written about the new kind of sex in fiction, which is so exciting. I did Woman's Hour yesterday. Very fun.

James Blatch: The Woman's Hour is a big BBC program in the UK. The Daily Mail, which is I think certainly used to be the most-read website in the world. It's ridiculous.

Chloé Esposito: Really?

James Blatch: Ridiculous numbers on the website. And I think it's a good audience for you as well.

Chloé Esposito: Ah, thank you. Yeah, it's really fun. I'm absolutely loving it. It's more fun than being a management consultant.

James Blatch: I can only imagine. Yeah, death by nine-to-five. Brilliant. Chloé, we're very excited about this. Congratulations on everything that's happened to you.

You may be modest about this but are you sort of the standout success story from your class in the Academy?

Chloé Esposito: We have got a lot of really, really talented people in our class. So, I mean a few years ago S. J. Watson, who wrote *Before I Go to Sleep*, he was from the Faber Academy and he had a movie made with Colin Firth and ... What was her name? Nicole Kidman!

James Blatch: Oh, okay.

Chloé Esposito: Which is amazing. And in my actual class, Felicia Yap, who is represented by Johnny Geller. She has got her novel *Yesterday* coming out at the end of August, I think.

I'm just watching this space for some of the other students because I've read their work and I'm really excited about Michael Diaz for example, Alana Lindsay. These are names you're going to be hearing about, I'm sure.

James Blatch: Yeah. And we've got Felicia Yap coming up in the next few weeks, as well. So we had a chat with her.

Chloé Esposito: She's lovely.

James Blatch: She's great. She has a very interesting book that she's written as well, so great. Okay, look, Chloé, I'm going to let you get on with your million things you've got, including having a baby at some point, on your list.

Chloé Esposito: I don't know when I'm going to fit that in. Oh, thank you.

James Blatch: It's an exciting year and maybe we'll get you back on, particularly if the film starts to appear on the horizon. Because that's going to be such an exciting time for you and for us as well, sharing your journey.

Chloé Esposito: I can't wait. I'd love to speak to you again, James. Thank you very much for having me on the show. Catch ya.

James Blatch: Good name as well, isn't it? Chloé Esposito. I forgot to ask her if that was her real name.

Mark Dawson: I think it is real, yes. And also nice Freudian slip there referring to bonding us with our audience, then jumping into-  
James Blatch: Yeah.

Mark Dawson: ... with a filthy author. So, yeah, nice choice of words there.

James Blatch: What I loved about Chloé is that she did, I mean, you know there's nothing wrong with thinking that if you're going to write a book, you're going to write a book that might in your dreams potentially win the Booker Prize or might be discussed on the Culture Show on PR, Public Radio, or BBC in the UK.

And then actually finding yourself writing something that's a page turner, that's read on the Tube, that's read on holiday, that in all honesty is not going to win the Booker Prize but is loved by its readers. It's commercial. Brutal. Openly so.

But refreshing to hear Chloé having shed the load of being a kind of literary author or whatever you want to call it.

Mark Dawson: I completely understand that. When I started writing, that was exactly what I wanted. I wanted to have people stroking their chins and talking about how amazing my prose was. And tried for ages to write like Martin Amis and Will Self and people like that.

Only reasonably recently, in the last five or six years in my writing career have I realized that that's just folly.

Number one, I was trying to be something that I'm not.  
Number two, it's much more enjoyable to tell stories that thousands and thousands of readers enjoy.

They email me and tell me that they've enjoyed them. I've managed to take some readers out of unpleasant situations in their lives. I've had parents in

hospital enjoying the Milton books. And also to be completely base about it, it's quite nice to be able to pay the mortgage.

James Blatch: Yes.

Mark Dawson: Which is not necessarily something that Chloé would have been able to do. I'm sure she has been able to do that now but when she was writing that kind of, trying to write that highbrow fiction that maybe she thought she ought to write, I'm pretty confident that she either wouldn't have got a deal or certainly, I'm very confident she wouldn't have got a deal like that one that she's got now, with the film deal and all those accoutrements that go with it. So kudos to her. That's in a sense exactly the same I eventually realized as I say five or six years ago.

James Blatch: It was also interesting talking to Chloé about being in the traditional world. Being published. It is a different experience.

They're on her case a little bit about getting the proofs back for the second edition she spoke about. She revealed in the interview that she's pregnant as well. I think due January from memory.

Mark Dawson: Yep.

James Blatch: So she's got a slightly different context for her writing than you have.

Mark Dawson: That's true. I'm certainly not pregnant.

James Blatch: No.

Mark Dawson: No, that's exactly right. I mean, it is different. I set myself a fairly ambitious target in terms of publications. So I do feel, I don't get stressed very often but I do occasionally feel a little bit of stress to continue to put out quality content at a reasonably fast pace.

That feeling can be exacerbated if I'm writing a book, say, for Thomas and Mercer, who published my Isabella Rose series or were I to write another book for a traditional publisher, then there's a period between the moment I hand that over and its publication, which can be, let's say it's nine months for Thomas and Mercer or certainly a bit longer for a traditional publisher. When my fan base, which is, I get regular emails asking when the next Milton book is coming out. They could go for six, seven, eight months without anything from me.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Mark Dawson: It worries me. Although, if you think, five years ago that would be, you know, Lee Child doesn't write more than a book a year. And he seems to be doing quite well.

James Blatch: Does all right, doesn't he?

Mark Dawson: Yeah. But you know, just because that's what my readers have come to expect, that I'm going to be writing books fast. Good books that they can enjoy fast. And that does put a bit of pressure on you. But you know, I'm the boss there. I can change that around if I want to. Chloé has an editor in London saying, "Where are those proofs because I've got slots?" They want to fill for those books. So yeah, there you go.

James Blatch: Good innuendo again. Okay.

Mark Dawson: You dirty bugger.

James Blatch: Last words. Leave it with the Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know series from Chloé Esposito. Like I say, if you think it might be your thing, it probably will be. My wife really enjoyed it. A rollicking good read. Lovely to talk to Chloé as well. It'd be lovely revisit that in a year or so. Revisit that. Revisit her in a year or so and see how she's getting on.

Don't forget to visit us at [patreon.com/spfpodcast](https://patreon.com/spfpodcast). We've talked to two authors in a row.

Next week we're going to be talking something that's going to be potentially very big in the author world on a technical front. Another way of engaging with your audience. And on that teasing note, also goodbye.

Speaker 1: You've been listening to the Self Publishing Formula Podcast. Visit us at [SelfPublishingFormula.com](https://SelfPublishingFormula.com) for more information, show notes, and links on today's topics. You can also sign up for our free video series on using Facebook ads to grow your mailing list. If you've enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a review on iTunes. We'll see you next time.