

Answer Key

1) Amanda started writing books...

- a) after getting over a breakup
- b) before completing her degree
- c) as part of a gig
- d) as part of her final project

2) Regarding her past life decisions, she...

- a) Regrets having rejected the promotion
- b) She is OK with her decision and never thinks about it
- c) She sometimes wonder if she would have ended becoming an author
- d) She would have liked to work full-time

3) She took a course in...

- a) Creative Writing
- b) Editorial Publishing
- c) Journalism
- d) Scandinavian writing

4) Amanda plans to visit...

- a) Italy
- b) USA
- c) France
- d) Romania

5) What is the most important aspect in promoting your work on social networks?

- a) To interact with your target readership
- b) To have an online presence
- c) To gather information to know exactly what they want
- d) To handle criticism

6) What does she warn listeners about ?

- a) Social media
- b) Interactions with people
- c) Not finding the right platform
- d) Criticism

Tapescript

M- Welcome to bookworm.com! In today's podcast, we are introduced to Amanda Smith. Amanda is one of the most prominent, most insightful authors of sci-fi and fantasy books. What if I told you she is the great mind behind Larry Butcher and the Secret of the Melting Pot? Does she ring any bells now? Hello Amanda!

W-Hello Arthur. Thank you for inviting me! It is a great pleasure to be here!

M- The pleasure is mine, Amanda! After all, who hasn't grown up reading your book series? However, we know for a fact that your starts weren't easy by any means. Anyway, let's start from the beginning. How did you get into writing?

W- Well... as a child, I enjoyed writing just for fun. I remember making up stories of myself going on adventures. Some decades later, after completing my degree in Journalism, I landed a job at a news agency. I would be covering a news item on a man stealing an antiquity from a museum. The editor was quite pleased and kept proposing to me to write for his newspaper. Eventually, I was offered a raise and a promotion. I turned down the offer as I was OK with my life-work balance at that point since I was working half-time. Looking back, if I had accepted that offer, I don't know if I would have ended as a professional writer but a journalist instead. Not that I regret it but... I give it a thought sometimes.

Anyway, I was doing fine in my career but my personal life was a disaster at that point. My boyfriend broke up with me. A friend of mine suggested taking up writing stories to stop having ruminating thoughts about him. At first, I was skeptical - after all, my job already involved writing and it wasn't helping me much... but I decided to give it a go. For starters, it was hard for me to come up with a title. Eventually, I wrote a whole chapter in just one week! I showed it to my friend and she dug it! She suggested I could enroll in a Master's in Creative Writing at the University. I wasn't so sure about it because I was living on a shoestring at the time. I couldn't afford it. Instead, I went on to do a course on Editorial Publishing, which featured some creative writing. That's what I did and I passed all my courses with flying colours. I still thought about my former partner, though.

M- And that's around the time you published your first book?

W- That's correct. As part of my final project, I had to write a noir novel that could convince a publishing house. I decided to approach it from a Scandinavian point of view. My book was set in a Norwegian forest and it told the story of an amnesic woman trying to find his father after his new wife is found dead in a bathtub. After completing the course, I became a freelance writer and the rest is history.

M- Now, let's talk about your current projects! You are giving talks, right?

W- Yes, I give advice on how to thrive as an author using social media to promote yourself. By travelling abroad giving speeches, I also get inspiration from the places I visit. My editor said I could visit Indiana in the us. My book series *Loathing* has a cult following there. but I've already been to Ohio several times. He then proposed Italy, Romania or France. I had been taking a course in Italian and already paid deposit for a flat in Naples but another author was to present her book instead. Thus, I went to Paris and was surprised that the fans there were so welcoming. My French is not the best in the world but I managed to mingle with the fans after the talk was over.

M- To finish off, what would you say is the secret to making the most of our social media to promote our writing? I bet our listeners will be very interested in your answer!

W- First and foremost, to have an online presence. It is vital to be on Facebook, Twitter and the like. However, that's not enough if you don't engage with your audience. Allow users to interact with you and don't come off as a 'pretentious' writer who lives in their ivory tower.

However, in my opinion, if you really want to be well known is to know your audience. This is a consequence of the previous point. This way, you'll be knowledgeable about what your target readers really want and write accordingly. Nevertheless, beware of criticism! You ought to have a thick skin if you want to thrive in the publishing world!

M- Thank you Amanda. See you next week on our podcast!

Judith Viera @ Lang Training