A Glimpse into Heather Burch's Unexpected Global Success Story

(Image created at BookBrush.com)

*Heather Burch is a #1 bestselling author who lives in Southern Florida. Her title, One Lavender Ribbon was one of the top 100 bestselling books for the year on Amazon. She has been featured in USA Today, Booklist Magazine, Romantic Times, Publishers Weekly and Women's World magazine. Heather's stories explore family, love, hope and the challenges of life. Book translations include German, Spanish, Italian, Slovakian, Slovenian, Turkish, Norwegian and Russian. When she's not writing, she and her husband can be found vacationing on a mountaintop. They are theme park junkies, coffee aficionados and amateur foodies. Heather has two grown sons who are the light of her life. (Source: Heather Burch)*

Many thanks to Heather Burch for sharing her writing life with us! She offers some incredibly helpful tips and insights for the purpose of helping authors find success. We believe you will enjoy, appreciate, and be encouraged by her open-handed answers to our questions.

Now for our exclusive interview with Heather Burch.

# THE REAL AUTHOR

### Q: What's your earliest memory of writing something and what did you write?

*The first story I remember writing was about my grandfather who had a rather unpleasant encounter with a seagull. I was about seven and my mom sent it to our small-town newspaper. They published the story. Real news was hard to come by in our little town.*

### Q: What is your biggest challenge as an author?

*Learning that I'm not Wonder Woman. There are so many hats to wear when you become an author. The more successful you are, the more hats you have. Knowing which one to put on and which one to hand to a support person is definitely one of the biggest challenges.*

# THE REAL STORY

### Q: How did you choose (or get chosen) to publish through Amazon and Harper?

*When Amazon was new to publishing, I told my agent I'd like to get a book in front of one of their editors. She agreed, and we sent **One Lavender Ribbon** to them. They made an offer and slated it in their Kindle First program. I've written five novels for them and one novella which was a collaboration with Amazon and Princess Cruise Lines.*

*Before that, I wrote a trilogy and a standalone for BLINK, a Harper imprint. That first contract came about in 2011.*

### Q: You mentioned you are dipping your toes into self-publishing. Can you share what your motivation is behind switching over? Do you think it will help you to have already made a name for yourself having been published traditionally first?

*My goal is not to switch over but to broaden my brand. I love writing such an array of books. Sometimes, a story is deeply embedded in your heart and you just can't shake it. I have a few of those stories. I also know that they may not be commercially viable for a publisher to take a chance on. I'm being honest here, every story isn't for every publisher.*

*I've worked with three publishers on multiple projects and I love that collaboration. But having an opportunity to steer the ship completely has its own merit and I believe its own reward. I do*

*think having a solid fan base will help with any projects I do on my own, but the honest truth is this—no matter how big your fanbase is (okay, let's exclude the Stephen Kings, Nora Roberts, and the James Pattersons!) You're going to have to reach into your market to sell books. Big name or small, marketing effectively is a must!*

### Q: You mentioned your books have been translated into multiple languages. How does this relate to your life story?

*It's the craziest thing. I'll go on Instagram and search #HeatherBurch and all these pictures of my books in other languages pop up. I'm telling you, we could learn from other countries about the brilliant flat lays that make gorgeous marketing graphics, especially Turkey! I'm in about ten languages now. It's surreal. But Turkey does the most beautiful graphics for my books.*

## THE REAL STATS

### Q: What does the definition of success as an author look like for *you*? Is there anything that's happened to you recently that you feel is a mark of success?

*I've been asked to do my first magazine cover. I had new publicity shots taken for it, so that's been fun. I was also featured in* ***Women's World Magazine*** *when* ***One Lavender Ribbon*** *was a Women's World Book Club pick a few months ago.*

*As far as what success looks like, it's doing what you love as a career and that career allowing you to have the lifestyle you desire. I'm not a high maintenance person. I like to travel—oh lord, do I like to travel—but I'm also happy at home with nothing more than a sunset and the company of my husband and dog. Success to me has much more to do with the quality of life and less to do with finances. However, financial stability certainly takes the pressure off!*

### Q: How many books do you sell per month on average and what do you make from book sales on average?

*Contractually, I'm not allowed to discuss numbers but I can tell you this: four years ago, my agent said I needed to prepare to make six figures a year. I thought she'd lost her marbles. But here I am. On that note, one of the biggest surprises to me has been having to learn how to run a business. I thought the more I wrote, the less I'd have to worry about all those business-y details. Oh my. Did I have that wrong! Whether you're traditionally published or indie, you're an authorprenuer. You're running a business, a brand, a marketing company. Yes, you heard right. When you're marketing, you're no longer an author. You're a marketing company.*

## MORE REAL STATS

- How many readers do you have on your email list? ***~15,000***

- What is the largest number of books you've sold in one day? ***I just received an award for reaching 250,000 books sold for ONE LAVENDER RIBBON.***
- What is the next milestone you are shooting for in book sales? ***100,000 readers for IN THE LIGHT OF THE GARDEN***
- How many books do you sell in the first week of launching a new release? ***I may be crazy, but I worry less about the first week of a launch and try to think long term. Putting too much pressure on that first week can make release day and release week tough.***

### Q: What online tools do you most frequently use?

*I keep things fairly simple, so I don't use a ton of tools. I'm a streamline kind of girl. But I do love my iPhone. I do 80% of my social media work on it. It gives me freedom. I can work from anywhere at any time and everything is right in the palm of my hand. My new favorite obsession is BookBrush. Creative, fun, intuitive, I'm really enjoying its flexibility.*

Word Swag
PhotoShop Mix
BookBrush

## JUST FOR KICKS

### Q: Do you snack or drink anything while writing? If so, what?

*I never eat while I'm writing unless I'm on a marathon deadline. But I drink lots of coffee.*

### Q: What are you currently reading?

*I'm reading an advanced copy of Jane Healey's, The Beantown Girls. It's glorious.*

### Q: What would you like to communicate to authors that I didn't think to ask?

*When it comes to marketing, give yourself a break. Don't try to do everything. Find the two or three things you're great at and do those. Then, add to the list one thing at a time. Maybe you're great on Goodreads, but terrible at designing ads. That's ok. Work your strengths and strengthen your weak spots a little at a time. Set goals.*

*Do you want to learn to make gorgeous graphics? Find and utilize tools like Covers Sell Books. Do you need more exposure for your titles? Collaborate with other like-minded authors on marketing. Don't try to do it all alone. Banding together, you can grow your audience and lift some of the load. Maybe one of your collaboration partners is fabulous at Instagram and you can't figure out what Instagram is! You can help each other. Know your strengths. Strengthen*

*your weaknesses. Most of all, enjoy the journey! I see way too many authors stressed out these days and I understand it. I really do. I've been there. But life is short. Please, enjoy the journey.*

# Finally

### Q: What is the best way for our readers to connect with you?

*I'd love for you to stop by my website and let me know your thoughts on my books or the marketing strategies I've mentioned.*

*Below you'll find all my media links. Feel free to drop in on me, friend me, follow. See what I'm doing marketing-wise and I'll follow back—just be sure you let me know who you are and how we met (this article) so I don't assume you're catfishing. Unfortunately, we all get a lot of those friend requests these days.*

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