

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Local indie author finds unexpected success with her debut  
(and hopes for more with her second novel)**



Sandra Hutchison got tired of piling up rejections from agents who told her that her novel was good, but nothing they could sell in a tight fiction market. So she formed Sheer Hubris Press and put out “The Awful Mess: A Love Story” last year, with greater success than she expected.

Over 50,000 Kindle readers downloaded it during five free days, and over 1,200 paid for it during its first year on Amazon. During a recent promotion after branching out to Nook, iTunes, and Kobo this year, another 3,500 copies sold.

While these are modest numbers by traditional publishing standards, they are stellar for an indie debut.

Hutchison says she feels “incredibly lucky” that “The Awful Mess” has also enjoyed critical success, with over 200 Amazon reviews averaging 4.2 stars at her last count. A manuscript version of it was also one of five general fiction semifinalists for the 2014 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award.

Her second novel, “The Ribs and Thigh Bones of Desire” releases Dec. 9 and is available for pre-order now.

A coming-of-age novel set in the 1970s, it asks whether it can ever be okay for an older man to get involved with a teenage girl. She says, “Readers are going to have different takes on that, which is not exactly a recipe for uniformly positive reader reviews. So I’m a little nervous.”

Then why publish it? “Because it’s what I want to say. And one of the very best things about being indie is that I can keep publishing even if this book doesn’t sell well.”

Hutchison was inspired to write “The Awful Mess,” after knowing three Episcopal priests who cheated on their wives and ruined their careers. She was inspired to write “The Ribs and Thigh Bones of Desire” after hearing, years ago, that a widowed neighbor had married his teenage babysitter. She couldn’t help wondering how that had happened, and whether it was in any way justifiable.

“Of course, back in the seventies, that sort of thing really wasn’t that uncommon,” she says. “Today, many people might label this guy a pedophile. I find that change interesting.”

Her first novel was also not without its critics. A contemporary twist on “The Scarlet Letter,” it includes adultery and other adult themes, and has occasionally offended some Christian readers. She says, “My favorite negative reviewer gave it one star because a character took the Lord’s name in vain. I’m just glad she stopped reading when she did!”

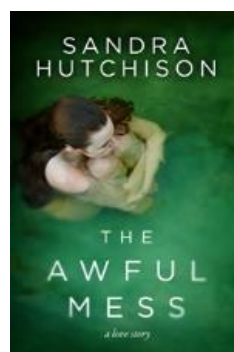
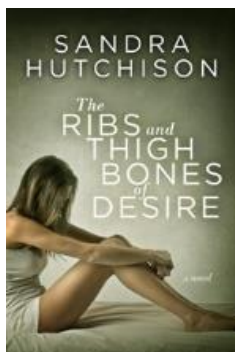
Asked what she thinks the secret to indie success is, Hutchison notes that, beyond writing a good book, it helps to have a background in traditional publishing and advertising, as she does. She also benefited from a good writer’s group, from traditionally-published friends who helped her along the way – particularly Averill Park’s Lucia Nevai – and from the support of other indie authors.

“I’m also still learning an awful lot through trial and error,” she says. “I do think it’s getting more challenging, especially for anyone who tries to do it outside Amazon’s Kindle Select. But I’m in it for the long haul, and every new reader is a thrill.”

A trustee of the Sand Lake Town Library until her recent move to Troy, she happily donates her books to any libraries that want them, which is why the Upper Hudson Library System has “The Awful Mess” in circulation. She says, “I get a real kick out of going into the online catalog and seeing that it is checked out.”

Hutchison, who also teaches writing at Hudson Valley Community College, will be participating in a program called “Resolve to Be Read: Three Paths to Publishing” Saturday, Jan. 10 at the Troy Public Library from 1-3 p.m., along with traditionally-published suspense novelist Jenny Milchman and hybrid nonfiction author Diane Cameron. (To reserve a spot, call (518)274-7071 or visit [TheTroyLibrary.org](http://TheTroyLibrary.org).)

Learn more about Sandra Hutchison and her books at [sheerhubris.com](http://sheerhubris.com).



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