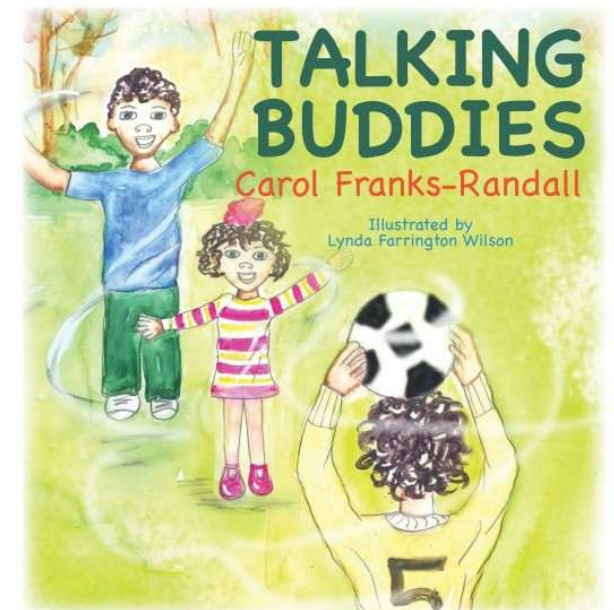
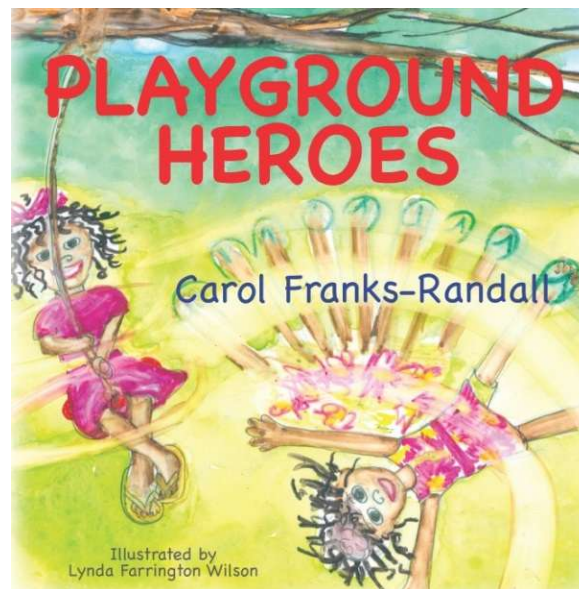
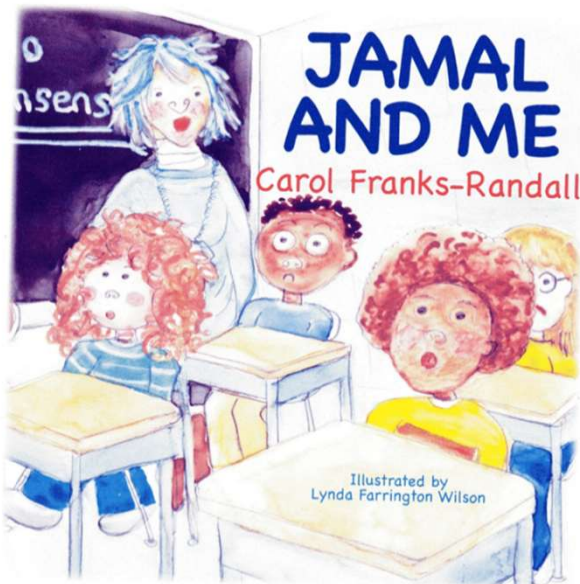


My Guide for Self-Publishing a Children's Picture Book

Carol Franks-Randall, EdD

Author of *Jamal and Me* and *Playground Heroes*

<https://carolfranksrandall.com>



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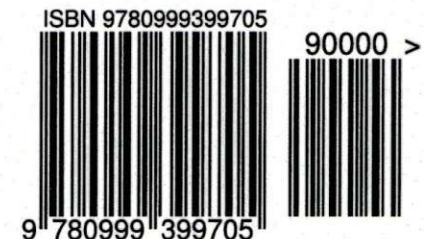
I started with an idea.....

- I only write about things I know and am passionate about. In my case, I want to write stories that feature underrepresented populations. For example, *Jamal and Me* is loosely based on experiences I had as a school administrator. If you love dolphins, write about dolphins, if you love the antics you and your siblings get into, write about that.
- Go to your device of choice and start keying in your thoughts. I have notes on my computer, my phone and my tablet. I didn't worry about the details, I just wanted to get my ideas down before I forgot them.

If you are self-publishing....

- It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the book publishing software you plan to use and create an account – even though you aren't ready to publish yet.
- Taking the time to do this will come in handy when you are ready to publish a proof of your book.
- It isn't too early to start thinking about getting an ISBN (International Standard Book Number), which is the identification that is used to identify your book. Some publishers will give you a free ISBN when you publish with them. I wanted a specific publication name for my books (Browns Corner Press), so I paid a fee to an organization called Bowker (www.bowker.com) to obtain ISBNs for my books.

Browns Corner Press
Centreville, MD



Book Layout

- Once I had enough words written to call it a “first draft manuscript”, I began to think about what words I wanted on each page.
- This phase can be painstaking but I found that it really helped me to refine my manuscript even further.
- This exercise is the first step of creating a book layout.

Illustration

- Since I can only draw stick figures and they aren't very good, I needed to employ the services of an illustrator. I had a friend who had produced a book I really liked, and she put me in touch with her illustrator. Fortunately for me, the rest is history. Lynda Farrington Wilson and I work extremely well together and she has a knack for making my words come alive.

Illustration (Continued)

- Getting back to the manuscript, at this point I started thinking about what the illustrations might look like. I made notes on the page.
- I also looked at the words again (and again) and decided if I should use speech bubbles, thinking bubbles or conventional text.



Book Layout (Continued)

- Once I got this far I started to think about how I wanted the pages arranged. Should the illustration and text be on the same page or different pages? Should the text/illustration be a two-page spread? If you are working with an illustrator or book designer that person may be able to make some suggestions.



Book Layout (Continued)

- Once I made these preliminary decisions I sent the manuscript to the illustrator I work with. Lynda took a look, made some suggestions and the work began!

Character Development

- Lynda sent me color pictures of the main characters for my approval. She wanted to make sure we are on the same page before we actually began working on the book. If she was making pictures of a real person (Dr. Toughlove for example), I sent her a couple of photos.



"JAMAL"



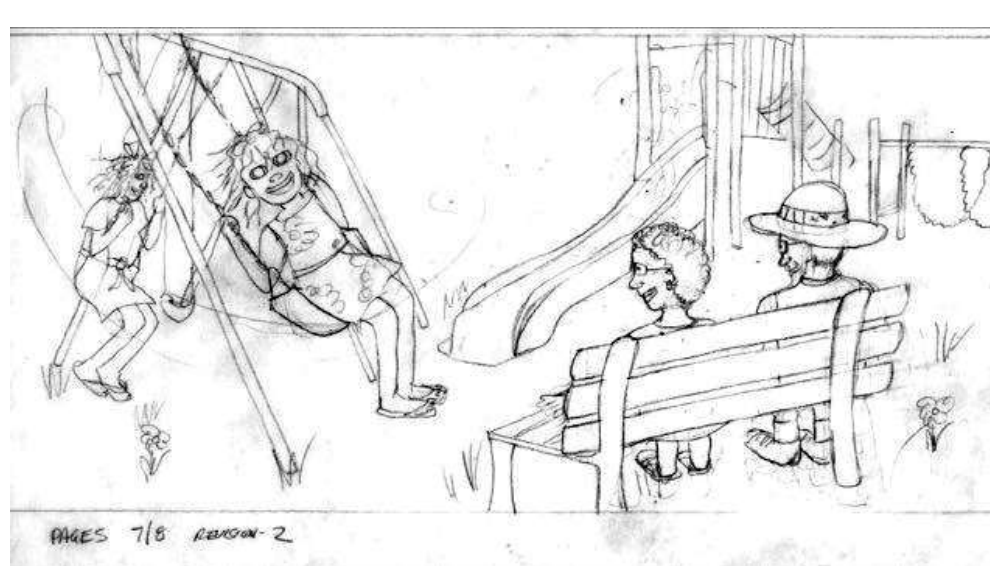
"DR. TOUGHLOVE"



"MISS ICEBURG"

Pencil Sketches

- Once the characters have been approved, Lynda sends me pencil sketches of each page. That includes **speech bubbles** and **thinking bubbles**. I either approve them as is or suggest changes.



“Coloring”

- Once the pencil sketches have been approved, Lynda starts “coloring” by using gouache paints and watercolor markers. She has an imagination and flair that is unsurpassed.
- We use the same process as the pencil sketches. We deliberate over each illustration before I approve them.



Inserting Text

- Once the interior illustrations are complete, Lynda inserts the text from the manuscript. Usually by this time I have revised the text several times, and have made sure Lynda has the most recent version.
- I check each page to make sure the text is correctly placed.

Jamal threw food in the cafeteria and made fun of his classmates on the playground.



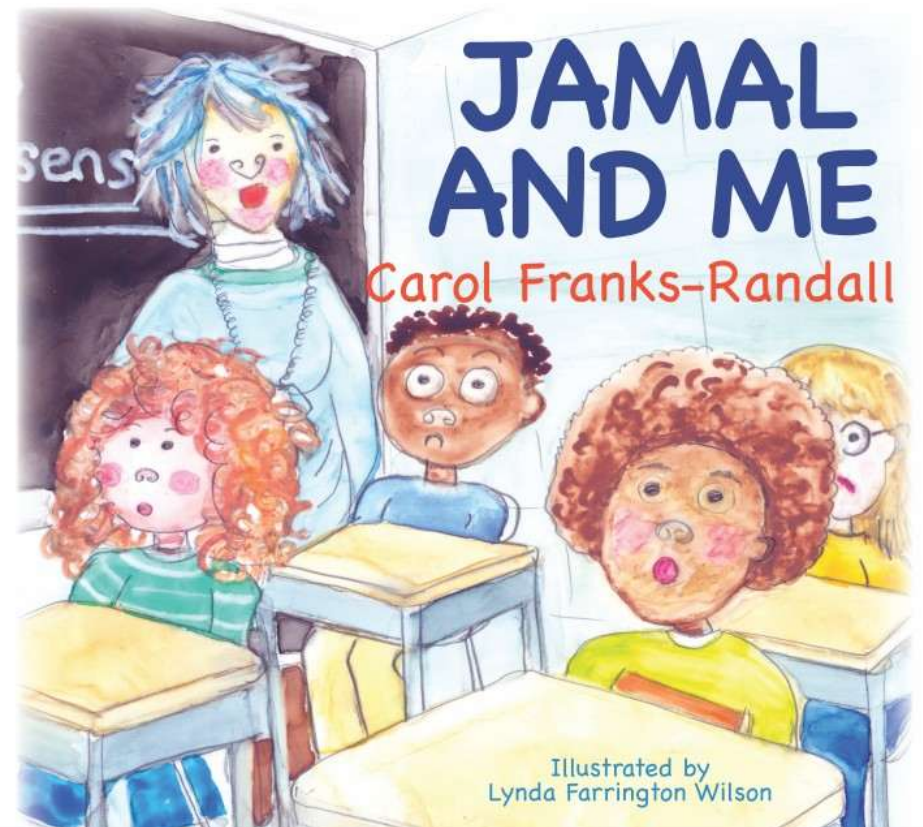
Front and Back Cover Design

- Now a very important decision needs to be made. Lynda sends me four illustrations and her ideas for the lettering for the front cover. Once I select the one I like best, we pick an illustration for the back cover.
- By this time I have written the text for the back cover which Lynda inserts.

A lonely, misplaced boy struggles with moving to the suburbs. His teacher thinks he is nothing but trouble and should be sent to another school. His loving but firm principal comes to the rescue.



All this and more can be found in **JAMAL AND ME** by first-time author, Carol Franks-Randall.

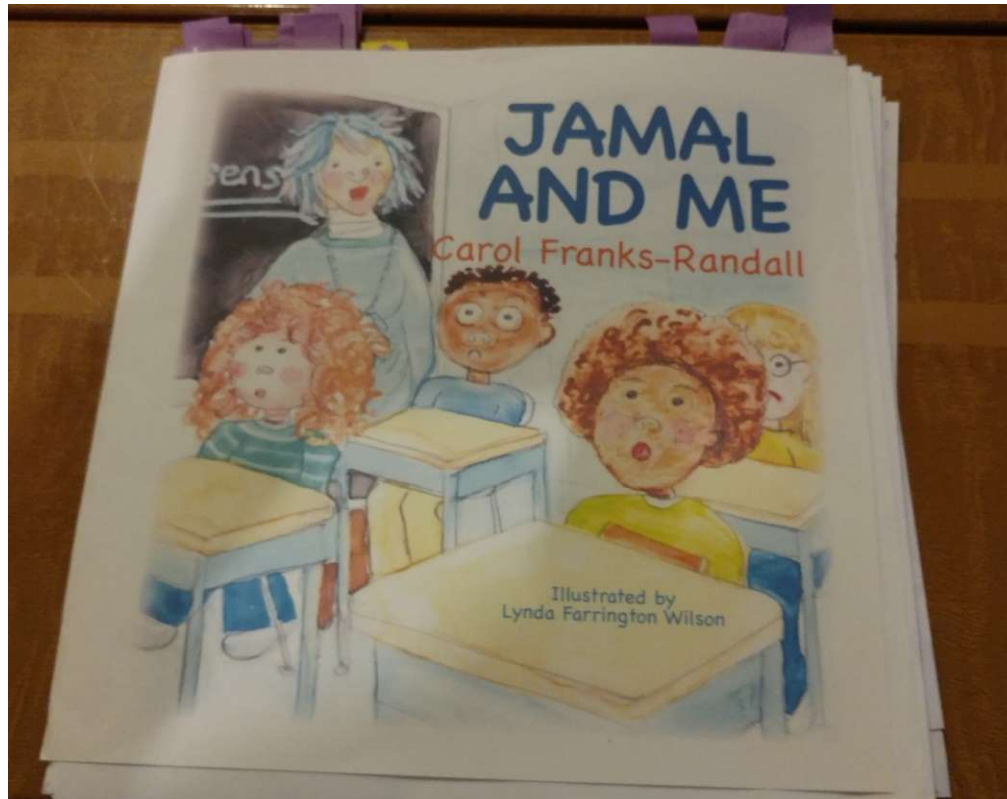


Finish up the Interior

- Lynda and I finish up the interior pages:
 - ISBN page
 - Dedication page
 - Inspiration for the book
 - About the Author
 - About the Illustrator

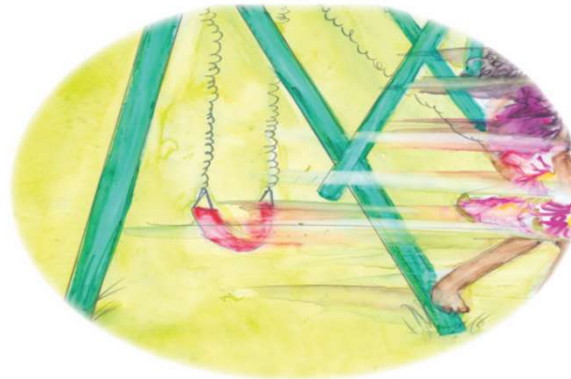
Mock-Up

- At this point (sometimes sooner) I create a mock-up of the actual size of the book to get a better idea of what it will actually look like.
- This is particularly important for first-time writers.



Partial illustration

- Lynda and I decide what illustration we will use for our “partial illustration”. This has become our “signature” at the end of the books we have worked on together.



Two files are created

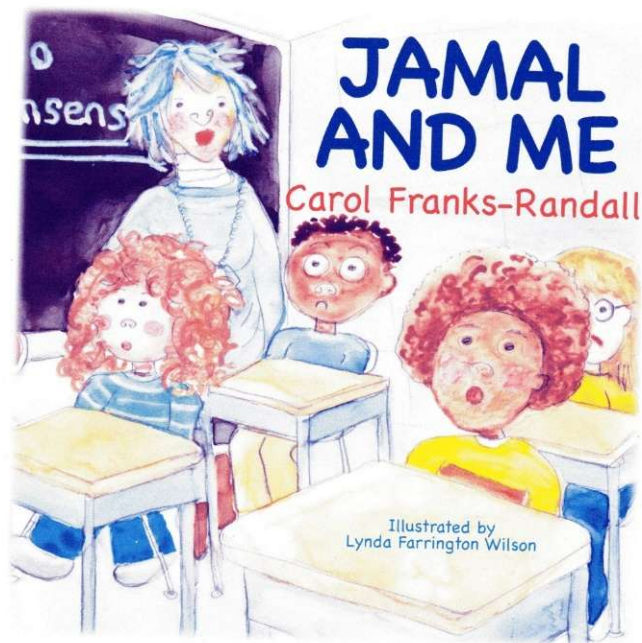
- Lynda creates two files:
 - Cover Final which is the front and back cover
 - Interior Final which is the rest of the book
 - She formats both files using pdf format and formats them to match the guidelines specified by the publisher (CreateSpace/Kindle Direct Publishing).

Send to the Publisher

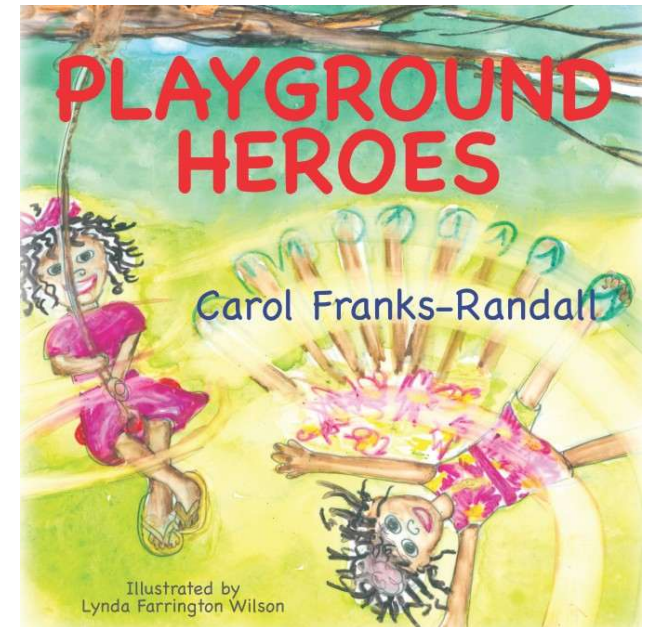
- After reviewing both files for the umpteenth time, I send them to the Publisher.
- As previously mentioned, I familiarized myself with the program prior to submission, so it wasn't terribly intimidating.
- **When I submitted the files I specifically requested a proof.** It took about a week to arrive by mail.

Finally.....

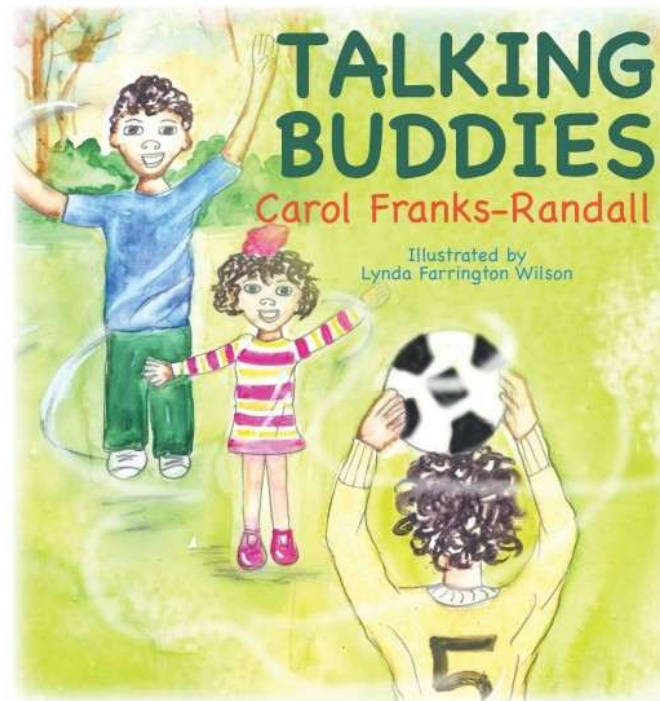
- Several people reviewed the book (most notably my husband) before I clicked “proof approved” and completed the publishing process. This process varies with different publishers.
- Within 24 hours, my books were on Amazon.com! Then the fun begins!



Published November 2017



Published June 2018



Published May 2019