

It's not a dream

Heather Rule
hrule@postbulletin.com

At 5 a.m., one day recently, Amanda Hocking had just finished a long night of writing and was settling into bed.

That's when this self-publishing author from Austin with a \$2 million book deal wondered if her quick rise to fame in the book world was real.

"This can't possibly be happening," Hocking said. "This has to be like some kind of weird dream and I'm going to wake up, or I'm have a psychotic breakdown, I'm imagining all this.

"It's so awesome that I can't wrap my mind around it."

The 27-year-old author who's sold more than 1 million copies of her self-published books is hitting another mark in her career: her first print book. "Switched," the first in her Trylle Trilogy, is being published by St. Martin's Press and will be released Tuesday.

Going to print

Hocking made the decision to have her books become available in paperback form as well because e-books make up just a small percentage of the market. She wanted to branch out and reach more readers, including more teenagers.

"And anybody can buy a paperback book, not everybody has an eReader," Hocking said.

If Hocking needs further surreal experiences, you can mark Jan. 5 as on such date. Hocking will be a guest on Anderson Cooper's daytime talk show "Anderson," taping Jan. 5. She will promote her book and share her story of perseverance.

When she heard from the show's producers over the summer, she "kind of freaked out," she said. She is a big fan of Cooper, and she's both excited and nervous about the show.

Following her time in New York coming up, and a quick stop Jan. 10 in Rochester for a book signing, Hocking will head off on an international tour from Jan. 12 to Feb. 3. It will take her to England, Italy, Spain and Ireland — Hocking has not been out of the country with the exception of a cruise in the Bahamas a few months ago.

With the busy schedule coming up, she doesn't have any events scheduled in Austin yet, but plans to have something in the future surrounding the Trylle Trilogy.

Hitting it big

January 2011 was the point where Hocking realized her books were a big deal. More than 400,000 of her books sold during that month alone, something that seemed surreal to her.

Even with all of her success and her book deal, which had some of the top publishing companies in a bidding war, Hocking said she does not consider herself to be rich and famous.

"Because I have this idea that people who are rich and famous are glamorous and jet-setting, and I'm really not," she said. "I'm pretty normal, I think."

She still resides in Austin, although in a bigger home, she keeps the same people in her life and does the same things she always has.

The biggest change for her is that she's able to make writing her full-time job, spending an average of eight to 10 hours a day working on her books. There's also the financial independence that has come from her success, as opposed to before when she was struggling, she said.

The quick leap to fame "definitely surprised" her. She said she's always wanted to be a writer and thought she would become one, but she didn't think it would play out the way it did, happening so fast and be so big.

"I try not to think about it that much because it still seems strange," Hocking said. "It doesn't even really make sense to me."