Bluebonnet Dreams

B Alan Bourgeois · Opening excerpt · 1 of 2

Emma Torres sat at her dining room table, laptop open, cursor blinking on a blank document. Her hands hovered over the keyboard. Just a few words—any words—and she'd finally get this novel started.

But nothing came.

Her gaze flicked to the spiral notebook sitting nearby, its pages filled with snippets of dialogue and character sketches. It had been her ritual for years—jotting down pieces of her story whenever inspiration struck. The problem was, that inspiration never seemed to stick around long enough to turn those fragments into something real.

"I don't even know where to start," she muttered.

The sound of a neighbor's car door slamming pulled her attention to the window. Outside, the late afternoon sun bathed her small Austin neighborhood in a warm glow.

Emma picked up her phone, intending to search for writing tips—again. Within seconds, she found herself scrolling Instagram instead.

Post after post showed smiling authors holding freshly published books. Some were selfies at book signings. Others were announcements for new releases or glowing five-star reviews. The longer she scrolled, the tighter her chest felt. It seemed like everyone was publishing a book except her.

Reading sample — continued

How do they do it? she wondered. How do you stand out when a million other authors are doing the same thing?

Her phone vibrated with a new notification. A colorful graphic flashed on the screen:

“Join Us at the Lone Star Festival! Celebrate Texas Authors with Workshops, Vendor Tables, and Networking Opportunities!”

Intrigued, Emma clicked the link. The festival was happening in two weeks, just a short drive from her home. She skimmed the list of events:

Paths to Publishing Success First Steps to Becoming an Author Building Your Author Brand: Marketing 101

The descriptions made her pulse quicken. She’d never been to a writing event before, and part of her felt like an imposter even thinking about going. But another part of her—the one that had been dreaming about writing for as long as she could remember—felt a spark.

Emma leaned back in her chair. What was the worst that could happen? If nothing else, it would give her a break from staring at a blank screen.

She clicked Register before she could talk herself out of it.