

# Stratmoor Hills author publishes 1st book in series on Medieval alchemy

BY DAN BELFUSS

Newly published author and UCCS graduate Laura Ander, 24, has taken a high school dream of authoring a book and turned it into a reality.

The Stratmoor Hills resident self-published the first in a series of six planned books in March: “The Alchemist Saga: Subversion” is available in print and on Kindle.

Ander, who has a B.S. in international business, recently moved to the Cheyenne Mountain area from Palmer Lake, where she attended high school. She is the CFO for family-owned waste management company, SZIA, which means “hello” and “goodbye” in Hungarian. Ander’s parents are originally from Eastern Europe and Hungarian was Ander’s first language. Her mother was born in Budapest, Hungary, and her father in Transylvania. Formerly a Hungarian territory, Transylvania is now a part of Romania. Ander’s parents moved to Michigan to escape political oppression. In 1999, the family relocated to southern Colorado.

“My father left his job at Ford Motors and we lived off their savings for a while,” Ander said. “They were looking for fresh air and found a lot of it here along with amazing scenery.”

The waste management company was purchased in Sept. 2016 and is a steady source of income, but Ander had bigger dreams for herself. “This is what I care about, this is my passion and this is my baby,” she said of her first book.

It started in a high school AP European history class, when Ander first heard the word “alchemy,” which refers to a form of chemistry and speculative philosophy practiced in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. During the Middle Ages, people sought to make gold using lesser base met-

## INFORMATION

“The Alchemist Saga: Subversion” is available for purchase on Amazon.com in paperback and on Kindle. An audiobook version is pending. It is also available for checkout through the Pikes Peak Library District. Ander will be at the Cheyenne Mountain Library from 1-2:30 p.m. Nov. 11 for a book signing.

als such as lead. They believed that by using astrological events and going through a personal change, they would be able to transmute cheap, easy-to-find metals into valuable gold using the famous “Philosopher’s Stone” to create an elixir of life — a source of eternal youth. This idea caught Ander’s attention.

“I just thought it would be really great to use it in a story somehow,” she said. “I spent the next eight years or so thinking of characters and how alchemy would change their lives.”

Ander’s writing process for “The Alchemist Saga: Subversion” took about eight months. The main character, Aspen is a 17-year-old newcomer to the craft of alchemy. The story details exciting fantasy concepts like the use of portals and a money tree, and the lead character undergoes personal growth.

“Transformations of self are necessary to transform other things,” Ander said. “When those changes are achieved, you see things differently, and people and things around you see you differently, also.”

Ander intends her story to show readers that there are positive and negative side effects from such changes. Some of her



Author Laura Ander works on “The Alchemist Saga: Schism,” the second book in her planned six-part series. Photo courtesy of Laura Ander

characters practicing alchemy have been blinded by greed; these characters are putting out negative energy instead of what they are seeking.

Ander’s initial sought the traditional publishing route, but she wanted to be able to publish more quickly than it would allow. She saw the self-publishing option through Amazon as an opportunity to bring her story to print and moved forward with it. Ander said she learned many things in the process, including how to format her project, which was more complicated than she had imagined. She also hired a line editor.

“I was very excited to hire the same editor who worked with Stephen King on his first novel,” she said. “I was not sure that he would accept my offer, but I was thrilled when he did.”

Many of the editor’s suggestions helped Ander navigate the overwhelming tasks of copywriting, page layouts and style. “These are things that most readers don’t think about when they pick up a book,” Ander said. “There are also a ton of things you can pay for as an author through Amazon and other sites like it. You even have to decide whether or not to buy your own ISBN number. If you do not want to pay for one they will assign one to you but if your book becomes popular, it might be a rights problem later.”

Amazon paperbacks are published “on demand,” meaning when a book is sold, it is printed and then sent to the buyer.

Ander’s second book, “Schism,” is in the works. Learn more at the book’s website, [thealchemistsaga.com](http://thealchemistsaga.com).