

CLICK HERE
TO SAVE OVER **75%** ON A STUDENT GIFT SUBSCRIPTION

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Dow Jones Reprints: This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. To order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, use the Order Reprints tool at the bottom of any article or visit www.djreprints.com

[See a sample reprint in PDF format.](#)

[Order a reprint of this article now](#)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
WSJ.com

TECHNOLOGY | MAY 20, 2010

Publishers to Issue Digital Works Intended as 'Appetizers' for Novels

By JEFFREY A. TRACHTENBERG

In a sign of how digital technology is influencing traditional book publishing, Ballantine Books and Harlequin Teen each plan to issue short standalone digital works intended to serve as "bridges" to coming novels.

On June 1, Toronto-based Harlequin Enterprises, a unit of media company [Torstar Corp.](#), intends to give away e-book copies of Julie Kagawa's "Winter's Passage." The 15,000-word novella will serve as a link between Ms. Kagawa's February debut novel, "The Iron King," and her second teen novel, "The Iron Daughter," which goes on sale July 27.

"The purpose is to keep her audience interested while building their excitement for the next book," said Malle Vallik, director of digital content for Harlequin Enterprises.

Harlequin plans to offer "Winter's Passage" at \$2.99, beginning in late August.

Separately, Ballantine Books, an imprint of Bertelsmann AG's Random House Inc. publishing arm, plans to publish in September a digital short story, priced at \$1.99, from thriller writer Steve Berry. It would be the first time that the Random House Publishing Group, which includes Ballantine, has issued a digital short story as a bridge to the next book in an established series.

The story is intended to attract new readers while whetting the appetite of fans for Mr. Berry's ninth novel, "The Emperor's Tomb," which goes on sale Nov. 23.

The 6,000-word piece, "The Balkan Escape," is too short to have been published as a paperback original. In effect, it is a literary appetizer, inexpensive enough to attract potential readers who might otherwise not be willing to buy a new novel from an author whose works they haven't yet read, said Mr. Berry.

The story features one of Mr. Berry's established characters, Cassiopeia Vitt. She will also appear in "The Emperor's Tomb," along with Mr. Berry's main character, Cotton Malone.

Mr. Berry said the short story stands alone, but will fill in some interesting background for readers of the novel.

"Realistically, it would be hard to get something like this in print," said Matt Schwartz, vice president of digital marketing and strategy for the Random House Publishing Group. "But the e-book format is very flexible. What this does is offer an affordable entry point into Steve's world."

Although many publishers remain concerned that low e-book prices could one day lead to lower prices for physical books, Mr. Schwartz said that the digital work's \$1.99 price is justified because the work is a short story. "It's the

equivalent of buying a couple of songs online," he said. "You can read it in 30 minutes."

Write to Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg at jeffrey.trachtenberg@wsj.com

Copyright 2009 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Distribution and use of this material are governed by our [Subscriber Agreement](#) and by copyright law. For non-personal use or to order multiple copies, please contact Dow Jones Reprints at 1-800-843-0008 or visit www.djreprints.com