Re: “Orphan works” and other creative fiction.

Honestly, the last time I heard “Because I want it!” came from a spoiled child having a temper tantrum in the supermarket. An artist’s work should not be declared “orphaned” simply because someone finds their work useful and doesn’t want to ask politely or pay for use of same. Likewise, as a freelancer, I retain the copyright to my work, this gives me the liberty to collect royalties from resale, file a claim against someone using it without permission, and the right to license my work as I see fit. It is a screaming insult to artists of all stripes that a group of legislators and policy wonks who create smoke, but no fire and a lot of hot air would wish to make things easier (again) for wealthy and well-represented corporations that undercompensated artists already have a hard time fighting.

This is the equivalent of someone taking a plot of land that I purchase for my own use, and without contacting me because it’s “too hard” to find me, they simply take the land and build a huge skyscraper on it. When I appear and ask why they took my land, they say it’s too hard to find me, and then claim the land as their own because they had a use for it. This is called stealing. Theft. Unfair taking. It means that taking someone else’s property, using it for personal gain, and then claiming it as their own. Perhaps that means that someone wanting to rob a bank could claim that money was just sitting there and finding the owners was too hard… oh, wait, if the person doing that was a banker, they’d get bailed out by the taxpayers.

Summary: More has been stolen from the people of the United States, pen stroke by pen stroke, than was ever robbed at gunpoint. Treat artists as the creators they are, and don’t let the corporations steal our livelihoods.

Sincerely,

Mary Feeley