



The Next Chapter

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Spooky Stories are Back! October 10th



In keeping with our annual October tradition, Spooky Stories are back!

Our next regular meeting will be held Monday, **October 10, 6:30 pm**, Genecov Room, Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce Building, 315 N. Broadway, Tyler. (Parking and entrance on Line Street)

Each person (that's **YOU!**) attending in person or or Zoom will be asked to read a short Halloween-inspired story (**a strict limit of 1500 words or less, please.**).

This is always a favorite among members. Come read us a story, then listen as others send shivers up your spine!

Join us **in person or through Zoom**. (Zoom instructions on ETWG website) <>

Nutz and Boltz - **October 17, 6:30.p.m. Online only**. The "Ask Us Anything" Meeting. Got questions about the writing process? This is where to ask. Or, if you've gone through it, come and share your experiences.

Simply go to etwritersguild.org and click on the Zoom link under "Nutz and Boltz." <>

President's Corner



Happy October, fellow writers!

When I think about October, my mind always goes first to Ray Bradbury and that story “The October Country”, about a magically beautiful day spent in the distant past of an elder’s mind. From there it turns a page into “Something Wicked This Way Comes” and plays on the sinister circus playground where time and age mean nothing. I could go on and on, but October and Ray Bradbury have always gone hand-in-hand for me. October is all things spooky for me, and the gently spooky starts with Ray Bradbury.

October in our household is also known as Bandtober because that’s when marching band contest season runs. Every weekend in October is an upwardly moving contest in a different town, usually somewhere in the DFW area. We are busy, busy, busy, and by Halloween, we’re so glad to put on a different kind of costume and let our little freak flags fly.

October is also Preptober in our house. I’ve been at least trying to do NaNoWriMo most years since about 2002. A few years ago someone told me about Preptober and I have been doing it every year since. A good month of getting both my household and my worldbuilding in order is just what I need for a successful 50,000 word NaNoWriMo.

What about y’all? Do you have any October traditions you do, either as a family or as a writer? I’ll post a thread in our private Facebook Group where y’all can post your answer. I can’t wait to see what y’all do during my favorite month of the year. 😊

Spookily Yours,

Lisa Holcomb

2022 ETWG President

The Worst Day

Michael Lazarine

The worst day of my life started when I was fifteen years old. It was the fall of 1989. I skipped getting on the number 8 bus to come home, instead wanting to hang out with my friends. I was a good kid and didn't think I would get in trouble. It was just going to be stopping at the Whataburger in town and grabbing a shake and fries.

This was 1989, remind you, and we didn't have cellphones back then. I couldn't just call my parents from school and tell them I wouldn't be on the bus. But as long as I got home before five I would be okay. It was a silly thing to say and at the same time, I told myself I wasn't doing anything wrong.

Anyway, my best friend Jason got his license about a month earlier and his parents bought him a 1967 Mustang. I had been begging to go for a ride, but my mom wouldn't hear of it. Secretly I don't think his parents were too thrilled about having a bunch of teenagers all in the same place and having their insurance covering it, God forbid anything to happen. I completely understand it now as an adult but back then, sigh, I just wanted to ride around in what I saw as a cool car.

Seriously, it was a 1967 Mustang! It's a classic!



So when I asked Jason earlier in the day if he wanted to hang out and if he could take me home later; of course, I told him my mom said okay, he said yes and told me where to meet him after school. I was excited as any fifteen-year-old is being with anyone with a car that wasn't a parental figure. After a long day at school, hanging out with Jason and a couple of friends was going to be what I wanted.

The school bell rang and I left the classroom in a hurry among hundreds of others. Jason was waiting at his Mustang, leaning up against the driver's door. I called out his name and he turned his head and smiled. He looked like a TV commercial for coolness. Jason was cooler than me and that was probably what I enjoyed the most. He made me feel cool just being with him. Whether it was true or not, I felt like I was one of the gang because I was friends with him.

He opened his door and threw his backpack in the back seat and told me the door was unlocked. I jumped right in as he fired up the little straight six motor and it roared to life. I remember looking around the entire car amazed at the design that took place in 1967. Cars didn't look like that in 1989. Jason's cool rating with me jumped up a few points.

"Buckle up!", he said.

(Worst Cont'd on Page 8)

Traditional Publishing vs. Self-Publishing

W. D. Edmiston, MSCJ

I could write the little I know about publishing on the head of a pin as opposed to what there is to know—but I have a strong analytical point of view of the difference between traditional and self-publishing. If you are looking at “writing” as a hobby or a part-time effort, rethink it. The Publishing Business often looks at self-publishing as if we are meddling with their craft. If someone started interfering with what you do professionally, you would have a similar reaction. Most of us can’t cook in the same kitchen as our spouse.

Hallmark Romances has taught us that nice authors can get-away-from-it-all, at a writing conference in Santa Fe, fall in love or meet a traditional publisher, and write the great American Novel. Or we could just find that agent that “believes” in us we could launch our career, fall in love and be successful... yeah, just believe and Tinker Bell will live boys and girls.

Rom-coms have also taught us publishing is a big clique, and getting your book published is just a matter of meeting the right author or agent to introduce you. It is not realistic if you are not willing to do the work and produce something people want to read. Writing is not about what you want, but what entertains the reader. Learning to do that requires hard work, and I can’t say I have gotten it right yet.

Read Stephen King’s book, *On Writing, a memoir of the craft*.

He worked in a commercial laundry and wrote at either a cramped desk or with his computer on his knees. He wrote magazine copy, news

articles, and contributed to what he calls T&A magazines before he sold *Carrie*. That’s not a Santa Fe experience. King says good writing is as hard as crossing the Atlantic in a bathtub.

“That is why many budding authors find critique groups difficult.”

That is why many budding authors find critique groups difficult. If you take part in a five-person critique group and submit a short chapter of 2500 words, each member reads 10,000 words. Everyone wants someone to read their work and red pencil the mistakes. That person, if you are lucky, is called “mom” and that is not critiquing. Authors critique other authors. Editing tools inside your app have replaced mom, but not the feedback of a fellow author. You must know how to write to critique well. I don’t.

Self-publishing promised an alternative to traditional publishing. Hundreds who started writing for Amazon sold books and we have been operating on that expectation since. However, millions, not hundreds, are writing now, changing the odds of a breakthrough and it is no longer as easy and still nothing like Traditional publishing. You need training, experience, the ability to produce a good product, insurance, a bookkeeper, a taxman, and profits will be slim for a long time, if you are good, lucky, dedicated, and humble. It is still hard work. We know that, not because of our success, but because those who were not hardworking, lucky, dedicated, and humble are no longer around.

(Publishing, Cont’d Next Page)

(Publishing, Cont'd from Previous Page)

Self-publishing is analogous to purchasing a franchise for a hot dog cart or caramel corn truck to take to ball games and rodeos on the weekends. You will also need to buy Publisher Rocket, sign up with MailerLite or Mail Chimp, BookFunnel, and attend roughly a quarter-million seminars. Then you create a newsletter, and you must write the newsletter instead of your planned Great American Novel, while still trying to write your Great American Novel. Oh, and keep your daytime job.

Is the publishing house way better? Of course. Self-publishing requires a marketing and sales portion that most authors dislike and would rather avoid. That is why traditional publishing works and takes a larger part of the profit. Yes, they do it for you, and writing is still hard work. For another viewpoint, try [here](#) for a great video seminar *How to Publish a Book in 2021* by Jerry Jenkins (YouTube) who wrote *Left Behind* and 200+ other books. <>

Got Groupies?

Lydia Holley

Every writer needs groupies—specifically, two of them.

The first groupie you need is a fan so dedicated and enamored with you they think everything you write is fantastic. This helps pump you up when you've finished a first draft. I have one. Maya Bethany mentioned she has one. We both know this groupie shouldn't be the final judge of us releasing something to be published, but having this type of groupie is extremely important. For without them, our souls would shrink and we might quit writing all together.

After presenting your work to groupie one, then you can move on to people who are less enchanted by your wordsmithing. That's when the next groupie comes in.



Groupie two is a small circle of writers—a critique group. Others who can give constructive criticism to help you with your writing and storytelling. You don't want to be paired with someone who attacks you personally, but you do want someone who will express their opinion on what was confusing, what was written awkwardly, and whether your story flows from its beginning to its end.

Now, when groupie one says something, listen. You will need those compliments to stay motivated. But when groupie two says something that contradicts groupie one, listen even closer. We need to continually learn our craft. So, consider your story. Consider your writing. And consider your genre. Then take what groupie two says and revise what needs to be changed.

With two groupies cheering you on, you'll be a writing rock star! <>

The Diner: An American Tradition

Patricia La Vigne

Researching for a particular setting for my story, *Nighthawks: The Diner*, led me to The Original Market Diner in Dallas. I never would have imagined this one except for mentioning what I had in mind to my critique group one evening. That particular diner was brought to my attention, so in my writer research mode, my daughter and I drove to Dallas. Arriving late in the afternoon, we decided that a piece of pie was in order. The waitress greeted us, provided a menu, we chose our flavors (Chocolate for Andrea and Lemon Meringue for me), and absorbed the atmosphere of this well-established diner. I told the waitress our purpose for the long trip from Jacksonville and asked if the owner was available. He was not, but she gave me his name and a good time to call him. She also mentioned about a waitress who had worked there for years, retired, and comes for her dinner every day for which the owner does not charge. What!? I have a character in my story just like that. Was this fate—a sign?

Long story short. I still have never met the very busy owner although we have corresponded through email. He even granted me permission to use a photo of the exterior of the diner, which includes the sign, to use on the cover of the book. He also suggested we could set a time for a book signing when it is published.

The book is still a work-in-progress, but in searching for a topic for my blogpost, I began to think about diners this week. There is a diner on Route 40 in Baltimore, Maryland that is a classic example of the type found in the early 1940's--shaped like a railroad passenger car with a stainless steel exterior. But I could not recall the name. However, I have maintained contact with several former students in the Baltimore area, so I emailed one of them, and told her what I was looking for. I woke up about 3:30 the following morning and had the name—Double T Diner. So imagine my thrill when I opened my inbox on my computer later and found a long email from Nancy B. Not only did she give me the name of the diner (Double T Diner!), but names of several diners in the area, her account of her childhood experiences eating in diners on vacation trips and several links to other diners, including the Double T.



(Diner Cont'd on Page 10)

The Sanctuary

Laura Bentz

I arrived in the famous tourist town of Villigiano up in the Swiss Alps and found the local pub. I had inherited a map from my grandmother's old trunk and was eager to cash in on it. According to this map, there were ruins near this village where may lie buried treasure. At least, that's what I thought when I consulted an expert. He analyzed it and explained that's what the markings showed, including a big red X in the middle of it.

As I sat in the pub sipping on my drink, a person came over to me and extended his hand in greeting. "Hello, stranger! Welcome to our town. What is your business here? My name is Antonio Barna. I'm the mayor here."

"Hi, and I'm Terrell Cotton."

I shook his hand as I observed a well-dressed man wearing a black hat with a prominent purple feather in it. And a matching black cloak to keep himself warm in the chilly weather. He ordered a drink, took off his hat, lit up his pipe, and started smoking.

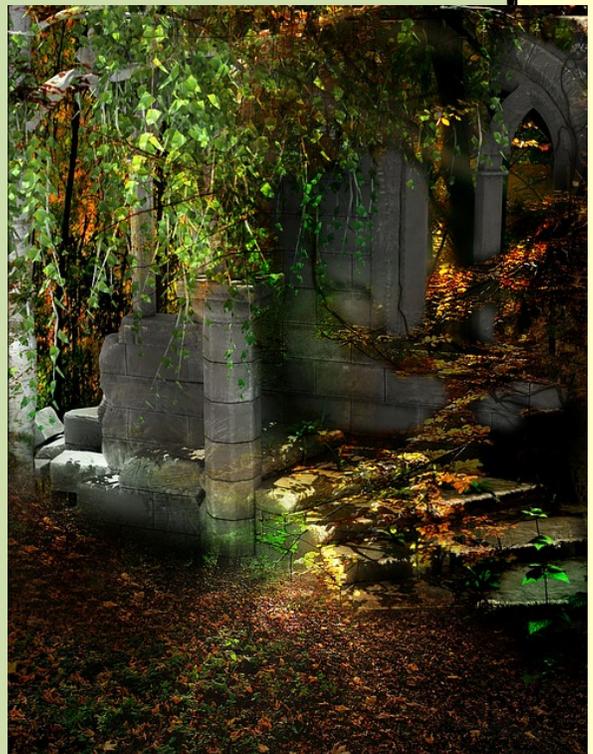
There was silence for a few minutes, and then I spoke up.

"I'm looking for a guide. I have a map that could lead me to some buried treasure. Whoever would do it with me, of course, I could reward handsomely when we find it, of course."

As he slid into the chair opposite of mine, his brow furrowed and his left eyebrow rose.

"I wouldn't advise you to go out into these woods. They are very spooky, and many an adventurer like you have gone in and never come back out."

"So, the answer is no?"



(Sanctuary Cont'd on Page 13)

(Worst, Cont'd from Page 3)

I found the lap belt and clicked it in place. Looking out along the long hood, the cherry red paint shined in the afternoon sun. It was so smooth it gave off the appearance that the paint was still liquid and naturally flowed freely over the sharp, bold lines of the Mustang. If being with Jason didn't make me cool, the car did so all on its own. It looked like it could tear up the streets. Before I knew it, the wind was in my hair and we were at Whataburger.

The afternoon post-school passed by much too quickly. The chocolate shake tasted so good, and the salty fries came right out of the fryer to my tray. Our mutual friend Chris arrived in his 71 Nova. His car was a funky-colored green that we all affectionately named 'Snot'. Chris brought his girlfriend and we all hung out in the booth, laughing and telling stories about stuff that happened at school. Of course, time flies and before I knew it, it was five o'clock. I cursed under my breath. I should have been home. My parents were going to kill me. I, fearing for my teenage existence, told Jason that I needed to get home now. He checked his watch and realized it was late for him as well.

He drove as fast and of course, as safe, as the law would allow before arriving at the driveway of my house. I told him to just drop me off at the edge of the driveway. I didn't want him catching the wrath of my parents if they saw him. He nodded and I'm sure he was happy to oblige. I shut the door and he took off in a flash, leaving me standing at the edge where asphalt met concrete. I guess he didn't want to catch the wrath of my parents any more than I did.

I stood there for a moment, watching the taillights drift off in the distance. I didn't move a step until they were gone. I was by myself in mere moments, I just didn't know how true that statement would be yet. As I took my first step, it started to rain. The clouds darkened the sky. The sun hid in shame. I guess the sun feared my parents too. I carried on up the drive with my head down. Maybe I could just walk inside and no one would notice that I hadn't been there. Unlikely.

I almost made it to the porch when I heard my dad's voice.

"Where have you been?" His voice was angry but tired.

I was about to speak before he threw another question at me, cutting me off. I wasn't mad. I knew I should have been home.

"Your mother is worried sick. She has been looking for you for an hour."

I felt so disgusted. Like a gut punch. I never wanted to let my parents down. I looked up to speak to my father. He was wearing his uniform as he does every day. My eyes were drawn to a red stain on his chest near the pocket flap on the front of his shirt. It was about the size of a quarter and misshapen. I wondered what it was but didn't get a lot of time to think about it before being told to go inside and apologize to my mom. I lowered my head again, never being allowed to even say I'm sorry to him and walked inside.

(Worst, Cont'd on Next Page)

(*Worst, from Previous Page*)

I opened the door and gradually stepped in, somewhat ready to take the next round of punishment. I put my backpack on the floor when my mom walked into the foyer from the living room.

“Where have you been? I have been trying to find you for the last hour or so. Why weren’t you on the bus? You should have been home almost two hours ago!”

Disappointment swept across my entire body. With the saddest voice I could muster, I apologized as much as I could. I spoke for the first time since Jason left.

“I know you’re upset mom. Dad already told me. I’m sorry I am late. I just wanted to hang out with friends.”

Before I could add to my request for forgiveness, my mother interjected, “What did you just say?”

I looked at my mother for the first time since I walked inside and I could see something different was happening. She wasn’t showing signs of being mad at me. Instead, she had been crying. Her mascara was running, smeared by her own hands from wiping her eyes. Her eyes were red and she was looking at me in total shock. I immediately forgot about my problems. Surely she wasn’t crying this much because I was late. I answered her question.

“I said that dad told me that you were upset.”

“Where did you see your father?” Another tear rolled down her cheek, struggling to get the question out. Her bottom lip trembled to speak the words.

“Outside on the porch.” I pointed to the location and looked back and he wasn’t there.

Where did he go?

“That’s not possible honey.” Her voice was in a state of refusal. “He couldn’t possibly have been outside.”

I heard her voice tremble again.

“But mom, I just saw him...” I was cut short again.

“You didn’t see him outside. Your dad was shot and killed around four this afternoon. You couldn’t have possibly seen him. I have been looking for you ever since.”

My life turned upside down at that very moment. It is the worst day of my life. I felt isolated for a moment even with my mom standing right there. She continued talking but it was muffled and distant. My mother touching me on my shoulder brought me out of a daze. She just grabbed ahold of me and wrapped her arms around me. I started to cry as I grabbed my mom in return.

I have wondered for the last thirty years of my life since, was that my dad’s ghost or spirit or whatever you want to call it, telling me not to go inside and pretend not to be seen, as I had wanted to go unnoticed? Did he know that I was going to need company? Did he want me to be with my mom and comfort her? I think the answer is yes to all those questions and more. Since that day, I haven’t seen dad again, but mom and I have never been closer. <>

(Diner, Cont'd from Page 6)

Nancy writes, “The chrome always shone brilliantly, and the 50’s space age boomerang pattern on the formica...made me feel like Judy Jetson. I was fascinated with the...glass creamer containers my parents got with their coffee and the heavy Buffalo china that served thousands of meals to traveling diners....You knew you were going to get a good meal, maybe hear a little gossip from the booth behind you and leave with a full belly.”

Thank you, Nancy, for sharing that memory. Long live the diner! <>



Getting the Lesson(s)

Lydia Holley

“You’ll keep getting the lesson and getting the lesson until you’ve gotten the lesson” are words of advice I’ve often heard. Which has always been frustrating to me because you have to figure out the lesson on your own. That seems to pertain to writing, too. There are so many aspects to a good story and good writing which need to be learned. How do you master them all? Books, seminars, and conferences are all good places to start. Don’t just read one book. Read 10. Then 50. Then 100. My husband asks me why we have to have so many books on writing. He doesn’t realize all the different aspects which need to fuse together to make a story right: Flashbacks and backstory. Character arcs and characterization. Plot lines and pacing. Voice and theme. Settings and scenes. Word choice and sentence structure. (To name just a few.) Then, of course, writing. A lot of writing. Some say a million words is a good place to start.

I agree with Jane Friedman when she says there are three things a writer needs to succeed:

1. Determination— because a book doesn’t write itself. During the process and afterward, you’ll have critics. Perhaps even personal attacks. Bad reviews. Days you aren’t feeling motivated. Times when the writing doesn’t flow. It’ll be difficult to find time to get started, much less to complete your masterpiece. You have to have determination to push through.
2. Skill — Writing takes more than talent. It takes skill. It’s a learned process. You can just throw words onto a page and call it a day, but if you want your writing to be good (and I assume we all do) you need to learn the best way to get your message onto the page. Then, when you know the rules, you’ll know how to manipulate them for the best reading experience. And of course, no matter how many books you read, you also have to write. Because practice makes perfect—or at least, better.
3. Luck — Some of the best writers are never recognized. As with many things in life, luck plays a small but important part. What makes a book soar to the top of the bestseller lists? No one’s quite figured that out yet. If publishers knew, that’s all they’d publish. And since we’ve all read (or heard about) books that were not well written but succeeded anyway, it seems as if it’s that touch of luck which propels one story above the rest. Of course, you can’t rely solely on luck. You have to work, too. But it doesn’t hurt to have it! <>

PREPTOBER FOR NANOWRIMO

Lisa Holcomb



What is NaNoWriMo?

For those beginning writer's out there, let's start at the beginning. NaNoWriMo stands for National Novel Writing Month. It begins every year on November 1. "Rules-following" participants have 30 days to write a 50,000-word novel. If you write every day, that comes out to 1,667 words a day. There are "rebels" out there that write poetry, screenplays, multiple short stories, blog posts, business-related writing, and even consider their freelance writing to be written for NaNoWriMo. They may still have the goal of 50,000 words, but they don't work on one full novel during the 30 days.

How do I participate?

Simply head to NaNoWriMo.org, click the Sign Up button, and fill out your profile. Once you've set up your profile, you can announce your novel, add buddies, and start prepping your book. It's free to join. In fact, NaNoWriMo is a nonprofit. You can always donate to their organization if you'd like.

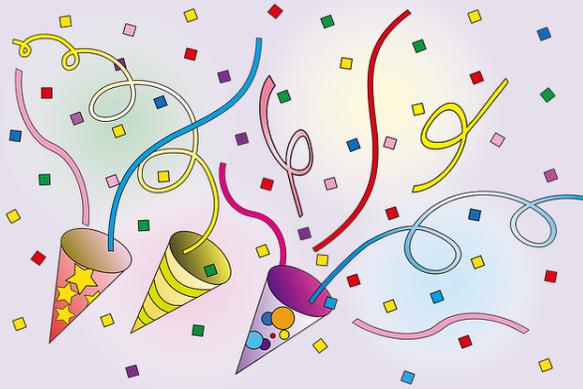
Planning Around Your Daily Life

Schedule Your Writing Time

To complete NaNoWriMo, you must focus your attention—and keep it focused. Think about what distractions you might encounter during November. How can you plan now to reduce or eliminate them? The most productive writers have learned to focus their attention on the time they have to write. That's why they are so prolific.

Before this 30-day writing challenge, block out time on your calendar to write as many days as possible. Consider what you need to give up to find time to write for more extended periods than usual. Make these writing appointments firm commitments—like a doctor's appointment you cannot cancel. Block out enough time to meet your daily or weekly writing quotas. And build in make-up days in case you get behind.

(NaNo, Cont'd on Page 15)



Dates to Celebrate in October:

- 6th Random Acts of Poetry Day
- 11th Myth and Legends Day
- 16th National Dictionary Day
- 17th Black Poetry Day
- 20th National Day on Writing

1st week: National Newspaper Week;

3rd week: National Friends of Libraries Week; Free Speech Week

September is:

National Book Month; National Reading Group Month; National Cookbook Month

Sources: <https://nationaldaycalendar.com/>; <https://buildbookbuzz.com/2022-literary-calendar>

Quote of The Month:

““You must write every single day of your life... You must lurk in libraries and climb the stacks like ladders to sniff books like perfumes and wear books like hats upon your crazy heads...may you be in love every day for the next 20,000 days. And out of that love, remake a world.”

~Ray Bradbury

(Sanctuary, Cont'd from Page 7)

"Yes, it is. Now, if you would excuse me, I have errands to run."

He drank the last few sips of his brew and tucked away his pipe.

"Well, thanks for your advice. Sorry, you're missing a great opportunity."

"That's okay. I'll pass."

And with these last words, he arose, put his hat back on, and left.

Everyone else that day would either avoid eye contact or tell me not to do it. The same litany of "It's dangerous in those woods," was all I got out of them. I left the pub in frustration and meandered to the edge of a huge forest, wondering what I would do next.

There, I saw a path leading into the dark woods. I looked at my map. Could that be the way to the treasure? And out of these same shadows leaped a man dressed in hunting clothes with a long-hooked cane and a felt hat covering half of his face. Only his long nose stuck out of it. He said he would take me to the ruins, no charge until the trip was over. Then he would take a ten percent cut off any treasure or artifacts I might find, and I agreed to his terms.

"Your name?"

"Oh, just call me Giovanni."

"Okay. And mine's Terrell."

He said nothing else and refused to shake my hand, which I thought was odd.

He took the map from me and pointed the way, and I followed.

We traveled down the dusty path hiking all day, and the shadows grew longer as the afternoon closed in around us. A black cat crossed our path but hurried along with barely a sound.

Finally, we saw a clearing ahead. The forest revealed parts of a lost civilization that had collapsed long ago. Everything looked like lumps of stone and ivy-covered walls except one lone building that was still standing. The creepiness overwhelmed me, but filled me also with awe as I drew closer. I explored the area around it and then approached the edifice.

"What happened here? It looks like this whole society somehow disappeared without a trace. Why is it gone?"

"A great plague hit this metropolis." He replied. "At first, they thought it was curable, but more and more chaos occurred as they tried to control it and soon more and more people died. Only this lone building survived."

I noticed a stone sign covered in ivy by the front door that hung slightly ajar on a very rusty hinge. I pulled away the tendrils to reveal strange markings.

(Sanctuary, Cont'd, Next Page)

(Sanctuary, Cont'd from Previous Page)

"What does this say?"

"Oh, that says 'the sanctuary' and it proved true. It was an asylum to all who wanted protection from the disease. It's actually some sort of church. You can see the cross from here."

He pointed to the top where the steeple pointed skyward eyes squinted in the gathering gloom.

"Yes, you're right. I see it."

A battered symbol, but it still stood intact.

"Why didn't the plague enter here?"

"It was pure magic, we think. All who entered survived, including my family."

"Really? There were some people here related to you?"

"Yes. It was my grandfather and my father, among others. They eventually fled when they realized they were the last ones left. They told me the whole story when I was very young."

"But my research said this was centuries ago! How could you have lived that long?"

A light poured out of the sky; an oval shape hovered over us. His eyes glowed like sapphires, and his face grew skeletal. A diabolical laugh rang out.

"What makes you think I'm still alive?"

With those last words, a beam of light flashed upon him, and he was gone. A shiver ran down my backbone. On the ground lay the map. I picked it up, but it made no sense. I couldn't read the words or understand the markings. There was no way I could figure out the way back.

I wandered for many days. And today I am still wandering. At least, I think I am. Or am I dead, too? It's no wonder the villagers called it "the Haunted Forest." All who are foolish would enter seeking for their fortune and never return.

Let the buyer - or treasurer hunter - beware! <>



(NaNo, Cont'd from Page 11)

Figuring Out an Alternate Daily Word Goal

If you're like me, you cannot write every day for all 30 days of NaNoWriMo. Maybe it's because you have small kids at home or you really like to party on the weekend or it's your year to host your group's Friendsgiving...no matter what, there's math to get you through!

- Check your calendar for the days you know you cannot write. Write that number down.
- Then give yourself one day a week as a catch-up day. It sounds ridiculous, but November is a tricky month. Write that number down.
- Add those numbers together.
- Subtract that resulting number from thirty.
- Take 50,000 and divide it by the number you got in step 4.
- That's how many words per writing day that you'll need to write to win NaNoWriMo.

Plan Your Food and Drinks for the Month

- You'll probably need some snacky goodness on your desk while you write. This reduces the nagging need to go to the kitchen, which can break your concentration.
- Make a survival kit! The contents of your kit will depend on what makes your heart happy, but here are a few of my favorite things:
 - Special coffees or teas.
 - Grab-and-go healthy snacks — nuts, dark chocolate, granola bars, cheese sticks, etc.
 - Gum — any flavor will do, but peppermint has been scientifically proven to boost your brainpower.
 - Electrolyte water — to keep you hydrated and hold leg cramps at bay.
- Food can also serve as a dangling carrot to get you through each writing milestone. For example, you may say to yourself, "Once I make it to the next page, I'll eat a Skittle."

Planning Your Work Environment

Do the Boring Stuff First

As much as you can, pre-plan to either do a lot of your November chores ahead of time or find someone who can do those things for you in November. Here are some ideas of things you won't want to think about during the marathon of NaNoWriMo:

- Deep cleaning your house and changing your sheets.
- Mowing the lawn, raking the leaves, and watering your plants - put them on the vacation maintenance system of your choice. I like hiring neighborhood kids.
- Doing all the laundry and putting it all away — did you know Tyler has some drop-off laundry services where you can drop off a bag of dirty clothes and pick up freshly cleaned and folded piles?
- Brushing the cat, clipping the dog's nails, and dusting the ceiling fan — have kids at home? Assign the chore to them!
- Cooking for Thanksgiving — pre-cook as much of the Thanksgiving meal in October as you can and freeze that for later.

You're going to be mostly ignoring this stuff for the entire month, so just get the planning of it all out of the way now.

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Clean and Organize Your Space

A cluttered workspace can distract you. If you can't find what you need in your office or on your computer, you will waste precious writing time searching for it. Use October to clean your desk, organize supplies and files, and prepare a folder, binder, or file for the manuscript you plan to write in November.

Make a folder on your computer to keep all your nano stuff in or a physical one if you're a real paper sort of person. Organization is key! Alternately, you could use an organizing software, such as Scrivener, yWriter, Campfire, or any of a number of others. I personally started off using Word, then graduated to yWriter, and then after winning my first NaNoWriMo, I used their 40% discount for winners to switch to Scrivener.

Other Tools

A good keyboard - Yes, it's possible to handwrite your novel during NaNoWriMo, but unless you're super-fast at it, it's probably faster to type. Your hands will get sore churning out over 1,600 words every day by hand. PS. If you need to replace your keyboard because of a sticky key, do it now so it won't mess you up later.

You will need a notebook and a writing utensil on your day time desk (for our writers that work full time during the day and do NaNoWriMo at night) during NaNoWriMo for when your brain throws out a fantastic idea (plot twist, character backstory, perfect turn of phrase), and you need to write it down before it evaporates. You can jot it down in your notebook without breaking your work momentum. You can also keep this notebook with you when you're not at your desk to quickly jot down ideas.

Music! Personally, I don't have one playlist per novel, but I break my playlists down by the mood of the scene I'm writing. Some examples are light and hopeful, romantic, intense, scary, comical, sadness, grief, and rage.

Reward yourself

- Rewards (or bribes 😊) can go a long way towards helping you get to your end point.
- Choose things that make your heart happy
- If you want to be extra fun, buy your treats ahead of time, gift wrap them, and put them somewhere you can see them a lot during the day.

Planning Your Novel

Step One: Brainstorming - WHAT DO YOU LOVE?

- TV Shows - What TV shows have you loved to binge watch? Include shows from your childhood, teen years, and more recent ones.
- Childhood Books - What kind of stories did you love as a child?
- Movies - What movies do you watch over and over again? Include movies from your childhood, teen years, as well as more recent ones.
- Current Books - What books have you loved recently? What did you love about them?

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Step Two : Free-Writing

Free-writing is the process of writing without censorship. Set a timer for 5 minutes, put your pen to the paper, and don't stop putting words down until the timer goes off. Even if you have to write, "I have nothing to write about," or "I have no ideas," keep going. Do not correct any mistakes, censor yourself, or try to make it perfect. Just write.

- I want to write a story where ____ happens.
 - I want to write a story that feels mostly ____ .
 - I want to write a story that's really about ____ .
 - What if...?
- Write out your WHY
 - Let's be honest. You're going to want to quit sometime in November when things get hard. What are the reasons you MUST and WILL finish this book this year? Having this as a list that you can refer to when things get hard will help.

Step Three: If you don't already know, figure out if you are a Pantser or Plotter

If you're a Pantser, you probably work best if you don't know what's going to happen next. You just allow the characters to breathe and the plot to unfold before you as you type.

If you're a Plotter, you need an outline. This tip is for all the non-pantsers out there. If the idea of going into NaNoWriMo without a plan of what you want to write about sends shivers up your spine, let's talk.

Beat sheets

One of the biggest helpers I found for novel writing was Beat Sheets. Beat sheets are kind of the precursor to an outline: They identify the important moments in a novel, and lay out what needs to happen in each part of the story. Beat Sheets come in many forms and there are even different ones for each genre. Jami Gold (<http://jamigold.com>) has an excellent collection of writing worksheets and beat sheets. Popular Beat Sheets include ones from Save the Cat, the Six stage plot structure, Story Engineering, and the Hero's Journey.

Step Four: Do Your Research Now!

- Whether you're writing a period piece or gearing up to create a sci-fi drama and want to write from an informed position, it's best to get the answers to your research-related questions now. In NaNoWriMo, your focus should be on writing, not researching. Research can slow you down and may even sideline your story altogether. Before you know it, the month has passed, and so has your motivation to continue writing the story.

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- Some research is visual. You can create a visual reference library for your novel. This is one of my favorite ways to use Pinterest. Simply create a secret board on Pinterest and then pin story-related images to that board that you can then refer to while you're writing your novel.
- Examples of categories for these story-related images include:
 - Landscapes
 - Hairstyles
 - Transportation
 - Houses
 - Clothing
 - People

Research Planner

In order to keep track of research that I've done for my novel and where I found that information, I make myself a little spreadsheet that helps me quickly find the information I need when I'm looking for it. Across the top of the spreadsheet, I use these titles for my columns: "Title of Source", "Author of Source", "Page # or URL", and "Info Learned". Then I put in all the interesting information I've found during October into the spreadsheet as I come across it so I can find it at 3AM when I wake up from a dream where Person X crosses into Location Z at Time Y and I want to make sure that's possible before I commit it to paper.

One Last Thing: Prepare Yourself Not to Edit

Understand this before you start writing in November: This draft is not for the world to see. It's not for your mama to read or your critique group to pore over.

You won't need to show this draft to another human being. It only serves as a starting place to get you ready for your next draft. So, don't let yourself get bogged down by re-working sub-plots, making dialogues shine, changing character backstories, or switching up locations. Aside from correcting a typo as it happens, let the words come as they are. NaNoWriMo is for writing. Editing comes in December or January.

Hope this has helped you first or second time NaNoWriMo participants to start things off right on November 1st! If you need a Buddy, come find me at <https://nanowrimo.org/participants/awamiba>. <>



Autumn Remembrances

Lisa Holcomb

In the emptiness
 I make my home.
There is a fire there,
 calling my name.
I sit beside it in my green chair
and think of children.

In my mind,
Plush rabbit dolls play at tea parties
 (long since gone)
while strawberry tendrils
curl round the
battleground
of GI Joes left at war.

A waterfall of orange spice leaves
 falling amongst
our not so childish toys

And inside, sealed-away jars of
Goldfish crackers
Line shelves with solemnity,
waiting to be eaten.

Here there are none.
 It is only the emptiness
where I live.
It is cold like chilled pears
 and just as gritty
in my mouth.

Leaves swirl by
As clouds threaten
icy rain.

Star-filled music from a long quiet piano stirs me to
 the brink and,
opening the door to yesterday,
I walk through
and see



not myself, not my vision of me,
but a version of me
seen only by you.

I am falling asleep while riding
a multitude of sorceries
to find you.
Something heats
in my heart as your photo smiles my way.
But I am weary of conceits
and none shall save you, though online you joke
"Do not merge yourself with machines - it will go badly."

Here it is such a far way
from the green and gold hills of home.
You and I grow more distant, still,
yet I dream of the day I see you
walk up to this door
and replace
the emptiness beside the fire's cold
flameless glow.

Thrown on the streets,
the pale streetlights
do nothing to help see
the home that we all used to live in.

But then I see
gold and burgundy,
as leaves fall and swirl in the wind.
"Nature's confetti," you called them,
and a surge of joy, the emptiness fading,
brings me hope.

I am here for you.
You left me here to stay
and I am waiting to hear
your voice calling my name.

Seeing stars
past black branches of unrecognizable trees,
a cacophony of voices
floats up beyond



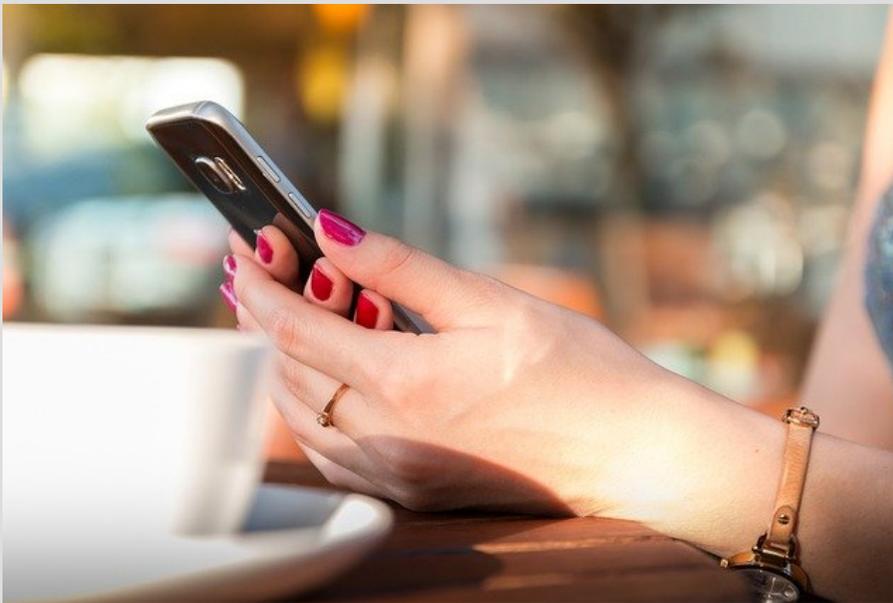
confines of this building,
curiously thrilling my senses.
Shivers tickle along my back
unrelated to cool of the October breeze.

Under me, the warm scruffiness
of your favored blanket,
Smelling of camping fires from long ago

It's dark, yet I feel bright.
Something's happening -
anticipation, exhilaration
roar in my chest.

I sit in the emptiness, smile, and wait
for the phone to bond us.

<>



TNC Newsletter and ETWG Information

TNC Submission Guidelines and Deadlines

All submitted data must be received by the 30th of the month prior to the month in which art/ad/etc. will appear.

Length—up to 500 words (ask if more)

Format—single space, no indent

Fonts—12 pt. Times New Roman

Photos—jpeg with caption instructions

Send to:

LydiaHolley@aol.com



2022 ETWG Officers

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