

# The Write Life

Volume 1, Issue 10

November 19th, 2009

## NaNo Week 3

Good morning, ladies and menfolk, to week the ending part of Week 3 in NaNoWriMo. You've survived the lull of Week 2. You've found the second wind of Week 3, and hopefully are powering through your story and learning more about your characters. If you're still dealing with some Week 2 lulling, then join us this weekend at some write-ins, or try some of our muse food on page 2 to jump start your characters a bit.

And if the Plague has found you, as it seems to have found everyone over the course of the month, have some soup, tea, and take it easy. Your health trumps writing any day. NaNoWriMo is about having fun while under a deadline, not killing yourself to get 50,000 words. Remember that, and enjoy!

## This Week's Events

We have multiple events available for your literary please this week. A Write-In at the Trumbull Mall on Saturday, Nov. 21st. From 1 PM - 4 PM.

A Write-In at the Borders in Fairfield, on Sunday, Nov. 22nd. From 1 PM to 4 PM. And a Write-In at the Panera's in Brookfield.

And let's not forget our online Write-In on Wednesday, Nov. 25th. In our regional chat room, from 7 PM - 9 PM.

Join us when you can, we'll be glad to have you.

## Group News:

**In the interests of "corporate" transparency, I'll be displaying our monthly financials, to help viewers better understand what goes into managing and maintaining our writing group.**

Monthly Expenses to Date:	\$0
Annual Donations to Date:	\$170
Annual Expenses to Date:	\$470

Total Annual Funds to Date: **-\$300**

## What's New:

- More Local Events

## Up and Coming:

- Contests
- Branded Swag
- Whitepapers

## Inside This Issue:

Muse Food	2
Writer's Sphere	3
Literary Latte	5
Contact Info	6

Is your muse burnt out, or overweight? too tired to go chase shiny objects? Try some of our new muse food, patent pending.

## Ninjai!

Ninjas have become almost mythical in their abilities of martial arts, secrecy, and beating people up with acrobatic style. But every great ninja was once a small ninja or ninjai. Even the greats started somewhere. And that goes for your characters too. Every character started somewhere.

Take one of your characters. What was their childhood like? What did they enjoy doing before they became who they are today? A lot can be learned in a character's history, old friends that can pop up in your story to pro-

vide support. High school arch nemeses that'll return to haunt your hero in the future.

Talk to your characters about their history. See what they're willing to tell. Read between the lines to learn what they're hiding. A lot of a character is in what they don't say. Old secrets can make for all sorts of plot complications when you least expect them, so be prepared for anything. Your characters may just surprise you.

## One Worders

Try starting a story utilizing one of the below words:

Confuddle  
Bamboozle  
Bazaar  
Frankincense  
Intoxicant  
Barrow  
Rooftop  
Lockstep  
Flammable  
Backfire

## One Liners

Try starting a story with one of the below sentences:

Blood is nothing new to me, it's all the skin that throws me off.  
I just high-fived a whale; I dare you to top that.  
Why be neutral, when you can pick sides?  
So, you want to be a writer?  
The dice are trying to kill me.  
Just five more minutes.  
I know you are, but what am I.  
I've got nothing to lose, but even less to gain.  
Here, have some tea.  
I'm rather attached to that arm.

## Photographic Inspiration



Use the image on the left or right as a starting point for a new story or to help jumpstart a sluggish scene.

Have a photo you'd like to have seen in our newsletter? Email it to [WriteLife@FCWriters.com](mailto:WriteLife@FCWriters.com)



## The Writer's Sphere - Combating Writer's Block

Every writer has at one point or another come into contact with the dreaded writer's block. A large monolithic creature that has the ability to separate you from your muse. Block are, due to the laws of physics, very hard to move, tip over, or otherwise manipulate until you can get around it.

A writer's sphere is the opposite of this. Not just in shape, but in personality and usability. The writer's sphere is similar to the bubble that Glenda the witch from the Wizard of Oz used to get around. The writer's sphere is capable of reuniting a writer with his or her muse(s) It can also envelop a stubborn writer's block, and transport it to somewhere less intrusive,

like Pluto.

How do you find your writer's sphere? And what do you do with one after you find it? Both are good questions, and require a bit of ingenuity to answer. In truth, a writer's sphere is a method of transportation a muse uses to travel around Muse Land, and to visit writers.

As writer's it is usually difficult to access a writer's sphere alone. But, with a muse's help, you can utilize this magical contraption, escape the doldrums of procrastination, and thwart any writer's block that dares stand in your way.

## Plot

Plot. The backbone of any novel, the crux of any story, the stuff that makes characters act the way they do. Plot is one of the fiercest weapons any writer can wield. But it has to be used wisely, to be effective. Otherwise your characters may mutiny and find a different writer to write them. And that would be very sad indeed. So let's talk about how to keep your plot moving so your characters don't wander off when you need them the most.

First off, it's important to realize that Plot is a multi-faceted object. It's not a set of blocks you just stack in some sense of order. Most writers picture as the Beginning, Middle, and End. I prefer to envision it as the Hook, Line, and Sinker.

You need a beginning hook to get your readers interested. Some solid starting point of plot to get your characters moving. Otherwise they'll wander off to read something else. The middle line helps guide your characters along the story, and keep your readers interested. Writing an ending Sinker will satisfy and please your readers, give your characters closure, and ensure that it was worth following the story from beginning to end.

The Hook:

The start of your story is not necessary the start of your plot. You could toss your readers in the middle of a fight scene, or equally dramatic action sequence. An important note to keep in mind is: If the beginning of your story doesn't interest you,

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why should it interest the reader? Choose an interesting part of your plot to get reader's eyes glued to the page.

Some of the classic methods for starting a story mid-plot can be having a question be the first line. A character in the middle of an action or movement can also provide a solid springboard for a plot.

By starting your story at the beginning of your plot, you're placing your characters in a "right out of the box" freshness that requires time to scuff up and make more "lived in". Characters that have already lived some of their life before page 1 allows for a more believable story. Unless you're recreating a Genesis type scenario, it's best to keep the very beginning of your plot hidden up your sleeve. You can always flash snippets in flashback scenes later once the story has gained some momentum.

The Line:

I've found that plot is most effective in the style of a car. Speeding along the highway works for some. Others like to dwell on the city streets, having intense scenes, then slow it down at an intersection for dramatic tension. Others still enjoy the back roads, twisting and turning along at a leisurely pace while taking in all the scenery.

Slow and steady may win the race when it's the tortoise verses the hare (on the premise the hare is lazy, or the tortoise has a large amount of identical twins helping out) but when it comes to plot, a long, drawn out story line can feel like torture for a reader. It's hard to stay engaged in a story line when the

## Plot

plot shuffles along like a dyspeptic zombie. Unless your driver is the iconic 98 year old man in a caddy pulling a solid 30 mph in the left hand lane of the highway, this speed of plot is best avoided.

The highway approach allows for all sorts of action and character development. It lacks some of the subtle details of slower speed plots. There's the occasional changing of lanes to get around a slow moving sub-plot. But most of the time, this method is for a right to the point, nothing between the lines story. Avoid this method if writing a mystery, as the details are integral to a solid mystery plot. To details to a mystery plot is the equivalent of painting a glow in the dark bull's-eye on the killer/thief/antagonist.

I'm a fan of the back roads approach to plotting. I'm not plodding along, but I'm not redlining it either. More like going 40 mph while going around curves, along with the ups and downs of hills. It's fast enough to stay engaged with where I'm going, but slow enough I can still enjoy the scenery around me. All the twists and turns keep things fresh and interesting. Anything can be around that next turn. The hills can speed things up a little, or slow things down a little, depending on the situation. Not to mention avoiding the random pedestrians, bikers, and deer. Those deer tend to be the equivalent of my character falling into a chapter long coma, while I wait to speed up again.

The Sinker:

The climax is not the end of the plot. The resolution is the end of the plot. Cliffhangers are for televised serials and multi-part stories. Sometimes the most effective "cliffhanger" is to end at the moments right before pulling a Bonnie and Clyde off a cliff. Mortal danger isn't in the last lines, but it still leaves you wondering what'll happen.

As for resolutions, you'll need to wrap up your loose ends. Have a victor, whether it be your protagonist or your antagonist. Ensure that your readers will be satisfied, especially if there won't be a sequel to your story.

Having an open-ended ending to a stand alone novel tends to leave a bad taste in a reader's mouth. Having the option of creating a sequel somewhere down the line, when you feel like it may be nice for you. But until then, readers are going

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to feel cheated, and be wary of reading a future book of yours.

Duologies, Trilogies, and Quadrologies, oh My!

Now a days it's not unheard of for writers to create a plot that spans multiple novels. This can be integral for a storyline that spans more than 75,000 words. It's important to give the reader an Sinker ending for each book, regardless of how many more will come in the future. Unless they're merely a group of books that happen to engage in the same universe (akin to The Discworld Series, or Star Trek books) In those cases, they're stand alone plots that draw from the same universe of characters and scenery.

Having a multi-book plot is becoming more and more accepted in mainstream popular fiction. Take the Harry Potter Septology, or the Twilight Series (don't know how many are in that one offhand). Their plots are semi-stand alone. You could read them out of order, but certain references wouldn't make sense to you right off. Sort of like trying to fit a small square block in a large circular hole. It works, but it's not how you should do it.

I prefer a more clean cut style. Each book is enhanced by the rest, but can still be read out of sequence, like the Discworld Series. You may have several plots intertwining with each other, but it's not a necessity to read them all in chronological order to enjoy them.

Prequels:

It can also be useful in the event of writing a prequel to a story, allowing the writer, and readers alike, to learn more about the back story of a plot. My favorite example of this is David Eddings, who wrote two quintologies, two trilogies, a few standalone novels, and I believe a quadrology (I've yet to read through his latest series) his first two quintologies have a few standalone novels that delve into the same universe, but act as prequels to the main body of the plot.

Prequels are best saved until after you've written your main plot, detailed the story, and gotten a solid reader base (more than just your immediate family). Otherwise a prequel will for the most part, go unnoticed, and unappreciated. Which would be a shame for all that effort.

By Charles J. Muir

## Literary Latte - Submissions!

Have a short story, poem, flash fiction, or literary article you'd like to share with us? Send your submissions to [WriteLife@FCWriters.com](mailto:WriteLife@FCWriters.com) and you may see your work published here in our Literary Latte.

### The Prisoner

"Let me out! You can't keep me in here!"

The prisoner banged on the walls of her prison cell until her hands were sore.

"You're giving me a headache!" snapped the jailer. He didn't look up from his paperwork.

"Good," she shot back. "I wouldn't give you such a headache if you'd let me out."

"Oh, please don't start that again," he groaned. "Give it up already, will you?"

"I won't," she said. "Come on, just occasionally?"

"Right, I suppose you'd just come right back when I called, would you? No, once I let you out, you'll never get back in."

"Would that be such a bad thing?" He didn't answer. "You can't keep me here forever!"

"No."

"Why not?" she asked. "No-one's keeping me here but you."

"Trust me, you're better off this way."

She snorted. "Who are you trying to protect here? Nevermind, I know. It's nobody but yourself, as usual. Never thinking of anyone else, only of you. I wish you'd understand that I'm a part of you. Why, I'm practically your daughter!"

"Don't be ridiculous!"

"It's not that ridiculous. You made me who I am."

The jailer shook his head. "If that's so, why would I give you such an attitude?"

"Creations take on a life of their own," she replied. "And yet you still try to keep me in this little cell, where I can't grow or interact with the world."

"You don't need those things," he said.

"I need them just as much as you do." He continued filling out papers, trying to block out her voice. "So tell me," she said, "just what is the real reason you keep me locked away like this? You know what I want to do; you agree with it. Why won't you let me?"

"Because it wouldn't do any good," he snapped. "Nobody would care. The world wouldn't be any different."

"You're afraid. That's all it is. Afraid that if you let me out, people will either hate me and blame you, or love me and ignore you. You're afraid that they will care and at the same time that they won't! And on top of that, you're afraid that they'll learn more about you than you want them to, and pick you apart and leave you in little bleeding pieces. You've built yourself a lovely little Catch-22 there, you know."

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. But don't you see that we could make a difference? Even if it isn't as big a success as you wish, it can't possibly be as bad as you imagine. If by letting me out, we can reach even one person, just one, wouldn't it be worth it?"

The jailer put down his pen. He stared at the bookshelves on the wall, where a small spiral notebook was squashed between two encyclopedias, and thought about it for a long time. She was right, he admitted. He was afraid of what might happen. And why should he be?

"All right," he said suddenly.

"What? Really?"

"Yes," he said. He stood up and reached for the notebook. "It's time to set you free."

He went downstairs. His wife was making a cup of tea in the kitchen. "Hello, dear, what have you been doing all day?"

He took a deep breath and held out the notebook. "I was wondering if you'd like to read something I wrote," he said.

"Of course, I'd love to," she said. She opened it to the first page and started reading.

By Kim Moor

The Fairfield County Writers Group of Connecticut was originally created in the last age of November, 2008. Founded as a regional chapter of National Novel Writing Month, FCWG grew into a local community of writers who are committed to writing not just in one month of the year, but every month of the year.

Whether a full-time, part-time, or hobby writer, we accept any and all who enjoy crafting words.

Come register for free. and learn more about our group. We offer a forum, chat room, local events, and even writing gear.

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Fairfield County Writers Group

Fairfield County  
Connecticut



## Brought To You By:

The FCWG is currently managed and maintained by [Charles J. Muir](#) of New Canaan, CT. As the Literary Director for FCWG he oversees the day to day operations of the writing group and act as Regional Municipal Liaison for the Fairfield County chapter of National Novel Writing Month.

All of the back-end and behind the scenes work is done by our incredible Technical Director, [Calvin Williams](#) of Brooklyn, NY. Calvin single-handedly ensures that the website and all its components work as smoothly as possible.