



The Write Life

Capturing Plot Bunnies:

The Care and
Feeding of Plot
Bunnies

Sparking the
Story

A Writer's Brain

Remember Who
You Aren't -
Part 3

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The Write Life

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About Us :

The Fairfield County Writers Group (FCWG) of Connecticut was founded in 2008. Originally created 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.

This magazine is an extension of that appreciation. It provides writing prompts and inspiration to craft new ideas; articles on how to better your writing skills, overcome writer's block, survive the life of a writer; and short stories.

Visit <http://www.FCWriters.com> for other offerings from FCWG.

We also have started up a CaféPress site. Check out some of our offerings: <http://www.CafePress.com/FCWriters>

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Muse Food

Word Play

Have you ever read a book, or short story where there are constant plays on words, whether it's a "which witch is which", "we'll have weather whether or not" or even a "roger Roger, what's your vector Victor?" Something that keeps your mind sharp. It's akin to wonder why we drive on parkways, but park in drive-ways. A great example of word play would be the book *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

Have you ever played with words, creating amusing alliterations, or names like Yetta Nother or Noel Lott? See what quirky combinations you can come up with and see what wacky adventures may happen in the process.

I'm a particular fan of acronyms, like the Evil League in Louisiana (E.V.i.L.), or the Organized Mercenaries Guild (O.M.G.)

One Words

Try basing a story with one of the below words:

Periwinkle
Coupon
Memory
Record
Tether
Tuba
Horseshoe
Quartet
Silhouette
Boomerang

One Liners

Try starting a story with one of the below sentences:

It smells like hospital soup around here.
I'm not racist; just yesterday I enjoyed a black and white cookie.
Your picture does you too much justice.
My life just flashed before my eyes; I slept through most of it.
Well, I'm thoroughly bored.
Time to go walk the dog.
I won't, and you can't make me.
I know where to get a tank on short notice.
Family vacations should not involve prison.
Nyah, nyah.

Photographic Inspiration



Use an image as a starting point for a new story or to help jumpstart a sluggish scene.

Muse Food

Dirty Pig

I have a small ceramic piggy bank that not only holds donations for the FCWG, but doubles as a swear jar. It's not so much that I swear a lot, it's more a matter of I hope to one day be an elementary school teacher, so I'm trying to get in the practice of cleaning up my language.

In that vein though, how often do you use particular four-letter words when angry, upset, impatient, or

simply to accentuate something important? How about catch phrases? Try and keep track of what words or phrases you use a lot in a day, or week.

Now create a character who uses those words or phrases, but has the polar opposite personality as yourself. What do you get? What will you do with your new characters?

One Words

Try basing a story with one of the below words:

Insanity
Lice
Libidinous
Banana
Zimbabwe
Obsession
Asteroid
Frogger
Pie
Swagger

One Liners

Try starting a story with one of the below sentences:

It's time for my quarter-life crisis.
Mini-golf is the true sport of men.
You have more books in your room than our library.
Who turned off the sun?
Pluto will always be a planet to me, regardless of what you say!
For the last time, you do not live in part of a Disney musical.
Why are you stopping?
I did this for you.
What sort of bottomless pit actually has a bottom?
There's a cat on my bed.

Photographic Inspiration



Use an image as a starting point for a new story or to help jumpstart a sluggish scene.

First Class

The Care and Feeding of Plot Bunnies

Many a published writer sighs when asked "where do you get your ideas?" Many a beginning writer sighs at the common response that "ideas are everywhere!"

But it's true. They are. Imagine a boat on the ocean. Maybe, once in a while, a fish jumps, but mostly the boat's crew won't see any fish--until they pull in their nets. Then! Oh, then, there are so many brilliant, odd, wondrous fish all across the deck! There may be one never seen before, or one thought extinct for five hundred years or more. And sometimes they fall together in such interesting patterns...

Ideas are, truly, everywhere. It's a matter of pulling in your nets.

Yes, you have nets. And they catch ideas. Plot bunnies, if you will.

Did something catch your eye today? Maybe a man in a nice suit was wearing a pair of worn sneakers and you wondered if he grabbed the wrong shoes, or if something happened to the dress shoes he should have been wearing. That's a bunny. And that woman with the sad eyes, whose story you don't know but whose face won't leave your mind's eye? She gave you a bunny too.

What, you ask, is a plot bunny? The name implies fluffiness, a cute loveable bit of soft and snuggly writing. Little could be farther from the truth. Plot bunnies are sneaky, slippery, manipulative little beasts. They can be aggressive, too, but right now we're talking about the elusive ones.

So. No, the sad-eyed woman is not a plot all to herself. You need more. Maybe...you need the mismatched man, too. And a setting. A bit more wondering. We need to feed the bunny if we want it to grow.

My first response to our sad woman and the mismatched man is a romance to take away the woman's sadness. But the first response is often the clichéd response, so let's go a little farther afield. Let's make the mismatched man her husband. He's in shock over the sudden loss of their child, and unable to quite get mundane things right.

How did the child die? That depends on the story you want to write. Was he ill? Was she murdered? Is he not truly dead, but removed by the government because he's the next step in human evolution a la the X-men?

What if her eyes aren't sad as much as they are weary? Maybe the man is her developmentally-disabled brother, and she's spent her life caring for him. She's tired, cynical, and full of regrets for a life not lived, torn between the ticking clock and her love for her brother.

Or you could take it much farther. The mismatched man is an alien in disguise, who hasn't quite figured out human fashion. The sad-eyed woman is a fugitive, who over-did the make-up in trying to disguise her artificial eyes.

The trick to a great idea is to take something that catches your attention, that piques your interest, and add to it. Play with it. Toss a stick and see what it brings back.

My serial fantasy started with one awesome character, a red-headed elf with a bad attitude. Where most elves are about sunshine and dancing and the wonders of nature, Flame thinks nature should be *outside*, humans are pretty cool, and wine is the best thing ever.

As mentioned earlier, one character does not a plot make. So I tried another. Elves and dwarves traditionally do not get along, so I stuck a dwarf in--and he and Flame were suddenly old friends. Okay, so he stuck, but still not enough--I decided I needed a "normal" elf for comparison, so I gave her Ryahled, a by-the-book elven ranger as shiny and impressive as elven rangers get. Now I had some sparks flying. Ryahled lectures, Flame rebels, and story happens.

Another thing I did was to poke at the "traditional" dislike elves and dwarves hold for each other. I decided to go with it--why waste a good source of conflict?--but to give it a reason. In Flame's world, there are several different intelligent races--and all but the humans and the elves (who aren't really elves, bwahaha) *were created by the elves*. The dwarves hate the elves because they have not forgotten they were slaves. And the elves fear and distrust the dwarves, who have not forgotten over millennia. This, and the fact that I like mysterious ruins, formed much of the basis of my plot.

Ideas are a dime a dozen, even in this economy. It's what you do with the ideas that matters, so grab a few that look shiny to you, and twist them together. Glue on a hubcap, or douse your creation in glitter, and see where it gets you. The worst that can happen is that the whole castle folds up and sinks into the swamp and you have to start over.

First Class

Keeping Ideas

One of the things that I have found the hardest about writing is keeping my ideas flowing – keeping the plot alive. It seems that when I get a good idea, something that I think might actually work and maybe someday be sellable, that it dries up by the time I get through a thousand or so words. I think that the most I have gotten on one of these half-attempts is five or six thousand words.

Part of keeping ideas is keeping up your motivation. You might have an idea that drives you insane during class or a business meeting you don't really have to be at, but your boss wants your body to be there, so you fill pages of a notebook with a story. Then you go home at night, sit at your computer with a nice warm beverage of choice and open a new word document with your notebook open at your elbow.

As you type, you realize that the words don't make much sense the way they are put together. That the main character is less than two-dimensional – he or she is one! And there is the silly, cliché romance polygon that is going on in the background, there is no setting and the dialogue is lame.

Which, can of course be fixed with major editing, even as you retype it. But staring at a page of what you feel is absolute rubbish is what keeps your inner critic alive. It whispers nasty little thoughts in your ear making you feel worse and worse about the writing that you throw the notebook across the room. Just be sure that you don't hit any children or pets with the notebook as they are not likely to understand.

The inner critic then gives rise to the perfect opportunity for the inner procrastinator to completely take over your body. Suddenly you find yourself ignoring the notebook as it lies across the room from your writing space slowly collecting dust as you do anything but write. You may start another tidbit in another notebook, or on your computer. But picking up that notebook that you feel is filled with rubbish becomes like climbing Mount Everest.

Which brings me to the muse's role in this. That is, seemingly non-existent. I have found that it appears my muse hates working with someone who doesn't like the ideas she crams into my head. An idea I was in love with, excited about writing dies at the first thought that something is horrible. And then my muse seems to vanish for months, taking my motivation with me.

get names of characters, maybe a little back story. But the more that I think about the story, the characters or if I hit a rough patch, my muse takes flight and the idea goes 'poof'. There have been times when I have sat down and kept plugging away, writing random things that don't even go with the plot just to re-interest my muse.

This of course, works better when I have some huge deadline that I'm working for – the deadline gives me the motivation to continue writing. The best way to keep your ideas is to just keep writing. If you get stuck, hit enter a few times, perhaps make a note for you to come back once you have something figured out and go to the next scene. Or, if you are someone who hates writing out of order, have it suddenly be nighttime, even if is in the middle of a big battle scene and just end it for right then.

Hard scenes, scenes you do not want to write can quickly turn a wonderful plot line and story into something that you dread even thinking about, which is the fastest way I have found to lose an idea. If you can't make another scene work because the events that you are stuck on are much too critical to the entire plot of the book, try putting it aside for a while. Don't write for a few days or a week. Not on that story, not on anything. If writing gives you pleasure and enjoyment in spite of the torture your muse may inflict upon you, it won't take long before you are desperate enough to start writing that the ideas come back.

It is okay to bounce ideas off of a trusted friend. Have someone that you occasionally talk with - a writers group that can share your pain. Telling them that you have two characters who you think are about to do very romantic things together but they will be late to a major battle, these friends can help you figure out ways to get them to realize what time it is. Or these friends will be cruel and encourage the romance that is maybe rated M. Which if it is forbidden or the two characters are both currently in other relationships, this can actually work to your advantage and get wonderful mini sub-plot bunnies.

Like KD mentioned last month, talking too much about your plot can kill the plot, just like over-thinking or over planning for an amazing story can. I have yet to find a way that can revive a dead idea, though I am sure it is just like getting a story past a 'danger' zone – keep writing, keep poking it with a sharp pointy stick or other weapon of choice. Eventually, it will probably roll over and at least give you something more to work with.

Writers Sphere

Sparking the Story

Sometimes our muses just aren't feeling helpful. Sometimes we don't like their offerings. Sometimes we just need a scene-twist or a motivation-poke or a stepping-off-point. At such times prompts and generators can be of enormous help.

As an internet junkie who will take any excuse to procrastinate on the middle of whatever I'm in, I've found a few.

My generators. Let me show you them.

A fusion of the story of Mohammed and the legend of Orpheus envisioned as a superheroic slasher horror tale. ([Seventh Sanctum Envisioner](#))

Well, that's...interesting. Perhaps not right for me, but interesting. [Seventh Sanctum](#) has quite a collection of generators, so let's try another.

From the Quick Story Idea Generator, I get: The theme of this story: humorous action. The main characters: cruel spaceship navigator and compassionate physicist. The major event of the story: sport.

I could do something with that. But let's say I'm really in a hurry. Or really want to push my boundaries and write a story like I haven't before. So I'll add a bit more. From the [Frenchboy Generator](#), I get: Alexis Joly, born November 7th, has dark red hair and grayish blue eyes. He has one brother and no sisters. He likes languages and art.

Ooh, I like! He can be my compassionate physicist. Now I need a cruel spaceship navigator.

From the Bishotron, also on Seventh Sanctum: This gentleman's sand-colored eyes are those of a wild animal. He has short, fine, straight, charcoal-colored hair. His form is very elegant.

Fun! I don't know about you, but I'm starting to want to write this story now!

There are generators for just about anything, if you look. Need to build a fantasy world? Here's a [Timeline Generator](#) to help make history. The [Fantasy Pocket "Litter"](#) is fun too. I got: Coins: 1-4 foreign gold coins. Foodstuff: three, greasy, smoked sausages, wrapped in wax paper. Rare or unusual item: a pair of small, round spectacles. Magic item: a small, dark, crystal bowl that will fill with a delicacy spoken by the user which can be used 1-10 times/week. That tells you a bit about the owner of the pockets, doesn't it?

Also from Seventh Sanctum is the What-If-inator. What if:

...Lewis Carrol had access to nanotechnology? ...the Global influenza epidemic involved a magical artifact? ...the arrival of the Pilgrims in America involved a secret bloodline?

Need to create a new animal? Try the [Mythic Animal Generator](#) That site also holds the [Random Fantasy Prophecy Generator](#) that tells me: The lion of the warrior will destroy the empire. The duchess of the moon will wed the emperor of evil. The unicorn god foretells prosperity.

And here's one I'll be trying out soon—the [Technobabble Malfunction Generator](#) Oh noes, the sonic particle warp field buffer has destabilized, resulting in a chain reaction in the port gravitic hyperdrive plate! We're all gonna DIE!!!

Perhaps the best plot generator out there—arguably the most fun—is [Patricia Nielsen-Hayden's Evil Overlord Random Plot Generator](#) Explained in her article [Stupid Plot Tricks](#) where she states that, "a plot device that's been used a thousand times may be a cliché, but it's also a trick that works. That's why it keeps getting used," the generator uses the Evil Overlord lists to generate a series of plot points. They could lead to the most clichéd, badly-written piece of tripe ever—or the best story you ever wrote. The difference is in the writing, because, as we've all heard, there are only (choose one) 7, 16, 32 plots anyway, and we all know them.

Generators are grand devices. But what if you just want to stretch your literary wings a bit without starting another story? Maybe you're blocked on everything, and just want to write a bit unconnected to your story, to maybe learn a bit and get unstuck.

Prompts might well help. [Creative Writing Prompts](#) has many on their page—just hover your mouse over a number. With suggestions like "In 200 words, describe your first toy" it is a site to get your mind and fingers going. An added bonus (for me, at least, who needs to work on it more) a lot of the prompts emphasize description.

Need to get going on a story? Use a prompt from the main character's point of view. Describe his idea of a perfect vacation. Write about the biggest lie she ever told.

This newsletter often contains one-word and one-sentence prompts. Take a look. Choose one. Write. One suggestion, though—give yourself a limited time to find one that sparks you. Searching through prompts endlessly looking for the one you "feel like" is just another form of procrastination. At some point most of us (Hobbyists excluded, if you choose) need to learn to write when we are not feeling it.

The only way to be a writer is to write. Prompts and generators are created by people who know how hard it is to write. So take advantage of their kindness, name your fantasy kingdom and your technical device, and write!

By **KD Crotwell**

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Writers Sphere

Organized Life

How do you organize your writing? Is it on sticky notes, notebooks, MSWord, Works, OneNote, Open Office, etc.? Folders, files, shelves, stacks, piles, etc.?

Every writer has some method to organizing their works. Even if it's just tossing all those papers into one large pile in the back of their closet, under some shirts and a random boot you don't know who it belongs to.

I've become somewhat addicted to OneNote, as it automatically saves everything I write, and I can organize everything within "notebooks", sections, pages, and subpages. A place for everything and everything in its place.

It took me longer than I probably should have spent on it, but now every one of my steady projects has its own workbook, complete with different sections and pages. Now it's just a matter of actually writing in them on a steady basis. That's the tricky part.

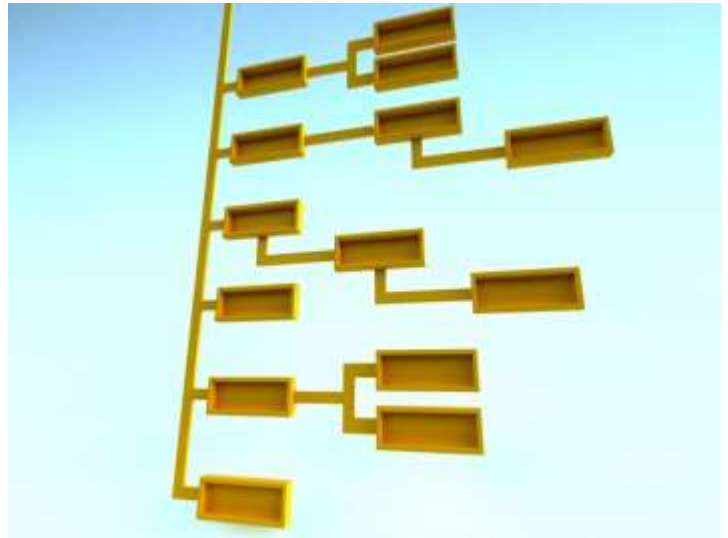
I also have a 5" stack of loose leaf papers with various notes, scribbles, outlines, ideas, quotes, and character profiles. Those have yet to be organized in any way shape or form, but I can't just throw them away.

Every time I've done a cleansing and just tossed anything I didn't want to organize or deal with, I regretted it within a year. Nowadays I have digital archives of most of my writing, which I'm forbidden from erasing, even if it were for the betterment of mankind that some of that writing never see the light of day.

I also have a 4" wide accordion folder that contains bits and pieces of short stories, poems, songs, and even a handful of character sketches. One of these decades I hope to actually organize everything into some semblance of order so that when I want to work on one particular story, everything is all in one convenient location.

I have a feeling it'll either take way too much time to implement, or I'm going to have to create a wall-to-

Page 8 wall desk to stack everything on, complete with a Batman-style escape chute



beneath my chair so I can get out.

In the meantime, I have to live with a more simplistic desk, that only spans the length of my windows. And no escape chute, unless you count the windows. Despite what I've said in the past about writing at a desk, and how it's not really for me, I've written most of my articles for this magazine at my desk. Lately, it's been while staring out the window, looking at a white world encased in snow.

My desk is relatively organized. Blank paper in one drawer, stack of various scribbles in another, and my stash of games for when I need a break. Combine that with my filing cabinet full of all the necessary evils (receipts, tax stuff, rejection letters) and a record of all my various published writings.

If all the rejection letters get me down, I have previous issues of this magazine, and a few college pieces to remind me that my writing is in fact publishable. Very important, having the good near the bad, in case you start getting too discouraged.

So, how do you organize your writing? Do you have a foolproof system, or is it still in the works? Mine is always changing, usually on a semi-annual basis.

By Charles J. Muir

Write Life

A Writer's Brain

I've always thought of a writer as having a differently wired brain as most everyone else. Not so much as blue wires rather than red or anything as silly as that. More a matter of, our perception filters of reality sieve through stuff differently than say a Wall Street banker. A banker may see a local coffee shop as an investment or property to be bandied about. As writers we see a local coffee shop as a refuge from the daily hassles of life, a place to receive our much needed life blood of caffeine, and a great place to people watch.

I've always been glad to have a writer's brain, rather than a banker's, or even a pirate's. Although to be fair I would think a pirate's brain would be a rather interesting thing to have. Anyway, I enjoy my writer brain, as I can use it to create articles like this, or a short story about seas of sand or characters with fixations on cheese cubes. The possibilities of entertainment are limitless, unlike a non-writer brain, which tends to be more focused on just one or two forms of entertainment.

To be fair, any artistic brain has the ability to create entertainment from anything. And I mean, anything. A yellow smiley face on a squishy ball can provide entire minutes of fun and merriment. Writing a particularly scathing review of your arch-nemesis' latest endeavors can be incredibly cathartic.

It's writer brains that bring you such entertainment as the movie Santa Claus Conquers the Martians, Hercules vs. the Moon Men, and books as ridiculous as Twilight, or Reaper Man, or radio plays like The Blue Beetle, or It Pays to be Ignorant. Any form of media requires the brain of a writer. Heck, our entire known history, is known from written records. Yes I know nowadays a lot of records are visual or audio, but civilizations like Sumeria, or ancient Egypt depended on the written word to convey stories, histories, people.

And a majority of all audio-based works were scripted, or at the least transcribed later. Same with everything on television and the silver screen. The written word permeates our society. How much fun is it to be a writer, and have the power to create people, places, worlds, universes, technologies, foods, histories, futures and more. We also have the power to convey real people, places, histories, and personal accounts. Not all writing has to be fiction after all. Some of my best writing is in the form of personal essays, a foundation of truth with several liberties to make it a little more readable.

The saying "too much of a good thing" can sadly be applied to a writer's brain, in the form of hypergraphia. The uncontrollable urge to write, constantly. What may sound like heaven to most of us, would send us on writing sprees at 2 in the morning, scribbling down ideas in the margins of books, or whatever we have nearby. Never mind editing the writing for public consumption, a hypergraphic mind is focused solely on writing for the sake of writing. Then again writers like Lewis Carroll were rumored to have been hypergraphic, and look how well-known the world of Wonderland has become. At least it's not like graphophobia, where you'd be too afraid to write anything. I guess that's just the fancy name for writer's block though. So that would make hypergraphia the fancy word for writers sphere.

I'd settle for an in-between level where I write frantically for a while, but then slow down so I can revise and rest an hour or so. As with all things, moderation is nice. It complicates matters that my writing brain also shares space with my gaming brain, and my comic book brain. Ah the joys of multitasking. Thankfully my writing brain takes precedence. Otherwise this magazine would be several pages shorter every month.

Write Life

Gotta Catch 'Em All

Everyone has had that great idea, that life-altering Eureka moment when everything clicks together seamlessly. And Everyone has also had that moment where it's all lost because they have nowhere to write it down for posterity. Holding onto your idea for the smokeless ashtray or the better mouse trap is a lot easier if you have a notebook, or convenient cocktail napkin to write it all down on.

Then again, I've gone through my fair share of notebooks through the years. I still have them, but traveling through far off lands like my office, or the local coffee shop have taken its toll on the notebooks.

Coffee stains, cracked spines, lost covers, lost backings, bent wire "spines", and more. To be fair, I don't coddle my notebooks, I don't pamper them and put them on a pedestal. If they can't handle a bit of battle scarring, then what good are they.

I've lately, migrated to a wire-bound notebook, with a fabric "shield" or sorts around the binding. I guess to prevent any unnecessary warping. It also comes with a view pockets, and even a removable plastic ruler.

What sort of measuring I'd need to do when working on a my paranormal pirates or Victorian thriller ideas are beyond me. Unless I want to get really specific on the measurements of the pirate ship Saucy Mare, or maybe diagram how the Great Crumpet Massacre occurred. I tend to leave my ruler by the wayside. Measurements are for the revision process.

I do like the fact that this notebook is holding together much nicer than previous incarnations. Each of my notebooks has had a name, dating all the way back to college. You don't have to name your notebooks, but I've found each notebook once named seems more lively and easier to use.

Mirroring a fellow writer, my notebooks have taken on the personification of doctors, only mine are Notebook M.D. - NAME, rather than Doctor Notebook - NAME. I'm up to my 10th M.D., named Davey T. If anyone can decipher the inspiration to that name, you get a cookie.

never seemed to get off the ground. From therapeutic moons, to soul-stealing cameras, to a trans-galactic tavern. So many quirky concepts, so little follow through. But they're all there, waiting for me to poke at them again if I run out of new inspiration.

And I have gone back occasionally, to try and revive an old idea. It's usually completely revamped or integrated into a current project. But none of that would have been possible without having kept all those crazy concepts. My memory is far from perfect - it's mostly a matter of if I don't have to remember it, I store it in the back closet of my mind, behind a few storage boxes and spare brain cells.

The notebooks however, are all in my desk, ready for instant perusal and recall. Well, near instant recall anyway. I was never really one for writing ideas neatly in a few pages. They're mostly scattered across several pages, interspersed with other ideas, diagrams, and random observations about life, the universe, and everything.

It's important for a writer to have access to a notebook. To go along with the title, your notebook is a vessel in which you can capture all your ideas, characters, plots, inspirations, concepts, places, and anything else you can form down in words, scribbles, pictograms, hieroglyphics, and sketches. It's important to try and catch as many ideas as you can, whenever you can. You never know when that perfect idea may pop up out of the high grass and pounce your brain, demanding to be written.

Keep that pen and paper handy, otherwise that great idea will probably wander off, never to be seen again. I know I've had several good story concepts slither away in the dark of the night, simply because I didn't have my notebook, or pen, handy. Usually because it was in fact in the dark of the night and I was trying to sleep.

Sometimes five minutes of lost sleep is worth the effort of saving an idea, rather than spending an hour the next day trying to recall why glowing teacups was so important at 2 in the morning.

Literary Latte

Remember Who You Aren't - Part 3 of 4

When I woke the next morning, I learned that I was to serve the princess as a friend, tutor, and servant. That I would listen to what she said and obey, though the king's rule would always surpass hers. It had been against the advisors' will that my mother and I stay at the castle as servants, but he didn't seem to care. It was better than living as a peasant. The princess was five years younger than me.

Over the next ten years, I became subject to her moods, her fits of anger, and refusals to do anything I suggested or asked. I put up with her hitting me without once hitting back. As she grew older, she would occasionally ask for my advice before deciding that what I thought was rubbish and doing what she wanted anyway.

I had long since forgotten what it felt like to sleep dressed in silk and on a bed without lumps and things that would bite you at night. No longer did I wake up in the morning refreshed and ready to start a new day. The princess was quite fond of calling me a stick, for I hardly ate. I wasn't allowed to eat unless she had finished her meal, and most of the time when she was finished, I had to escort her to her lessons.

I only saw my mother at mealtimes, but the servants were not allowed to talk in the presence of the king unless he spoke directly to them, and only if it was a direct question. My only relief came at night when the princess was asleep and I could sneak off to the kitchens to eat whatever the cook pushed my way.

Then just after her sixteenth birthday, the princess' hand was promised to a prince in a foreign land. She didn't know of it until a week before he was to arrive, too late for her to convince her father to cancel the deal. I had known with the other servants for nearly a month, but the king had threatened us into silence. No one disobeyed the king. He always had a grip on someone you love, and commoners went "missing" all the time.

The princess and I were in her sitting room one rainy evening, warming ourselves by the fire. I was quietly embroidering, and she was complaining about anything she cast her mind on while pretending to embroider when she was summoned to her father's study. Half of an hour later, she returned, her face red with anger.

"How dare he!" She screeched, throwing a footstool across the room. "How dare he promise some... some... foreigner that I'll marry him!" The footstool flew back the other way. "I hate him!"

"My lady, it isn't lady-like to talk about one's father in such a way. Nor is it lady-like to scream and throw about footstools." I said calmly, used to her acting this way.

"Jesabel!" She cried, and threw herself at my feet. "It's not fair! You don't have to marry a foreign prince! He's probably old! Like Rupert!"

Rupert was Princess Elizabeth's elder brother. While I never had liked him, he was just 10 years my senior, and 15 to the princess. At that time, however, she viewed any one over the age of twenty years as old, which included me.

"I won't marry him! I refuse!" She decided, sitting up.

"My lady, it is your father, the king's, wish that you marry him." I replied, keeping my eyes on my needlework.

"Jesabel!" She cried, angry again. "You're supposed to support me! Not my father! You're my servant, not his!"

"Forgive me, my lady." I tucked my needle work away.

"I shall run away!" I'll throw myself out of the tallest tower! I'll drink poison! But I will not marry him!" The princess ranted, pacing back and forth.

I said nothing. It wasn't worth having the princess angry at me over something like that. She would only get angrier if I said anything further on the subject, if I tried to calm her down.

For another hour, she paced, declaring what she was going to do, and what she absolutely refused to do. Then, abruptly, she decided that it was time to retire for the night.

The next morning when I went to wake her, I found a letter lying on her pillow. With dread, I carried the carefully written letter, unopened, to her father's study. He was already awake, and in a bad mood from the look on his face.

"What's that?" He snapped, grabbing the paper out of my hand. His face went from red to purple as he scanned the contents of the letter. "You idiot! How dare you let this happen!?" He roared.

I stayed silent. Like his daughter, it was best to just let him yell. "I'll have you hanged for this! How dare you loose my daughter!"

He kept yelling for another ten minutes, ending in a roar for his guards. I kept my face calm, though I knew he was going to have me arrested and killed.

To my surprise, he ordered the guards to search for the princess and had me take two of the princess' gowns to the seamstress so she could finish making the gowns for the wedding.

By the end of the week, there was still no sign of the princess. The foreign prince was only a day's ride away. In desperation, the king turned to me. I was taller than the princess, and thinner. My hands were chapped with ten years of hard work, and my skin dry.

But he still sent me to the seamstress to have the dresses tailored to fit me. I wondered if he would try and trick the prince. But later that night, just before the prince was to arrive that they found the princess' body. She had apparently changed her mind after writing the letter to her father and jumped out of the tower into the river below. Perhaps she had realized she couldn't easily get out of the castle, but how she had gotten up there unnoticed,

I still do not know.

By Lauren Welch



Upcoming Events:

February has many things in store for us, among them, our online write-ins on Wednesdays, from 7 PM - 9 PM EST. Join via our chat room at the following URL: <http://www.FCWriters.com/Chat>.

We also have a local event, scheduled for Saturday, March 6th. We'll be at the Borders in Wilton (14 Danbury Road Wilton, CT 06897 - Their Phone #: (203) 834-0600), from 2 PM - 5 PM; working on whatever piece of writing you're interested in working on. Be prepared for productivity though. We're there to write and encourage writing, not spend three hours chatting - that's for after.

Next Month:

Next month's issue focuses on the topic of **Snowflakes and Outlines**. We'll also have new writing prompts, articles, and the continuation of Lauren's short story: Remember Who You Aren't.

How To Subscribe:

To subscribe, register on our website at: <http://www.FCWriters.com> to receive future issues, and read through our back issues, all available in .PDF format.

Brought To You By:

The FCWG is managed, maintained, and run by **Charles Muir** of New Canaan, CT. As Literary Director, he oversees the day to day operations of the writing group, produces this magazine, and schedules local events throughout the year.

The back-end, behind the scenes work is done by our Technical Director, **Calvin Williams** of Brooklyn, NY. Calvin single-handedly ensures that the website and all its components run as smoothly as possible.

Staff Writer **Lauren Welch** is currently a college student in Indiana. When she isn't slaving over class work, Lauren enjoys tormenting her muse to try and get something written.

Staff Writer **KD Crotwell** has held some twenty jobs so far, most having nothing to do with writing. This has given her great motivation to complete some nine novels in draft. In the Great Game of Publishing, she has achieved the status of "Agent Passed for Market Reasons." She is actively working towards "Agent Fainted With Joy."

Contact Us

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Expense Sheet

Below is a summary of our monthly financials for not only producing this magazine, but running the online writing group throughout the course of the year.

Our expenses include webhosting fees, magazine submissions, local event materials, and general group maintenance.

Annual Donations to Date: **\$300**

Annual Expenses to Date: **\$280**

Total Annual Funds to Date: **\$20**