

LLOYD'S BEACON



What Do You Want? by Joshua Danker-Dake

President

www.nightwriters.org

What do you want out of a story?

That's a potentially huge question. It's really not dissimilar from asking "how do you write a story that readers want to read?"—and countless books have been written on that subject. Because I make a point of articulating (to myself; nobody else wants to hear it) what I like and don't like about the stories I consume, I've thought about this a lot.

In one sentence, what I ultimately want in any story I read or watch is *interesting characters believably doing interesting things for stakes that are meaningful to them.*

My oldest daughter is eight, and she spends half of her free time every day reading fiction. I asked her the same question. After a little back-and-forth to clarify the question, she gave a similar answer: she wants *characters she likes doing interesting things.*

When you set out to write a story, you need to write the kind of story you want to read. If it's not, you've failed—after all, if you don't want to read it, nobody else is going to.

You're surely familiar with the famous Elmore Leonard quote: "I try to leave out the parts that people skip." What do you skip when you read? It could be lots of things: overly long descriptions of setting, irrelevant details, conversations about tiresome mundane things—there are all kinds of ways to bog down a story, and I hate most of them.

But what I hate most of all is exposition. You know what I mean. Paragraphs and paragraphs of backstory, especially in genres like sci-fi and fantasy, especially at the beginning of the story, especially before you even know who the characters are or care about them.

I write mostly genre fiction, and I go out of my way to avoid this. I don't want to read it in anybody else's story and I don't want to read it in my story. Let's get right to the interesting characters doing interesting things.

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Those things you skip when you read—do you put them into your own stories? Sometimes we're biased toward our own stuff, and it can be difficult to tell. Objectivity can be hard. That's why the conventional wisdom is to put your first draft away for weeks or months before editing. (This is an area where a good beta reader or critique group can be particularly valuable. They won't miss it.)



We've all got pet peeves when we read and parts that we skip. Being mindful of them when we write—keeping that “reader” part of the brain turned on—will not only make our stories better, but just might make us better writers in the process.

RAMBLING REX



Backstory by Rex Griffin

Vice-President

www.nightwriters.org

Why do so many protagonists start on page one? Don't characters need to have some background *BEFORE* the story starts?

Maybe you agree. You could already have a roll call of traits that make up your protagonist, as well as lists for other characters. Each inventory might include things like job, marital status, wealth or lack of, hometown, hair color, buff or overweight, left-handed, smokes cigars, loves dogs but hates cats, favorite color, watches Humphrey Bogart movies, has a gold tooth in the front, and on and on.

So, armed with these facts, you know everything there is to know about your protagonist, including how s/he will react in any situation. No?

I'm not knocking a list of attributes. But it's like a resume, a thumbnail sketch, and won't give you a

character that springs off the page. It gives the protagonist's “what,” but it doesn't give the “why.” For that, you need to know what happened in

your character likely came later—say during puberty. Maybe there was even a third incident in the character's teenage years that cemented that misbelief in his/her mind. On the threshold of page one that fear is as much a part of your character as a backbone, and gives him/her an ingrained misbelief he or she will have to struggle with and overcome.

That's easy enough. You come up with a few incidents and—presto—you've got a better protagonist. Your reader can certainly empathize with someone trying to overcome their inner fear.

Not so fast! Nobody ever said writing was easy. To make your story the best it can be, you have to put in the elbow grease.

Now that you have an idea for that initial incident that gave rise to your protagonist's misbelief—write out the scene. By doing so, you'll put that general conception of the incident on the page, in words, with specific details. To quote Lisa Cron (again), *specifics beget specifics*. The specific details that come from writing the scene will produce more specific details that give your character a depth right down to microscopic level.

Cron suggests a single incident must have happened to your protagonist as a child that gave rise to that misbelief. A second incident that reinforced the fear in

the character who he/she is on page one. In other words, you need his/her *backstory*.

How many people do you know were birthed as adults? Me neither. Outside of mythology, everybody I ever heard of began as a baby, and went through childhood and many formative years before they became the person they are today. I'm not suggesting you write a character's whole life from infancy on, but as Lisa Cron teaches us in her excellent book *Story Genius*, a protagonist (and perhaps other characters) begins a novel with a burning desire or goal, and a “misbelief”—a.k.a., fear—that stands in the way of achieving that desire. Where would a misbelief/fear originate? In childhood.

Cron suggests a single incident must have happened to your protagonist as a child that gave rise to that misbelief. A second incident that reinforced the fear in

Now, write out that second scene.

Now, write out that second scene.

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RAMBLING REX (CONT.)

Continued from page 2

And the third.

Backstory this detailed will give you an understanding of your character so intricate that s/he will spring off the page. That understanding will assert itself in your protagonist—and your story—at a depth hard hitting as a gut punch and as nuanced as the aroma of fine wine.

Your protagonist is now ready for Page One. The rest of your characters. . . ?

Though the speaker schedule for the meetings is more-or-less full, we could still use your ideas and preferences for speakers for October 26's mini-conference. Please see me at the next meeting or e-mail me with your ideas at

rexgriffin@aol.com. (Yes, I am a computer dinosaur.) Please put "Nightwriters" in the e-mail subject line so it won't go to my spam folder.

OUR APRIL MEETING

April 16, 2019

7:00 p.m. to 8:20 p.m.

Martin Regional Library Auditorium, 2601 South Garnett Road, Tulsa, OK

This event is not affiliated in any way with the Tulsa City-County Library. The Library neither sponsors nor endorses this event, the speaker(s), nor the organization.



Romney Nesbitt: "Secrets from a Creativity Coach"

You want to write, but finding the time and motivation to get started and stay on track isn't easy. Join Romney Nesbitt, Creativity Coach, to learn easy tricks to help you shift the way you use your time to match your circadian rhythms, evaluate requests for your expertise (nice ways to say "NO!") and make decisions based on your inner wisdom.

Romney has facilitated workshops on creativity for artist and writers groups regionally and at Romance Writers of America's annual conference. Copies of her book, SECRETS FROM A CREATIVITY COACH, will be available for \$15 following the meeting.

Romney Nesbitt is an artist, art teacher, author and creativity coach in Tulsa. She's been coaching creative people to claim their goals and take action since 2004.



FEATURE ARTICLES

WRITING BY THE RULES



Using Commas, Part 4

by Carol Lavelle Snow

Nonrestrictive Clauses

Nonrestrictive clauses and phrases are adjective clauses and phrases that are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence. They are like “asides” or additional information about the noun they modify and are always set off with commas.

My neighbor, who also loves classical music, usually drives his jeep to work. .

I think petunias, which come in a variety of rich colors, are hard to care for.

Notice that commas usually come where you would naturally pause when reading a sentence aloud.

Get eggs, milk, and cheese tomorrow.

My new dress, though it needs to be ironed today, is much more flattering than this one.

**Books
Authored and
Coauthored
by Carol Lavelle
Snow**



About the Author

Carol has an M.F.A. in drama from OU but got into the habit of teaching English instead—at Ohio University, TCC, ORU, and Spartan. She has acted in many plays and directed a few. Her scripts have appeared on the Narrative Television Network and at Spotlight Theater. She’s published two novels and several short stories. You can find her poetry online in magazines like *Songs of Eretz* and *StepAway Magazine*, and in print in several journals, including *The Lyric*, *Harp-Strings Poetry Journal*, and *Crosstimbers*.



FEATURE ARTICLES



Hear ye, hear ye, all Tulsa NightWriters...

Contest wins are not the only competition at the OWFI conference in May. Each member writing organization brings a basket or two, full of books and desirable goodies, for auction at the conference.

The auction of baskets, thus the terminology “Basket Wars,” has been handled in various ways. Several years an actual “going once, going twice, gone,” auctioneer auctioned the baskets, which led to a rousing (um, rambunctious) banquet. Usually, however, it is handled by silent bidding. This meant that an attendee had to keep an eye on the basket he/she wanted to make sure another hadn’t come behind his bid and upped the ante.

If you have a published book (fiction or non-fiction) to donate, a picture of the book will be inserted in a standing display. Sitting in front of our giant basket last year, that display garnered lots of attention as people stopped to flip through the pages on their way to sessions or while waiting for lunch or a banquet. Consider it a form of advertising for your novel.

If you don’t have a published book...you can still participate! Any writerly-type of supplies, specialty coffee, neat mug, tea, teapot, specialty soaps, candles, small games, etc. will be most welcome. You are writers. Use your imagination.

The money raised in the basket wars goes to fund scholarships for the following year. The number of scholarships given depends upon the amount of funds collected, and are awarded based on need, without regard to age or craft experience, and the submission of a required essay.

Please bring your donation to the April meeting (Tuesday, April 16th) or if you cannot make the meeting, contact me to arrange for pick-up. Our contribution to the basket wars will need to be assembled by April 28th.

Carolyn Steele, Hospitality Chairman
918-749-1253



We Met the Publishers

“Do we still need to file for an official copyright on our work?”

“What percentage of royalties do authors make with different companies?”

“Should we be listed at Author Central?”

There was no shortage of questions at the 5th Annual *Meet the Publishers!* event on Saturday, March 30th. Renee’ La Viness brought in five publishers of different types, including one who claimed she was not a publisher. The panelists came from Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri.

A room full of authors—some who also drove in from other states—asked great questions, listened intently, and took notes, as the publishers shared their views on the current publishing trends and how to survive the latest movements. Those who attended received swag bags with information about the publishers and a few support professionals, from editors to audio book creators.

Other subjects covered were the following: Why is it important to attend conferences? How can you attend conferences and workshops with confidence on your first visit—even when you’re alone? How can writing contests help? Should you edit your entries? Should you submit your books for the big prizes? Why should you identify your target audience *before* you write your story?

After more than an hour of questions and answers, multiple door prizes were awarded before the publishers moved from the stage to their half-tables. There, authors visited independently with the publishers while viewing samples of their products.

Publishers in attendance were Peter Biadasz of Total Publishing & Media, Sharon Kizziah-Holmes of Paperback-Press, Nikki Hanna who represented self-publishing, Cyndy Prasse Miller of Oghma Creative Media, and Dianna Street of 4RV Publishing.

Every spring Renee’ brings this event to Tulsa as a labor of love for fellow authors and publishers. All publishing professionals are welcome to attend. Stay tuned for the 6th Annual event by bookmarking the website at <http://jespiddlin.com/publishers> or watch Renee’s author website at <https://reneelaviness.com>.

For more information contact Renee’ at meet-the-publishers@jespiddlin.com or catch her at a monthly Tulsa NightWriters meeting.



GOING TO THE “STREETS” — Creating a Street Team

By Deborah Camp

Rolling out a new title isn't a huge deal when you have a mainstream publisher behind you. However, if you're an independent writer, releasing a new book can eat up days and even weeks of your time. There isn't an “easy” way to promote your book, but there are shortcuts.

With social media being paramount for getting the word out, there are many tools you can use to assist you. For instance, you could hire a company to conduct a book blog tour for you so that you can reach hundreds of readers all at once. In my experience, I've found that reputable companies that do this are certainly worth the money invested (\$25 to \$150, depending on what you contract for). These book blog hosts have created a “team” of bloggers that need fresh material for their blogs to remain popular with their readers/subscribers. Instead of the author attempting to reach 50 or more blogs, the blog host does it for you. Plus, the host can target blog/readers who are interested in the kind of book you write.

Eager Readers

You can create your own “team” of readers by forming a “street team.” This is a band of readers who love what you write and are willing to spread the word, far and wide. They will post information about your upcoming and current releases in their blogs, on their Facebook pages, on Twitter, on Goodreads, on Bookbub, and in other blogs they belong to or frequent. In essence, they become your sales team.

How do you pay these people to “work” for you? By providing them special compensations in the form of private Facebook pages (by invitation only for your street team members), letting them know about your works-in-progress (WIP) and not sharing this information with anyone else, giving them a peek at your new book cover before you post it anywhere else, providing tidbits about your work (what actor you imagined as the hero in your latest release, for example), and giving them your books to read/review before the public release. In other words, making them special because they *are* special. They are your number one fans and are eager to let everyone else know how much they enjoy your books.

Finding Your Team

To form your team, ask. Go on Facebook and ask who would like to be on your street team and tell them a few of the “perks” they'll receive. You can have them message you or send them to a dedicated Facebook page or Group page. When they go there or ask to be included, you can set up a series of questions they must answer to help you decide if this person would be a good fit for your team. (Facebook offers this as a tool.)

You might ask if they like to read the genre you write in, how many books they read in a year, do they like love stories that are sweet, spicy, or steamy, do they prefer happy-ever-after endings, do they like fantasy and/or paranormal novels, do they love stories that contain mysteries and/or romantic suspense, etc. In other words, use three or four questions to narrow the field and find your target audience.



GOING TO THE “STREETS” — Creating a Street Team (CONT)

If they like what you write, you can accept them as members. If you're not sure, you can message or email them and discuss your concerns. Most of your team members should be avid readers of what you write and excited by the prospect of helping others discover your work. However, don't decline people who haven't read your books. As long as they read the type of book you write, let them join because you should always be seeking new readers.

Some authors limit the number of people in their team while others go by “the more, the better” philosophy. The important thing is to gather enough people to make an impact on social media. Five people aren't going to do that. Fifteen is getting there. Fifty will make people notice. You get the idea. Since this is word-of-mouth marketing, these team members will reach hundreds of other readers.

Keep Them Interested

To reward your team for their participation, you have to communicate with them every week, if not almost every day. Post messages that relay your appreciation for them or funny photos and messages that readers will enjoy. Tell them about your work. Ask for their opinions on things, such as your book title, character names, and plot elements. If you wonder about something, ask your team. For example, you could inquire if they like novels that are 300 to 400 pages or more than 400 pages. Or you could ask them if they like subplots about secondary characters. Receive their answers without judging or arguing. This needs to be a respectful exchange or information.

Hold contests every month or two and give away your books, other authors' books, calendars, keychains, tote bags, etc. Your team likes to read, so always look for something you can give in that vein. Check with authors you know about “donating” an ebook to your winner in a contest. Most authors are happy to do this. Be sure to follow through by mailing or emailing the team members their winnings quickly.

Ask them what they want the most from you so that you're all on the same page. You might think that the majority want free books (and they probably do!). However, they might surprise you by wanting closer communication with their favorite author. They might simply like knowing before others what you're working on and when it will be released.

Another “perk” from a street team is by adding book reviewers and active bloggers to your database. These members will provide you with book reviews of your new releases. Most authors know how difficult it can be to get enough reviews. Your whole team can help you out with this task. Street team members are usually the first ones to post on review sites, such as Goodreads and Bookbub.

So, get busy and choose your members now so that your next book release will be a team effort.



Deborah Camp is the author of more than 50 romances, both contemporary and historical. She loves writing stories that are centered on brave women and honorable men. Her books have been published by Jove, New American Library, Harlequin, Silhouette, Avon, and Amazon. She was inducted into the Oklahoma Authors Hall of Fame and she's a charter member of the Romance Writers of America. She's also a member of the Author's Guild and a proud member of the Tulsa Nightwriters and the Oklahoma Writers Federation, Inc. Her latest novel, *Lonestar's Lady*, is available on Amazon.

OWFI NEWS & INFORMATION

51ST ANNUAL
OKLAHOMA WRITERS' FEDERATION CONFERENCE

MAY 3 & 4, 2019

AT THE EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON
1815 SOUTH MERIDIAN
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73108



It's not too late to register. Here's the link: <http://www.owfi.org/register>. The OWFI member price for the conference for \$200. Non-member price is \$250. Non-members can join OWFI through Tulsa Nightwriters Club for \$25 or be charged \$30 at the door.

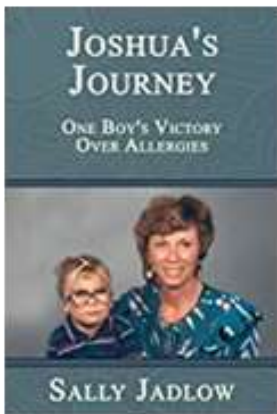
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THIS LINK:
<https://www.owfi.org/conference2019/>



Remember: Wri t e r s W r i t e



OUR MEMBERS HAVE BRAGS



Sally Jadlow has a new non-fiction book out about her son's struggle and victory over extreme allergies entitled *Joshua's Journey: One Boy's Victory Over Allergies*. It's available on Amazon.com in e-book and paperback at <https://www.amazon.com/-/e/B007F5H0H4>



Tony LoPresti's new book "Storm Sentinel" has just been published and is now available from Amazon. It is dedicated to the people hurt in the 2013 tornado in Moore, Oklahoma.

Tulsa NightWriters Club **Hall of Fame**



Peggy
Fielding

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and Writing Instructor



Charles W.
Sasser

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Journalist,
and Photographer



Jackie
King

Cozy Mystery
and Short Story Author



Deborah
Camp

Romance Author



M. Carolyn
Steele

Journalist, Genealogist,
Author of Historical
Fiction and Nonfiction

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EDITING SERVICES

- * Proofreading
- * Copy Editing
- * Developmental Editing
- * Summary

Contact Julie Kimmel-Harbaugh

juliekh314@gmail.com



Thank you,
JOHN TAYLOR
AND
TULSAJAZZ.COM,
 for supporting local authors
 on your website's
Local Author's Corner!

tulsajazz.wordpress.com

The Local Author's Corner was created to encourage the Jazz and the writing community to collaborate in promoting Tulsa-area talent. You'll find many Tulsa NightWriters showcased here.



Tierney James

Authors Wanted for

Sizzle in the Kitchen Blog

I have started a new blog series concerning where authors cook. I would so love for you to share about your world through your kitchen and cooking. One author will be featured each week. Share pictures, recipes, your books and genre, etc., anything that will make you shine (or *sizzle*). This is meant to be fun, light, and insightful to your world. It's a great way to get some new readers and much deserved attention. I will let you know when you will go live so you can promote on social media. I will do the same. Interested?



Deborah Camp is looking for "street team" members. If you or someone you know enjoy her books and would like to be part of her exclusive group of Happy Campers -- readers who promise to promote her work through reviews, brags, social media, etc. in return for swag, free books, gifts, etc. -- contact her at deborahcampauthor@yahoo.com

We'd love to welcome you as a member!

If you'd like to join Tulsa NightWriters Club, please contact our treasurer, Marion Grace, at jnmgrace@att.net

FROM YOUR EDITOR

NightScripts Submission Guidelines

- Deadline: 1st of the month (January-December)
- Specifications: Please do not format your text. Times New Roman, 12pt Single-space Attach graphics and/or photographs
- Send To: Cindy Rose cindy-rose@cox.net

CURRENTLY ACCEPTING ARTICLES

Do you have an idea for strengthening Tulsa NightWriters Club?

Send any ideas, speaker recommendations, etc., by e-mail, to the officer of your choice.

GENRE FOCUS GROUPS

The Genre Focus Groups program is an opportunity for NightWriters who write in the same genre to connect on an ongoing basis to support each other, exchange ideas, talk about marketing, read each other's work, and offer feedback. If you'd like to be listed for a genre or to connect with other writers, let us know—we'll be glad to help.

WE'RE ON THE WEB

WWW.NIGHTWRITERS.ORG



Click on these links to connect with TNWC on Facebook:

[TNWC Facebook Group for Club Members Only](#)

[TNWC Facebook Page \(public\)](#)

Please note: Only Tulsa NightWriters Club members may join our TNWC Facebook group. Our public Facebook page is open to non-club members.

Visit the [TNWC website](#) for club membership information.

FOLLOW TNWC ON TWITTER

You can follow TNWC on Twitter: [@TulsaNightWrite](#)
Please tweet our meetings and other events, and we will do our best to retweet your writing-related tweets.

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