

NightScripts



June 2023

Connie Palmer Dodson, Editor

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Writing Prompt:

Does this scene inspire a story for you?

Write a short story of 1000 words or less and get it to me by June 30th 2023. I'll print my favorite in the July issue. One entry per member.

You can also just use the image to spark a scene or a story.

If you submit it to me don't forget to title your story. Put Writing Prompt in the subject line and submit it to: editor@tulsanightwriters.org

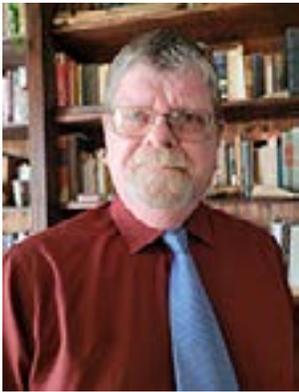


WRITE ON

Readers Have Become Bored By Passive Voice

Part 1

By our President, Merle Davenport



My wife and I submitted our latest Historical Romance novel to the OWFI writing contest this year. It was an awesome story which we thought should place either first or second. When the names of the winners were announced, our story was not included. We didn't even get an honorable mention!

How could such a great story fail to win? When the critique came, we eagerly read the comments. "The entire story was written in the passive voice – boring!"

OUCH!

When we looked back at the book, we realized they were right. It wasn't the story; it was the telling of it.

"The ink wells had been placed in the corner of the empty desks with the quills next to them."

Writing in the passive voice seemed natural, like describing a scene that had happened in the past. Apparently, what seems natural to write can be boring to read. According to the critique, active voice is far more interesting to read and holds the readers attention better.

The first question is, what is passive voice? It's where the subject of the sentence is being acted on by the verb. Active voice is where the subject acts.

"The ball was kicked by Jack." (Passive voice)

"Jack kicked the ball." (Active voice)

In the first sentence (passive voice), the

reader knows something happened. In the second sentence (active voice), we can picture the action happening. Giving the reader information using the passive voice may be effective in certain situations but use it sparingly. It is far more effective to paint a word picture. Look at the opening paragraph to our book. (Please note that it is slightly modified for the purposes of this article).

"It was mid-morning when Liberty Rose Montgomery had opened the door to the small attic storeroom near the servants' quarters that had been converted into a school. As she paused at the doorway, a soft light was cast on the desks by the glow of the oil lamp. Each desk had a goose quill neatly laid next to a brass ink well."

In each sentence, the subject is not doing the action. Instead, any action is happening to the subject. Very informative, but hard to turn into a mental picture.

Compare that to, "It was mid-morning when Liberty Rose Montgomery opened the door to the attic room. She paused in the doorway of the converted servants' quarters and gazed at the school in the soft light of the oil lamp. On each desk, she saw a goose quill lying next to a brass ink well."

Notice that Rose was performing an action in each sentence. We read the same information, but in a manner that pulls us into the story. Most readers prefer active voice because they can interact more with the story. Remember, happy readers sell more books.

One final note, writing programs such as "Grammarly" and "ProWritingAid" do a good job of identifying passive voice. Often, these programs will suggest alternative wording to keep your story in active voice.

THE WRITE TOUCH

Point of View: Part 2

By our Vice President, Kathryn Helstrom



Last month we talked about First, Second, and Third Person POV. I explained that the narrator and the POV character are not the same in Third Person. What is the difference between the Narrator and the

POV character?

The Narrator is the teller of the story. If it is written in First Person, then the POV character is the narrator. It is the same for Second Person. But most of the fiction we read is in Third Person, so there must be a narrator, the one who is reporting what is going on and relative incidentals such as setting, mood, backstory and so forth. This is also known as the Authorial Voice.

There are three basic types of narrators.

Omniscient

This is where the author plays God. You can be all-knowing. You can be anywhere, including inside your characters' thoughts. You can show the reader anything useful to advancing the story, including details from outside the time and space of the story. You can even tell the story from the point of view of inanimate objects such as a looking-glass or a corn field. You can jump around in time, filling in the history of a character or event. You can leap into the future to other events that haven't taken place or characters that aren't even born yet.

The formal, invisible narrator can

enter any head they want in order to further the story. This type of Authorial-Omniscient storyteller always speaks the truth, is impartial, and relates the good and the bad without judgement, leaving that important responsibility to the reader.

On the other hand, the Essayist-Omniscient narrator interjects their own personality into the tale. This is usually the voice of an unnamed, invisible storyteller. Or, it can be a character within the story, often with only a distant relationship to the people or events. Opinions, skewed observations, and other voices can be expressed. However, it is the author's god-like persona or ethos or agent that is reporting; not the author himself.

Third Person Narrator

Once you enter a third person narration style, you are seeing through the eyes of the POV character.

A Limited Third Person narrator can only tell the story from the information that character has access to. This is much more common than Omniscient.

To focus or emphasize a POV character's experiences, knowledge, and thoughts (subjective) you would use a Close Third Person narrative. This is similar to the First Person narrative and is the prevailing method of storytelling for modern novels.

It is not uncommon to have more than one Close Third Person narrating the story. Just make sure that you are not jumping from one character's thoughts to another too quickly. Try to keep one narrator per scene.

(Continued on page 7)

Flash Fiction Contest is underway!

[It's online Click Here for all the details.](https://tulsanightwriters.org/flash-fiction-contest/)

Or use the following link in your browser:
<https://tulsanightwriters.org/flash-fiction-contest/>



WORKSHOP:

July 15, 2023

9:00 am-12:30 pm

It's Alive!
Dissecting Horror
from the Gothic to Contemporary

[For More Information](#)
[Visit Our Website Here](#)

This is a ticketed event:

\$25 – General Public

\$20 – Students

\$20 – Tulsa NightWriters Members

[GET TICKETS HERE](#)

Throughout this workshop, we will think about how we define horror, what makes something scary, and how language incites fear. This workshop strives to foster a better understanding of the genre, from its first “official” appearance in 1764, the evolution of the genre, all the way to the literature we currently consume, attempting to define what

“horror” is (or isn’t). In seeking this, we’ll identify what is said and unsaid in the horror genre and explore some of the psychological and cultural interpretations of the genre as a way to understand how societal fears, anxieties, and pressures influenced the evolution of the genre.

This workshop will include a presentation on defining horror in the context of societal fears and anxieties, a round table discussion on writing and publishing, and creative writing exercises.

Tulsa NightWriters Between the Pages



On June 9-11, the Springfield Writer’s Guild, Sleuths; Ink, and Ozarks Romance Authors conducted the Between the Pages Writers Conference in Springfield, Missouri. The Keynote Speaker was William Bernhardt, who will also be Keynote Speaker at the Tulsa NightWriters Craft of Writing Conference on October 21.



June Speaker

Bob Avey

June 20, 2023, 7 pm

As authors, at some point in our careers, most of us have been asked by potential readers: “What’s your book about?” If you have struggled with answering this question, chances are you have a problem with understanding the theme. Like plot, setting, and characterization, the theme of a story is important. Having a firm grasp of it helps us to focus on other story elements. We will discuss theme and how it relates to your story.

BIO: Bob Avey is the author of Sandcastle for Pegasus, a tale of urban fantasy, and the Kenny Elliot mystery series, which includes Twisted Perception, Beneath a Buried House, Footprints of a Dancer, and Identity Theft. He lives in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, where he is retired from the petroleum industry. Through his writing, which he describes as a blend of literary and genre, he explores the intricacies and extremities of human nature.

May Meeting Followup

By Connie Dodson



In May we celebrated the winners from the OWFI conference contest. Find all the winners in the table below.

CATEGORY	PLACE	TITLE	AUTHOR
2 Essay	3 rd Hon	Scout the Provider	Heather Nuttall Westover
2 Essay	1 st Hon	In the Trenches	Joan Gerhling
3 Memoir/ Nostalgic	1 st	Redbirds in the Snow	Carol Garber
4 Prose Humor	2 nd Hon	Bonds of Matrimony	M. Carolyn Steele
13 Short Story FF	3 rd	Magnets	Virginia Jeanean Doherty
16 Short Story Adult	1 st Hon	Little Burnt-All-Over	Merle Davenport
25 Unpub Non-Fiction	1 st	A Path to Dignity and Purpose	Joan Gerhling
32 Pub Non-Fiction	1 st	Growing Old	Heather Nuttall Westover

COVER PROMPT WINNER

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR

BY JAMES R SYBRANT

Tires chained together, once lashed to the side of a ship, were abandoned on the shore. Left there by a tsunami years ago, looking like a deep-sea creature. The setting sun giving it the appearance of red suction cups from an enormous octopus.

Still, he was grateful for this discard from the destruction, it gave him a place to find crabs when he was unable to get work. They liked to congregate in and around those tires, making an easy meal. He hated that he had to rely on that for food, but had no choice much of the time.

He was an orphan, made that way by that same tsunami, when he was only twelve. With so much destruction, and so many dead, he was overlooked. He didn't mind too much, except when he was hungry, but once he discovered the crabs that didn't happen often.

He made friends with a few other orphans, and they made a shelter out of debris. Even if the weather was always warm, when it rained, and it did a lot, it was cold and having a roof over their heads was nice.

Aid workers came after the disaster, but it wasn't long before they were gone, and they were left to fend for themselves.

As he picked up crabs and put them in his pail, he saw one that was bigger than he usually found; it was also gold in color, instead of the rust brown of the others. He reached down and picked it up.

"Put me down," the crab commanded.

He tried to throw it, but it pinched him with its claws; hanging on.

"Let go of me," he demanded.

"No."

"I'll smash you on the rocks, then I'll eat you for causing me pain."

"You'll eat me even if I let go of you."

"No, I won't."

"But you'll eat my kin, if not me."

"I'm hungry, what else can I do?"

"If you promise not to eat me, or any more of my kind, I'll take you to a treasure."

"Really? Do you think me a fool? I may be

young, but I'm not dumb."

"No, I mean it," the crab said as the boy reached for a rock. "The tsunami uncovered a chest of gold not far from here."

"If you're lying to me, I'll take my time cooking you." It was a promise he intended to keep.

"I swear I'm not lying to you, and my life is at risk."

"Fine, tell me where to go."

"Put me down and I'll lead you to it."

"Nice try, but I'll not put you down."

"Very well."

As he followed the crab's direction to the treasure, a thought occurred to him. "How is it you can talk? And why are you gold, when your kind is a dark red?"

"That I can't say," he lied. "It was as if I woke from a dream, and I could think and talk, like a human." In fact, when he found the treasure, there was a magic lamp that he'd rubbed against. He didn't understand what was happening, and had not thought of being more than he was, but the genie gave him what it thought he needed.

"Well, that tsunami changed many things, so maybe it was what changed you as well."

"Perhaps," was all the crab said.

It was taking longer than he would've liked to get to their destination, as the crab had short legs, surely it wouldn't be too far away.

"We're almost there," the crab assured him.

"I hope you're right."

"It's there, by that post sticking out of the sand. Now, please set me down, I'll not try to escape. And you'll need both hands to lift the gold from the water."

"If this is a trick, I will hunt you down," he promised.

Once the crab was back on the sand, he ran into the water toward the post. He reached the spot before the boy, rubbing up against the lamp.

"What is your wish?" the genie asked.

"I wish to trade bodies with this boy."

"Your wish is my command."

(Continued on page 7)

How Many Plots Are There? (continued from pg 2)

An Objective Third Person narrator is limited to observable facts and dialog. It is like watching through a camera. This narrator never enters a character's head. This voice is seldom used.

First Person Narrator

When you tell the story as if it was a diary or memoir, from only the main character's POV, the narrator and actor are the same. The narrator can be the center of the action (Central First Person), or a secondary witness or reporter (Peripheral First Person).

"That is the strangest thing about the world: How it looks so different from every point of view." –Lauren Oliver

Do your research on point of view, and experiment with different approaches. You can do this through short stories. Remember that the Flash Fiction Contest is now open and closes in August, which offers an opportunity to stretch your writing wings.

Happy Writing!

**Be Careful What You Wish For
(continued from pg 5)**

"Ha, it worked." The crab's voice came out of the boy's body.

"You tricked me," the boy protested.

"No, I brought you to the treasure, just as I said I would."

"I will be hunted by people and birds alike."

"So you'll know the life I've lived," he told the boy. "Genie, I wish that you be free from your service." He didn't want the boy to find the lamp and reverse what he'd done.

"Your wish is granted." The genie burst from and lamp and the waves. "Although I thank you for my freedom, you're now required to take my place in the lamp."

"No, I freed you."

"It's not my judgment," the genie stated. "It's the rules."

"You tricked me when you made me aware," the crab-come-boy accused.

"That was not my intention. You had free will

the same as any other; it was your choice to free me."

"Ha, ha," the boy-come-crab reacted to the situation. "Don't worry; once you are in the lamp, I'll be sure you give me back my body."

"Sorry, little one, but he is not a genie, and the lamp will not make him able to grant wishes."

"So I'm stuck as a crab?"

"I'm sorry, but, yes."

"And I'm to be imprisoned in that lamp?"

"Yes, you each had a choice, and each was made from greed. Now, I'll leave the two of you to start your new lives, as I start mine." With that said, the genie was gone, leaving them to their fate.

Save The Date

**Saturday, August 12th,
9am to 1pm.**

Branding for Writers

Save-the-date for our second summer workshop, Branding for Writers.

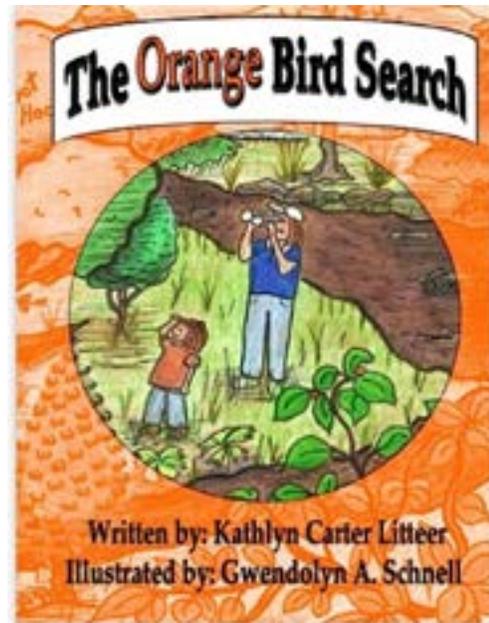
In this hands-on workshop, the team from Zealot Branding, will dive into branding yourself as a writer and what that means for you. From websites, to your book covers, keeping your brand in mind matters.

**\$20 for TNW Members
and Students,
\$25 for General Public.**

BULLETIN BOARD



Kathlyn Smith published her first children's picture book. Audience 3-7 yrs. Find it on Amazon under Kathlyn Carter or use the link below.



[Available Here on Amazon](#)

Brag

Bill Wetterman

Bill Wetterman has published a new non-fiction book titled Christianity Faces the 21 Century-2024. His novel, The Kidnapping, is now available on Audible as well as E-book and paperback. Or you can obtain a copy from Bill at a reduced price by emailing him at bwetterman@cox.net.

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Contact Julie Kimmel-Harbaugh

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918-720-4866 (cell)

NightScripts Submission Guidelines and Wants

From Members: Currently accepting ads (for books and services), articles, short stories (100 - 200 words), poetry, and event information.

Submit To: editor@tulsanightwriters.org
Deadline: 5th of the Month
Specifications: Please format your text as follows:
Times New Roman, 12 pt
Single Spaced
Attach as a doc or pages
Attach graphics and / or photographs

From Non-Members: Paid Ad Space Available,
contact editor@tulsanightwriters.org

**\$10
Entry**



**\$10
Entry**

Fifth Annual

La Viness Short Story Writing Contest

www.jespiddlin.com/writingcontest

**First Place - \$100
Second Place - \$75
Third Place - \$50**

Submissions accepted July 1st through August 31st.

2023 TNW Board & Meeting Information

Merle Davenport
President
President@tulsanightwriters.org



Tulsa NightWriters will meet at 7 p.m. Tuesday,

June 20, 2023,

location information below.

Kathryn Helstrom
Vice President
VicePresident@tulsanightwriters.org



June Speaker

Bob Avey

on

What's Your Theme?

See page 5 for additional information about this month's topic & speaker.

Bill Wetterman
Treasurer
treasurer@tulsanightwriters.org



Directions

Take the I-244 to downtown Tulsa, and exit on Detroit. If you are coming from the west, the exit for the OSU campus is on the LEFT.

From Detroit Ave., turn right onto JH Franklin Road. You will see the Auditorium and Conference Center (North Hall) on the left. You can park in Lot E (first parking lot on left), or across the street in Lot D. We meet in Room 153. Look for signs posted at both entrances.

Parking is free and open to the public. It is a very short walk, and handicapped accessible. Campus security patrols the parking lots regularly.

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