

DEAD TO WRITES

A MALICE IN MEMPHIS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2015 ISSUE

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I have hijacked the President's spot this month. Missy is out sick with a double ear infection and bronchitis. On a good note, Missy has been able to return to work. Barbara will give the treasurer's report at the meeting as I did not have it as of the printing of this email. Barbara's mother in law passed away last month just before the meeting so I know she has probably had a lot of stuff going on with that. As this is the summer and people are on vacation or taking care of family obligations, there maybe a few changes in the newsletter until the fall. Please bear with me. What would you like to see for the newsletter? I am open to ideas or even "stories or articles for anyone who would like to submit something to the newsletter. We are really growing this year and with one anthology under our belts and another one in the works, I think our newsletter could grow as well. Please let me know if you have any thing you would like to submit. I believe we are going to have to find an alternative location for September's meeting and I am working on that. If you have any suggestions please let me know. I will post it on the Facebook page and send out an email when I have the information. See everybody tomorrow. Gene Hines is our guest for this month.

Juanita Houston

Secretary/Editor of Dead to Writes

NEWS:

From the VP:

I'm pleased to announce our guest of honor at the August meeting will be Gene Hines. Gene is a Research Liaison Administrator, Scientist and Bio-ethic Compliance Specialist. We look forward to his presentation and learning about what he does. Please show support for our guest by attending the August 8th meeting.

Kristi Bradley
VP Malice in Memphis

A note from Susan Wooten:

I fell and fractured tibia and fibula where they attach to knee. Won't make August or Sept meeting. In a brace and on a walker for three months. If that doesn't work, knee will have to be replaced.

Haven't heard back from speaker I invited for Sept meeting. Please schedule someone else to speak in Sept, and I will try my guy again when I'm able to walk.

I will miss you crazies.

Love,
Susan

WRITING TIP: FROM AUGUST 2013 NEWSLETTER

Can you envision your characters in your mind's eye?
Do you know the little details such as hair and eye color?
Do you know their personalities? Their likes and dislikes?
I bet you can even tell us about their childhood, but be careful when writing your story. Let your characters develop gradually the same as in real life. You don't meet someone and know every detail about them instantly, and your readers shouldn't learn everything about your characters in the first chapter. Let them develop slowly.

Keep writing
Barbara Christopher

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Malice in Memphis Minutes –June 2015

We had our meeting at the El Porton Mexican restaurant and did not really have an official business meeting so there are no minutes for the June Meeting. Stay tuned for the minutes for July in the August newsletter.

Thank you.

Juanita

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Disclaimer: I signed up for a newsletter called Creative Writing Newsletter back in July 2010 and it is a great newsletter. I recommend that every writer check it out. You get prompts, and help with just about any issue you might have. I hope that you check it out and that Nancy from Creative Writing doesn't mind me posting this in our newsletter. She does an awesome job. I am hoping this will get her many more followers.

Welcome to Lesson 3 of Endless Story Ideas!

In Lessons 1 and 2, we looked at lots of ways to come up with ideas for characters and story conflicts. Today, we're going to generate ideas for story settings.

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The importance of setting

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A story's *setting* is the time and place of the story.

Examples of settings:

- A middle-class Cincinnati suburb (present-day)
- Paris during the French Revolution
- The magical land of Narnia

The details of your story's setting create a world where your character can move around and the conflict can unfold.

In the 8-week course *Description Writing Secrets*, we talk about more in depth about how to find and choose the right details to make your setting feel three-dimensional and real:

<http://www.creative-writing-now.com/descriptive-writing.html>

Everything your character sees and touches depends on the setting. Your character's house, the clothes she wears, the secret shortcut she takes through the woods, the rain sprinkling down on her -- all of this depends on the story's setting

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How to get setting ideas

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How do you choose a story's setting?

You can choose the setting because it's familiar to you, or because it's interesting, or because it adds something specific to your story's conflict.

You can also use your characters to get setting ideas. Here are some questions to help.

Character Setting Questionnaire:

- What kind of home and neighborhood did you imagine for your character?
- What are some of the items in your character's refrigerator? What's on your character's bookshelves? Is there anything under your character's bed? What's in your character's night table drawers?
- Where has your character lived in the past? What kind of environment do you think your character grew up in?
- What are your character's cultural roots?
- What kind of schools did your character attend?
- Did your character ever go to summer camp?
- What is your character's workplace like?
- If your character is married, did he or she go on a honeymoon, and where?
- If your character is married, where do his or her in-laws live? What is their home like?
- Where does your character go to relax? Where does your character go when he or she feels lonely?
- Does your character have a secret place or a place where s/he goes to escape from her/his problems?
- What's a place where your character feels extremely uncomfortable? A place where your character behaves badly?
- What's a place your character has always wanted to visit? Would this place meet your character's expectations?

The answers to many of these questions can give you ideas for new story conflicts! A setting idea can become a story idea when it creates a problem of some kind for your character.

You can even leave "booby traps" in your setting and see if they turn into new story ideas. For example, if you set your story about a camping trip in a swamp where alligators live, maybe one of those alligators will creep up to your character's tent and create a story conflict. Or if you set your story in a hunting lodge with a cabinet full of guns in the bar, maybe someone will produce a story conflict by getting drunk and then picking up a gun.

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How to describe your setting

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You can make your setting come alive for the reader by including details that capture its special flavor. What sights, sounds, smells, sensations are typical of your setting or unique to it?

You don't have to list all of these details together in a block of "description." Weave setting details throughout your story, using them where they fit naturally without interrupting the story's flow.

How to find details for your setting:

- Observation. If your setting is someplace you know well or someplace you can visit, record details in your Idea Journal so that you use them later.
- Books and articles about that time/place.
- Interviews with people from that time/place - either interviews you do yourself, or published interviews.
- Published journals and letters by people from that time/place. Related biographies.
- Magazines and newspapers from that time/place.
- Photos, movies, documentaries.

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Homework

- 1) In your Idea Journal, answer the Character Setting Questionnaire from this unit about two of the characters that you've developed during the course. Make a note of any conflict ideas that come up as you're completing this exercise.
- 2) Choose a setting from your responses to the Character Setting Questionnaire. In your Idea Journal, make a list of 10 details that will help to express the sights, smells, and sensations of that setting.

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Next steps

Congratulations! If you've completed the exercises in this course, you now have an Idea Journal full of ideas to use in your fiction.

More importantly, you have learned techniques that you can use to generate as many new ideas as you need!

Don't forget to go back to your Idea Journal and start turning those ideas into stories!

To learn how to make these stories as vivid as possible, consider joining our 8-week description writing course if you haven't enrolled yet:

<http://www.creative-writing-now.com/descriptive-writing.html>

I hope to see you there!

Happy writing,

Nancy

Creative Writing Now

Here is the link to Killer Nashville magazine:

<http://www.killernashvillemagazine.com/>

Lots of great articles in it again this month.