



Penwheels Newsletter

Fall Issue 2020

For Escapees Writers, Published or Not

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Jamie Bruzenak

Jaimie's Tips

▶ Sad that it is coming to this in the publishing industry. Read "[Self-publishing May Be the Last Bastion of Free Speech.](#)" in the July 2, 2020 Writers Weekly.

▶ [Get paid to review products!](#) This may be a way to earn some extra money. This July 9, 2020 issue of Writers Weekly shares places that pay.

▶ Cannabis is now legal in many states. When you cross the line, for example, from New Mexico into Colorado, billboards advertise cannabis stores at every exit. We saw many stores in Colorado Springs on our last visit. If you are a user or grower, there are now a number of places you can sell articles about various aspects of this subject. Writer's Weekly 7/23/2020 offers "[10 Paying Cannabis Markets for Freelance Writers](#)" – by [Hannah Jones](#).



▶ Editing a book is necessary before publishing. Whether you plan to hire one or not, taking these steps will ensure a better manuscript. If you do hire an editor (which I recommend), your bill should be lower because it will take less time to edit. See "[Can't Afford An Editor? Try These Four Fun Steps For A Much Cleaner Manuscript!](#)" By Angela Ho, which appeared in a past issue of Writers Weekly. You'll be much happier with your work and less likely to find embarrassing mistakes later on.

▶ [Markets for faith-based articles](#) in Writers Weekly 8/13/20.

"A word is not the same with one writer as with another. One tears it from his guts. The other pulls it out of his overcoat pocket." ~Charles Peguy

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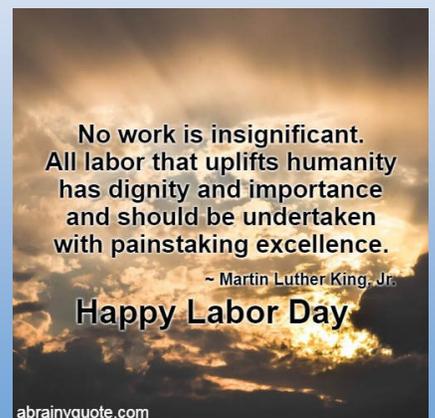
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Penwheels is a private group of Escapees members who enjoy writing and discussing the writing adventure.

The Penwheels Newsletter is digitally published quarterly.

[Archives Available](#)





It's Recursive!

Ellen Behrens

“Recursive.” Sounds like it has something to do with handwriting, doesn't it? But when I talk about something being “recursive,” I'm talking about something that comes around on itself again. It doesn't really repeat, it just circles back again.

Like writing. Writing is a recursive process. You'll write something, then discover your story is taking a different direction, so you go back to a part you've already written and revise it. Then you write some more, only to retreat to an earlier point and revise again.

I've harped on this before—how much you need to follow a process that doesn't end at drafting or a quick review of the draft. It's easy to quit too soon: the early blush of finishing a novel or short story can push us toward publication before the manuscript is as good as it can be.

But we shouldn't feel bad about that. Bestselling author John Grisham, after more than a dozen books, wrote this in his Author's Note at the end of *The King of Torts*, where he thanks numerous people for a lot of help:

Renee read through the draft and didn't fling it at me—always a good sign. David Gernert picked it to pieces, then helped me put it together again. Will Denton and Pamela Creel Jenner read it and offered salient advice. When I had written it for the fourth time and everything was correct, Estelle Laurence read it and found a thousand mistakes.

What?!? A thousand mistakes after four revisions? Even assuming that's an exaggeration, the truth is plain to see: John Grisham had to keep re-writing his novel before it went to press. At least five times, it seems.

Stephen King, in his terrific book *On Writing* (2000), writes, “I got a scribbled comment that changed the way I rewrote my fiction once and forever. Jotted below the machine-generated signature of the editor was this mot: ‘Not bad, but PUFFY. You need to revise for length. Formula: 2nd Draft = 1st Draft – 10%. Good luck.’”

And in a 1956 interview for *The Paris Review*, Ernest Hemingway was asked how much re-writing he did. Hemingway replied, “It depends. I rewrote the ending of *Farewell to Arms*, the last page of it, 39 times before I was satisfied.”

The interviewer asked, “What was it that stumped you?”

Hemingway replied, “Getting the words right.”

So...celebrate when you finish your draft, but **don't** assume you're done. **Don't** rush it into publication. Instead, remind yourself writing is recursive. Two steps forward, one step back is still making progress!

Ellen Behrens' short stories, articles, essays, and reviews have been widely published. Her third Rollin RV Mystery, **Superstition Victim**, is now available. If you'd like a free copy for review purposes, please e-mail ellenbehr@aol.com with your request. Learn more about her books at www.ellenbooks.com.

Help Me Out, Please

What do you want to see in your newsletter?

- ◆ More how-to articles
- ◆ More *World of Publishing* articles
- ◆ Articles related to poetry, autobiography, ???
- ◆ More Marketing, Book Promotions, Amazon Tips

Do you still want to see Freelance jobs listed?

Other areas you are interested in ...

What can you contribute?

Email the editor: margo@themaxwellgroup.net

Subject line: Penwheels NL

From the Editor

What's Your Novel About?

This might seem an easy question to answer because you've been thinking about your story quite a bit and know the essence of what you want it to be pretty well.

Yet if a friend asks you, "What's your novel about?" it can often be difficult to give them a short answer that does justice to all you have in mind. You might start by explaining about all the key elements of your story – the character and their problems and their quests. Or, you might relate a sequential timeline of all the major things that happen, essentially telling them the plot.

At some point, their eyes begin to glaze over and you know that not only have they lost interest, but you never actually explained the core of your story so that they really know what your novel is about, right?

This is a symptom of a larger problem for novelists: If you can't describe the essence of your story in a single sentence, your story really has no core does it?

[The rest of the story . . .](#)

Avoiding the Genre Trap

A common misconception sees genre as a fixed list of dramatic requirements or a rigid structural template from which there can be no deviation. Writers laboring under these restrictions often find themselves boxed-in creatively. They become snared in the Genre Trap, cranking out stories that are indistinguishable from a whole crop of their contemporaries.

In fact, genre should be a fluid and organic entity that grows from each story individually.

Such stories are surprising, notable, memorable, and involving.

In this article, you'll learn a new flexible technique for creating stories that are unique within their genres.

- ◆ How We Fall Into the Genre Trap
- ◆ A New Definition of Genre
- ◆ How to Avoid the Genre Trap

Step One – Choosing Genres

Step Two – Listing Genre Elements

Step Three – Selecting Genre Elements

Step Four – Peppering Your Story with Genre Elements

- ◆ What about Re-writes?
- ◆ Summing Up the Sum of the Parts

[Want more? . . .](#)

The Four Families of Story Structure

Take a moment to consider all the different kinds of structural things you know ought to be in stories. For example: a protagonist, some sort of goal, a personal issue that needs to be resolved and perhaps even the type of story, such as a chase or a tale of self discovery.

If you put all those items in a list, you'd find it would be a mixed bag of all sorts of story parts without any kind of order to them.

So in this segment, we're going to provide a means of organizing all the structural elements of story into families so you can draw on them when you need them.

To begin with, there are four broad categories into which all story elements fall: Characters, Plot, Theme, and Genre. These groupings are like the primary colors of story structure. By mixing them together, you can create any shade of story you like.

[Read on . . .](#)

The Count of Monte Cristo

Today we celebrate the work of Alexandre Dumas, the French writer who penned swashbuckling adventure novels like *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. It's *The Count of Monte Cristo* that has an anniversary today — its serial publication first began on August 28, 1844, making it a sprightly 176 years old — and that means we have an excuse to dive into the novel's secret history.

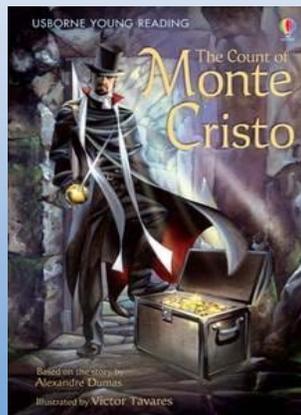
The Count of Monte Cristo wasn't just a book for Dumas. It was a revenge fantasy he wrote on behalf of his father, a Black general who fought in the French Revolution and was ultimately betrayed by Napoleon.

The novel tells the story of one Edmond Dantès, a promising young man whose friends, jealous of his charisma and professional abilities, secretly betray him to have him locked up in prison.

Dantès eventually escapes, becomes impossibly rich after digging up a buried treasure trove, and while in disguise as the Count of Monte Cristo, wreaks implacable vengeance on all those who have wronged him.

It's a rich and satisfying story for anyone who has ever felt betrayed: This is how I'll get mine if fate is just, you might think, seething. But Dantès's betrayal bears a startling resemblance to the real-life story of what happened to Dumas's father — only he never got his revenge.

[The rest of the story . . .](#)



World of Publishing

Emotional Realities of Being a Freelancer

There's no one else to blame when you're your own boss.

1. If you're a people pleaser, you're going to suffer.
2. You start valuing attention as much as labor.
3. You start to hate Tim Ferriss.
4. You'll miss your boss.
5. You'll start paying to be annoyed by other people.

You pull out your computer and, in this relaxed and nourished state, accomplish more in an hour than you did in an entire day at your last job. And you realize that maybe — just maybe — going freelance was the right choice.

[Read on . . .](#)

Freelance Writing Job Options

- ◆ Blog Writing
- ◆ Ghostwriting
- ◆ Article Writing
- ◆ Press Release Writing
- ◆ Technical Writing
- ◆ White Paper Writing
- ◆ SEO Writing
- ◆ B2C Writing
- ◆ B2B Writing
- ◆ Video Script Writing
- ◆ Course Writing
- ◆ Case Studies
- ◆ Copywriting
- ◆ Email Marketing Writing

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