The Purloined Newsletter

CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS
...writing wrongs

A CAPITAL CRIME WRITERS PUBLICATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Capital Crime Writers is an organization of writers and editors working in the mystery field, and readers who love the genre.

We meet on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss writing and crime, with the exception of July and August when meetings are suspended for the summer.

Membership is
$30 per year,
$15 corresponding.

Meetings are held in Room 156 at the Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street.

There is a meet and greet from 7:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m., prior to every meeting.

CCW Program Committee Announcements

Next Meeting:
Wednesday April 2, 2008

Selecting, Researching and Describing Believable Settings.

ALEX BRETT   R.J. HARLICK   DEBORAH GYAPONG

Come to our meeting on Wednesday, April 2nd when a member panel will talk to us about selecting, researching and describing believable settings for your short story or novel.

Bev Panasky will moderate a panel of published authors Alex Brett, Robin Harlick and Deborah Gyapong. This is an evening you won't want to miss

**Your Program Committee
Ken Gibson, Bev Panasky and Deborah Gyapong**

From the Chair – Brenda Chapman

For those short story writers who want to know precisely what magazines are looking for in submissions, Melanie Fogel presented us with insights into the editorial process at our March meeting. Melanie stressed that it is important for writers to see their work through an editor's eyes in order to increase the chances that our work will be accepted – welcome advice in this competitive field.

Speaking of short stories, the Audrey Jessup contest will accept submissions postmarked up to April 1st; however, Darlene Cole will accept hand-delivered submissions at the April 2nd CCW meeting. Once again, I would like to thank Prime Crime Bookstore, The Bookstop and Biagio's for their kind donations as well as our judges, Barbara Fradkin, Jane Crosier and Tom Curran.

Well, it has felt like the winter that will never end, but spring is around the corner and the longer days and return of the sun should rejuvenate us and start the creative juices flowing. Perhaps, your writing time could include composing an article for the Purloined newsletter – Katherine is always happy to receive submissions and it's a great way to share information and see your name in print.

Hopefully, next time I write, the crocuses will be up and the snow a distant memory. Just like writing, it's necessary to make that leap of faith.   **Brenda**

The CCW Executive

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"**When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they really didn't *do* it, they just *saw* something.** "

Steve Jobs

Editor's Notes – Katherine Hobbs

April 1st evokes some strong memories for me. Growing up I always fell for it – my Dad calling out "Come quick, there's a giant rabbit on the front lawn", or "look there's a horse on the back lawn". And year after year I'd race to the window to check out whatever strange thing was supposed to be on the lawn just to hear him proudly announce "April Fool!" So April is a fond reminder of my foolish childhood, although some might say not much has changed. ☺ So Melanie Fogel's information on how to avoid foolish mistakes in submitting work to an editor at the March meeting is timely. Also this month Paul Sadler reviews software that might help us avoid dumb writing mistakes, and he also reviews a writing book – Save The Cat – that he found invaluble. And author Nancy Kilpatick talks about how great it feels to get nominated for a prize and then win it! Her advice is on page 9. April's Forensic Corner is: D is for Dead Body - apparently even the dead can tell us tales. But don't believe anyone that says there's a zombie out on the lawn. Well, not unless it sounds like it might be true. Hmmm. You never know, maybe it's best to just to check it out and make sure.   **Katherine**

Workshops

SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOPS   Sunshine in a Jar is thrilled to announce that four FABULOUS workshops will be offered to writers and writing teachers this Spring/Summer. Sign-up today! **For more updates go to www.sunshineinajar.com**

·   The Play's the Thing (APRIL 19/08)
·   Bring Your Characters to Life through Dialogue (JUNE 7/08)
·   Finding your Teaching Voice: Workshop for Writing Instructors & Teachers (JULY 5/08)
·   How to Create, Promote, and Implement a Writing Workshop (JULY 12/08)

OTTAWA INDEPENDENT WRITERS - WRITERS' BOOTCAMP: OIW is also presenting a Writers' Bootcamp: The A to Z of Writing A Novel consisting of 3 ½ days in May. Author Rita Donovan will be teaching participants everything they need to know about writing fiction -- from character and plot development, dialogue, description, point of view, writing strong beginnings, and editing your own work, to submitting manuscripts. It's a step-by-step journey to writing success for beginning and intermediate writers that's fun, fast-paced and packed with advice.

DATE: May 22-25, 2008   TIME: 8 p.m. Thursday – 2:30 p.m. Sunday
PLACE: Marguerite Centre, Pembroke, Ontario

Rita comes well qualified for her mission as Bootcamp Director. Born in Montreal, she has a B.A. from Concordia University (Loyola) in Montreal, and an M.A. from the University of Alberta, where she studied creative writing with novelist Rudy Wiebe in 1980 and 1981. She is the author of seven books, and was co-editor of ARC poetry magazine, with John Barton, for many years. She has taught writing courses and workshops for the University of Ottawa, Algonquin College, Loyalist College, and the Gloucester Arts Council, and she continues to be in great demand as an instructor.

Price for OIW members for the BOOTCAMP is $325 and includes 8 meals (Friday morning to Sunday afternoon), wine and cheese evenings, snacks, a single room with all linens, and daily instruction with Rita Donovan. A $100 deposit is required to reserve your place, with the balance due on or before May 9th. The Bootcamp is open to all interested people, with $350 fee for members of other recognized literary groups (CAA, PWAC, Crime Writers, etc.), and a $375 fee for the general public.

WRITERS' RETREAT: For those looking for a quiet time away, working on your own projects without any instruction, we are offering an extended version of our annual Writers' Retreat, where participants work on their own projects and set their own schedule, also May 22-25 and at the Marguerite Centre in Pembroke. Due to the fact that this part of the weekend does not include instruction, the fee for OIW members for the Writers' Retreat only is $225. Full payment is required to reserve your place for this part of the weekend, and is due on or before May 9.

Cheques can be made out to **Ottawa Independent Writers** and mailed to:
Pandora Ballard - OIW Writers' Retreats and Special Events
#210 – 270 Lorry Greenberg Drive   Ottawa, Ontario   K1T 3K2

Both the Bootcamp and Retreat offer ample time to mix and mingle with other writers, especially during meals, and at the nightly reading, socializing and networking sessions. There are a total of 30 spaces available for Bootcamp and Retreat combined, so book now and don't be disappointed. For registration and more information, contact Pandora Ballard at: 6133-249-9850 or
pandorabee@travel-net.com

Forensic Corner:
D is for Dead Body

The dead do tell tales. The following information on the stories dead bodies tell was excerpted from the Evidence Collection Guidelines at http://www.crime-scene-investigator.net/collect.html. They outline how to determine the time since death, cause of death and how to identify the body, in much greater detail (and more gruesomely) than I have done here.

Identifying the body: The following factors are used:

- Basic facts - sex, age, height etc.
- Topographical features - physical description of exterior of body
- Pathological information - evidence of diseases, past surgery etc
- Special Procedures - X-rays, teeth etc
- Forensic anthropology

Determining cause of death: Death is usually caused by:

- Coma (failure of brain)
- Syncope (failure of heart)
- Asphyxia (failure of lungs)

Specific causes under each of these headings can be found in the site listed above.

Determining time since death:
There are a variety of methods. Some are for the investigators at the crime scene while some are for the pathologist at the autopsy.

Rigor Mortis. Not the most reliable of methods. After death, all muscles relax and about three hours after that, they start going rigid, as glycogen is converted into lactic acid. This starts at the eyelids, works through the face and down the body and is usually complete within about 12 hours. It then starts to wear off after about 36 hours. However, temperature, climate, etc. affect this. Heat accelerates the process and cold slows it down. Illnesses also make a difference. Also, faced with a limp body, it could be a body that has not yet started to stiffen, or a body that has stiffened then relaxed again. Just to complicate matters, people killed in intense heat tend to stiffen anyway, straight away, and stay that way. Also, sometimes a person stiffens at the exact time of death, such as clutching convulsively onto the gun they used to kill themselves.

Livor Mortis (Discoloration): Livor mortis is the settling of blood. It is also called Hypostasis. When the heart stops, the blood stops circulating and gravity makes it settle. This makes the areas where the blood has settled turn dark blue or purple. This starts happening immediately and is visible with a couple of hours. At this point skin is bluish and blotchy. After five or six hours the blotches have joined up but the skin still goes white when pressed. After ten to twelve hours the blue colour remains even when pressed. The lividity doesn't show where the body is in contact with something. A body lying on its back will show lividity in the small of its back, its neck, etc. but not in parts of the body directly touching the ground. This is useful in determining if a body has been moved after death. The discolouration looks like a bruise, but

experts can easily tell them apart. With some poisons the discoloration is different. Carbon Monoxide, for example, turns the skin cherry pink.

Algor Mortis (Body Temperature): After death, body temperature declines progressively until it reaches the temperature of its surroundings. This process generally takes about 8 to 12 hours on the skin, but the centre of the body takes aboue three times as long to cool. At the crime scene, it is vital to take the rectal temperature of the body as well as the air temperature. If possible, the same temperatures should be taken again just before the body is removed to the mortuary to determine the rate of cooling. A rough estimate of the time of death can be obtained by assuming a temperature loss of one and a half degrees Fehernheit per hour, and assuming the normal body temperature of 98.4. However, many factors may influence the rate of heat loss and this is only an estimate.

Eyes: Within minutes the cornea films over, and the white of the eye goes grey. After around two hours the cornea goes cloudy, and within a day or two it goes opaque. On the third day the gas makes the eyes bulge. With advanced decomposition, the eyes retract.

Food in the stomach: A light meal is out of the stomach within 1 ½ - 2 hours. A medium meal is out of the stomach within 3 - 4 hours. A heavy meal is out if the stomach within 4 - 6 hours. There are variations however: Liquid is digested faster than semi-solid food, which is digested fasted than solid food. Emotional state may also influence the rate of stomach emptying.

Insects: Body Lice outlive their host by three to six days. Other insects like to lay their eggs on very fresh corpses. The eggs hatch out within 8-14 hours. After another 8-14 hours it sheds its skin and emerges as a bigger larva. This process is repeated several times, taking 10-12 days in total. People who know about insects can look at the larva, see which stage it is at, and work out time of death. Samples should be taken and preserved and given to an entomologist.

Plants: Grass and plants beneath an object wilt, turn yellow or brown and die. The rate depends on type of plant, season, climate, etc. Seasonal plants or remnants may help indicate a range of time. Samples should be collected and shown to a botanist.

Putrefraction: Begins after about 2 days. The process is faster in damp places or when the body is exposed to air. Decay is about eight times faster in the air than underground. Too cold or too hot and the process won't happen. In very hot temperatures the body will dry out and mummify instead. People with a lot of fat will decay faster. People who died of bacterial disease will also decay faster. However, some poisons preserve the body.

> *The Body Farm (Anthropology Research Facility of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville) is an outdoor facility used for researching the decomposition of human remains in varying environmental conditions. It provides crucial information to law enforcement investigating murders and provides a real life instruction to Forensics Anthropology students and researchers.*
>
> *In other words, they stick a lot of dead bodies out in the woods and see what happens to them.*
>
> en.wikipedia.org/wiki/**Body_Farm**

Anamnestic Evidence: This is evidence taken from the victim's daily habits. For example, three days' uncollected newspapers would suggest he has been dead three days. If he missed an appointment on a particular day then he was probably dead then. If all his food in the refrigerator is rotten and horrid it suggests he's been dead a while. And so on....

Reviewing Writing Software

By Paul Sadler

Being new to the world of writing, I am constantly on the look-out for tips from more experienced writers, lessons learned in magazines like Writers Digest, or tools that will help me progress. Most writers use the main word processing programs – Microsoft Word, Corel WordPerfect, or OpenOffice Writer. But there is other software to help the aspiring writer.

Dramatica Pro: Dramatica Pro is a tool designed to help in outlining or structuring your story. It includes a "story creation engine" that walks you through a series of questions about characters, plot, theme, and beats. The more detailed the answers, the more detailed the result – an outline of a story based on your answers. It won't write the story for you, obviously, and the result is a bit formulaic, but a newer writer may find it a useful beginning. While it does require a basic understanding of the fundamentals of writing (the more knowledge you have, the more detailed the questions become), a more experienced writer will likely find it too mechanical in approach.

Final Draft: Final Draft is a popular software package designed for aspiring screenwriters. It is extremely sophisticated, and includes formatting guidelines, extensive protocols for importing and exporting for various types of screenplays, character name tracking, version control, production notes, and mark-up tools. However, one of its better known features is the ability to use "index cards" to outline your stories, a basic form of "storyboarding" during the writing phase. Prose writers who use cards for their outlines might find it a useful virtual tool.

Movie Outline: Movie Outline is a bit weaker than Final Draft in its richness of features, but it does spend more time on character development. For example, there are "character panels" that allow you to specify four elements for every character: what they want or need, what they get or learn, what conflict or dilemma they face, and how they move the story forward. These character panels are always available to help guide you through out the story, tied to each scene, and you can see the arc in the characters as the story progresses. The software also has a power search feature that allows you to track elements at any stage of the story, and a reference library that gives you some "feel factors" for famous characters in history as inspiration for your own characters.

Power Structure: Power Structure is also more geared to screenplays than prose, as it prompts the writer with preset headings according to different beats. However, the biggest benefit of the software might be of particular interest to those with a dramatic arts background. It includes a view mode that lets you look at various parts of the story from different perspectives – story, characters, acts, journey, scenes, gestalt characters, conflict, and more traditional "index cards". Depending on your dramatic background, each view might help you develop your story in a mode you already know.

All of these software packages include import and export options, which allow you to port your outlines or structures to your regular word processing software as needed. You can write the story to varying degrees within the program (particularly the more expensive ones like Final Draft or Dramatica Pro) but the writing areas are relatively basic compared to the three big word processing packages. Each have demonstration versions available for free download, but they are either time-limited trial periods or some of the features are disabled. In particular, your ability to save or export are extremely limited, so if you try one, don't do your entire story in the trial version hoping to export or save it for use later! One final recommendation if you do try one of the above – give it a real world test using a story you have already finished, and see if it would have improved your story or made the opening process earlier. If so, maybe the software might help you; if not, you probably won't benefit.

Save the Cat: A book review

By Paul Sadler

One of the reasons I started writing is that I have a movie playing in my head. I can see the characters, hear the dialogue, even smell the wet fur on a dog that is in the movie for about 30 seconds. I don't know how I came up with the storyline, but it's been playing in my head for the last fifteen years. The character is a cross between Anthony Robbins and Sherlock Holmes, with a dash of Tom Cruise from Risky Business thrown in. I feel I know the character so well that I can almost touch him. I naively hope that if I ever get to the point where I'm good enough to tell that story, I'll be able to take dictation from the movie reel as it unspools and transcribe it into something that doesn't completely suck.
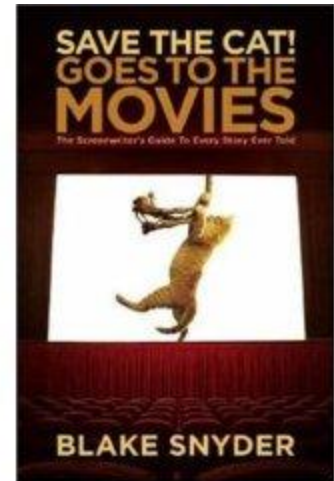
Given my interest in screenplays, I was intrigued when I stumbled across a book entitled "Save the Cat", even if only for a title. The book is by Blake Snyder, one of the numerous scribes that populate Hollywood and who are willing to share the tips they've gleaned from their own experiences and that of others, even if they can't write the next blockbuster themselves. I'm always skeptical when I pick up these tomes, so imagine my surprise when I fell in love with the book, learned a really practical approach from its text, and am considering a marriage proposal for the author.

> ## His second chapter is worth the cost of the book….

The intriguing title refers to Snyder's argument that successful movies give us a reason to care about their main characters. No matter how despicable the character is, we want to see a moment's hesitation by a gangster or that they care about their mother, etc. If they're a hero, we want to see a vulnerable moment when we can connect with them, and realize they are human. Snyder calls this the "Save the Cat" moment – with the example being the despicable gangster or the invulnerable hero who stops to save a cat while fleeing a raging fire. It's not a literal event, obviously, just a reminder to include elements that can take a one-dimensional character and make them understandable.

Most of what he describes for screenplays can also apply to short stories or novels. For example, while he argues for a strong "logline" to pitch the movie, it is similar to the "story in a sentence" recommendations found in other writing books. Snyder recommends that your pitch should include two pieces – a killer title and a logline complete with irony, a compelling mental picture (including time), and some indication of tone (thus suggesting a likely audience).

His second chapter is worth the cost of the book as it gives you a list of nine genres into which he argues most successful movies can be classified. While that might sound like nothing new, he doesn't do it by themes like action or romantic comedy – he uses broad primal themes combined with the goals of the protagonist. For example, classic schlock flicks frequently include a "Monster in the House" theme, and most books / websites would classify them as horror films. However, the goal of the protagonist is the real story – run and hide, or be food. It is the primal elements in Jaws, for example, that Snyder argues distinguishes it from a series of imitators. Other themes include Out of the Bottle (be careful what you

wish for), Dude With a Problem (average guy, extraordinary problems), Buddy Love (including romantic love stories), The Triumphant Fool (over-coming established society), and Group / Institutions (the internal rebel).

The Superhero genre is of particular interest to those who are writing series. While it is commonplace in book one to show someone overcome the odds, subsequent books often forget the humanity that showed the characters change in the first place. For example, Snyder argues that the Spiderman series succeeds in movie one as you see ordinary Peter Parker turn into the web-crawling superhero but he still has to deal with his grandma, find true love, hold down a regular job, etc. By the time you get to the third outing, despite the fact that it is aimed at

> ## Suddenly my scenes came into focus…. If Snyder was in Ottawa, I might have kissed him.

showing Peter's inner darkness, it is almost completely devoid of sympathetic moments that show his true humanity. This is obviously not an easy story arc; after all, who wants to see the butterfly return to the cocoon after the first taste of success? But without the cocoon, we may not root for the character in subsequent outings.

This genre chapter was where I had my epiphany, maybe because I'm a newbie. My story has a pseudo-mystery at the heart of it, and I've been struggling with the clue elements. But it was reading Snyder's description of how "whodunits" are almost never about "who" but "why" – a "Whydunit" genre that can tell a dark story about a character's motive – that I figured out why the story wasn't coming together for me. It's not really a "whydunnit" but a "Golden Fleece" story. In the vein of Jason and the Argonauts, this genre is about a person on the road to find something (i.e. solve the mystery), but who finds himself instead. Suddenly, three plot holes disappeared, I dropped two scenes from my outline that have never worked, and two other scenes came into focus as to where they have to start and end on an emotional bent. If Snyder was in Ottawa, I might have kissed him.

Chapter three covers types of characters (i.e. Jungian archetypes) and what you need – someone you can identify with, you can learn from, you have compelling reasons to follow, who deserves to win, and who has primal stakes we can feel. Chapter four covers a somewhat formulaic approach to the "beats" in a story and divides scripts into three acts and a total of fifteen sub-acts (not scenes in the normal sense). This approach either resonates for you or it doesn't, but it is presented well. He covers "storyboarding for writers" in chapter five, and while most people can imagine the typical "index card" system for outlining, Snyder suggests some additional elements to put on each and every card. The expected elements are there – location and the main actions or goal of the scene. However, he also suggests adding colour coding for the hero's story, the secondary B story, theme / imagery, or minor characters. He concludes by recommending that you also identify the emotional arc of each scene (to guarantee something is happening!), and the source of conflict for each scene. If it doesn't include both, Snyder argues that it's not furthering the plot or the characters, and should be tweaked or deleted. The rest of the book concludes with a variety of tips on elements to include or avoid, common mistakes, and appropriate (and inappropriate) ways to get into scriptwriting.

All in all, a highly enjoyable and informative read. If I ever get around to transcribing my movie, Snyder will feature prominently in my acknowledgements!

Defying the Odds!

By Nancy Kilpatrick

It was the year 1989 and I was all over the map, writing-wise. I'd been trying on for size literary fiction and various genres, having a bit of publishing success with short fiction here and there. One day I decided to write a mystery.

The story is loosely based on my short stint as a security guard at the Royal Ontario Museum. The protagonist, a rather hard-boiled female detective, must find a murderer at the ROM. I took the tale to my writers' workshop for feedback. "I hate it," CS (still a close friend) said. "Me too," Peter declared. The other four in the group concurred. At home, dejected, I asked my then husband Mike for his opinion. He was an avid mystery fan and also had done a bit of writing. "A no-go," he declared. Quietly I slipped the story into the proverbial drawer and went on to other writing projects.

At that time I was living in Toronto and somewhere saw an ad for a little mystery anthology. It was a contest, actually, sponsored by Mississauga organizations--the Arts Council, the Writers Workshop, the Library, and the local government, open to all for a small fee which I seem to recall as $10.

I opened the drawer and found my story staring at me, pleading for its life. I reread it. Gee, I thought, not bad! I revised some, pared it down to the contest length and hauled it back to my workshop. Still a barrage of negatives, not one positive comment from the bunch, and my husband Mike concurred yet again.

All my life people have called me stubborn, rebellious, foolhardy. I submitted the story anyway and was shocked when the editor, Michael Crawley, phoned to say I was one of the 10 stories selected. "Mantrap" would be published in **Murder, Mayhem and the Macabre!**

In 1992 I attended Bouchercon, held in Toronto that year. I couldn't get into the SRO room with the forensics panel so I headed over to the short story panel. One of the esteemed panelists was the late Ed Hoch, who mentioned that he edited an annual year's- best mystery and suspense reprint antho and urged anyone who'd published anything the previous year to send it to him. I went up after the panel and we spoke; my story met the criteria and he asked to read it. Months later he wrote me that it didn't make the cut but he gave me an honorable mention in the antho.Unknown to me, Ed was one of the judges of the Crime Writers of Canada Arthur Ellis Awards that year and submitted my story for the awards. I moved up the ladder and was thrilled to make the list of finalists but balked when David Skene Melvin of the CWC called pressuring me to attend the awards ceremony. "I won't win," I told him. "I hate crowds!" Finally, he persuaded me and I persuaded my husband to accompany me. Off we went to eat rubber chicken alone in a corner in a room full of strangers. I was startled speechless when my name was called as the winner of the 1992 Arthur Ellis Award for short fiction. I have no recollection of what I said when I accepted the hanging-man award, although I must have said something funny because I recall people laughing, hopefully with and not at me. Those more shocked than me included my husband, and the members of my writers' workshop.

Believe in yourself, even if no one else does. Defy the odds!

Nancy Kilpatrick lives in Montreal. You can check her 30 published books at her website:
www.nancykilpatrick.com   She also teaches a course in writing mysteries on the Internet:
http://coned.georgebrown.ca/section/dsed/exc1.html

Ten Ways to Not Get Published – March Meeting Overview

By Katherine Hobbs

When the envelope containing your submission is received by an editor you have 100 points. When an editor opens it they start mentally subtracting points. If you hit a score that is below 75 it is unlikely your story will be published. At the March meeting, Storyteller editor Melanie Fogel gave us a good idea of how to get enough points subtracted to ensure you won't be published. "If you want to imagine the life of a slush editor," Melanie says, "observe yourself when choosing a book. Chances are you will reject 95% of the writers immediately – maybe you don't want science fiction, romance, or non-fiction. It's just not what you're looking for."

This brings us to the #1 way to not get published. **Send in a story that is not what the editors are looking for.** Send a poem to a mystery publication. Or a novel submission to a short story magazine. Tip from Melanie: Read the guidelines. Read the publication you have submitted to. Make sure your story is a fit.

#2: **Open poorly.** Statistically 80% of the stories received by an editor are rejects. Editors are skeptical and you have to prove yourself. A poor opening leads an editor to think the rest of the story isn't going to be very good. Readers make huge decisions on story openings and editors are human. If you open badly they are hard on you. Tip: A good opening is a promise that the story is worth reading.

#3: **Don't reveal who the protagonist is**. The editor has read to the bottom of page one and still doesn't know who the character is. Tip: This is a bigger problem with 1st person POV, but no matter what POV you use, make sure you let the reader know this detail. As an example, "my wife and I" lets you know it is a man.

#4: **Use a fancy font.** It's too distracting and too hard to read. Don't use drop caps etc. to prettify your manuscript. It screams amateur. Tip: Courier font is best.

#5: **Don't format the story properly.** Your margins are 1/8 of an inch your copy is single spaced and the editor asked for double with ½ inch margins! Tip: Format according to the guidelines. Period.

#6: **Make lots of typos and grammatical mistakes**. To really ensure you won't get published, make a typo in the title. Tip: It does depend how bad they are and how many. You will lose 10 points if it is bad. There is a difference between a writer mistake, versus a slob type mistake. In a title a spelling error is a slob mistake.

#7: **Send a four page cover letter, or a CV with your manuscript.** Put your picture on it for added points to be subtracted! Tip: If you do this you have no understanding of what sells your story.

#8: **Don't provide any context or sense of character in a dialogue heavy story.** Tip: Watch when using lots of dialogue. Don't just have talking heads.

#9: **Don't live up to the promise of your opening.** Tip: Story is character plus problem. Plot is what a character does about the problem.   Make sure you stay focused on your story.

#10: **Use flat language to deaden the editor's curiousity to read on.** Tip: Make the story speak to the editor – use a striking voice, precise prose, and a widely entertaining hook. Have a colourful setting, interesting characters and try to be as original as possible in plot and setting.