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Calling all Authors, News from Lesley Hart

Author's Pen

Calling all Authors

- Have you written or are you hoping to write a book?
- Are you unsure about the different types of editing?
- Would it be helpful to chat about writing craft and/ or traditional or selfpublishing?
- I am a freelance editor and creative writing teacher whose passion is to support authors through the writing, self-publishing and traditional publishing processes
- Come in and have a no obligation chat about your writing aspirations ...



Find me online: Website: https://www.Author's Pen.co.uk, Facebook: Author's Pen - A Community of Authors: https://www.facebook.com/groups/687298795250966
Twitter: https://twitter.com/@Hart4Lesley





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January

This poem by John Updike is available to read, or alternatively as an audio version via this link: https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/january-30/

The days are short, The sun a spark, Hung thin between The dark and dark.

Fat snowy footsteps
Track the floor.
Milk bottles burst
Outside the door.

The river is
A frozen place
Held still beneath
The trees of lace.

The sky is low.
The wind is gray.
The radiator
Purrs all day.
John Updike



Brilliant Literary Quiz Questions

Round 4:

Literary Quiz, from: https://brokebybooks.com/an-epic-list-of-50-literature-trivia-quiz-questions/

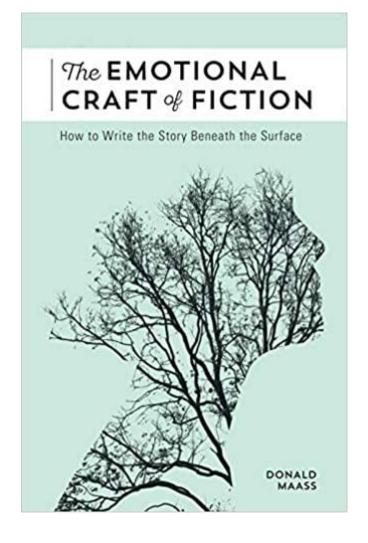
| 31 – Name That Book: Chronologically, this novel comes first in C. S. Lewis's <i>Chronicles of Narnia</i> series. |
|---|
| a) The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe |
| b) The Voyage of the Dawn Treader |
| c) The Magician's Nephew |
| d) The Silver Chair |
| |
| 32 – What's the name of the college of magic that Quentin Coldwater attends in Lev Grossman's Magicians trilogy? |
| a) Osthorne |
| b) Brasenose |
| c) Pembroke |
| d) Brakebills |
| |
| 33 – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes made his first appearance in print with which novel? |
| a) The Sign of the Four |
| b) The Valley of Fear |
| c) The Hound of the Baskervilles |
| d) A Study in Scarlet |
| |
| 34 – True or False: "Agatha Christie" is a pen name. |
| a) True |
| b) False |
| |
| 35 – Name That Author: Who wrote the noir classic <i>The Maltese Falcon</i> ? |
| a) James Ellory |
| b) Dashiell Hammett |
| c) James M. Cain |
| d) Raymond Chandler |

| 36 – Tana French's mystery series that starts with <i>In the Woods</i> is based in which city? |
|--|
| a) Dublin |
| b) London |
| c) Edinburgh |
| d) Belfast |
| |
| 37 – Who is the heroine of Janet Evanovich's <i>One for the Money</i> and its sequels? |
| a) Sadie Pear |
| b) Stacy Partridge |
| c) Sarah Peach |
| d) Stephanie Plum |
| |
| 38 – Name That Author: Who wrote <i>The Girl on the Train</i> ? |
| a) A.J. Finn |
| b) Sophie Hannah |
| c) Paula Hawkins |
| d) Ruth Ware |
| |
| 39 – Which is NOT a poem by Emily Dickinson? |
| a) "'Hope' is the thing with feathers" |
| b) "Because I could not stop for Death" |
| c) "Acquainted with the night" |
| d) "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" |
| |
| 40 – Name That Poet: Who wrote the Beat classic "Howl"? |
| a) Jack Kerouac |
| b) Lawrence Ferlinghetti |
| c) Allen Ginsberg |
| d) William Carlos Williams |

Book Review – Lesley Hart: The Emotional Craft of Fiction, by Donald Maas

I really enjoyed this writing craft book and it is one I will recommend and continue rereading. It opened my eyes to another way to reach readers, one which is in part linked to showing and telling and which engages reader's hearts in the story and is therefore invaluable for creating memorable and empathetic characters. It does this by approaching writing from a different angle, that of analysing the reader's reaction to the character. In doing so, it helps the author to understand the journey the reader must undertake in order to feel they are walking the protagonists path and that it is a journey they want to continue with.

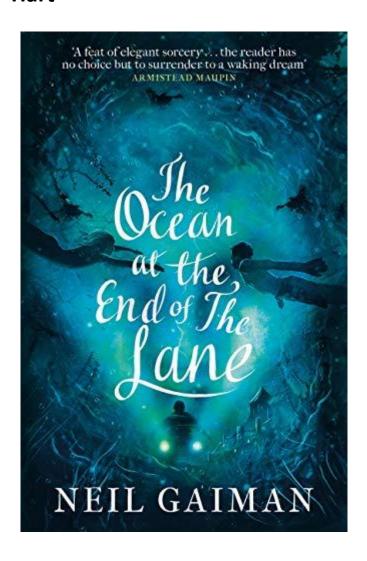
Donald Maass essentially believes that many authors don't dig deep enough and this results in characters whose depth is only skin deep. This book encourages the



author to dig into the psychology of their characters and to create emotional depth and suggests that by doing so you are reflecting back the readers own experience to engage emotionally and that this creates an empathetic reader experience. Maass also stresses the importance of engaging with readers using simple imagery and language.

I thoroughly recommend this book.

The Ocean at the End of the Lane, by Neil Gaiman – Review by Lesley Hart



Oh my goodness, this is such a powerful story and is a mixture of both adult fairy and fantasy story.

Neil Gaiman's protagonist returns in his fifties to his childhood home for a funeral and continues past his family home to the farmhouse at the end of the lane. As he sits on a green bench beside the small pond which his friend and protector - eleven-year-old Lettie Hempstock - had told him was really an ocean, he is transported back to his childhood and to half-forgotten memories of the importance of the pond.

The story is told through the eyes and memories of the unnamed protagonist from his seventh birthday when he meets Lettie for the first time. From their first meeting, Lettie takes the boy under her wing and he

knows that whatever fate befalls him that he can rely on Lettie more than anyone else in the world and he also knows that she appears to be older and wiser than her years. There is magic and danger existing around the Hempstock Farm and Lettie, her mother and her grandmother have been successfully keeping it under control for many centuries until this point.

Neil Gaiman tells the story from the perspective of a seven-year-old boy and his characterisation is completely believable from his reaction to the things that befall him to the baffling responses of his parents. The Ocean at the End of the Lane is a compelling story of lust, greed and sacrifice. It is also beautifully written, please read it.

Brilliant Literary Quiz Answers

Round 4:

Literary Quiz, from: https://brokebybooks.com/an-epic-list-of-50-literature-trivia-quiz-questions/

31 – c

32 – d

33 - False

34 – d

35 – b

36 – a

37 – d

38 - c

39 – c

40 - c



Phil's Phunny Cup Winner and Entries Christmas 2021

Unfortunately, many of you weren't able to join us at our Christmas party, but nonetheless we had excellent entries and many of our members have kindly shared their entries for your enjoyment. Our winner was Tracey Robbins and Martin was able to drop the cup to her with her prize fizz.

Martin had written part of his entry and has completed it and given me permission to share it with you, so this is also included. Below is a brief reminder of the rules, which highlight the challenge members face and which makes the competition so much fun.

Horsham Writers Circle – Phil's Phunny Cup – Christmas Party Competition

For the December Christmas party competition, which is really aimed at having a little fun during our annual Christmas party, we have Phil's Phunny Cup.

Phil's Phunny Cup was donated in memory of Phil Hollis who was secretary and member of the HWC for many years and tragically passed away far too soon. Phil had a warm heart (and Clive remembers how welcoming he was when he first joined the group), and he had a penchant for humorous stories and anecdotes. He is remembered fondly by those who knew him.

The prize is the Phunny Cup and a bottle of Sparkling Wine.

The rules of the competition are as follows:

Entry to the competition is free.

The entrant must be a paid-up or honorary member of HWC.

The entrant may present one story only, 250 words maximum.

The entrant must read out their entry to the attendees of the meeting.

The entry must be a comedy, or at least humorous in some respect.

The entry must not be a limerick, nor be poetic, in anyway whatsoever.

The entrant must not vote for their own entry – it would be churlish to do so.

Enjoy our entries and winning entry from Tracey Robbins.

'Are you coming to my party, Grandad?, by Tracey Robbins

Dennis was prone, mirror in one hand, Maglite torch in the other.

Why buy a five year old a hamster? Said hamster had escaped under the cupboard, hence the mirror/Maglite combo. A man of 72 shouldn't be writhing on the tiles, hunting the ruddy thing. Nearby, the birthday party was raging. Musical statues. Thudding feet accompanied 'Don't you wish your girlfriend was hot like me?' Dennis wished he'd taken out his hearing aid.

He re-angled the torch. There! Eyes glinted. The hamster, furtively stuffing its face (literally), threw a vitriolic glance over its shoulder. Little bastard. Dennis needed a scoopy thing to nab it. Magically, a small pink fairy appeared.

'Hello,' said Dennis conversationally, 'could you fetch me a ladle?' The fairy, nodding, wandered off. God, he thought. She's never coming back, is she? He laid his cheek wearily on the food-littered floor.

Dennis mentally scoured the kitchen for an implement. The sieve. Perfect! Fixing the spotlight, he groaned upright. A flattened jam tart stuck to one nipple, the foil case like a stripper's pasty. Cheesy Wotsit crumbs stippled his thighs. Choice. As he seized the sieve, the fairy returned, holding a red tag, string dangling. 'To Ellie...' it pronounced. Dennis looked at her.

'Label,' she said stoutly.

'No...' he said, 'I - oh never mind...'

He returned to the floor. The hamster was gone.

'Fuck!'

The fairy grassed him up. He had to leave. Gratefully he walked down the path. From the kitchen window, the hamster waved, cheeks bulging.

Bryan's Red Letter Day, by Bryan Webster

There I was full four fathoms deep beneath the waves, surrounded by circling sharks.

Hang on! I'll start again. You'll want to know the reason I found myself swimming amongst these pointy-toothed giants. I admit it now. It was my parental hypocrisy.

'You need to face your fears, Emma," I advised my arachnophobe daughter, thirty years previously. Emma was 6. 'Like Topsy and Tim in 'Topsy and Tim Move House'. Now, just hold this tiny spider in your little hands ... Stop trembling ... come on ... arms out straight. That's right ... keep them still. She's only tiny. Can't hurt you. I'll just place her here ... Oh ... no ... don't ...there's no need to cry...

Then thirty years on the Red Letter Day card arrived. It said Congratulations, Bryan, here's your very own ticket to the Jaw-dropping Swim with Sharks Experience at the Blue Planet Aquarium. Attached was a note saying 'You need to face your fears, Dad. Oh ... and Happy 50th.'

I started hyperventilating.

However, just like Topsy and Tim I faced my fears. Oh! I'm so glad I did. What an experience - that calm, uncluttered world. No aggression, no rush, just a few aqualung bubbles and those elegant creatures' unthreatening ballet-dancer gracefulness surrounding me.

Yet what I remember most was the crowd gathered on the other side of the two-inch thick perspex, their i-phones held ready to film the You-Tube-Goes-Viral moment when the 16-foot tiger shark behind me rips off my head.

CANNOT COMPÈRE, by Esther Pepper

His breath fogged the cold air as we shuffled down Park Lane.

"Look Father!" I said, "Christmas lights. Isn't it magical?"

Father's face remained expressionless, but it wasn't just the Parkinson's. Half Dad's life had been a one-man comedy show. The other half he'd spent bitter and depressed.

"Need a piss," he muttered as we neared The Grosvenor.

The lobby of the luxury hotel was busy and warm. Waiting with his coat I peeked through the doorway of a posh function just as the entertainment came on stage. Titters rippled around the tables as a bewildered figure shuffled into the spotlight, took out an embroidered handkerchief and blotted his brow with a shaky hand.

I froze. That was my old man peering out into the ocean of faces.

But he didn't crumble. Steadying himself on the lectern he tapped the microphone - and told a joke.

An awkward silence.

Then a voice heckled, "Tell us another one, grandad!"

And so he went on. Face dead pan. Voice monotone. Humour excruciating.

They loved him.

Eventually a security guard gently took his arm. Reclaiming the stage the real compère examined the forgotten handkerchief.

"Arthur Pettibourne," he read, "Let's hear it again for Arthur Pettibourne!"

Arm in arm we floated back to Victoria, coloured lights twinkling in Dad's watery eyes.

"Made 'em laugh tonight Linda," he said out loud to my long-deceased Mum.

Lsmiled

"That you did," I said, squeezing his shaky arm, "Happy Christmas Dad."

A Christmas Moan, by Maggie Weir-Wilson

'What was that'

Mary woke with a start, it was still the middle of the night, or rather early Christmas morning. She surfaced groggily from a deep sleep. Then she heard it again, a low moan or whine.

"Oh god – what the hell was that?"

Now fully awake Mary could feel the fear rising. She tried to think. She felt her heart go into overdrive and feared for her blood pressure.

'I really don't need this' she thought.

'Surely not a burglar on Christmas Day? No - burglars don't announce themselves by moaning. What on earth could it be? The ghost of Christmas past? Mary shivered as she remembered past Christmas exhaustion feeding hordes of Rob's lazy family with food, drink and false cheer.

There it was again – louder this time, a heart stopping low wail. Mary was frightened, but she felt she had no choice but to go downstairs and see what the noise was. She picked up a heavy shoe, tiptoed down the stairs, and arrived silently at the lounge door.

With a loud yell she barged open the door, brandishing her shoe. Grayson, her cat, had the fright of his life and immediately plummeted through the branches and baubles of the Christmas tree, bringing the tree crashing down behind him.

Mary realised poor Greyson had been stuck up the Christmas tree, and had been wailing for rescue.

'Happy Christmas Greyson, you can clear up this mess' Mary said, with relief and annoyance, before heading back to bed.

St Covid's Primary School pantomime, by Martin Brown

Welcome everyone!

I'm afraid we've had an outbreak so we've had to make a few changes. Six of the seven dwarves are isolating. We don't know who infected everyone but our money's on Sneezy. Bashful's still with us as she's been hiding in a cupboard during rehearsals. Doc was no use whatsoever, no one could get hold of him. We replaced them with volunteers from St Innocent's sixth form but then Grumpy found Bashful feeling Dopey in the PE store and that's caused no end of problems. No-one should be feeling anyone – it's hardly social distancing. Happy wasn't best pleased, what with being Dopey's boyfriend. So it's all change – Happy's now Grumpy, Dopey's gone all Bashful, Bashful's now known as Handful for some reason and Grumpy, who saw things he'd never seen before is now very much Hopeful.

Mr Sanderson our Deputy Head and Health and Safety Manager is playing Buttons and he's on edge. In yesterday's performance when the crowd shouted 'Oh no he isn't!' he was triggered and suddenly the whole audience was writing a hundred lines: 'I will not answer back to my teacher.' Best to just accept what he says tonight and let him get on with things.

Mince pies made by Year 5 are for sale, and don't worry, we've wiped them with hand sanitiser so they're safe. Anyway, thank you for coming. We hope you catch sight of your children in the show and that it's the only thing you catch tonight.

America, by Tony Bauckham

'Iced or hot?' The Arby's assistant, dressed in Arby's standard red and black uniform, complete with last week's stains, questioned.

'Hot please'

'Why sure. I love your accent, where are you from?'

'London'

'London, England?'

A plastic table, uncomfortable wooden seated chairs, also painted in the Arby's colours. We reckon we have thrown this traditional travellers' restaurant into a panic. The large coffee maker was filled with water. A grass like substance rain dripped into a paper filter. As the water heated, it seeped onto the filter paper. Underneath, a garden sized aluminium bucket. The water emerging from the filter, now appearing muddy coloured, pouring into the bucket.

'That cannot, be it?' my companion said in horror.

'Excuse me, is our tea ready yet?'

'It'll be but a moment Sir'

'We have been here a while.'

'It's a cummin, sir'

The now steaming bucket, was removed from the coffee maker. Enormous sized cups, humongous, were placed on the counter. The bucket was upturned, and a flow of the muddy brown fluid poured into the cups.

'Y'all want milk, sugar?

'Milk, no sugar please'

Plastic lids were popped onto the cups.

'OK y'all, that'll be \$1.40'

We sat staring at these lagoons of tea. The flavour resembled a flat white, mocha, almond milk, Ceylon mix. It was lukewarm.

'Can you heat this up?'

'Sure, I'll nuke it.' A ding proclaimed it was now hot. But the flavour had not changed and the thought of drinking it was too much.



January Birthdays and Links to the Author's Books

If you're looking for new authors, or to challenge your reading, then why not pick one of our Birthday authors each month. Follow the link on their book cover to search for this and other published work.

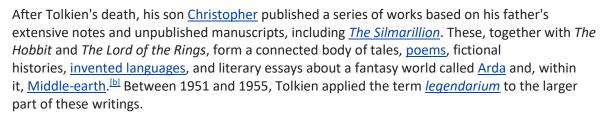


J.D. Salinger was born 1 January 1919, and died 27 January 2010, was an American writer best known for his 1951 novel <u>The Catcher in the Rye</u>. Before its publication, Salinger published several short stories in <u>Story</u> magazine^[1] and served in <u>World War II</u>. In 1948, his critically acclaimed story "<u>A Perfect Day for Bananafish</u>" appeared in <u>The New Yorker</u>, which published much of his later work.

Salinger became reclusive, publishing less frequently. He followed *Catcher* with a short story collection, *Nine Stories* (1953); *Franny and Zooey* (1961), a volume containing a novella and a short story; and a volume containing two novellas, *Raise High the Roof Beam*, *Carpenters* and *Seymour: An Introduction* (1963). Salinger's last published work, the novella

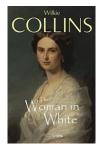
"Hapworth 16, 1924," appeared in *The New Yorker* on June 19, 1965.

J.R.R. Tolkien was born 3 January 1892, and died 2 September 1973, was a close friend of <u>C. S. Lewis</u>, a co-member of the informal literary discussion group <u>The Inklings</u>. Tolkien was appointed a <u>Commander of the Order of the British Empire</u> by Queen <u>Elizabeth II</u> on 28 March 1972.



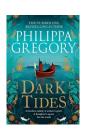


While many other authors had published works of fantasy before Tolkien, the great success of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* led directly to a popular resurgence of the genre. This has caused Tolkien to be popularly identified as the "father" of modern fantasy literature—or, more precisely, of high fantasy.



Wilkie Collins was born 8 January 1824, and died 23 September 1889, was an English novelist and playwright known especially for *The Woman in White* (1859), and for *The Moonstone* (1868), which has been proposed as the first modern English <u>detective novel</u>. After *Antonina*, his first novel, appeared in 1850, Collins met <u>Charles Dickens</u>, who became a friend and mentor. Some of his work appeared in Dickens's journals <u>Household Words</u> and <u>All the Year Round</u>. They also collaborated on drama and fiction. Collins gained financial stability and an international following by the 1860s, but became addicted to the <u>opium</u> he took for his <u>gout</u>, so that his health and writing quality declined in the 1870s and 1880s.

Philippa Gregory was born 9 January 1954, is an English historical novelist who has been publishing since 1987. The best known of her works is *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2001), which in 2002 won the Romantic Novel of the Year Award from the Romantic Novelists' Association and has been adapted into two separate films. She has written novels set in several different historical periods, though primarily the Tudor period and the 16th century. Reading a number of novels set in the 17th century led her to write the best-selling Lacey trilogy *Wideacre*, which is a story about the love of land and incest, *The Favoured Child* and *Meridon*. This was followed by *The Wise Woman*. A Respectable Trade, a novel of the slave trade in England, set in 18th-century Bristol, was adapted by Gregory for a four-part drama series for BBC television. Gregory's script was nominated for a BAFTA, won an award from the Committee for Racial Equality, and the film was shown worldwide.

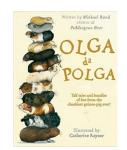




David Mitchell, born 12 January 1969, has written nine novels, two of which, <u>number9dream</u> (2001) and <u>Cloud Atlas</u> (2004), were shortlisted for the <u>Booker Prize</u>. He has also written articles for several newspapers, most notably for <u>The Guardian</u>, and translated books about <u>autism</u> from Japanese to English. Mitchell's first novel, <u>Ghostwritten</u> (1999), takes place in locations ranging from <u>Okinawa</u> in Japan to <u>Mongolia</u> to pre-Millennial New York City, as nine narrators tell stories that interlock and intersect. It won the <u>John Llewellyn Rhys Prize</u> (for best work of British literature written by an author under 35) and was shortlisted for the <u>Guardian First Book Award</u>. In 2003, he was selected as one

of <u>Granta</u>'s Best of Young British Novelists. In 2007, Mitchell was listed among <u>Time</u> magazine's 100 Most Influential People in The World.

Michael Bond was born 13 January 1926 and died 27 June 2017, was a British author. He is best known for a series of fictional stories for children, featuring the character of <u>Paddington</u> <u>Bear</u>. Bond began writing in 1945, when he was stationed with the Army in <u>Cairo</u>, and sold his first short story to the magazine <u>London Opinion</u>. He was paid seven <u>guineas</u> and thought that he "wouldn't mind being a writer". After he had produced several plays and short stories, and had become a BBC television cameraman (he worked on <u>Blue Peter</u> for a time), his first book, *A Bear Called Paddington*, was published by Collins in 1958. <u>Barbara Ker Wilson</u> had read his draft at one sitting and she then phoned Bond at the number given. She was put through to Lime Grove Studios. Bond had to tell her that he was not supposed to take calls at



work. More than 35 million Paddington books have been sold around the world, and his first book was published in 1958 and his last in 2017, a span of 59 years.



Jenny Nimmo, born 15 January 1944, is a British author of children's books, including fantasy and adventure novels, <u>chapter books</u>, and picture books. Born in England, she has lived mostly in Wales for 40 years. She is probably best known for two series of fantasy novels: <u>The Magician Trilogy</u> (1986–1989), contemporary stories rooted in Welsh myth, and <u>Children of the Red King</u> (2002–2010), featuring schoolchildren endowed with magical powers. <u>The Snow Spider</u>, first of the Magician books, won the second annual <u>Nestlé Smarties Book Prize^[a]</u> and the 1987 <u>Tir na n-Og Award</u> as the year's best originally English-language book with an authentic Welsh background. <u>The Stone Mouse</u> was highly commended for the 1993 <u>Carnegie</u> <u>Medal</u>. [4][b] Several others of hers have been shortlisted for children's book awards.

Eva Ibbotson was born 21 January 1925, and died 20 October 2010, was a British novelist born in Austria to a <u>Jewish</u> family who fled the <u>Nazis</u>. She is known for her <u>children's literature</u>. The books are imaginative and humorous, and most of them feature magical creatures and places. Ibbotson has said that she disliked thinking about the supernatural and created the characters because she wanted to decrease her readers' fear of such things. Some of the books, particularly *Journey to the River Sea*, also reflect Ibbotson's love of nature. Ibbotson had said she disliked "financial greed and a lust for power", and often created antagonists in her books who have these characteristics. Some of her novels for adults have been reissued for the <u>young adult</u> market. The historical novel *Journey to the River Sea* (Macmillan, 2001) won her the <u>Smarties Prize</u> in category 9–11 years, garnered an unusual commendation as runner-up for



the <u>Smarties Prize</u> in category 9–11 years, garnered an unusual commendation as runner-up for the <u>Guardian Prize</u>, [2] and made the Carnegie, Whitbread, and Blue Peter shortlists. She was a finalist for the 2010 Guardian Prize at the time of her death. [3] Her last book, *The Abominables*, was among four finalists for the same award in 2012.



Virginia Woolf was born 25 January 1882, and died 28 March 1941, was an English writer, considered one of the most important <u>modernist</u> 20th-century authors and a pioneer in the use of <u>stream of consciousness</u> as a narrative device.

Woolf was born into an affluent household in <u>South Kensington</u>, London, the seventh child of mother <u>Julia Prinsep Jackson</u> and father <u>Leslie Stephen</u> in a <u>blended family</u> of eight. She was home-schooled in English classics and Victorian literature from a young age. From 1897 to 1901, she attended the Ladies' Department of <u>King's College London</u>, where she studied classics and history and came into contact with early reformers of women's higher education and the <u>women's rights movement</u>. Encouraged by her father, Woolf began writing professionally in

The Eric C Williams Memorial Trophy - HWC Annual Short Story Competition



SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Entry to the Eric C Williams Memorial Trophy Short Story Competition is free, the competition is open to members (membership is free to all members during the duration of the pandemic) and to Honorary Members.

A maximum of two short stories can be entered per author.

The short story must be fiction, must be written in English, and be no longer than 2000 words (excluding title which can have a maximum of twelve words).

The short story must have been written within the previous six months.

The short story should not include pictures or pictograms.

The short story should be submitted as an emailed Word attachment and sent to the Competition Secretary lesleyhart007@gmail.com, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed with the Competition Secretary.

Competition submissions must be sent before midnight of 31st March, the closing date.

All members who enter work for the competition must vote. Failure to vote will result in your work(s) being removed from the competition. Nobody is permitted to vote for their own work.

Please note that the Competition Secretary will send an email confirmation of all entries submitted. If you do not receive this response, please contact the Competition Secretary before the closing date, so your missing entry can be found or resubmitted.

The Competition Secretary will compile the booklet of entries and send it out to all members for judging.

Competition entries will be judged by HWC membership at the closing date.

Everything You Need to Know About Finding and Hiring a Freelance Book Editor

PUBLISHING

28th September 2015 - Sophie Playle: https://www.liminalpages.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-finding-and-hiring-a-freelance-book-editor



So, you've finished writing your novel and have redrafted it and edited it as best you can. The first thing you should do at this point is jump to your feet and dance a funky victory dance. But what about after that ...?

Should you hire a freelance editor? What kind of editing should you get? How do you go about searching for and then choosing the right editor for you? How should you go about contacting an editor?

Never fear, this article will answer all those questions. (And probably raise a few new ones. But, hey, I didn't say I had *all* the answers. Or did I? Damn.)

The first step is to determine these two crucial pieces of information:

- 1. Whether you want to <u>self-publish</u> or <u>traditionally publish</u>. If you want to do neither of these things, you don't need an editor. An editor's role is to help you along the journey to publication.
- 2. The current state of your manuscript. I don't mean to say your novel is in a mess, but if you're not an experienced novelist, it's likely you'll need more help than if you were a seasoned professional.

Your chosen route to publication

If you want to self-publish your novel, quality control is now up to you. That means you're responsible for every part of the publishing process, from editing to typesetting to proofreading to cover design.

Luckily, you don't have to do everything yourself. You can hire freelance professionals. Yet doing so for every part of the process can add up, so it's worth thinking about which part of the process you need the most help with.

If you want to publish traditionally, the publishing house ends up paying for most of the quality control services – including editing and proofreading.

But if you want to go down this route, the most important thing is that the foundations of your novel are solid from the start. Publishers want to publish books that are as close to perfect as possible (so they can be confident it will sell with as little investment as possible!).

That means your novel's concept needs to be marketable, your plot needs to be solid, your characters should be vivid, your voice strong, the pacing balanced, and so on.

Editorial services explained

There are three levels of editorial services.

The first looks at the foundational elements, such as story, plot, characterisation, marketability, pacing, voice, etc. You might even ask a professional to help you develop the manuscript as you're writing it.

The second level looks at the sentences and paragraphs.

The third level is the final check.

Normally, you'll only need one type of service from each level.

Keep in mind that the services you might pay for will depend on both your intended route to publication and the state of your manuscript.

The descriptions below should be taken with a pinch of salt. They aren't set in stone, and what one editor chooses to offer may be slightly different to what another editor chooses to offer, even though they call their services the same thing. Hey, that's the arts for you.

Level One

Manuscript Critique

A <u>manuscript critique</u> (also known as manuscript appraisal or assessment) is a summary of the big-picture elements of your novel. The editor analyses the manuscript, reflects back their understanding and provides unbiased guidance on how the novel could be improved.

The critique is presented as a separate report or editorial letter, which is usually divided into sections based around the main components of storytelling – plot, theme, pacing, character, narrative style, etc.

Though the critique may briefly describe these different elements, the author is expected to have at least a basic understanding of these components. The author should research any holes in their understanding and apply what they learn to their manuscript.

A manuscript critique is a useful tool to help a writers see the woods for the trees and gain an objective overview. It will alert them to any major issues and point them in the right direction for further redrafting.

Developmental Editing

<u>Developmental editing</u> (also known as substantive editing, content editing, structural editing, book doctoring and coaching) is probably the most flexible editorial service in terms of what's offered – as you can probably tell by all the different names.

Always check the editor's description of this type of deep-level editing.

In general, developmental editing is a more intensive service than a manuscript critique (which is a type of developmental edit).

Because it's more detailed, it takes longer and costs more.

The editor will examine all the main storytelling components (such as plot, theme, pacing, character, narrative style, etc.) but will also focus on specific moments within the manuscript that need attention (where there's muddled point of view, lagging tension, inauthentic characterisation, etc.)

They'll advise the author on how they might redraft the manuscript in order to achieve their authorial intentions. The editor will ask questions to encourage the writer to think deeply and critically about their manuscript, and may make suggestions on restructuring, deleting or adding parts to the story.

The editor doesn't rewrite the material or correct grammar and spelling.

The suggestions are usually presented as a separate report or editorial letter that includes extracts from the manuscript for specific analysis, and/or substantial comments on the manuscript itself.

The manuscript might go back and forth between the editor and writer, through various drafts, depending on the arrangement made.

Level Two

Line Editing

<u>Line editing</u> (also known as stylistic editing or copy-editing) focuses on the sentences and paragraphs to make them artful in the way they flow, and correct and consistent in the way they are presented.

Though the style of the writing is addressed, a line editor does not simply apply their own stylistic preferences; instead, they act as an intermediary between the author and the reader so that the author's voice is amplified but the meaning behind their words is clear.

For example, the editor will fix awkward phrasing, clunky syntax, unintentional ambiguities, misused words, inappropriate tone, ineffective use of cliché, repetitive sentence structure, inconsistencies in minor plot details (such as character eye colour) and more.

As well as this, they also address the same spelling, punctuation and grammar issues as a copy-editor.

The manuscript may go through one or multiple passes, depending on the agreement.

Edits are made using comments within the manuscript, Track Changes and sometimes a brief editorial letter. The editor may also provide a style sheet that contains details of all the major editorial decisions.

Copy-editing

<u>Copy-editing</u> (also known as line editing – though technically line editing provides a deeper level of editorial suggestion) aims to make sentences and paragraphs clear in meaning, error-free, consistent in style and as concise as possible without impacting on authorial style.

They'll also flag up any potential legal issues, such as plagiarism or libel.

In traditional publishing, the copy-editor will also 'mark up' the manuscript for the typesetter/designer.

A copy-editor will use Track Changes to edit the text, raising any specific queries as comments within the manuscript (or in a separate file). They'll also provide a style sheet that contains details of all the major editorial decisions.

Level Three

Proofreading

This the final stage, and comes after the text has been typeset/designed.

Proofreading does not aim to assess or improve the manuscript, but instead acts as a final check that everything is correct.

A proofreader looks at nearly all the same issues as a copy-editor, essentially checking for any errors that have slipped through the cracks. The proofreader makes sure that the work of author, editor and designer/typesetter has been carried out to a satisfactory standard; they mark up any errors and flag up any last issues.

Amending a page once it's been typeset costs time and money, so the proofreader must use their judgement to recommend only the most essential changes.

Because they work on final 'proofs', the proofreading is normally conducted using comments or BSI symbols on PDF or hardcopy. Alternatively, proofreaders will use Track Changes in Word, though technically this means they aren't working on the final proofs.

How to find the right editor for you

By now you should have a pretty clear idea of the type of editing you need based on which publishing route you want to take and the condition of your manuscript. Consider yourself informed!

Next, you have to actually find an editor. Here's how:

1. Search professional directories

Use key words in your search, such as the type of editing you're looking for and the genre of your book. In the UK, the most reliable and comprehensive directory comes from the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading. In the USA, the Editorial Freelance
Association has a similar directory. You could also run a Google search, but make sure you carefully assess the editors you find.

2. Ask for personal recommendations

If you have good access to a network of writers, it's worth asking around for personal recommendations. Don't just rely on their experience, though – check out the editor they recommend to make sure they are a well suited to you.

Be warned, if you post 'Can anyone recommend a good freelance book editor?' on Twitter, floods of freelance editors will pounce on you recommending their own services!

3. Read testimonials

Now you've hopefully found a few editors you like the look of, see if they have any testimonials on their website. This is almost as good as getting a personal recommendation and you'll get a greater number of opinions. If you're still unsure, ask the editor if you can talk to one of their previous clients.

4. Assess qualifications and experience

In an age in which anyone can set up a website and call themselves an editor, what proof does this editor have that they're qualified to do the task at hand?

- Have they completed any courses? Courses from the Publishing Training Centre and the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading (formally the Society for Editors and Proofreaders) are highly regarded in the UK.
- What is their educational background? An MA in creative writing shows that they have a good understanding of the mechanics of good fiction writing. A degree in literature could also be useful.
- What books have they edited? An established editor should have a portfolio listing previous books or projects they've worked on. An editor at the beginning of their career

- should have enough evidence from the other aspects listed here to show they are competent enough for the job.
- What practical experience do they have? Have they worked in publishing, as a creative writing tutor, as a successful author, or in a job that relates to their field? These aspects might not be essential, but are something to consider.
- Are they a member of a professional society? As mentioned, the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading is the most well-regarded body of professional editorial freelancers in the UK. Joining a professional society indicates that a freelance editor takes their role seriously. As well as that, members of the CIEP are encouraged to follow its Code of Practice.

5. Ask for a sample edit

Many editors will be happy to provide a short sample edit (usually between 500-1500 words) – sometimes for free, sometimes for a small fee.

Not only this, but it can be a good indicator of whether you are a good 'fit' with an editor. It will show you the depth of their editing, and demonstrate how they work – all useful things to know before you commit to a full manuscript.

Some more established editors might not have the time to provide you with a sample, but they will undoubtedly have an extensive list of books they've edited that you can take a look at. However, if you really want a sample, it doesn't hurt to ask.

Editing should be a partnership, not a battle – and that's exactly why it's important to find an editor suited to your style. A sample edit can be a really useful indicator of the compatibility between the author/editor/manuscript.

Communicating with your editor

Once you've found some editors you like, you of course have to get in touch with them.

Email is usually the best method.

Personally, I hate it when clients phone me out of the blue. (An arranged call is perfectly fine.) More often than not, I'll let the call go to voicemail as I usually have my phone on silent. Most of my work requires a lot of focused concentration, so a call is pretty disruptive.

On top of that, there's no record of what's discussed in a phone call, so I normally type up the gist of our conversation and email it to the person, anyway. If this sounds suspiciously like double the work, it's because it is! But it's my responsibility to keep track of our correspondence.

It's fine to send enquiries to more than one editor at a time. You might request sample edits from a variety of editors to help you make your decision.

I recommend you send the same sample to each editor so you can more easily compare the results. It's not necessary, but it is polite, to let the editor know you're contacting a couple of other editors.

My top tip is to never speak to the editors you contact as though they are an employee who is obligated to do what you tell them because you're going to pay them for it.

You are not my boss. I am my own boss. And I choose the clients I work with as much as they choose me.

The editor-author relationship is one of equals. If I get an email that just says 'Here's a document for you to edit. I need it by tomorrow', I'm highly unlikely to even respond.

Instead, politely enquire about the editor's schedule and whether they'd be interested in working with you on your project.

Most editors request a sample so they can assess whether or not they think the project is a good fit for them as well as so they can provide you with an accurate quote.

Always read the guidelines on the editor's website to make the enquiry process as efficient as possible.

Summing up ...

That's quite a lot of information to take in, so here's a quick recap of what you need to do to find the right editor for you:

- 1. Consider which route to publishing you'd like to take. This will indicate how much of the quality control process is your responsibility.
- 2. Assess your own manuscript and decide what kind of editorial service(s) would be best for your novel.
- 3. Search for suitable editors and assess their competence. Make sure they offer the service(s) you're looking for and work in your chosen genre.
- 4. Get in touch with the editors you're considering working with in order to a) ask for a sample and/or a quote, and b) allow both you and the editor to decide whether or not you're a good professional match for each other.

There you have it! Now you should know exactly how to go about finding and hiring a freelance book editor. Now, go forth and publish excellent books!





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How to take your manuscript from draft to polished - Saturday 12th February

In this session, Helen M Walters will show you how to trim the fat, spot your prose tics and kill your darlings, and ensure that your manuscript works its very hardest to keep readers turning the pages.



How to Edit your novel - Sunday 20th February

James McCreet will explain how to ensure your novel maintains pace throughout, keeps readers interested and reaches a satisfying conclusion, essential for authors looking to reach a wider audience, whether through mainstream or self-publishing.

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Writers Online events were shared by Sarah Nuttall.

Editing your Manuscript, from Sarah Ann Juckes in conjunction with Jericho Writers



How to edit a book

As a messy first-drafter, I find my books are really made in the editing stage. If you've finished November with a messy first draft, here's a breakdown of the stages that may lie ahead.

Step one: Read, digest, plan. Give yourself a bit of space after finishing your draft, then try to read it in one go. It can be helpful to write notes on what happens in each scene, and any large issues you spot along the way.

Step two: Restructure and rewrite. Using post-it notes or similar, re-arrange/delete/add to your key scenes until your plot works. Then open up a new document and paste in the scenes to be kept – adding those new ones as you go along.

Step three: Get feedback. When you've got your structure working as best you can, it's time to bring in outside help. This can be a writing friend, or a professional editor. A Manuscript Assessment at this stage can save a lot of time later on!

Step four: Digest notes and revise. You might not want to follow all suggestions from your reader/editor and that's completely fine. Do think about why they've said certain things though – usually it's an issue with clarity. Revise your document again and pass to another friend/editor for further feedback once you're happy.

Step five: Hone your prose. Once the structure is working, read through your manuscript again, looking at things on a sentence level. Pay particular attention to the first few pages of your book, as this is what an agent/reader will often judge you on the most. I find the 'Read Aloud' tool in Word really useful for this step (or you can read it aloud yourself!)

If you're self-publishing, you may want to add <u>professional proofreading</u> to this list too. And if you're traditional publishing, remember that you'll have several edits remaining after this with your agent and then your editor. Editing really does make a book, so invest time in getting it right.

2022 Writing Retreats from former Horsham Writing Circle member, author, Daisy White



Sussex Writing Retreats are nestled deep in the lush Sussex countryside. Our retreats cover a range of topics, but also focus on your wellbeing, creativity and confidence. The retreats are suitable for writers at any stage of their journey, whether you are already published with a massive readership, and just need some time out to relax and enjoy delicious food and like-minded company, or if you have a book idea, or film idea that just needs to be nurtured.

Here is a bit of info, and more can be found on our website;

https://daisywhiteauthor.co.uk/sussex-writing-retreats/

And Youtube;

https://youtu.be/jobamQCjHQc

For 2022 we are running 4 retreats;

April 1 - 3

Creative Writing Retreat with special guest speakers including authors Sue Wickstead and Casey Kelleher, plus literary Agent's Assistant, and the person who first sees your submissions, Saskia Leach (The Kate Nash Literary Agency).

Special Offer *The first 5 guests to sign up with receive a targeted 1-2-1 with Saskia, who will read your cover letter, synopsis and first page and give feedback.

15 places still available.

May 5 - 8

Writing for TV and Film with our guest speakers, and top industry experts screenwriter Hayley November, Executive Producer Steve November and screenwriter Debbie Moon.

Pitch your book to screen idea, learn how to write and edit a pitch and script for TV drama, or just explore another side to creative writing in this jam-packed retreat, which also includes homework and a follow up group Zoom call 1 week later. Our professional trio have extensive experience within the film and TV industry, a few BAFTAs between them, and the enthusiasm and know-how to get you started, or polish an existing idea!

14 places still available

July 8 - 10

The Writing Bootcamp Retreat

For those whose manuscript is nearing completion, and you need a final polish and help to get over the line! Includes advice on submission package, agents, social media MOT, PR plan and a professional author headshot. Special guest speaker is BBC News correspondent Alistair Fee, who will be giving you the chance to see how the news is created, edited and hone your interview technique.

12 places still available

September 16 - 18

The Find Your Creative Side Retreat with inspiring special guest speakers Alistair Fee and Hayley November. A gentle confidence boosting retreat. Has someone told you that you should write a book? Got an idea that won't go away? Explore your creativity in this retreat designed to get the ink flowing. Eighteen places still available

Daisy White's July 2021 Three Day Writing Retreat, Review by Jonathan Dancer

It was raining. Not in a consistent sort of a way, but raining nonetheless. The clear-sided marquee came into view round a bend in the track and I knew I had arrived.

As I drove through, there was a lovely warm welcome from Daisy, "You must be Jonathan!"

The whole back of the big tent was piled reassuringly with tea, coffee and pastries, and even some very healthylooking bright green smoothies. A promising start to the three-day retreat.

We started the session with some yoga stretches for the intrepid. These were held outside by Sam Marshall, a fitness trainer, under a giant oak tree, where heavy drops of water accompanied the downward dogs and incredibly demanding stretches. Suitably limbered-up, once the others had arrived we began our sessions at big round tables in the tent ...

The tone of the retreat was completely informal, with a mix of discussion, facilitated sessions and writing exercises. Daisy was incredibly generous in sharing her experience, and we covered a wide range of topics, ranging from the "the first line" to "the last line" and everything in between. There were sessions on: PR, Social Media, different publishing models and how to work with Amazon.

On day two, in the afternoon, we met Hayley and Steve November, who took us through the TV Pitch process with the option to get 1:1 feedback on our pitches, either away from the group or as a full pitch in the marquee.

Despite near typhoon conditions on the first day, the weather was kind when it needed to be, and we managed a few walks around Daisy's farm and even some social media shots on the carefully-placed bench by the hayfield.

We were a small group of only seven for most of the weekend, with another few authors joining on day two.

Everyone was incredibly passionate about their writing and encouraging to others as we read out our snippets. Some were very experienced authors and others had never written at all. There was a nice mix of published and unpublished writers.

I'm happy to say, I was so inspired that for my "last line" exercise, I took on the final scene of my trilogy – long planned, but not yet attempted. Whether it was the company, the preparation or the setting, I was delighted with the result, penned in the corner of the large field where the marquee had been pitched. When I read it out, it had an unexpected emotional impact, which I took as a good sign. I think those 200 words or so may even make it through to the final edit.

Wanting to be totally immersed, I spent the weekend at the Crown Inn, nearby in Dial Post, which was very comfortable and had been recently refurbished. Dinner and breakfast were very good indeed. I woke early to a lovely clear morning to practice my pitch and opened the curtains to a traditional village green. When I looked again half an hour later, there was a terrifying scarecrow standing in the bus shelter opposite my room. I had to look twice and doubted my eyes at first. It was the Shipley scarecrow festival that weekend.

I really enjoyed the retreat, and it went by in a flash. I learnt some really useful things that I don't think I could have discovered on my own and I made what I am sure are some lifelong friends. Overall, I had an unforgettable experience that I would highly recommend to anyone.

Jonathan Dancer