



***Carindale Writers' Group Meeting
12th February 2009***

Welcome to: Josie. Some of us already know Josie, having met during the 'Redlitzer' writing program. A big welcome to CWG, Josie, we hope you find your niche in our midst.

Present: Dawn, Jeff, Brian, Chip, Beverley, Leslee Ann, Heather, Marilyn, Gary, Eileen, Judy R, Debby, Josie, Wendy, Sandy, Melinda.

News/ challenges/ discussions/correspondence:

- It was agreed to subscribe to Australian Writers Marketplace Online for a one year trial. The subscription, this first year, will come from our collected funds.
- We agreed to drop the financial report from our newsletter.
- We agreed that only first names should be used in this newsletter.
- Beverley advised that a new (updated) list of email addresses would be forwarded to members within the next few days.
- As from this meeting, the Queensland Writers Centre magazine, this newsletter and any other information will be limited to contributing members only. This will also apply to AWM online.
- It was decided we wouldn't limit membership at this time.
- 2009 Project. Permission was given to Dawn to consult with Desley about creating an E-Book Anthology using the stories already collected and edited for the SOSE project. The e-book will only be available for members' to purchase on order. It will not be available for general distribution.

Feature Readers:

Brian kicked off at 9:30 on the dot and most of us were in our seats on time, waiting for him to take his place at the podium. Aptly, the title of his short story was "A Race against Time" – although, seriously, it had nothing to do with our new schedule.

From the opening paragraph, Brian had us hooked into the story, keeping us rapt until the closing pages and then hitting us hard with a shock ending. As we know from his past readings, Brian never uses metaphors for window dressing. In this story a Timex watch worn by the main character, signalling the passage of time and life changes, was put to good use for his transitions.

The critique was more about praise for the technical story telling skill, than about any suggestions for change. There was, however, a short discussion about clichés and whether the watch might have stopped when the main character died, with some for and against this. It's hard to know if a story will be spoiled because the event or dialogue has

been relegated to the cliché bin. As one member said, pretty much everything has become clichéd now. Another member made the point that the safest place to use clichés is in dialogue – but only to show character traits.

The second reader was **Chip**, with a story about a very different life journey. “The Pay Off” was a psychological study in how, from childhood, a sociopath justifies their actions.

The opening of Chip’s story showed a young boy dissecting a doll, removing the eyes with detached aptitude which, for me at least, was more chilling than many murder scenes I’ve read.

We all agreed that Chip had created a twisted, yet totally believable character able to lie and cheat his way to a top secret job. The only suggestion for revision was cutting back on the information about how computer hackers go about the business – which of course comes from knowing the subject too well or overdoing the research and then wanting to include it all. It’s obviously tricky to know when the pace of the story is being affected because of this, but the opposite can also apply to our writing. This is when you don’t do enough research and try to fudge your way through...

Wendy responded to the heartache of the Victorian bushfire tragedy by penning a tribute poem, which she shared with us in its first draft. Wendy’s poetry touched the hearts of us all, putting into words what goes beyond words. Thank you for that, Wendy.

Homework: *Working towards completing a short story of open genre to submit to competitions, writers are asked to bring their opening paragraphs, having made sure it has a good hook, has introduced the characters and the setting and is foreshadowing the plot.*

There was a strong response to the set homework with at least nine members bringing their opening paragraphs to share – including our latest recruit, Josie, who admitted to having a small case of stage fright. It’s not easy to read your work aloud for the first time but Josie need not have worried. The opening sentences had been well crafted to lead us into her epic, historical romance, “The Heart of the Beast”.

In fact, all the readers had great opening hooks. And catchy titles too. Any comments were based on sentence arrangement, rather than content. Using a computer makes it easy to juggle sentences, and I’m positive a few of you went home to do just that after receiving the feedback.

Next meeting Homework: Write a few lines describing the conflict in your story. This will be useful for you to use to keep your storyline focused and will come in handy later when you write your synopsis and pitch for it. If you have already written a paragraph for your story that illustrates the conflict you may bring that for feedback as well.

Feature Reader for next meeting (26th February)

1. Judith R will read her revised ‘Iggy’ story.
2. Second reader spot still open

Next Meeting: 26th February. Until then, be happy and enjoy your writing.

Beverley.