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Alex Cooper, Lisa Walsh &
Jordann Chetwynd

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Editors

Jordann Chetwynd

This week Jordann has been working on her novel and fighting the temptation to edit.

Alex Cooper

This month, Alex has been working on her numerous university assignments while trying to keep up with story writing, learning that the perfect balance is hard to find, and possibly doesn't even exist.

Lisa Walsh

This month, Lisa has been hating technology and very slowly working on her book.

Reviews

The Grinch Who Stole Christmas by Jordann Chetwynd

The Grinch is timeless, definitely one of the all-time greats. It includes the whole good trumps evil thing, and even in time to save Christmas, which is always a plus. I think I enjoy this story in particular because it shows the value of being a nice person, and what you can get from Christmas. I don't think that there will be a time that I will be too old to understand the message behind the Grinch, because unlike other films that include Santa, the outcome isn't just more presents or getting what you wanted, it's getting a family and understanding that you're worth more.

It is told in a funny way though; in fact this is the only role that I actually enjoy Jim Carrey's acting style. I suppose it's one of those films that refrains from shoving the moral down your throat and that is a satisfying change. Dr Seuss' books and consequently films will always remain some of my favourite of all time.

Unwholly by Lisa Walsh

Neal Shusterman's *Unwind* is a jewel among young-adult fiction. When I first read *Unwind* I was strung on Shusterman's writing ability. I loved that book more than any other and would recommend it to anyone who ever doubted that young-adult books weren't worth the read. I did not think *Unwind* need a sequel; I thought the book that good, so well rounded, that the idea of a sequel never crossed my mind. So when I discovered that, not only was it getting a sequel – *Unwholly* – but was also being made into a trilogy... well, I was ecstatic.

Unwholly follows the continued story of Connor, Lev and Risa and their lives after their revolt at Happy Jack Harvest Camp - a camp for children who are to be Unwound. In case you have never read the first book, to be 'unwound' means to have your body harvested of their parts after your parents either no longer want you or you become too 'juvenile' for people to handle. They 'help' rid society of troublesome teens while also providing much-needed organs for transplant, but in this sequel the morality of Unwinding has finally been brought into question and war is being waged. The book explains it much better. The sequel also follows the story of three new characters - Starkey, Cam and Miracolina - in order to add more spice to the mix.

Is *Unwholly* a worthy successor to *Unwind*? That's debatable. On the one hand, the book itself isn't as exciting as I remembered the first, but as a continuation of the story it is perfect and I can almost taste the excitement for the final book and I very much look forward to reading the final instalment - *UnSouled*

Poetry Page

By Alex Cooper

A picture is worth a thousand words, so use them. Writing poetry can be an awful lot easier with something to look at. Specifically, I'm talking about writing about pictures. Art, in other words. That way, you already have a base and starting point to work on. All you need to do is find something that makes you stop, think, and find words to both describe and not describe it at the same time. Think about the impression the image gives you. Positive or negative? Happy or sad? Calm or stormy? Use something a little abstract as well as the basics of what you can see.

No idea what I'm talking about? No worries, here's a quick example that I hope will help illustrate my point.

The Scream by Edvard Munch 1893

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/f/f4/The_Scream.jpg

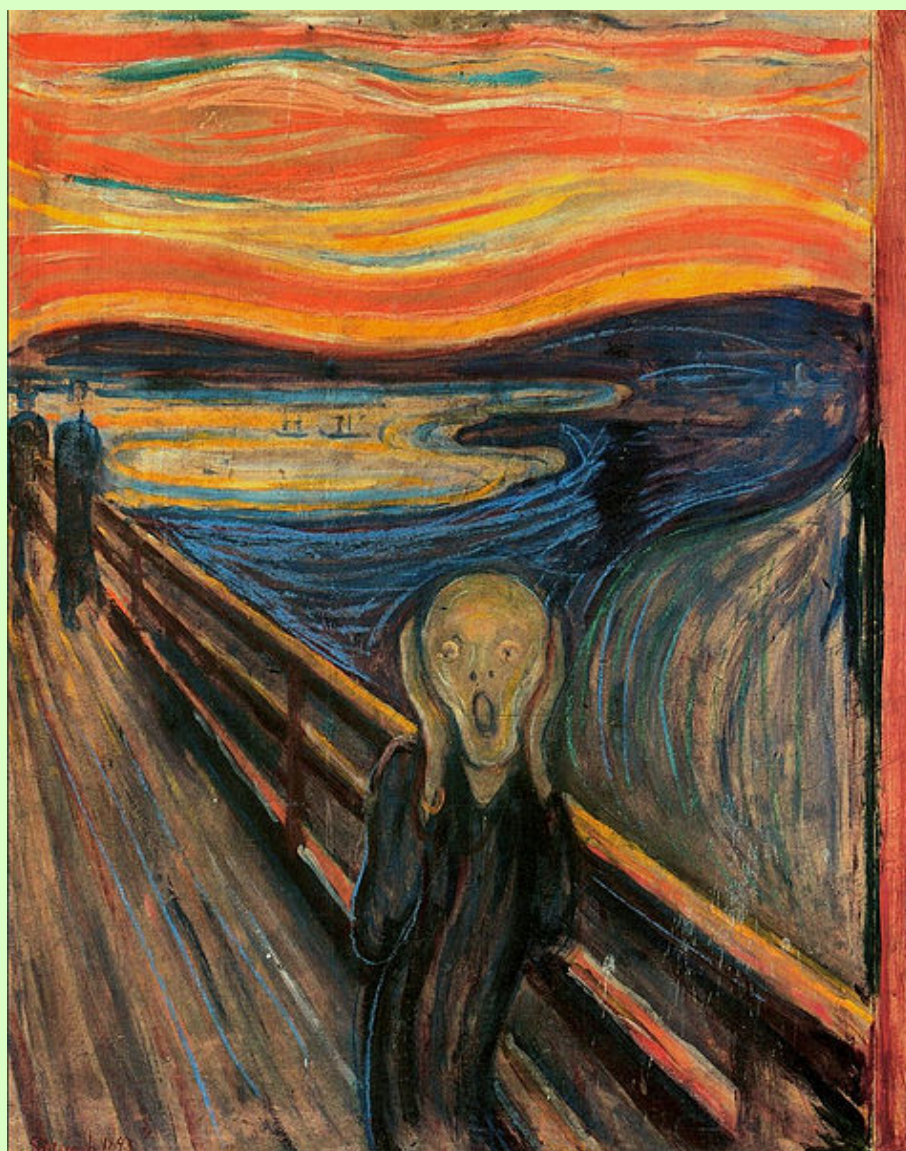
The Scream

Ignorance,
Feigned or not,
And running red
Of the shivering spine,
The lights pulled
Right down low
And try not to look,
The water shines,
They're mad.
A boat goes by,
They're dangerous,
Eyes away,
don't let them touch,
Take a step,
But listen close

And don't let them see.
If you do,
You'll hear
The scream.

Sometimes a little background information or thought into a painting can give a some inspiration, or just looking away from where you're meant to. This poem was suppose to be from the point of view of the other figures in the painting, rather than the screamer (or, as some people think, the one hearing the scream) as well as the theory the painting is set near a lunatic asylum. But, you don't need to know anything about an image to make something jump out at you. Sometimes it could just be the colours, a mad thought that pops into you head when you look at it. It doesn't even need to be a painting. It could be a sculpture or whatever passes for modern art these day.

Remember, keep your eyes and mind open. Be prepared, a poem could pounce on you at any moment.



The Changing Face of Christmas

By Jordann Chetwynd

With this being a Christmas issue, I thought I would discuss the world Christmas entertainment and how it's changed in the space of me growing up.

I remember the time where only the traditional films would be on at Christmas, you know the feel good ones, like 'Oh, It's a Wonderful Life', some dreary adaptation of the 'Christmas Carol', but nowadays with TV shows really making a comeback, you are definitely not sure of entertainment value. Almost every TV show has a Christmas special, whether it's the soaps which are usually filmed live and kill most of the main characters off, or one of my favourites, Doctor Who where he is battling some sort of creature (although these have been disappointing the last couple of years), or the classic ones like Downton Abbey.

Although this seems to make Christmas all the more better, what is one of the most annoying things about it, would have to be the X Factor and their incessant plugging of a ridiculous artist who we'll never hear from again (bar a couple), it's not that these people are not talented, because I sure as hell couldn't do it, but it's what they are changed into. They go in as normal people and come out marketing machines; I'm pretty sure that when the boys from 1D auditioned they didn't look quite as perfect as they do now. I love music, don't get me wrong, couldn't live without it. But something really bugs me about the X Factor type of music; I guess it's so commercial it hurts. I just wish they would give up the losing battle, and cancel the show already.

Movies, well when I was a kid, all I can remember things like 'The Nightmare Before Christmas' was always my favourite, and 'Muppets Christmas Carol' but when you look at the older films, these seem exceptionally bright in comparison. I suppose with things like Nightmare, you have to question how much of it is actually for children, I mean now that I'm older the characters aren't scary, but what about when I was younger, surely they would have freaked the hell out of me. I guess the whole film makes the monsters more relatable, but should this be a point to make at Christmas? I enjoy all of these films, but sometimes it's nice to settle down, with something that is totally Christmassy like 'It's A Wonderful Life'.

What Next?

By Alex Cooper

Agents

Agents are a tricky subject, especially with new writers. I remember wondering about what they did and if I needed one. The answer appears to be yes. It is pretty tricky to get work published, novels specifically, without one. Most publishers, from the big to the small, will not take unsolicited manuscripts. Basically, they won't even look at book manuscripts without it coming from an agent first. (This is mainly due to copyright issues)

So, what do agents do? Well, they do all the searching through publishers and editors so you don't have to. They have the inside knowledge of the publishing business and who to approach to give your book the best chance. And there are millions out there. More agents than publishers.

But, it's not all rosy. Agents do require some form of payment. Nothing much, to be honest. No blood sacrifices or first born sons, just a cut of the profits. And there are also those who see agents as just another hoop to jump through, another rejection in waiting. Which I suppose might happen.

Don't get disheartened, though, my fellow writers. Those who try will prevail and with an agent, they will do better. Search the websites, read the information available and see for yourself.

Q and A

by Alex Cooper and Lisa Walsh

What is self publishing?

Pretty much what it says on the tin. Authors can publish their own work by themselves, using available companies to get the work out there. The only problem with this is that you have to be committed, in a different way than when trying to get it accepted by the regular publishers. You have to front the money, keep it funded, and market the whole thing yourself. It can be a lonely business.

Make sure you know what you're doing before you get into this.

What is vanity publishing?

Not advisable. This is a little like self publishing only companies advertise for your manuscripts, which no reputable publisher should ever have to do. And, you still have to pay. I'd advice you to do anything but this.

What is e-publishing?

Pretty much internet publishing. Your work would be on kindle, the internet and other such sources. This can be done through companies which you submit to, like the traditional publishers, or you can self publish in this way. I suggest, if you're a first time writer and you want to self publish, go this way. It's cheaper and easier and a great way to get noticed.

What is print on demand?

This is where your book is printed as it's needed, and is either done by you, if you're self publishing, or by a smaller publisher when orders come in.

Top Five

by Alex Cooper and Lisa Walsh

Most heroes have someone who helps them out when they're in trouble, gives them a quest, or whatever information or clue they'll need later on in their stories, which will seem like nonsense at the time. Sure, not all of them have someone like this, but some of the best ones have. And they're usually completely mad. But, here are some of the best of those mentors that I've ever come across.

1. Albus Dumbledore from Harry Potter- Of everyone I asked, he is the first one that anyone thinks of, so has to be number one. Not only does he tell Harry everything he needs (almost and eventually) but he's there for him when Harry needs someone to talk to. Even after he's gone, too. Not many can claim that.

2. Aslan from Narnia- One of my personal favourites. I love how Aslan gives his heroes lessons and that they usually learn from them, as well as not appearing when they ask, only when he is needed. In both the films and the books, he is brilliant, all knowing and not someone to mess with. Oh, and ageless, did I mention that?

3. Gandalf from The Lord of the Rings- Gandalf is one of my favourite characters in these books. He's humorous and helpful, except for the short while he happens to be dead, but he does come back. He may have sent his little Hobbit friends into the fires of hell, but he gets them out again.

4. Chiron from the Percy Jackson series- from a troubled background, he rises up to teach heroes throughout time to deal with the countless threats humanity always comes across. And he feels horror for every one of them. Probably the most pity and hatred filled one on this list, loving teaching these people to survive, hating that they might have to fight and may not come back. Completely human, half horse.

5. Yoda from Star Wars- Well, he had to be on the list, didn't he? This ancient master of the force trains his heroes in, albeit, unorthodox ways, but train them he does.

Keep an eye on these guys, they're the most dangerous people in their stories, and, if pushed, they will fight.

Submissions

Snow Drops by Zoë Arthur

Snow,
Whispering kisses
And gentle
Touch
In night
And swirls
Of white
And colour
And ice
Of course.

Light by Eddie Robinson

I can hear the light
Drawing closer
And it's sparkle
Speaking
Laughing
Soft and
Sweet,
Children's wonder
Growing with
Glow
Of Christmas
Light.

This week in Waterstones...

By Alex Cooper

So, last time in Issue two I gave you a basic run down of what was in the largest concentration in my local Waterstones and what seems to be 'hot' in the world of publishing right now. If you missed it, basically Fifty Shades of Grey type books dominated the fiction shelves, Hunger Games type books the teen and Diary of a Wimpy Kid ruled the children's books. This time, not much is different.

I wandered around the shelves, my trusty notebook in hand, seeing that the fiction section was still a dangerous place to wander in alone (thankfully in my favourite and much larger Waterstones, the scary books have their own separate section) and dystopian novels were in charge of the teenage shelves. One thing that seemed a little different from last time happened to be an explosion in the number of autobiographies, like they'd been breeding behind the scenes. Pictures of well known (and unknown) 'celebrities' peered down on me from ever corner, which was, frankly, a little unnerving. But, apparently, there is a reason for this increase. And it's a marketing one.

We all know that books generally come out in hardback first, right? Well, with these autobiographies, there is a certain amount of time a bookseller can wait before the cheaper paperback versions have to come out. So, what they do, is find that point before Christmas, so the paperbacks won't be available for purchase until after the holidays are over. Sneaky, or what?

Anyway, this week in Waterstones, I learnt that booksellers are crafty, but they know how to make money. Guess that's good news for us writers...

Ask an Expert

By Alex Cooper

This week we spoke to a Chief Superintendent Steve* about his job and the common questions that most people ask and need answers for.

What is the official procedure during a hostage situation?

Steve: The type of hostage situation can effect how we react. Not every one is a bank robbery gone wrong or a crazy person wandering in somewhere with a gun. Sometimes, it can be a domestic issue where someone is kept in a house against their will or a kidnapping. And each is dealt with a little differently, but, overall, the same kind of procedure is observed. Mainly, we gather intelligence on the situation, set up surveillance, find the whereabouts of the hostage and how best to get them out. Hostage safety is usually the first concern. We tend to bring in people who specialise in these situations, such as negotiators and specialist teams, who will decided exactly what needs to be done. But information is key.

How often do the police use consultants?

Steve: Not usually in the way everyone thinks we do. Consultants is actually a very wide term used for anyone the police work with. Forensics people can be deemed to be consultants, as well as the less used criminal profilers, psychiatrists and psychologists, doctors, anyone with a specialist knowledge that will assist any way with our investigations. Interpreters happen to be the most common form of consultant we use here. However, as far as I am aware, the police department has never used individuals claiming to be psychic, nor are there Sherlock Holmes type people on the payroll. Though, if we do find an unusual case, or murder, people of this sort can be of assistance. Despite this, it is rare to come across an usual murder. Usually, the killer is someone the victim knew, and even in stranger killings, DNA evidence usually finds the culprit.

Do the police follow the rules all the time?

Steve: Short answer: yes. The police are very much in the public eye now that people walk around with video capable phones and all of us are vary aware that our actions are under constant supervision. Not only that, it has happened that when a detective or officer does break the rules, cases have been thrown out and the culprits walked free as a result. This is not something we want to happen so take great care to follow the rules. No officer wants to be held accountable for that.

Do the police often work with other groups of law-enforcement officials?

Steve: We often do training exercises with member of special forces agencies and work with them on specialist tasks. Customs is most often worked with because of drug issues that are on the increase, as well as government bodies with larger cases and for accessing information or when VIPs are in need of protection. Most police departments liaise with these agencies and have contacts within them, and work together when they are required.

Is there anything that you feel is handled badly in fiction to do with the police?

Steve: Sometimes writers can get the process wrong. The incidence occurring may be common enough for any police force to deal with, but the way the characters handle it could be incorrect due to out of date information or research. One writer, formally of the Scottish police force, I found dealt with the process with increasing difficulty with each book as things within the service changed. Saying this, however, most things the police deal with day to day isn't entirely worth writing about and the most common sorts of crime stories deal with things we don't usually come across. Though, writers do tend to do the character of the police officer well, as the work is as harrowing as it is in books and I can imagine many of them working in the service with ease.

Steve also informed us that many enquires of this type can be researched under the freedom of information act.

*Names have been changed for privacy reasons

Have you noticed?

Twilight Saga

By Jordann Chetwynd

1. In Twilight, when Edward is telling Carlisle's history to Bella, he says that Carlisle "actually found a coven of true vampires that lived hidden in the sewers of the city. The vampires couldn't have been hidden inside the sewers because there weren't any. The sewage system was only built around 1859, and Carlisle found the vampires around 1660-1670.
2. Twilight, manages to mix up 'moats' and 'motes' on page 142, 'I ate breakfast cheerily, watching the dust moats' unless large rings of water are floating in the air, this is wrong!
3. 'At home only two years of P.E were required. Here, P.E was mandatory for all four years.' Actually all Washington schools require you to have 3 P.E credits and 1 Health. That means one full year and a quarter of P.E and a quarter of Health, meaning that it was only a year and a half for both.
4. New Moon misses out really important letter, damn the spellchecker, page 339, "'The seemed pretty nice to me" I shrugged'. Hmm pretty sure that's supposed to be 'they'.
5. New Moon mentions a character from Romeo and Juliet twice but the spelling changes. I mean you don't mess up the world's most famous love story like that, page 17 it's spelt Rosaline and on page 370 it's spelt Rosalind.
6. Meyer, mixes up reign in and rein in on page 135 'I needed to reign in my enthusiasm', bad Meyer!
7. In Eclipse, Meyer mixes up her 'who's' and her 'whose', on page 619, 'Who's definition is right?' Silly, editor.
8. Eclipse uses the phrase "I needed come to grips." I think Meyer needs to read her work more than once!
9. In Breaking Dawn, on page 39, it said that when Charlie got up Bella made him pancakes. Later, it says that Charlie scowled into his cereal bowl.
10. Also in Breaking Dawn, just before the end of Chapter 38, Caius looks to Bella and asks her if her daughter is venomous. Right after she responds with a "no" it says that, "Nahuel's head snapped up at Aro's question." Aro was not the one asking the question, it was actually Caius.

Writing tips - Human Characters

By Alex Cooper

Remember they're human...unless they're not. Your characters are most likely going to be normal human people. At most, people with a little bit extra something or other. They have their limitations, like any person. And not just physical. They have their mental limits too.

What you need to remember:

Characters will break either mentally or physically eventually. There are only so many times they can get hurt, be attacked by people or monsters or lose someone important. Their mind will snap. Their willpower will fail. They will collapse from exhaustion. Don't push them too far. Even if they are heroes. Unless they need the push.

They are alive. And, being alive, they follow the rules of all living things. Most important of these happen to be the need to eat, sleep and use the restroom every now and again. Your characters cannot survive with no food or sleep. They will either die from starvation, resort to desperate measures, and sleep whether they want to or not. Not to mention the bathroom situation. Sure, you don't have to explicitly tell your reader any of these antics, but remember your character will need to visit eventually.

They aren't perfect. Nobody is. And, to be honest, no one likes a perfect character. Any time we come across one, we half expect them to break at any moment, as it's clear that perfection is only a mask people choose to wear. And, seriously, who doesn't love a character who rises from a troubled background?

Humans are complex beings. Think of all the conflicting thoughts and feeling you have throughout an average day. Your character has these too. Again, these don't always need to be shown, just remember that your character may go off into their own world sometimes.

Something makes them tick. They are always after something. No one does anything without a reason, selfish or not. They only do things they feel they want to or have to.

Think of your characters as you would yourself. Whatever goes on with you, will go on with them. They are human, after all.

Puzzles and Student tips

By Alex Cooper & Jordann Chetwynd

1. One night, an avid reader was quietly reading her most recent book in the living room when the power went out. She kept on reading as before. Assuming there was no natural light anywhere in the room, how is this possible?
2. Can you rearrange the letters of the words CANE TEENS into a sentence? (I do not mean this as a suggestions, by the way)
3. What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letters to it?

Student tip - House Hunting

So this is from my personal hellish experience last year, and my personal advice would be, and I don't know how other universities do it, but here at Edge Hill they have a list that they endorse. My advice would be, WAIT for this to come out and make sure you are straight on the phone ringing people up. When you start to view houses ask yourself;

- Is the house warm?
- Could I see myself living here?
- Can I manage the rent?
- Is the rent worth what I can see?
- What is included?

Ask the landlord;

- Has the house had all of its safety inspections?
- Has there been any problems with damp?
- How would we get in contact with you?
- How much are bills on average a week?
- Is the house insulated?

But remember you can ask him, doesn't mean that he will tell you the truth. Be careful of extra costs, such as summer retainers and administration fees.