



Mythulu

WRITING BINGE SURVIVAL PACK 2019



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From the Editor

Writing 2,000 words a day isn't hard. Doing it sustainably is the hard part.

Becoming a professional writer ultimately means doing NaNoWriMo over and over and over and over forever. It takes 30 days to build a habit, so NaNoWriMo is the perfect, socially supported opportunity to not just finish one novel, but become a novelist.

On December 1st, you're only going to want to keep going if you've been taking care of yourself.

Sustainable creation is the theme of this survival pack. Ten authors—world-renowned, award winning, jaw-droppingly consistent creators are sharing the tactics that keep them in the chair and loving it, month after month, year after year.

Laura Crenshaw
Editor

STARTING STRONG



BRIBE YO'SELF

Motivation methods from a 11-year NaNo'er

OCTOBER SANTERELLI

The best way I've found to face the treacherous waters of NaNoWriMo is to make my entire day a series of bribes.

That's right. If no one else will do it, I will pay myself to write.

I start my day with writing, and I start my writing with a light cup of tea and a finger snack. After that, what do I use?

MEDIUM BRIBES

At the halfway point



WALK, RIDE, OR GYM

When you've struggled to get halfway, this is a great way to re-center.



SHOWER

When writing drags, take a break and come back all refreshed.



TV EPISODE

If it's too hard to detach after one episode, try reading instead.



NAP

Give your brain a break. 40-minutes is my preferred length.

SMALL BRIBES

Every 200-500 words



MUSIC BREAK

Pull up your favorite jams. Dance if you feel like it!



CANDY

Hard candies are my favorite.



WEB BROWSING BREAK

Set a 5-minute timer. Messaging friends helps the day go faster.

BIG BRIBES

For hitting your daily or weekly word count



TRIP TO THE STORE

Do you love new notebooks? Adore fresh pens?



WRITE-IN

Hang out with other writers. It seriously helps! Plus, it helps you get ahead.



FROZEN YOGURT

Go to a shop, sit with a notebook, and plan the next day.

CHOOSE YOUR BRIBES

Fill out this chart with bribes you're psyched about. For major bribes, consider major pampering, in-town adventures, or buying yourself a present.

TYPES OF BRIBES	 SMALL	 MEDIUM	 DAILY	MAJOR BRIBES
	Every 200-500 words	800 - 1,000 words	Daily word count complete	
Self Care				12,500 WORDS
Movement				
Pleasant Taste				
Pleasant Touch				25,000 WORDS
Mental Break				
Get out of the house				
Enjoy a Story				37,500 WORDS
Social Connection				
Play				
				50,000 WORDS



FRACTAL PLOTTING

An improv-compatible method for perfect pacing
and preventing scope creep.

LAURA CRENSHAW

I love discovery writing—aka "pantsing". Charging into a blank page and giving your characters full control often yields vibrant, authentic interactions. Characters aren't being coerced into your agenda because you have no agenda. I believe discovery writing is an essential skill.

But you know what sucks? Rewriting. It's slow and demoralizing to cut scenes you never needed. And the worst feeling of all is writing a fabulous 190K novel you can't sell.

I pantsed my first NaNoWriMo, "won", and then spent 14 years trying to edit that story down into a sellable debut. News flash: You can't be a pro writer at that speed.

To save my career, I discovered Two-Peak Plot and invented Fractal Plotting. These two methods together create juuuuuuuust enough structure to:

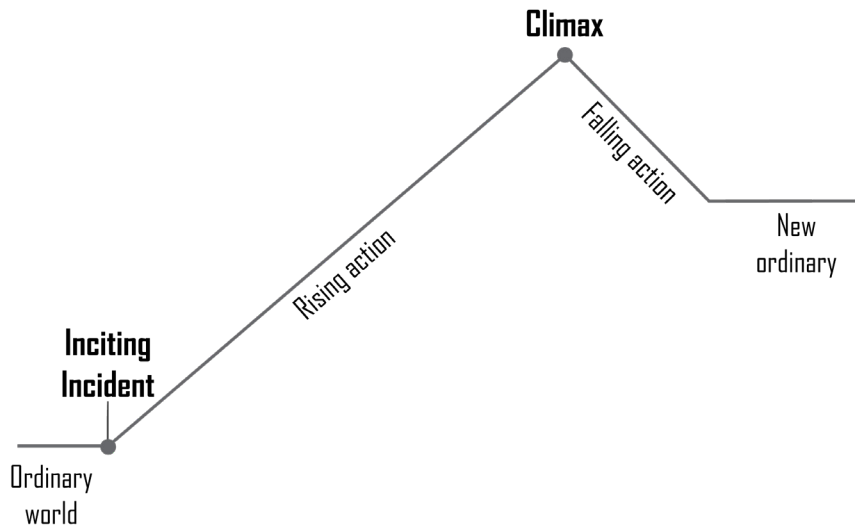
- Never write chapters you don't need.
- Pace perfectly—especially in the middle.
- Nail the target word count, every time.

OLD PLOT METHOD

This is a traditional plot map, in case you've never seen one. It was invented 150 years ago and hasn't changed much since.

It's great for introducing 3rd graders to creative writing, but it has two weaknesses:

- It's painfully predictable
- Authors get lost in that "rising action" middle.



Ordinary World -

Introductory phase, where you establish what is "normal" in your world and in your character's life.

Inciting Incident -

Change that forces the protagonist into action. Makes it impossible to return to the life they had.

Climax -

Confrontation of the story's big bad problem. Your main character makes their last big choice.

New Ordinary -

New daily norms are established. Series and character arcs resolve. The world comes to rest.

TWO-PEAK PLOT

Two-Peak plots define that middle and build a "surprise" twist into every story.

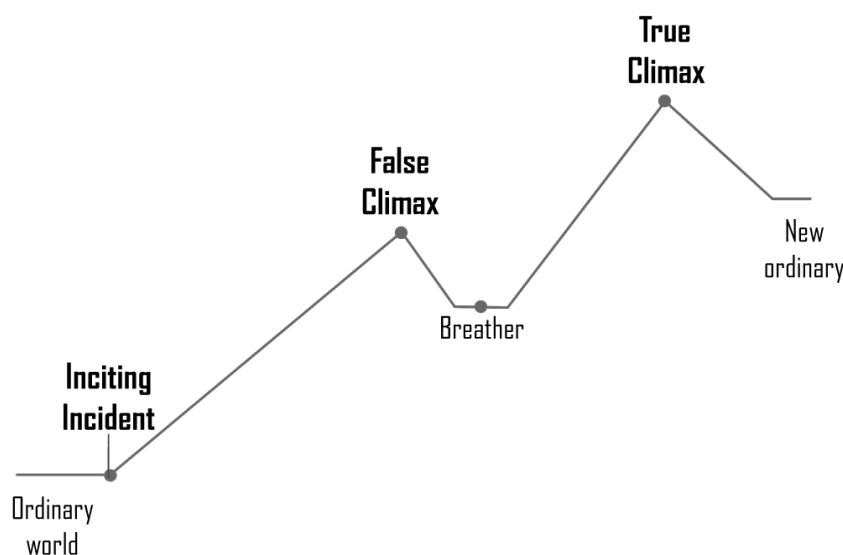
Readers can see your traditional climax coming a mile away. So instead of saving it for the end, we sprint breakneck style toward

their expectations, hitting them halfway into the story. That's your false climax.

The false climax exposes a bigger, nastier problem that jeopardizes your hero's willingness to continue. In response, the hero takes a breather.

Breathers let your hero be a coward for a minute, which humanizes them.

Two-Peak Plot Chart, created by Laura Greshaw



False Climax -

The victory or conflict your readers can see coming. Exposes a bigger problem.

Breather -

Hero gets a chance to walk away and seriously considers it. Ends when they recommit.

FRACTAL PLOTTING

This is where things get AWESOME.

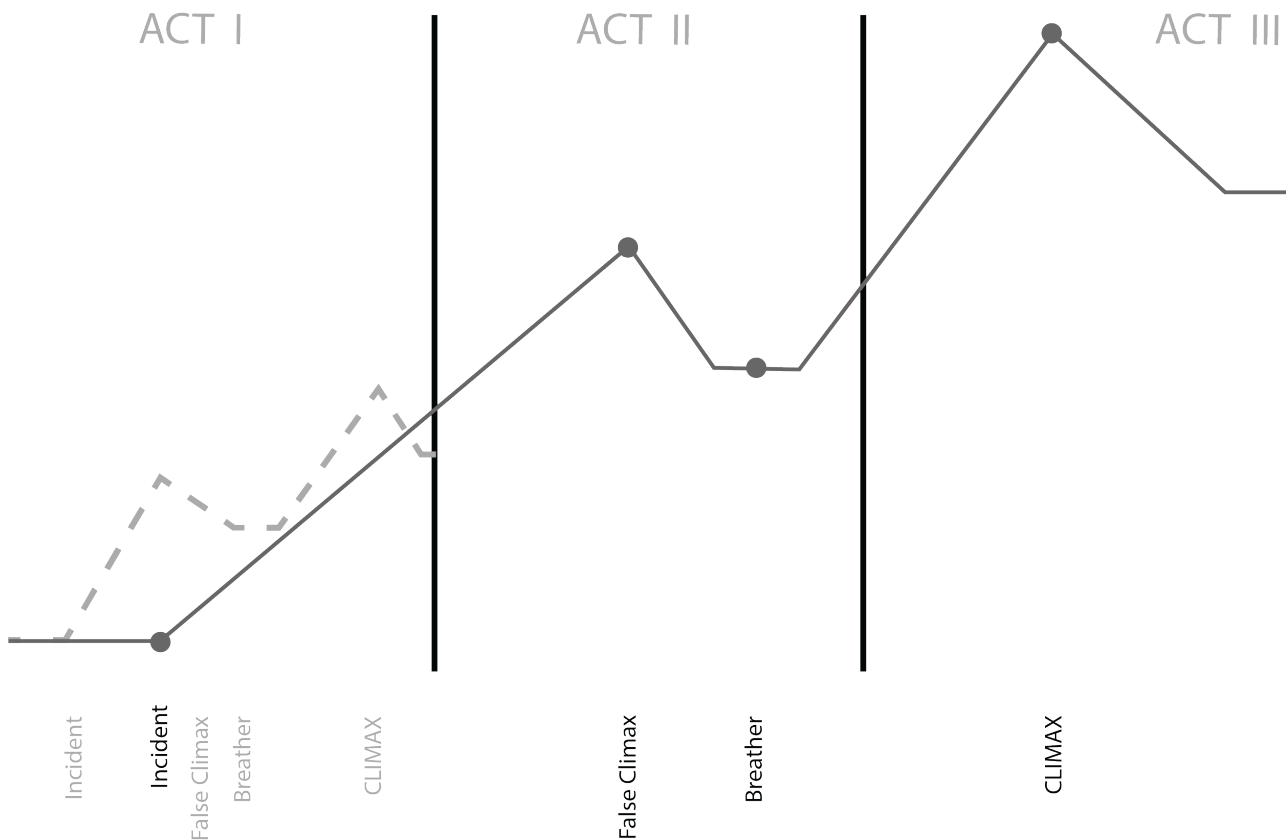
Plot charts don't just apply to the story as a whole. They ALSO apply to every Act.

...and every chapter. And every character. And your series as a whole.

When you apply the two-peak plot chart to Act I, in addition to the whole story, you get this:

Now Act I has TWO inciting events. Incident 1 occurs early and often looks innocent, but gets things rolling. It leads to Incident 2, which is a BIG event—like the farm burning down—and makes it impossible for the protagonist to keep living their old life.

Notice how Incident 2 (the main plot's inciting event) lines up with Act I's False Climax. This is the same event dual-purposed.

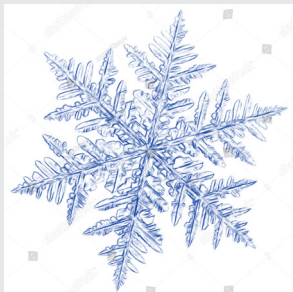


Three-Act story with Two-Peak plot overlaid—Once for the entire story, and again for Act One.

WHAT'S A FRACTAL?

A Fractal is a curve or geometric figure, where each part has the same statistical shape as the whole.

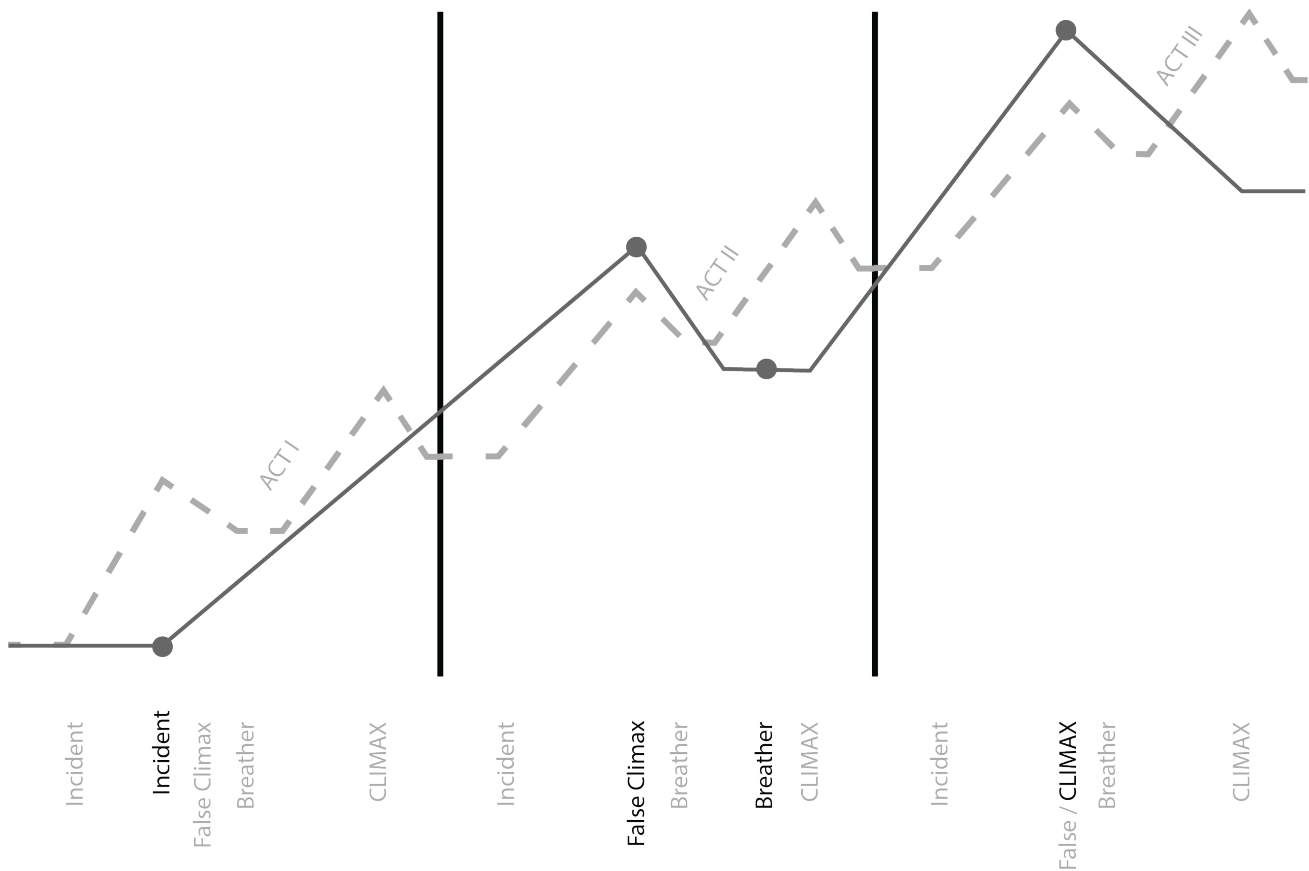
Fractals are useful for modeling structures where similar patterns recur at progressively smaller scales.



The hero has their first panic attack soon after. This is your breather. They develop their first strengths as a result, which leads straight into the True Climax of Act I.

Act I concludes with the protagonist falling into the New Ordinary of their new role... which becomes the starting point of Act II.

Repeat this fractal pattern for the other Acts.



Three-Act story with Two-Peak plot overlaid in a fractal pattern, once for the whole story, and again for each Act.

When repeated in this way, the dotted line reveals something interesting. True Climaxes for each act often occur during main story Breathers.

Why? Well, because the BIG plot line tracks major tangible events—explosions, battles, logistical stuff. Act-level plot follows character growth. Major character growth typically occurs during breathers, not when they kill a villain.

This also explains why the main plot's True

Climax is only the False Climax of the final act. When your hero gets the thing they've been chasing, is it really what they need? Not usually.

Staggering plot and character progression addresses the final problem common to most stories: A soulless epilogue.

If you save the final character climax like this, it hits when the character hits overall New Ordinary—making your story resolve on a super satisfying emotional sucker punch.

PACING EVERYTHING

Finally, it's time to budget the number of chapters for your story.

Grab a pen and paper, and answer the questions on the right.

1) YOUR AVERAGE CHAPTER LENGTH: _____

2) YOUR BOOK TARGET WORD COUNT: _____

3) DIVIDE #2 BY #1 = _____

This is the correct # of chapters for your book

4) DIVIDE #3 IN THIRDS = _____

This is the correct # of chapters for each Act.

For example, here are the numbers for my next book.

I know NaNoWriMo is a 50K goal, but I want a 75K book in the end, so I'm budgeting based on final length—because I KNOW the chapters I write are correctly paced. This project will take 6 weeks to complete.

1) YOUR AVERAGE CHAPTER LENGTH: 2,500

2) YOUR BOOK TARGET WORD COUNT: 75,000

3) DIVIDE #2 BY #1 = 30

This is the correct # of chapters for your book

4) DIVIDE #3 IN THIRDS = 10

This is the correct # of chapters for each Act.

Apply this numbers to the fractal plot chart and then draw lines. This will show you which events belong in each chapter.

Now you're ready to discovery write. In chapter 1, just set up your ordinary world. Contrary to popular advice, you can save your minor inciting incident for the second chapter—but NO LATER.

Your main plot's inciting incident needs to happen in Chapter 4. Now you know.

You probably have ideas already. Now instead of barfing possible events in a notebook and organizing them later, you can put them straight into the chapter where they belong.

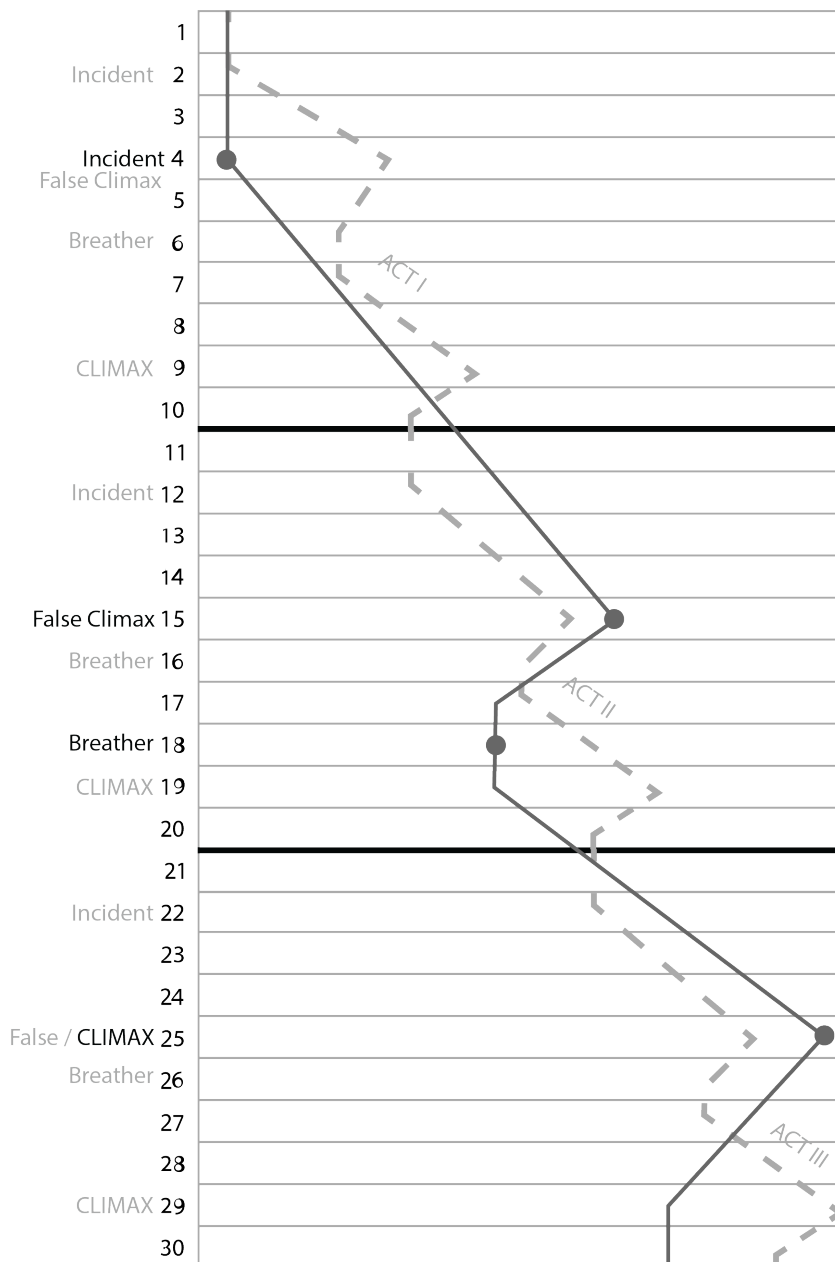
When I'm plotting, I draw straight on these charts.

If you want to pants like a maniac, you don't even have to fill out the chart. Just knowing what SHOULD happen in each chapter will be enough to keep you on track.

I've included blank, full-page versions of these charts on the next two pages. Feel free to print and draw on them.

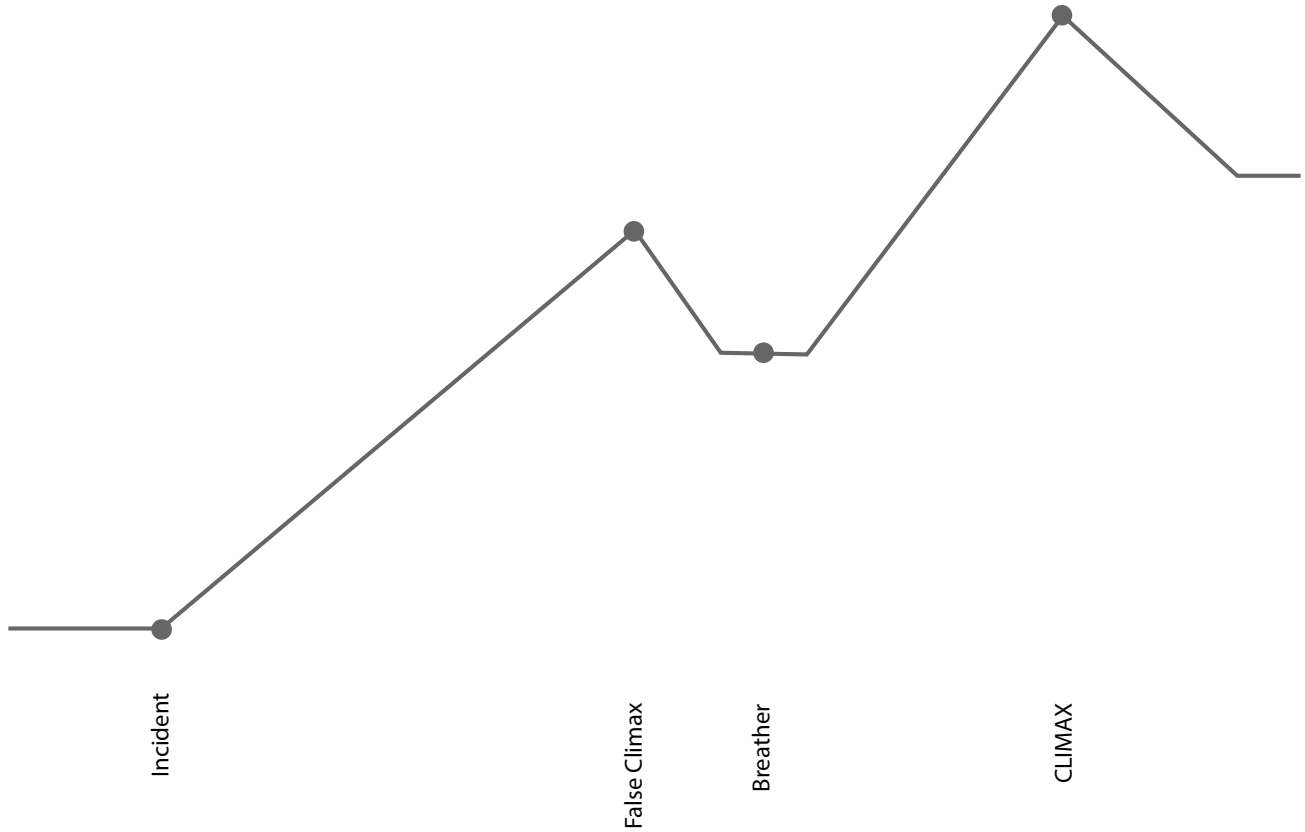
Best of luck with your project!

- LAURA CRENSHAW



TWO-PEAK PLOT CHART

by Laura Crenshaw
Printing and sharing encouraged.

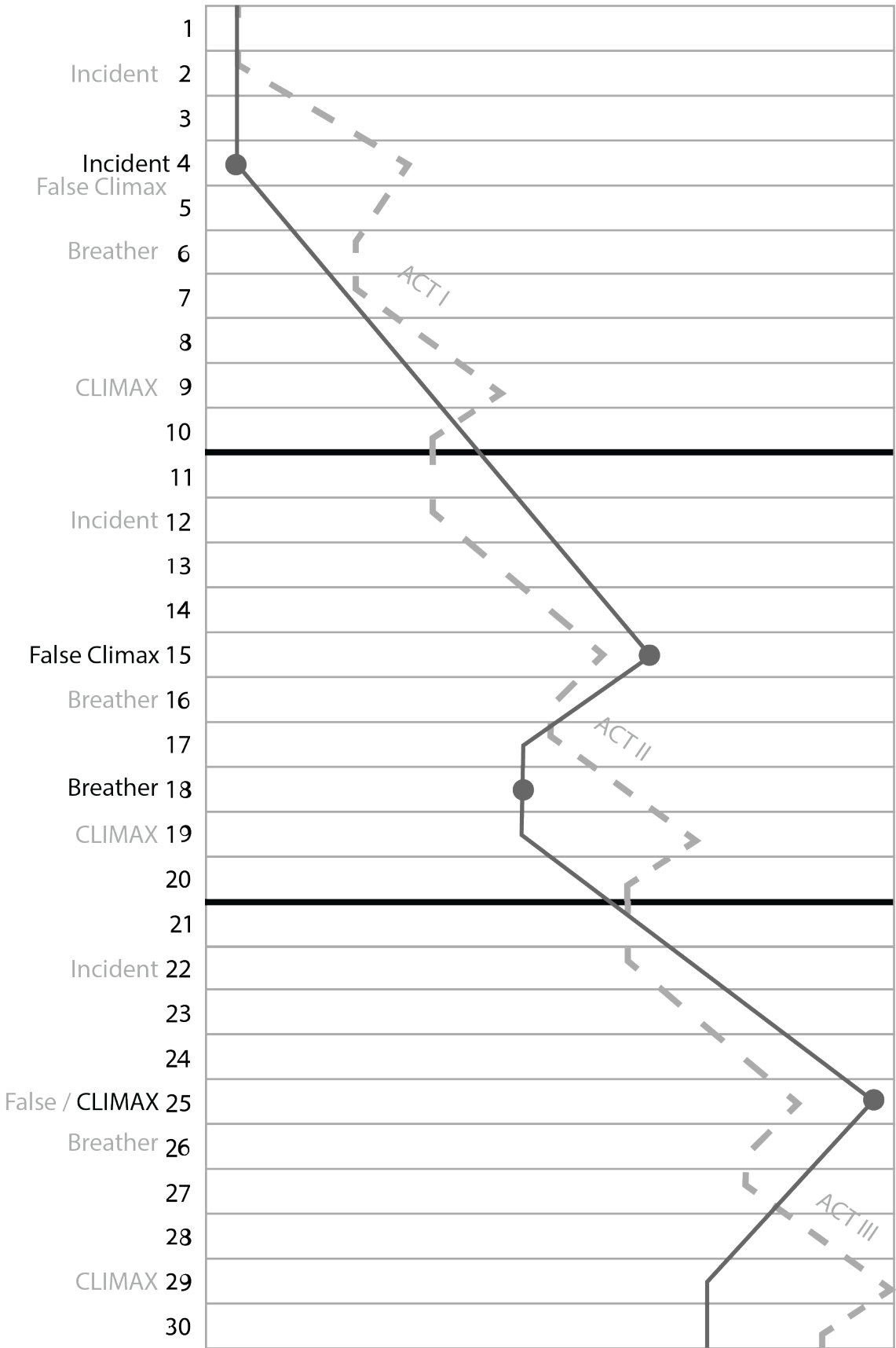




www.Mythulu.com

NO MORE REMAKES

FRACTAL PLOT
by Laura Grenshaw. Printing and sharing encouraged.





Wax figure of Picasso. Photo by Eva Studio.

“I wrote to Picasso once: I did not receive a reply.

I saw Picasso at a party or an opening or something crowded and awful in New York. I spoke to him. I repeated what I had written in my letter: How do we do it? What do we do when the images and the words do not come forth? How do we survive? How do we remain artists?

He looked at me with those glorious eyes, snapped back that shiny, bald head and told me that we are not artists; we do not concern ourselves with ‘art.’ We are workmen, day laborers—who happen to work with paints and clay and actors, and curtains part on occasion to display what we do. Tell the truth, he said. As you know it. Art may happen; it may not. We are not owed its presence.

His point was made.”

Tennessee Williams, interview with James Grissom
New Orleans, 1982

FIRST CHAPTER CHECKLIST

JUSTIN HERZOG

Today's fiction market is a crowded, competitive space, and you only get one chance to make a good first impression. Your novel's opening is the foundation on which your entire story rests. Make sure it's as strong as possible.

FIRST CHAPTER CHECKLIST



HOOK THEM QUICK

Your novel's opening line is perhaps the most important line in the entire book, and you need it to shine. Not only is it the reader's first introduction to your work, but it's often the sole basis for whether or not they will continue reading.



INTRODUCE YOUR PROTAGONIST

People don't read books for the history, the landscape, or the cultures inherent within. They read it for the characters. Get yours on the page as soon as possible.



ESTABLISH YOUR STORY QUESTION

Readers want to know what your book is going to be about, and they don't want to wait until halfway through the novel to find out. Establish the story question ASAP, preferably within the first page but almost certainly within the first chapter.



DON'T OVER EXPLAIN

Your job at the beginning is simply to keep people reading. Only once they are invested should you begin introducing the backstory.

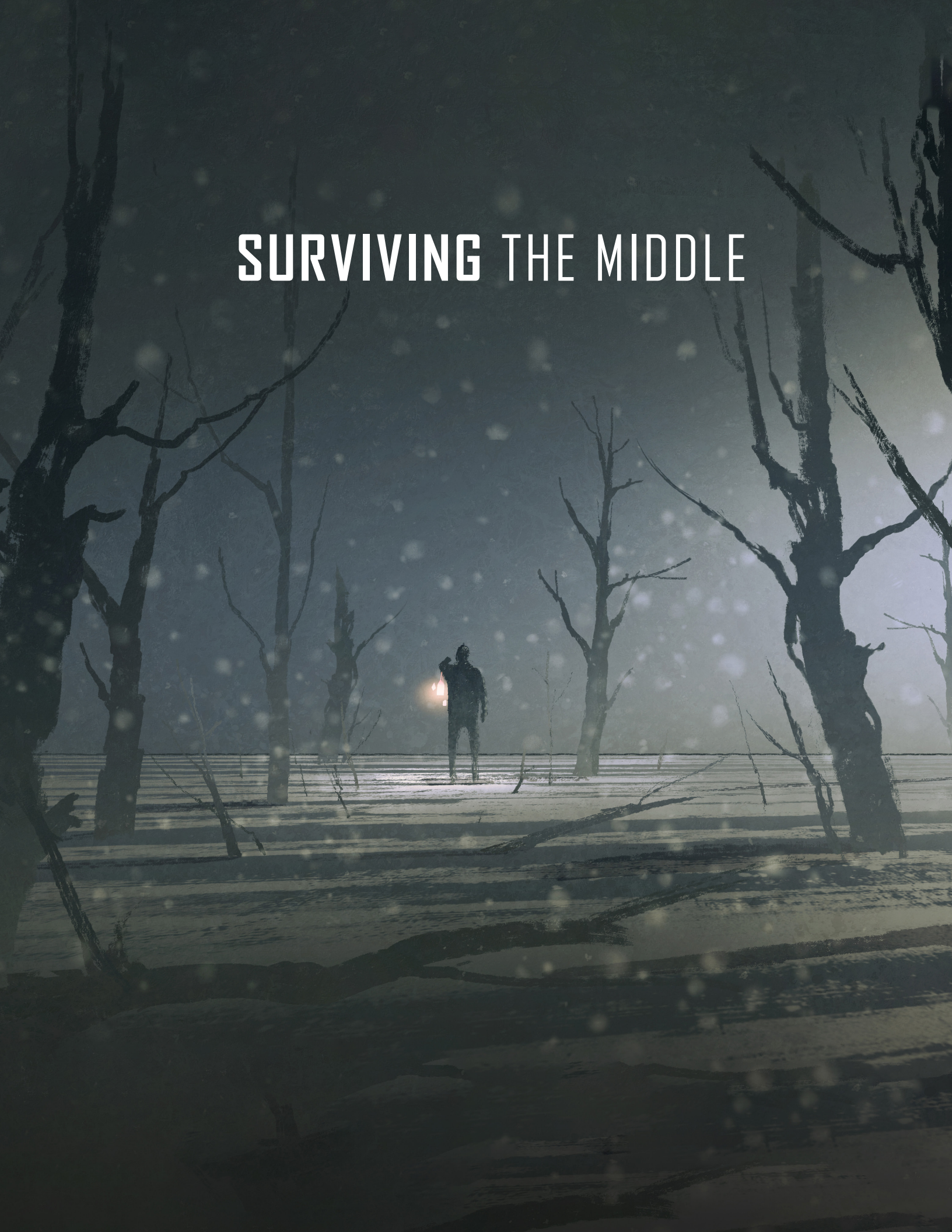


ESTABLISH YOUR SETTING

No matter how hard you try, your finished novel won't come out exactly as you intended. Surprises are okay. That said, your setting needs to remain consistent throughout. Establishing the time and place immediately (and any rules) will ensure that it does so.

- JUSTIN HERZOG

SURVIVING THE MIDDLE



INTERRUPTION CHEAT SHEET

JAMES A. OWEN | KEVIN IKENBERRY | LAURA CRENSHAW | OCTOBER SANTERELLI

COMMON INTERRUPTIONS	<div>NOT URGENT</div> <div>URGENT</div> <div>LOW ENERGY FIX</div>		
Hungry	Drink water & avoid sugary snacks.	Cook in batches & freeze for next time	Fast food & paper plates
Cleaning & Chores	Set dedicated writing time & don't give in	10-minute clean up breaks	Embrace the squalor
Naps / Sleeping in	Caffeinate	20-minute naps clear your mind! Set an alarm.	Go to a cafe where sleeping isn't an option
Anxiety or Sadness	Music, music, music	20-60 mins of exercise or hard manual labor to get your heart beating and lungs pumping	Set a timer for 20 minutes & look up your favorite comedian, comic, or lolz.
Loneliness	Pick a local write-in to attend ASAP.	Call a friend and/or snuggle a pet	Visit Mythulu's Discord channel * to chill with other writers
Brain Fog	Do 100 jumping jacks, clear your desk, and hydrate	Brainstorm with a friend	Change your environment. Switch desks or location.
Errands	Add to a list for later. Save all errands for least productive time of day.	Delegate	Shop online, call in to the appointment, or reschedule
Social Media	Turn off your wifi & leave your phone in another room	Make it a treat for getting the day's writing done.	Turn off all notifications
Texts & Phone Calls	Set up auto reply. Answer messages at end of day.	Pass your phone to a friend to screen calls.	Airplane mode
Netflix, Video Games, & other entertainment	Separate yourself from it. Earplugs, wifi off, AND write in another room.	Use it as a self-bribe. Only self-bribe with types of media you can detach from.	White noise, music, or go to a cafe.
Children	Plan writing time around sleep and school schedules.	Family is the whole point. Allow for emergencies.	Kids love routine. Establish daily "quiet time" and regular baby sitters or child swaps.
Significant Other	Communicate your goals. Schedule time to sync up daily.	Treat writing time like any other job. Respond to emergencies. Return ASAP.	Take a break and spoil them a little. ;) Fill them with love before reservoirs run low.
Friend in Crisis	If it's not urgent, schedule time today after writing time.	Unless there's a critical deadline, this takes priority.	Find a mutual friend who can handle it.
Sick	Take medicine. Write anyway.	It happens. Take time to heal, or it will take twice as long.	Lie down and read.
Social Obligations	"Thanks, but I already have plans."	Identify who you're going for. Dote on them. When you're done, go home.	Only go to events that massively rejuvenate you.
Travel	Save it as a reward, or integrate into work schedule.	Write on planes. Plot on drives. Remember your charging cord.	Listen to writing podcasts for inspiration
Burned Out	Write something you enjoy, just for you.	You haven't been bribing yourself enough. Fill out chart on p. 6 and claim a major bribe.	Hand an imperfect chapter to your biggest fan and ask them what they like.

*Visit <https://discord.gg/ws3869q>





FROM AFTERTHOUGHT TO MUSE

KEVIN IKENBERRY

Feisty, well-made characters can spark long-term inspiration.
Here's how one of my muses came to life
and how she helps me.

As an aspiring writer, I'd once purchased a "guide" to writing a novel consisting mainly of exercises like "What is your character's favorite flavor of ice cream, and why?" That type of detail, like most research, can be tedious and ultimately distracting from your creative flow.

In 2016, I was introduced to an anthology project to "widen the scope" of the wildly successful Four Horsemen Universe. I contributed a short story to the first of these anthologies entitled "Stand On It" which featured a human mercenary company in the far future on a mission gone horribly awry. Two-thirds of the way through the story, I introduced a human Peacemaker named Jessica Francis. Truth be told, I developed her as a plot device to add tension to the story's main character who was her ex-husband. Little did I know what I'd done.

Stories and their structure essentially come from character design / development. I've taught numerous classes on this concept for years. I'd created a character from nothing, essentially, and

tossed her into a situation where she is ultimately successful in rescuing the mercenaries around whom the story followed. Within hours of turning in the story, the publisher, Chris Kennedy, wrote me an email and asked me to write a novel featuring Jessica.

My first reaction was "HER?"

So, I went into character development mode. There are a few simple questions you have to answer about your characters – the most important of which is "Why them?"

The answer to that question is really an onion-peeling event because once you center the story on a character, and start asking "Why them?" a bunch more questions tend to come up and need to be addressed. Do all those details make it into the story? No, not at all. But, some of them will drive the events of your story forward.

As I peeled back the layers and dove into this character I'd (carelessly) created, I realized that she had one helluva story, so I wrote that story into the novel Peacemaker. When I turned the novel in, I was



Peacemaker Jessica Francis. Character Art by Matt Haley

promptly asked to write two more, and then another, and now I'm curating a whole spin-off series following the Peacemakers in the Four Horsemen Universe.

While I was writing Peacemaker, I reached out to my friend and comic artist Matt Haley, who has drawn for both Marvel and DC Comics. Matt just happened to have a spot in his schedule to work with me. He created the first "character sketches" of Jessica, and one in particular has helped me immeasurably.

When I sit down to write, just to my right, outside the view of my monitor, is this sketch (above).

I took the opportunity to add a speech balloon to the one at my desk that says "Why aren't you writing?" I'm not sure why I added the speech balloon, but I am glad that I did. It's become a part of my routine.

Having Jessica Francis scowling at me tends to help. With a muse like that, how can I not write?

A look at this picture, every day, helps me focus and get through the fuzz. Part of it is because it's a manifestation of something I created. The other part is that it's one item in many around me that are not writing focused, but "me-focused."

When you're ready to write create a space, an atmosphere, and a routine to keep your butt in the chair and doing what you were meant to do.

Discipline for writers means having a routine. Create a routine to make the transition from our real world into your writing worlds easier. Once you've created it – do it every time you sit down to write. Routine will break through the fog and get you past the blinking cursor of doom.

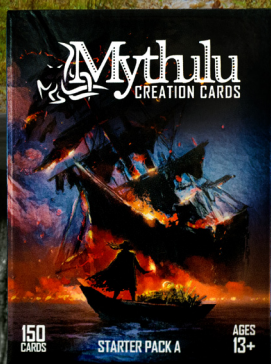
- KEVIN IKENBERRY

SAY GOODBYE TO WRITER'S BLOCK... FOREVER

Mythulu Creation Cards help you unlock your author voice by expanding the pool of ideas available to your subconscious. We challenge the stagnant pool of tropes that clutter your creativity.

Create stunningly unique magic systems, worlds, races, rites of passage, religious systems, motives, methods of burial... in 5 minutes or less.

\$10 OFF DURING NANOWRIMO



Mythulu CREATION CARDS

VIEW DEMO AT MYTHULU.COM/DEMO

ERGONOMICS

Get a chair that supports your elbows and lower back. Keep your head and neck aligned with your spine--don't slouch. But do keep the angle of your legs/back greater than 90 degrees.

Use an ergonomic keyboard. Top of your monitor should sit at or just below eye level.

REST

Training harder doesn't equal training faster, like setting the oven temp too high. In the same way, chair discipline doesn't translate directly to effective writing time, even if you do a lot of it.

Respect the physical process and allow your body to enter all phases of work and recovery.

FANTASTICALLY FIT

Going through intense physical training is great story fodder. Swim! Ride! Run! Try training for endurance. Map out your strengths and weaknesses. Engage in an activity that gets you personally excited, and own it!

THE CALORIE CUTTING DILEMMA

As writers, we think for a living. When cutting calories, the brain is a low-priority organ. If you plan to lose weight, try 1-6 weekend fasting to stay clear-headed on work days.

Be careful not to drink too many calories! Lattes, kombucha, juice, and sweet tea may only have 50-200 calories at a time, but that sneaks up on you fast. Keep good-quality water and healthy snacks at your desk instead.

PLOT A FITNESS STORY

Make a plan and chart it. Writers keep word count logs to make sure they're on track for a novel draft. Do the same for your fitness.



TOP 3 FITNESS APPS

1. GymPact
2. Zombies, Run!
3. You Are Your Own Gym

TIPS FOR SCREEN FATIGUE

AND OTHER HEALTH HICCUPS CAUSED BY STEADY COMPUTER USE



Computer Glasses

Computer glasses are yellow-tinted to cut blue light and glare. Some glasses also have very slight magnification (x.05), which helps your eyes relax. Using dark mode and night mode software will also help.

Remember to Blink

My optometrist told me people often forget to blink when they are staring at computer screens. Over time, forgetting to blink dries out your cornea and makes your vision hazy.

If you get dry eyes, avoid contacts for a few days and use gel eye drops. Blink brand eye drops are preferred by most optometrists.

Look away every 20 minutes

Look away from your screen regularly and focus on a distance object. If you're feeling nerdy, look up a whole set of eye exercises online.

If your wrists hurt...

This isn't necessarily carpal tunnel. It's more likely that your laptop keyboard encourages hand posture that restricts blood circulation to your hand. Wearing wrist braces at night makes that type of pain go away.

Getting an ergonomic keyboard for your desk will also help a LOT.

If your back hurts...

It sounds funny, but one of the best solutions for this is to do the same set of stretches people do when learning the splits. Download the app "Splits in 30 days" by Leap Fitness for daily reminders and a great coaching timer.

Sitting at a computer all day every day makes your hips, legs, and back tight and weak. These training stretches loosen and strengthen the same muscle groups.

Give it a try. You should feel relief in just a few days.



Wax figure of Carrie Fisher as Princess Leia. Photo by Anton Ivanov.

“Stay afraid, but do it anyway.
What’s important is the action. You don’t have to wait to be confident.
Just do it and eventually the confidence will follow.”

Carrie Fisher

DISTRACTIONS

MARK LESLIE

Distractions was first published in 2001. The tale, which features a frustrated writer, is certainly dark humor. But I think it contains an important lesson for writers.

The cautionary element involves the main character's unwavering belief that he is going to find the answers to all of his woes within the pages of a popular self-help book. I thought it'd be fun to examine what might happen if a frustrated author fell victim to the overly simplistic belief system that a self-help guru preaches.

Though he is a murderer, Maxwell Bronte is as much a victim in this story as anyone. The book itself is meant to be seen as a shadowy evil presence, affecting and controlling Maxwell's weakened mind. And yet, the advice I'll offer comes from this fictional book – because, as the saying goes, even a broken watch can be right twice a day.

READER DISCRETION ADVISED

THIS IS A HORROR STORY
AND CONTAINS ELEMENTS
SOME READERS MAY FIND
DISTRESSING.

MAXWELL wasn't surprised when the rubber ball smashed through the window and rolled to a stop near his feet. In fact, he hardly flinched as the shards of glass flew through the air, some of them nesting in his blond curly locks.

He'd known it was only a matter of time before the ball being bounced against the side of the house strayed just enough to hit the window.

Maxwell looked down at the signed copy of Andy Robinson's latest self-help bestseller: *MAXIM POWER II: GETTING THROUGH DISTRACTIONS*. Andy's proud, smiling face (with his unique trademark oversized cleft chin and dimples) on the cover brought the book's first words to his mind.

Distractions should be seen as evil.

Calmly, Maxwell picked up the ball and walked out of the study. The

ball was made of Indian rubber, warm and hard with just a little give as he pressed his thumb into it. Tossing the ball into the air and catching it with the same hand, he headed down the hall on his way to the door.

The packed book shelf at the end of the hall caught his eye, as it often did. He paused to run the tips of his fingers across the spines of the books. His fingers stopped on a book with golden lettering down the spine reading: THE BRAZEN HERALD.

He pulled the book off the shelf, admiring the cover lettering, the artwork, the dark winged-dragon silhouette against a purple-red sky, and below that, a blue-black sea, and the lone figure standing in the foreground on the edge of the cliff, mostly in silhouette, the blue and yellow tunic showing, the glinting shine of the sword in hand. Turning the hardcover book in his hand, he admired the black and white photo on the back, how the smiling face captured there resembled him, yet was different. A fuller head of hair, the confident smile of an author still producing. Then he read the text. 'Maxwell Bronte lives with his wife Doris in Arizona and is hard at work on his next novel, furthering the chronicles of Sebastian Eldritch.' He smiled and fondly remembered those days. The novel had been praised and cheered – he had been the talk of the town, described as that up and coming fantasy writer from the Southwest, the way that King was the horror writer from New England. He'd been interviewed and featured in all the major Science Fiction & Fantasy journals.

That, of course, had been five years ago. He still hadn't finished the follow up novel about Sebastian Eldritch, the one he had been planning on calling HERALD IN PERIL. No, between that first blockbuster novel and now, he'd gone through two job changes, the loss of his father, a near divorce and a

house fire. Getting back to working on his novel had not been a priority during those changes.

The world around you shouldn't decide your priorities for you. Only you can do that.

Until he discovered Andy Robinson, that was, and learned that all of it, all that change, turmoil and upset, was really nothing more than distractions that had been getting in the way of fulfilling his destiny.

He'd bumped into Andy at Roc*Kon, a science fiction convention in Little Rock, just a few months ago. Maxwell was still touring the conventions, riding on his one past publishing success and hoping to revitalize his career by being around other successful authors. He'd ended up reminding himself of a certain television star from 20 years ago whose soul quest seemed to be to work non-stop at rallying fans to help bring back STARSHIP ACADEMY, despite the fact that most of the other main cast members from that series had either all but disappeared from acting or had died.

Minutes after making that realization and wondering if he would be doing this for another fifteen years, he'd gotten off the elevator at the wrong floor, where he'd stumbled into a business leaders' convention, and Andy Robinson, the convention's main speaker. Across from the elevators and just outside the lecture room, Andy was involved in an animated discussion with a few men in suits.

The way he moved, gestured, the passion and excitement in his voice, caught Maxwell's attention immediately. Andy actually reminded Maxwell of a character in his novel, the one faithful companion of Sebastian Eldritch, Marvis Cranley, who was a sometimes sidekick, sometimes court jester, and full-time spiritual advisor. He started watching Andy because of this

fascinating parallel, but then continued watching him because he was such a captivating speaker. When Andy and the two men (who were also listening to him with rapt attention) moved down the hall, Maxwell spotted the poster-board bearing Andy's grin, and a table covered with the man's motivational books.

The phone began to ring, bringing him out of his silent reminiscence. Maxwell turned and regarded the phone, answering machine and key cup on the small table near the front door.

You can only deal with one distraction at a time. Don't let them gang up on you.

He slid the novel back into place on the shelf between *THE ARMIES OF DAYLIGHT* by Barbara Hambly and *FROSTWING* by Richard A. Knaak, two of his favorite fantasy authors. The answering machine picked up after the second ring.

"Hi, Sweetie." His mother's voice, slightly tinny coming through the answer machine speaker, filled the hallway. "I'm just worried because I haven't heard from you in a couple of days. Call me." Damn woman, he thought, continuing his journey down the hallway, making him call her twice a week, as if there were anything important to discuss that often. What a waste of time.

Without breaking stride, Maxwell ripped the phone cord out of the wall and carried the unit out the door. In the entranceway, he lifted the lid off the trash can and dropped the phone inside. "I'm busy, Mom," he said as he snuggled the lid back into place. "I'll deal with you later."

Put aside those extra distractions until you have the time to deal with them.

Maxwell then rounded the house. In the front yard, a red-haired kid with a speckling of freckles across his nose stood waving his arms in the air. It was his neighbor's kid,

Danny.

"Sorry, Mr. Bronte. I'm so sorry."

Reaching the boy, Maxwell stopped. "Danny, what did I say about throwing the ball against the side of my house?"

Danny didn't answer.

"Danny. What did I say?"

The boy shifted his left foot in front of his right one, softly digging his toe into the grass as he looked up. "You said not to."

"Not to what?"

"Not to throw the ball against the house because it distracts you when you're -"

"That's right," Maxwell said, cutting the child off. "And you disobeyed me. Again."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Bronte. I'm sorry. Can I have my ball back?"

As Maxwell stood there looking at the boy, he was reminded of the fact that this distraction was taking up even more of his time. Andy Robinson's smooth calm voice of reason filled his head. **Distractions are anti-traction. You must give yourself traction by eliminating distraction.**

"Eliminate distraction," Maxwell mumbled. "You want your ball? Here!" He drew his arm back, and with that, the boy immediately stopped sobbing. He started to stumble backwards, his wide eyes never leaving the ball, as Maxwell followed through on his pitch and sent the ball straight at the boy's head.

The ball bounced off the boy's forehead, the shock, more than anything, dropping him to the ground on his backside.

"And stay out of my yard!"

The boy turned, scrambled forward about a foot on his hands and knees, then got to his feet and ran across the yard to the

neighbor's house.

After watching the boy run inside and hearing the satisfying slam of the door, Maxwell stood there a moment, taking in a breath of fresh air, carried in on a dry warm desert wind. Then he headed back into the house.

"Oh great," he said, noticing the grass stains on his hand that must have come from the ball. "Running out of time, here."

Andy's voice came to him again. **Time is your friend, not your enemy. Embrace it. Make the most of it.**

He glanced at his watch as he headed toward the bathroom. He only got one day off a week to work on his writing and so far he'd been wasting it with minor distractions. But, as he now knew, there is no such thing as a minor distraction. **Every single distraction is evil and must be dealt with or they will soon stockpile and run your life.** For the past five years, he'd let distractions get in his way. They'd stockpiled in front of him, preventing him from getting anything accomplished. Job Interviews, Funerals, Marriage Counsellors. Distractions with capital letters, all of them, preventing him from getting down to his novel. But not anymore.

Not with the sound words of Andy Robinson to inspire him along.

When Maxwell got to the washroom, he turned on the water, not bothering to wait for the hot water to start coming out. No. That would be a waste of time. He smiled at himself in the mirror as he washed his hands. The new Maxwell smiled back at him.

Say goodbye to the you that says, 'Perhaps I'll do it later.' And say hello to the you that says, 'I want it right now!'

The new Maxwell didn't procrastinate and

thought of time as his best friend. **Because time was too powerful to work against.**

Hey, that was a good one he'd just made up on his own.

Not only was Maxwell taking charge of his life, but he was able to rework Andy's strong and powerful words into his own life. After all, it was Andy who said: **Don't just follow these tips blindly. Take them. Use them as your own, and they will evolve into your own words, your own tips, your own maxims.**

Still smiling, Maxwell felt something soft and furry rubbing up against his leg. He looked down at an orange tabby, Smuckers, as it purred and wound back and forth between his legs. Maxwell's smile began to falter as it continued this pattern without pause. And he knew it wouldn't stop until the animal was either fed or petted or perhaps both.

In any case, it was just another distraction.

Still smiling, Maxwell scooped the tabby up, carried it to the toilet and forced its head under the water. Within a couple of minutes, the struggling was over, and he set the toilet lid back down, the cat's orange tail still sticking out. He'd been surprised that the feline hadn't put up more of a fight.

Soon, he would have to clean the body out of there. But he couldn't worry about that now. He had to remain focused on the job at hand.

Prioritize your list. What is important? What can wait?

As he washed his hands, Maxwell became aware of a stinging sensation on his left arm. He turned his wrist over and discovered that the cat must have indeed fought back at least a little. There, on his skin, was a puffed-up red scratch. The center of the scratch had opened and a thin line of blood

leaked out.

“Not another distraction,” Maxwell mumbled, opening up the medicine cabinet. Unable to find any bandages, he stormed out into the hallway.

The doorbell rang.

Maxwell turned towards the door.

On the other side of the screen door stood his neighbor, Gus Sherrington. Gus looked like a much older version of his son, Danny, complete with the thick patch of freckles across his nose. But his red hair had receded to nothing more than a patch of wispy tufts a few inches above each ear. The way he was breathing, in big dramatic gasps, and the look on the man’s face suggested that Gus was none too happy that Maxwell had beamed his son with the Indian rubber ball.

Gus raised a baseball bat where Maxwell could see it. “Get yoh ass out heah!” he screamed through the door. “I’ll kick yoh ass down the frickin’ street for touchin’ mah boy.”

Distractions have a way of compounding themselves, becoming more than the sum of their parts. “No kidding,” Maxwell mumbled, stepping over to the closet. He opened the closet door and reached in for his shotgun.

Eliminating distractions, at any cost, is often your only solution.

“Get yoh ass out heah!” Gus yelled again, unable to see Maxwell checking to ensure the gun was loaded behind the cover of the closet door.

“Ah said . . .” Gus started to say, but stopped as Maxwell closed the closet door and revealed the gun. Gus’s eyes were suddenly as wide as his son’s had been when he knew he was going to be getting his ball back the fast and hard way.

Stepping forward and raising the shotgun to chest level, Maxwell fired. The glass and screen shattered in an explosive blast, and Gus was knocked backward off his feet, almost as much from the sound as from the force hitting him in the chest.

Maxwell stepped forward, looking at the man lying on the sidewalk on his back. His eyes wide and terrified, were fixed on Maxwell; his chest, now hitching even more dramatically than before, was pretty much a stewed up mess of blood, skin, pellets and the remains of his yellow t-shirt. His right hand still clutched the baseball bat and his left hand pawed at the grass, as if it alone could drag him away from further pain.

Distractions are often over before you stop being distracted by them. Could that be the case now? Certainly, Gus wasn’t a distraction any longer; he should let him be.

Maxwell turned and headed back down the hallway.

A trickle of blood leaked down his forehead. He figured it must be a cut from the glass, either from the screen door just now or the glass that flew through the air when the ball came through his window.

Whatever it had been, it signalled a need for more bandages.

He stormed towards the master bedroom. “Doris, where are the bandage–”

He paused at the bedroom door. His wife was lying on the floor, her dead hand still clutching the vacuum cleaner wand.

“Oh yeah,” Maxwell muttered, remembering. His wife had had the nerve to start vacuuming when she knew he had a lot of work to get done. What a stupid thing to do. He was going to miss her. Strange how quickly he’d forgotten about killing her.

Once you eliminate a distraction, you should forget that it ever existed. Or else it will consume your mind, and your time. That is why distractions are so evil. That is why they must be vanquished.

He decided enough time had been wasted. Without Doris around to help find the bandages, he'd probably never locate them.

Instead, he headed back to his den. He sat in front of the computer, smiled as he propped the shotgun against his desk and lifted his coffee, now cool, to his lips, and relished in the silence of the afternoon.

Now that the distractions were removed, he could get some work done.

After all, there was only so much time to

write.

Off in the distance, a wailing siren started to lurk up out of the silence.

Unless it pertains to you directly, ignore anything that threatens to distract you. Deal with it only when it begins to directly interfere with your goal.

Maxwell sent a sideways glance at the shotgun propped up against his desk and then typed, figuring he could at least finish his next paragraph before the police car reached his house.

As he typed, Andy Robinson's smiling face watched him proudly from the cover of the book.



MARK LESLIE

Mark, whose full name is Mark Leslie Lefebvre, is a writer, editor, book industry expert, professional speaker, and all-around book nerd.

BEST TIP:

Always adapt advice you receive into your own methods, applying it in ways that work for you. This goes for both the craft of writing and the logistical elements too.

Listen, learn, absorb. But use your own methods, your own mantas, your own ways. Own it. You've got this.

MARK'S SHELF:

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NAILING THE END



A BUSY INTROVERT'S GUIDE TO HOLIDAYS

Family's in town. It's hectic. What should be vacation time & the ideal writing spree is often sacrificed for a bizarre parade of junk food, terrible music, and mountains of dirty dishes. But the predictable chaos also holds moments that families hang their hearts on. Here's how to handle holidays when you'd rather be writing.



Customize your traditions

If you don't love traditional holidays, use your imagination. Take time to do anything that makes you glad you're alive.

Don't suffer boredom, and don't mope about it either. Be a memory maker.

Pitch In

Holidays frequently involve a lot of work—and you didn't always choose it. It's okay. Spend time at the side of whoever's working. Talk to them. Put on music. Don an apron. Use the dish bubbles as a chance to flirt.

Your writing is important, but it's NOT more important than real life—and this is real life.

Limit writing time

If you're desperate to write, take two hours, early in the day, before things get crazy. Communicate when you'll be ready to join festivities and honor that promise.

Whatever you do, don't work full days. The work will still get done, but you'll never get these specific days back.

If it's too loud...

Use earplugs. Invite people to move conversations outdoors. Reduce stimulation in pro-social ways.

It's also okay to take a break! Shower, run an errand, or walk the dog. Dogs always want another walk.

Keep plans simple

With travel, planning, cooking, Black Friday, and so on wrapped around Thanksgiving, that one day can eat up an entire week. Insist on a solid, sacred chunk of uninterrupted writing on non-holiday days.

Rest in the evening

Steer your group toward restful activities in the evening. Crazy all-nighters take multiple days to recover from. Protect tomorrow's writing time and your body's overall well-being by winding down at a reasonable hour.

PEAK PRODUCTIVITY

J.T. EVANS

Cherry-pick the hours when you're most effective for writing. By working smart, you can write as much as a pro, even if you can't write full-time.



There are ways to make the time to write, even during these busy times. I want to start with an example from several years ago in my personal life.

In 2010, I was a full-time graduate student, a full-time (and then some) lead software engineer, president of a non-profit, webmaster for the same non-profit, had a 1-hour commute to/from work each day, had to squeeze in some sleep, and still had to make the time to spend with my family

(which included a toddler son at that time).

Wow! From what I just laid out, it might seem like a miracle I wrote a short story during this year. I have news for you. I finished (and edited) a novel during this year. I also started (and finished and edited) a second novel during this year. I also banged out several short stories as well.

I'm not telling you all of this to brag or stand tall about my accomplishments. I'm putting these details out there to prove to you that

it can be done. Honestly, if I can pull off writing somewhere in the neighborhood of 175,000 words in that one year while being that busy, I have **complete and total trust** that you can do the same. This means you can easily nail the 50,000 words for NaNoWriMo.

So, let's get to the "how to do it" phase of things.

First, make a table and lay out the major blocks of time that you must spend doing things in your life. Don't forget to allot for sleeping!

In 2010, I had 15 hours a week to write. Once I figured that out, I had to make slots in my schedule to take advantage of those 15 hours. Honestly, I only scheduled 10 hours a week for writing time because I knew my brain and body. I knew I'd need downtime and unscheduled time, so I took those extra 5 hours "off" to just relax and enjoy the world.

Don't be afraid to try out different schedules and "levels of business" as well to see what works best for you. Try to reserve hours for yourself at the time of day when it's easiest for you to concentrate.

Now that you've made time to write, you need to get the most out of that time. If you have a private space to write in your house, close the door and put a sign up that states you are busy and don't need interruptions. If your family doesn't respect the closed door or sign, it's time for a serious conversation with them about boundaries and respect. Sometimes that doesn't work, so it's time to go somewhere else.

This is where coffee shops, diners (especially the late night ones, but not during the "bar rush"), libraries, and similar establishments come into play. If you're going to be writing in a public space, you'll probably want a set of headphones or earbuds to drown out most of the ambient noise around you.

Regardless of where you're writing, make sure to turn off (or silence) alarms, phones, anything that beeps, boops, or bongs, and any other external distractions.

I break down motivations to write into two major groups: external and internal.

EXTERNAL MOTIVATIONS come from sources other than your inner desire to write. This can be in the form of peer challenges, deadlines, "word wars", and the environment you put yourself in. Write-ins are an example of a motivating external environment.

INTERNAL MOTIVATIONS come from you. For me, music is key. It injects the right energy into my brain to allow me to really get the words down. Toss in tiers of rewards and see if that motivates you. If word count isn't your measurement of choice, then go play a video game or watch a movie each time you reach five hours of writing time. Of course, that five hours doesn't need to be in one block, but it certainly can be!

I've talked about blocking out time and getting a decent writing space. However, there are oodles of places where writing can take place that are spontaneous in nature. I call them "stolen moments." These stolen moments can occur almost anywhere, so the key is to be prepared at all times. Always have a pen and notebook with you. If you can arrange it, carry your charged-up laptop with you as well.

These stolen moments usually coincide with a planned event in which extreme waiting happens. They can also occur when nothing really important involving your immediate attention or care takes place. I've written in all the following places. The key is to be prepared to write at the drop of a hat.

- Emergency Room
- DMV
- Lunch Break
- Driving (voice only or brainstorm)

- Public Transportation
- Oil Changes
- Waiting on Others
- Auto Repairs

I want to close out with a few words of warning. If you squeeze every last drop of time out of the 168 hours you get each week, you will feel it, and not in a good way. You can only run your emotional and creative engine at maximum for so long before things start to break down, and you find yourself hurting or completely drained. Make sure to take time to idle your engine.

Many creatives refer to these activities as “filling the well.” You draw your creativity and energy from that well. You need to get out and experience life or read a book or hang out with friends.

Idling your engine doesn’t have to be a specific, large event, either. You can do this when you do laundry, wash the dishes, vacuum the house, or perform other minor tasks around the house.

It’s amazing how well the creative juices flow when you’re performing those mindless tasks around the house. Just carry a pen and notepad in your pocket to jot down ideas that percolate through your brain.

By vigorously defending your writing time and getting the most out of it, hitting that 50,000-word goal for the month of November is completely within sight.

Now go write!

I believe you can do this.



J.T. EVANS

J.T. Evans writes fantasy novels. He also dabbles with science fiction and horror short stories. He is the former president of Colorado Springs Fiction Writers Group and Pikes Peak Writers. When not writing, he keeps computers secure at the Day Job, home brews great beers, spends time with his family, and plays way too many tabletop games.

BEST TIP:

Everyone’s busy. Make time by blocking out your most productive hours for writing. Then “steal back” extra minutes by carrying your writing tools everywhere, so you can write when you’d otherwise be waiting.

J.T.’S SHELF:

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MY ROUTINE

R.R. VIRDI

Carving out time to write doesn't have to be invasive.
Make time every day using this simple routine.

I never knew what Nano even was until I'd written and published my first novel. A friend of mine gifted me a copy of Chris Baty's novel about the subject, and only then did I realize it was about how to pants a novel. I didn't know this was a common writing practice, much less an acceptable one.

Once I'd figured that out, I went about finding a functional routine for myself. Around 2016, I'd found it:

20 minutes on, 10 minutes off.

My life's pretty hectic (still, yes), so I write in short bursts of 20 minute increments with 10 minutes off to deal with the usual culprits of time suckage: dishes, administrative emails, ancillary research of other stuff, the Facebooking of the world and social media stuffs, and occasionally, I remember to eat. But 20 minutes on with 10 minutes off is easier than it sounds. It's accessible, even in the dull moments. And it adds up.

Allocating just two hours a day gets me an average of 2,000 words a day and 60k a month. That's a novel.

It doesn't have to be that much. Even if you just crank out 500 words a day,

that's a lot more than you might realize.

Making a career out of writing is not just about cramming in X amount of words in a week or month. It's about the long term — consistency.

500 words a day over a month is 15k. Four months in that's a novel at 60k. A year in? That's 182,500 words. That's an epic novel, two 90k novels, or three 60k novels.

Use NaNo to find your limits, what you can do consistently a day. Rinse. Repeat.

Even if your goal is just one novel ever, eventually, the goal gets done.

I don't write a lot per day compared to some folks I know. I know some monsters who've done 6k averages, even peaking at 10k a day. I do 2-3k averages at most. But I've published eight novels to date. I have about 200,000 words of short stories, novellas, and novelettes sitting about. This process has led me to two Dragon Award-finalist novels, and a Nebula finalist story.

Is it fast? No.

Is it consistent? On average, yeah. Life still gets in the way, but knowing what I can produce reasonably makes it easier to get back to it mentally and get to work.

Is it doable? Heck yes, which is the hardest part for so many, right? Just doing it. So, find what's doable.

NaNo is a learning curve. Experiment and find what your doable writing goals are. You'll walk away knowing how to best

hack your day to make writing happen. Add that up over any given amount of time...and you'll see your word counts tally up closer to your desire.

It works.

It's doable. Go find out for yourselves.

It's harder than it sounds, but it just might be easier than you think.

- R.R. VIRDI



R.R. VIRDI

R.R. Virdi is a two-time Dragon Award finalist and a Nebula Award finalist. He is the author of two urban fantasy series, a LitRPG/portal fantasy series, and a space western/sci fi series. He has worked in the automotive industry as a mechanic, retail, and in the custom gaming computer world. He's an avid car nut with a special love for American classics. The hardest challenge for him up to this point has been fooling most of society into believing he's a completely sane member of the general public.

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VIRDI'S SHELF:



Grab Grave Tidings FREE here: <http://bit.ly/2XKxeG6>



“We have not succeeded in answering all our problems.

The answers we have found only serve to raise a whole set of new questions. In some ways we feel we are as confused as ever, but we believe we are confused on a higher level and about more important things. So this report does not purport to give final answers, or to claim that we now “know how to do it”. We see more need for revision than ever.

But we are doing better than we did. And this is a progress report, rendered with humility because of the unsolved problems we see now which we could not see before.”

Earl C. Kelley
“The Workshop Way of Learning”, 1951

LETTERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT





KEVIN IKENBERRY

Kevin Ikenberry is an internationally best-selling military science fiction action and life-long space geek. His 2016 debut science fiction novel *Sleeper Protocol* was a Finalist for the Colorado Book Award and was heralded as “an emotionally powerful debut” by *Publisher’s Weekly*. Kevin is also the author of *Runs In The Family*, *Peacemaker*, *Honor The Threat*, *Vendetta Protocol*, *Stand Or Fall*, *Deathangel*, and *SuperSync*. For you NaNo writers – Kevin is a multi-year winner and three of his NaNo novels have been published – you can do it!

If you’re writing at home, “prepare” your writing space with some of the items that mean the most to you. They will ground you.

I have pictures of my family on my desk. Above my desk is a painting one of my kids did of me when they were in pre-school. It’s not a Da Vinci by any means, but it gives me perspective.

But, Kevin? What if I write at a coffeehouse or the library? I have changed the background for my computer to either cover art or pictures of family. I listen to music and typically start every writing session with one of three songs that help me focus on the project at hand. You’ll notice that my answer here touches on the most important aspect of being a writer – discipline.

When you’re ready to write, create a space, an atmosphere, and a routine to keep your butt in the chair and doing what you were meant to do.

Best of luck in NaNoWriMo!

BEST TIP:

Discipline for writers means having a routine. Routine will break through the fog and get you past the blinking cursor of doom.

KEVIN’S SHELF:

www.kevinikenberry.com





JAMES A. OWEN

James began his career in publishing approximately two years before he was old enough to get a driver's license. James has written and illustrated two dozen StarChild comics, the award-winning MythWorld series of novels (published in Germany and France), the bestselling series, The Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica, the inspirational nonfiction book Drawing out the Dragons, and more. More than a million copies of his publications are in print, and are sold all over the world.

You are the world's foremost authority on your own work. You literally cannot do it wrong. Just keep going. As my friend Jess Smart Smiley says, "Action cures anxiety."

If you need a boost, go back to the moment you first knew you loved stories. I keep my favorite comics close at hand, to remind myself of the things that inspired me to do this to begin with.

Just keep going. Don't quit. And let everyone see that.

Everything is Signal.

BEST TIP:

I no longer see sleeping in OR naps as interruptions, but self care. If you're getting adequate rest, you'll produce better work.

JAMES'S SHELF:

www.jamesaowen.com





JUSTIN HERZOG

A native Floridian whose resume includes everything from police officer to personal trainer, Justin Herzog fell in love with books at an early age and turned to a career in writing because anything else would have been unthinkable. He is the author of the Marcus Aries series, an urban fantasy series taking place in Hawaii, as well as the forthcoming Patrick Bannon Series, set in the city of Miami.

Hello Nanowriters!

As the month of November approaches and you're all gearing up to begin, I wanted to give you a tool that I personally use in the form of a novel foundation checklist.

Telling a story is a lot like building a house. Without a solid foundation, the entire thing is likely to topple over at the first sign of trouble. That's why it's worth taking the time beforehand to ensure that your foundation is solid and able to support the weight of your narrative.

Crafting a firm foundation will provide you with freedom to tell your story and the satisfaction of watching your novel take shape before your very eyes. It's a professional tool that will allow you to craft a professional-level manuscript.

Enjoy and good luck!

BEST TIP:

Today's fiction market is a crowded, competitive space, and you only get one chance to make a good first impression. Your novel's opening is the foundation on which your entire story rests. Make sure it's as strong as possible.

JUSTIN'S SHELF:

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MICHAEL ANDERLE

Michael Anderle was born in Houston, TX. A very curious child, he got into trouble - a lot. What to do with an inquisitive mind when he was grounded? Read!

My second and third book(s) were written and released during NaNo 2015. While my sales did not SOAR during November, the foundation I laid allowed me to continue to build my income into 5 figures by January of 2016 and six-figures during Nano 2016.

You CAN do it !

BEST TIP:

In the beginning, I found it hard to come up with names. I decided to watch movie credits and picked out interesting names as they scrolled up the screen. Later, I mixed and matched names to use in my stories.

MICHAEL'S SHELF:

www.kurthierianbooks.com





OCTOBER SANTERELLI

11-year NaNo Participant and frequent victor from Colorado. He primarily writes epic fantasy. His writing career began in the 7th Grade when he found out that being a writer was a job people still did to this day. His method of success for NaNo is writing sprints against friends, and write-ins at local coffee shops.

Dear Writer,

Use NaNoWriMo to build the good habit of writing daily. Make writing your number one priority, and settle down at your computer every morning before you do anything else.

If you can make it through an entire 30 days of writing in a row, even if it isn't 1,667 words every day, you can set yourself up for an entire career of success! Remember that November is one month, but being a writer is a lifetime of words in your head and at your fingertips.

Surround yourself with the same energy, with the people who support you, and try to go to a write-in at least once a week. It seriously does help! Bribe yourself to stay motivated, if you need to. Play, breathe, take care of yourself — the words don't happen without you. Just keep writing, because every word you put down is another word off that 50,000.

BEST TIP:

Missing a day can feel like a huge mistake, but remember, if the word count is going up, that's progress!



JOSH VOGT

In addition to being a certified personal trainer, Josh Vogt has been published in dozens of markets with work covering fantasy, science fiction, horror, humor, pulp, and more. His novels include Pathfinder Tales: Forge of Ashes and his humorous urban fantasy series, The Cleaners, with Enter the Janitor, The Maids of Wrath, The Dustpan Cometh, and The Fellowship of the Squeegee. He's a member of SFWA, the International Association of Media Tie-In Writers, and a Scribe Awards and Compton Crook Award finalist.

One of the best ways to combat brain fog or other bumps in your writing progress is even the smallest bit of exercise. Getting your body active can often kick your brain into gear.

So if you find yourself stuck, go on a walk, do a few pushups and situps, or take a jog around your area. It doesn't have to be a marathon (though that certainly might provide some inspiration!).

To encourage writers with their overall fitness and nutrition, I've written a collection of blog posts called Write Strong. It contains advice and insights on how to stay physically active, take care of your body in a generally sedentary career, and eat well. Adopting an overall healthier approach to life can enhance the writing process, as well!

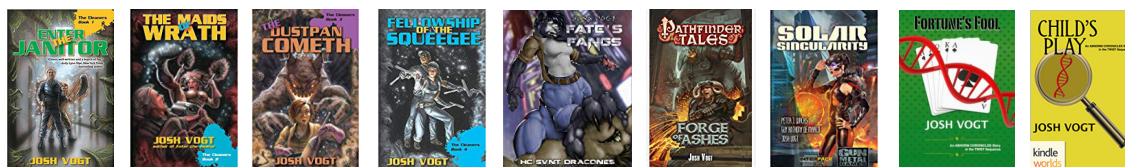
www.jrvogt.com/writing-resources/write-strong-fitness-for-writers

BEST TIP:

If you need motivation to go to the gym, download the app GymPact. When you hit your goals, you get monetary rewards. If you don't... you pay money that goes toward paying the rewards for others!

JOSH'S SHELF:

www.jrvogt.com





LAURA CRENSHAW

Creator of Mythulu. Laura writes anthropomorphic fantasy, YA sci-fi, and occasionally ghostwrites business fables. She's a kick-butt wilderness survival expert and a decent archer. She earned a bachelor's in Business Entrepreneurship at Arizona State University. She can nerd out about almost any topic and loves spending time around passionate people.

When you love what you do, it doesn't feel like work. It's hard to put your "toys" down when you're writing.

If you fall on the workaholic side, practice letting go a little. Keep one eye on your loved ones while the other's on your screen. Spend your breaks checking in with the people around you, and remembering to live. You can burn relationships out before you burn yourself out. Don't burn midnight oil.

Stories matter. As much as they matter, some things matter more: Your health, your family, your happiness. Take care of them.

Work hard, play hard. Good luck!

BEST TIP:

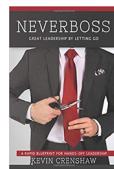
Diet has the single biggest impact on my capacity to focus. More than adequate sleep. More than exercise. More than the miracle of caffeine. Dairy is my personal kryptonite. (Not lactose. All dairy.) Sugar is its evil sidekick.

Brain fog isn't normal. If you can't think straight, experiment with your food and see if it helps.

LAURA'S SHELF:

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NO MORE REMAKES

This collection was curated as a service by Mythulu. Our mission is to rid the world of remakes and help writers tell wildly original stories.

If you need help during your NaNoWriMo, reach out.
We've got your back.

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