ForeWord Reviews

REFERENCE

Free Your Captive Fiction Writer
Jean M. Goldstrom
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The first commandment of writing good fiction is “show, don’t tell.” This means bringing characters to life by showing the reader their emotions and actions rather than just telling about them. Goldstrom, the owner/editor of Anotherealm E-zine and the author of numerous short stories as well as the e-book, How to Write Creatively for Internet Magazines follows this first commandment with style and provides excellent examples with her own fiction.

One of her major points is that there is no one way to write. “Some… outline everything. Some… never outline. Some… write biographies for characters. Some never write any biographies…” Goldstrom also explains the process for using real people as models for characters, “…take a characteristic from here, an idiosyncrasy from there, a behavior from still a third place, stir them all together, bake in the warm oven of your Imagination, and presto! There’s just the character you need.” She cautions against inadvertently using too much of yourself for a character and says, “It limits who and what your character(s) can be….” Details are brought to life with short stories to illustrate these and other points that makes this book both entertaining and informative. Readers discover that they are learning about how to write good fiction without even noticing that they are being taught.

The author gets the readers attention with the opening statement, “Do you have a captive fiction writer within you?” She then explains about the importance of writers finding their own “voice and style” and indicates that writers can attend writers classes, critique classes, etc. but until they find their own writing style, the fiction is trapped inside the authors’ minds. She shows how to free those trapped stories by using everyday events to spur the imagination into active participation.

Even the most mundane happenings can become a story. The author describes how to turn such events into exciting fiction. Another good point made is “What are stories about They’re about people. What happens to them is plot. But the story is people.” One good example is using people remembered from the past—people who made an impression. Using such a person from her past, she gives a short history of a night editor she once worked with, then

shows the compelling short story she wrote about this person.

Many ideas, writing points and skills are illustrated by entertaining stories. Even non-writers would enjoy the good advice, humorous re-collections and stimulating stories of this masterful author.

S. Joan Popek