
The Advanced Fiction Writing E-zine

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Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius.

"Fiction Writing = Organizing + Creating + Marketing"

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- 1) Welcome to the Advanced Fiction Writing E-zine!

Those of you who have joined in the past month (about 250 of you have joined since the last issue), welcome to my e-zine!

You should be on this list only if you signed up for it on my web site. If you no longer wish to hear from me, don't be shy -- there's a link at the bottom of this e-mail that will put you out of your misery.

If you need to change your e-mail address, there's a different link to help you do that.

If you missed a back issue, remember that all previous

issues are archived on my web site at:
<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com/ezine>

What's in this issue:

I believe that success in fiction writing comes from balancing three aspects of the writing life: organization, creativity, and marketing. I'll discuss each of these in one of my regular columns.

In the organization column, I'm doing something very different, just for this month -- I'll be talking about money. (Oh, the horror of it all!) But since most writers sweat about money, I'd like to share something that works for me. Have you heard of the "HELOC Trick" yet?

In the creativity column, I'll continue the topic I began last month on subtexting in dialogue. Can you imagine a dialogue in which one speaker uses heavy subtexting and the other uses none? I'll show you one.

In the marketing column, I'll talk about legitimate methods of "search engine optimization" for your web site or blog. Want to see an example of how one web page was brilliantly optimized to help Google lead me right to it?

Are you reading my blog? Join the fun here:
<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com/blog>

2) Organizing: The "HELOC Trick"

Several months ago, a friend of mine invited me to come listen to a talk by one of those debt-reduction people. The talk would supposedly show us a way to pay down our mortgages a lot faster. My friend wanted me to tell him if the math was legit, because it sounded too good to be true.

I am always skeptical about money games like this. My experience says that when something sounds too good to be true, there's a catch somewhere.

I was right, there was a catch, but it turned out that there was a lot of truth in the idea. I'd like to share it here, for the simple reason that most writers I know are often concerned about money. Any idea that can reduce a writer's pesky money worries is a good idea.

If money is not an issue for you, then skip this article. Next month, I'll be back to my normal article on organizing your time or whatever. But just for this

month, I'll be talking about that vile money thing.

Here is my standard caveat: I am not a financial advisor. I don't give financial advice. Nothing I say here should be construed as financial advice. I am a math guy, and I am pretty darn sure that everything I say here is mathematically correct, but any action you take is your own decision, not mine.

By the way, in the last 12 months, I've reduced my total debt by almost exactly 10%. At that rate, I'll be debt-free in a bit more than six years (because of the compounding effect).

Now, not everybody believes that it's smart to be debt-free. There are lots of good folks who think that debt is terrific and that you should be in debt up to your eyeballs, as long as it's debt for an investment (such as a house or a business).

If you believe debt is wonderful, then that's fine, I won't argue with you, but this column is not for you; skip on down to the next column. If you e-mail me telling me that I should love my mortgage because I'm using other people's money to get rich in real estate, I won't even bother to answer you. I don't love my mortgage anymore. If you love your mortgage, go ahead and kiss it, marry it, live happily ever after with it. I want to burn mine.

Let's get back to the story. My friend took me to hear this guy talk about debt-reduction. To my astonishment, I saw right away that the plan would actually work. The math was completely legit and it had some nice psychological advantages that would help even more.

The problem was that the speaker was selling a \$3500 software product to "help you do the math." To be blunt, I didn't think the product was worth that kind of money, when I could easily "do the math" with a pocket calculator in one minute. I'd have been happy to pay fifty bucks for the idea, but not three and a half Big Boys.

For that reason, I won't give the name of the product or the company that sells it. You can easily find it with a search engine after you've read this article. You'll see that a lot of financial advisors think the product is a load of hooley.

But the idea is rather clever and I was incensed that I'd never thought of it myself, because it's obvious to any math guy. I call it "the HELOC Trick."

OK, so how does "the HELOC Trick" work?

Before I answer that, I'll talk about what problem we're trying to solve. After all, as any of those financial advisors will tell you, the way to get out of debt is to spend less than you earn and apply the

difference to your debt. If you do that, you'll eventually fry your mortgage. Duh, right?

Yes, that's pretty obvious, but most people don't do it. I had a mortgage on my last house for 12 years, but I hardly ever applied any extra money to my mortgage. Why not? Two main reasons:

* I knew that if I paid extra money on my mortgage, I wouldn't be able to get that money back out. Those meanies at the bank won't give it back once you pay it in.

* When I had extra money, I put it in savings in case of an "emergency." When the savings got big enough, I started feeling "rich" and spent the money on something I didn't need.

So after 12 years of paying my mortgage, I had paid the bank MORE than the original value of the house and had actually paid down ALMOST a quarter of the value of the house. Pretty sweet deal, eh? Sweet for the bank, anyway.

Fact is, I made money on the house when I sold it, because house prices were skyrocketing in those days. But house prices aren't skyrocketing right now. Not in most places. For sure not where I live. I don't really want to pay for this new house 2 or 3 times over. I'd be happy with paying for it only once. I'm funny that way.

So here's what I've done in the last several months to start knocking down my debt. When I started this game, I had two debts: a mortgage on my house at 6.25% and a car loan at 6.4%.

a) I went to my bank and opened a Home Equity Line Of Credit (a HELOC). You can take money out of a HELOC any time you want, but you can also put money in any time you want. They charge you interest daily based on the amount you owe that day. The bank didn't charge me anything for my HELOC, and they gave me quite a big credit line -- a LOT more than I needed to make this plan work. At that time, the interest rate was 7.19%. It has since dropped to 4.94%.

b) I used the HELOC to pay off my car loan completely. (It always makes sense to pay down the debt with the highest interest rate first. If I'd had credit card debts at the typical usury rates, I'd have paid those off first.)

c) Right after my next paycheck, I took almost all the money in my checking account and paid it into the HELOC, leaving only a few hundred bucks in the checking account. This also reduced my HELOC debt to a comfortably small number. And it reduced my daily interest charge to a very small amount.

d) Throughout the next month, I paid bills by writing checks out of the HELOC account. So the debt in my HELOC gradually increased throughout the month from a small amount to a larger amount.

e) Every month since then, I've repeated steps (c) and (d). Right after I get paid, I move most of the money in my checking account into the HELOC. Whenever I get any extra cash (tax refund or whatever), I move it straight into the HELOC. At the beginning of each month, I do a simple calculation and then pay some extra money out of the HELOC against the principal in my mortgage.

What is that "simple calculation?" I have a target amount that I want to owe on my HELOC after paying the mortgage. I look at how much I owe and subtract it from the target amount. I pay the difference on my mortgage.

For example, if my target HELOC debt was \$10k and I owed \$8k on the HELOC on the day my mortgage was due, then I'd take \$2k out of the HELOC and pay it to my mortgage company. If I only owed \$5k on the HELOC on that day, then I'd take \$5k out of the HELOC and apply it to the mortgage. If I owed \$10k on the HELOC, I'd pay the mortgage payment but no more than that.

By following this strategy, I always owe roughly the same amount on my HELOC, and any "extra" money goes to pay down my mortgage.

Notice that my total debt is the sum of my mortgage plus my HELOC debt, so that "simple calculation" above doesn't have to be very precise. It really doesn't matter who I owe that money to; I owe it to somebody. My goal is to reduce the total as fast as possible. That's why every spare dime I get goes into the HELOC right away.

That's pretty much it. It sounds like a shell game, doesn't it? How could it possibly work? What does it cost, and what does it gain me?

a) Opening a HELOC cost me nothing. Some banks charge a fee to open one, but my bank paid the fee because they wanted to earn interest from me.

b) Paying off the car loan with the HELOC didn't change my total debt. I still owed the same amount. This cost me nothing and saved me nothing.

c) Moving most of my money from my checking account into the HELOC immediately began saving me interest. My checking account earns no interest. The HELOC costs me interest, but the interest is computed on the daily balance. Mathematically, moving my money into the HELOC means that I am now earning interest on all the money that WAS in my checking account.

d) As I pay bills out of the HELOC throughout the

month, I gradually increase my debt. The bank will charge me interest on this debt, but they charge it each day on the daily balance. Early in the month, that daily balance is low. Near the end of the month, the debt rises back to almost its original level. (Since I spend less than I earn, the debt doesn't quite reach the original level.)

e) Whenever I get any extra cash, that money goes immediately into the HELOC, and I effectively save the interest I would have paid on that money throughout the month.

As any financial advisor can tell you, the above hocus-pocus will earn you a few hundred bucks per year. Many advisors will tell you that it isn't worth your time to do this. In a world where people act with pure mathematical logic, they would be right.

However, in the real world I live in, hardly anybody acts with pure mathematical logic. Very few people floss daily, for example, even though it's one of the cheapest and easiest things you can do for your health.

The reason the above hocus-pocus has led me to reduce my debt so sharply is that it has changed my entire way of thinking.

I used to think: "I have money in my checking account, so I might as well spend it."

Now, I think: "I have almost no money in my checking account! I have this huge debt that I have to pay off someday! I'm not going to spend any money unless I have to."

I used to think: "If I get extra cash, I'd better save it in case of an emergency."

Now, I think: "If I get extra cash, I'll put it in the HELOC and save some interest. If an emergency does come along, I'll take it back out of the HELOC. In the meantime, I'll have saved some interest."

This change in thinking is what makes the whole thing work. If you were to buy that un-named \$3500 product that I mentioned earlier, the sales-droid ought to tell you that this psychological shift is what makes it all fly.

The sales-droid will likely instead tell you that it's the "debt-cancellation effect" that makes it fly. Um, sorta. There is a smallish "debt-cancellation effect" thanks to the fact that interest on a HELOC is computed daily. It's a few hundred bucks a year, and so "the math works."

But "debt-cancellation" is a small effect. The main thing has been to change my thinking. If I want to pay off my enormous debt, I need to get that enormous

number in front of my face every time I spend money. I had to quit thinking I'm "rich," when in reality I owe tons and tons of money.

Now it should be obvious that none of this would work at all for me if ANY of the following were true:

- * I don't have a mortgage
- * I don't want to eliminate my debt
- * I have no equity in my house
- * I spend more than I earn
- * I don't want to do the calculation every month

If any of the above were true, then the "HELOC Trick" wouldn't work.

People often get over-excited about the "HELOC Trick" and think that it will solve all their problems right away. Nope, sorry. For that there is a faster but much riskier solution called "winning the lottery." The "HELOC Trick" works for me because it helped me change from a "spend the extra" mentality to a "save the extra" mentality.

The "HELOC Trick" helped me grow myself a spine. That's all. But it's enough.

Once again, you are a thinking, autonomous, intelligent human with the ability to make your own decisions. I make no recommendations here. I give no advice. I have put a bug in your ear; what you do with the bug is your business.

If you're in town six years from now, you're invited to my mortgage-burning party.

3) Creating: More on Subtexting in Dialogue

Last month in this column, I talked about "subtexting" in dialogue and gave an example from book #4 in the Harry Potter series. It was a popular column and I'm going to continue that topic here.

Broadly speaking, "subtexting" refers to that part of dialogue which is left unsaid. You can write a dialogue that is completely "on the nose" in which the characters say exactly what they are thinking. But in real life, people often leave a lot unsaid, either because they can't say it, won't say it, don't know how to say it, or don't think it's necessary to say it.

For your further reading on subtexting, check out the book GETTING INTO CHARACTER by Brandilyn Collins.

This month, we'll look at an example of subtexting in THE MATARESE CIRCLE, by Robert Ludlum. Ludlum is best known for his Jason Bourne trilogy, but I like THE MATARESE CIRCLE better.

A little background on the book: THE MATARESE CIRCLE is a conspiracy novel, written in the late 70s at the height of the Cold War. At that time, spy novels pitting a "good guy" CIA agent against a "bad guy" KGB agent were common. (In some cases, the CIA guy was "bad" and the KGB guy was "good.") But generally, both the "good guy" and the "bad guy" were Xtremely competent -- they were matched opponents in a battle to the death.

THE MATARESE CIRCLE flipped those conventions around by forcing an ultra-competent CIA man to work with his sworn enemy, an equally talented KGB officer. The two men had a shared backstory: The KGB man had once killed the wife of the CIA man, who retaliated by killing the brother of the KGB guy. But now, a worldwide conspiracy is set to take over both the US and Russia, and both of our uber-agents are marked for death by the conspirators. Only by working together can the two arch-enemies save the world. A good solid high-concept story.

The following example features the KGB man, Vasili Taleniekov. His task is to go back into Russia to smoke out some information on the conspiracy. This is a tough job, because he's a wanted man and his picture is posted in every KGB office in Russia. The KGB is claiming that Taleniekov has defected to the US and should be shot on sight. In truth, he is a loyal Russian intent on saving the Motherland from the conspiracy.

Taleniekov enters Russia from Finland, using a Finnish agent who believes he is American, and who has therefore "helped" him by setting up a driver -- an incompetent KGB agent who is currently an informer for the Americans. The driver's name is Maletkin. Our man Taleniekov must prevent Maletkin from panicking, must persuade him to help gather the information, and must find a way to get him hanged as a traitor.

Here then is the scene. I'll show it complete and then analyze the subtexting. Taleniekov has approached Maletkin's car while shielding his face, so Maletkin has not yet recognized him. The scene begins with Taleniekov leaning down into view and shoving his gun in Maletkin's face.

"Good morning, Comrade Maletkin. It is Maletkin, isn't it?"

"My God! You!"

With his left hand, Taleniekov reached in and held the

flashlight, turning it slowly away, no urgency in the act. "Don't upset yourself," he said. "We have something in common now, haven't we? Why don't you give me the keys?"

What . . . what?" Maletkin was paralyzed; he could not speak.

"Let me have the keys, please," continued Vasili. "I'll give them back to you as soon as I'm inside. You're nervous, comrade, and nervous people do nervous things. I don't want you driving away without me. The keys, please."

The ominous barrel of the Graz-Burya was inches from Maletkin's face, his eyes shifting nervously between the gun and Taleniekov, he fumbled for the ignition switch and removed the keys. "Here," he whispered.

"Thank you, comrade. And we are comrades, you know that, don't you? There'd be no point in either of us trying to take advantage of the other's predicament. We'd both lose."

Taleniekov walked around the hood of the car, stepped through the snowbank, and climbed in the front seat beside the morose traitor.

"Come now, Colonel Maletkin -- it is colonel, by now, isn't it? -- there's no reason for this hostility. I want to hear all the news."

Randy sez: In this short section, Vasili Taleniekov accomplishes the first of his objectives -- he prevents Maletkin from panicking.

Both men are in a very tight spot. Each is certain that the other is a traitor to Mother Russia. Each distrusts the other. Each would be better off with the other man dead.

Yet Taleniekov is in complete control of the situation, whereas Maletkin is sweating his socks off. What makes the difference?

Two things. First, Taleniekov was first to recognize the other man, so he's had the advantage of a few minutes of preparation before their meeting. Second, Taleniekov is a skilled agent, whereas Maletkin is a plodding incompetent who has risen to second-in-command at an obscure KGB outpost by reason of seniority.

These differences show up in their first exchange of dialogue:

Line 1: "Good morning, Comrade Maletkin. It is Maletkin, isn't it?"

Line 2: "My God! You!"

Randy sez: In Line 1, Taleniekov speaks calmly, matter-of-factly, greeting Maletkin by name. The subtext here is that "everything is normal." Taleniekov knows full well that Maletkin is dangerous. The man might try to ram him with the door, or pull a gun, or try to drive off, or radio for help, or any number of other obnoxious things. Taleniekov would then be forced to shoot Maletkin, but he'd rather not. By speaking calmly as if there is no danger, he actually REDUCES the danger.

In Line 2, Maletkin says exactly what he's thinking. He had believed he was picking up an American infiltrator. Instead, he's picking up the famous Vasili Taleniekov, who now knows that he, Maletkin, is a traitor. Rumors say that Taleniekov is also a traitor, but . . . is he? Maletkin can't know and he's terrified. His dialogue carries no subtext.

In the next exchange, Taleniekov moves from words to actions. Again, he moves calmly and deliberately, in full control of the weak-minded Maletkin:

Line 3: With his left hand, Taleniekov reached in and held the flashlight, turning it slowly away, no urgency in the act. "Don't upset yourself," he said. "We have something in common now, haven't we? Why don't you give me the keys?"

Line 4: What ... what?" Maletkin was paralyzed; he could not speak.

Randy sez: In Line 3, Taleniekov moves the flashlight out of his eyes and then assures Maletkin that they are both traitors. This reduces Maletkin's biggest fear -- that Taleniekov will expose him to the KGB. Then, Taleniekov calmly asks for the keys. The subtext is that Maletkin is in no danger.

In Line 4, Maletkin's jabbering makes it clear that he is still out of control, but he is paralyzed into inaction. Again, Maletkin's lines carry no subtext. He is too much of a dullard to use subtexting.

Line 5: "Let me have the keys, please," continued Vasili. "I'll give them back to you as soon as I'm inside. You're nervous, comrade, and nervous people do nervous things. I don't want you driving away without me. The keys, please."

Line 6: The ominous barrel of the Graz-Burya was inches from Maletkin's face, his eyes shifting nervously between the gun and Taleniekov, he fumbled for the ignition switch and removed the keys. "Here," he

whispered.

Randy sez: In Line 5, Taleniekov tells Maletkin exactly what he's thinking -- that he doesn't trust him. But he does it in a nice way: "You're nervous, comrade" -- and again, his voice is calm and sure. The subtext is clear -- "I am in control, even if you are just about to wet your pants."

In Line 6, the gun provides Maletkin with all the persuasion he needs. His fumbling actions make it clear that while he is not in control of the situation, he is also not going to do anything stupid. He's going to do whatever Taleniekov tells him. This paragraph is so nicely done that most readers will ignore the run-on first sentence, which really should have been fixed by the editor.

Line 7: "Thank you, comrade. And we are comrades, you know that, don't you? There'd be no point in either of us trying to take advantage of the other's predicament. We'd both lose."

Line 8: Taleniekov walked around the hood of the car, stepped through the snowbank, and climbed in the front seat beside the morose traitor.

Line 9: "Come now, Colonel Maletkin -- it is colonel, by now, isn't it? -- there's no reason for this hostility. I want to hear all the news."

Randy sez: In Line 7, Taleniekov assures Maletkin that they are on the same side and that it would make no sense for either of them to try to take advantage. This is a flat lie. Taleniekov intends to force Maletkin to drive him to Leningrad, which will mean an awkward all-day absence from his real job at local KGB headquarters. Furthermore, Taleniekov intends to find a way to get Maletkin executed.

In Line 9, Taleniekov picks up the dialogue in a mock-friendly bantering tone that leaves no doubt that he is in charge and Maletkin had better do whatever he tells him.

I don't have space to show you how Taleniekov bullies Maletkin into driving him to Leningrad. However, I think it's worth showing a couple of lines a bit further down, in which Taleniekov sets a trap for Maletkin. They've been discussing the past few years, and Taleniekov idly mentions that he once heard Maletkin's name during a counter-intelligence investigation. Maletkin responds fearfully:

Line 10: "Me? I was brought up?"

Line 11: "Don't worry. I threw them off and protected you. You and the other man in Vyborg."

Randy sez: In Line 10, Maletkin reacts once again with no subtexting, saying exactly what he thinks. He's terrified that KGB has ever entertained the idea that he, Maletkin, might be a traitor.

In Line 11, Taleniekov responds with a series of lies. He implies that he, too, has been a traitor for some years. He says explicitly that he protected Maletkin from suspicion. Then he drops the bomb in an apparently off-the-cuff comment: he claims that there is a second traitor in KGB Vyborg, (where Maletkin works).

Maletkin immediately reads the subtext of this claim -- knowing the name of another traitor would give him a lot of power over that man. Maletkin will do anything to get the name of that traitor. Taleniekov promises to give him the name when they've finished their excursion.

In reality, there is no other traitor, and Taleniekov's goal here is to get Maletkin to cooperate fully for this mission and then to incriminate himself when he returns to work.

In the above example, we've seen an example of one-sided subtexting. Maletkin's half of the dialogue has no subtext. Taleniekov's half is packed full of subtext. There's no question which half is more fun to read.

4) Marketing: Web Sites and Blogging, Part 7

This is the seventh in a series of articles on using a web site and/or a blog to help promote your writing.

Last month in this column I talked about how important it is to make sure that your web site or blog includes what I call "great content." Great content is valuable, unique, understandable, entertaining, and free. If your content is all of these, then it is "great content."

This month, I'll talk about what you need to do in order to help people find your web site or blog. Here, I'm talking about people who never heard of you before. People who already know about you can easily find you. But unless you are famous, there aren't that many people who already know you.

How do people find you when they don't know you? It's not very hard. They find you through a search engine. Search engines are the most trusted of all entities on

the web, because they are rewarded for being honest brokers who connect searchers with great content.

If you have great content, then all you have to do is to help the search engines help you.

Let's look at an example.

Imagine for a moment that you need to know the exact lyrics for the song "Bridge Over Troubled Waters." What's the fastest way to get them? Here's what I would do:

- * Pop up a web browser
- * Go to Google's web site
- * Type "lyrics bridge over troubled waters"
- * Wait for Google to return the top 10 results
- * Scan the list, starting from the top
- * Click on the first result that looks plausible
- * If that isn't what I wanted, keep scanning results
- * Quit when I find what I want

I tried this just now and the first result gave me the answer on a site named "LyricsFreak.com". The page also had a link to a page where I could get this song as a ringtone for my phone. It also had links to other songs by Simon and Garfunkel and links to "related lyrics" by Neil Young, Mariah Carey, Asia, U2, James Taylor, Frank Sinatra, and the Rolling Stones.

There are a number of things we can learn from this exercise.

First, I didn't know this web site existed until a few minutes ago. I never heard of it and would never have guessed its URL. But Google knows this site. I trust Google because my experience tells me that it usually takes me to what I want, quickly and efficiently.

Second, I communicated what I wanted to Google by typing in a few words, but without any concern for grammar. I typed in five words: "lyrics bridge over troubled waters". These words taken together are called a "keyphrase." Each of the individual words in it is called a "keyword."

Third, notice that the keyphrase is far more than the sum of the parts. If I had typed in ANY of those five keywords alone into Google, there is very little chance that what I wanted would be in the top ten results, nor even the top thousand results. (Imagine searching for "bridge" by itself.)

Fourth, when Google gave me the results, it displayed several pieces of information about each page. The very first result showed me the title of the page: "Simon and Garfunkel | Bridge Over Troubled Waters lyrics". Beneath that was a short description that said "Bridge Over Troubled Waters lyrics by Simon and Garfunkel." When I saw that, I was certain I had a winner.

Fifth, I started at the top of the results page that Google gave me and worked down. Because the first result was a clear winner, I didn't even bother to look at the #2 entry, nor any of the others. Being #1 in Google is way better than being #2. There's an old saying: "If you're not the lead dog, the view never changes." (Next time you hear a statistician talking about a "Pareto distribution," that's what he's really saying.)

Sixth, when I clicked on the first result, I got what I wanted right away. It wasn't buried. It was right there -- the whole song.

Seventh, there was more on the page than just the lyrics I was looking for. There was a link to a ringtone page, where I could buy the song. There was a paid banner ad to a youth-oriented online clothing store. There were a number of Google AdSense ads. There were links to other pages with more Simon and Garfunkel songs (each with its own set of ads). There were links to pages with lyrics by similar artists. The creator of this page has "monetized" the page.

Eighth, the page had nothing irrelevant on it. There were no ads for beer. No ads for vacation getaways to Tahiti. No ads for psychological counseling, union-removers, or camel-milk. There were no ads for your book. So even though the page is "monetized," it is done in a targeted way. All of the ads are plausibly going to be of interest to people who come to the page.

We can learn a lot from this simple example. Here are some of the most obvious things:

Any web page should have content on one tightly focused topic. Just one -- no more, no less. The page I found had content on only one thing -- the lyrics for "Bridge Over Troubled Waters." No page can be about "everything." The search engines know that a page that's about everything is a page about nothing.

The topic of a web page should be expressible as a keyphrase. The page I found was well-defined by "lyrics bridge over troubled waters" and any permutations of those words. Whoever designed the page intended that search engines would yield this page for searches on this particular keyword.

The keyphrase should play prominently in the title of the page. The title of the page I found is "Simon and Garfunkel | Bridge Over Troubled Waters lyrics". Search engines know that the title of a page is a strong indicator of which keyphrases it is related to. So choose your page titles carefully!

The keyphrase should also be in the "description" of the page. There is a way to define a "description" for any web page. Search engines often display this

"description" in the results. The "description" of the page I found is "Bridge Over Troubled Waters lyrics by Simon and Garfunkel." That's it. That's enough. To define the "description" of any web page on your site, you need to set the "description metatag". If you don't know how to do this, ask your webmaster. Or Google this phrase.

It is OK to "monetize" a page by having ads, but these ads should be strongly related to the great content on the page. A bunion-remover ad just wouldn't work very well on a page with lyrics about a song. Likewise, an ad for your romance novel won't work very well on a page of political analysis for the coming election. (An ad for a political thriller might work VERY well, though.)

I have a lot more to say about all this, but we'll save it for next month. In particular, we'll talk about how to decide what keyphrases you might try for your web page. You can guess . . . or you can do it scientifically. Next month, I'll show you a new free tool that works brilliantly. See ya then!

5) What's New At AdvancedFictionWriting.com

I recently posted my second monthly humor column in a new online magazine. Is it as wicked as my first column? You decide! Here's the link:
http://www.ChristianFictionOnlineMagazine.com/biz_rooney.html

I teach at roughly 4 to 6 writing conferences per year, depending on my schedule.

If you want to hear me speak on fiction writing, there will be a couple of opportunities in coming months.

I will be teaching on those pesky Motivation-Reaction Units at the ACFW conference in Minneapolis in September. Details here:
<http://www.ACFW.com>

I will be teaching internet marketing in a major track at the Florida Christian Writers conference in February. Details here:
<http://www.flwriters.org/>

If you'd like me to teach at your conference, email me to find out how outrageously expensive I am.

If you'd just like to hear me teach, I have a number of recordings and e-books that are outrageously cheap. Details here:
<http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com/info>

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Extremely tasteful postscript: I encourage you to email this E-zine to any writer friends of yours who might benefit from it. I only ask that you email the whole thing, not bits and pieces. Otherwise, you'll be getting desperate calls at midnight from your friends asking where they can get their own free subscription.

At the moment, there is one place to subscribe:
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