

CONTENTS

NEW AT novelinspirations.com
STORY STARTER
SHORT STORY – The Messenger, part 1
WRITER’S CORNER
RECOMMENDED WEBSITE
PASS IT ON
REPRINT RIGHTS

====

NEW AT novelinspirations.com

I’ve been busy teaching novelinspirations.com’s FIRST EVER online course – 30 Days of Writing. We’re about halfway through the course and with only 10 participants, we’ve already cranked out over 110,000 words!

October’s FEATURED AUTHOR is Kim Vogel Sawyer. She’s an award-winning author and it’s no wonder, because her characters jump off the page and pull you into their world. If you haven’t read the interview with Kim, jump over to novelinspirations.com and do it!

Coming in November, Kathleen Y’Barbo will be the FEATURED AUTHOR and her featured book is *Beloved Castaway* – an adventurous historical romance. Check back in November to enter to win a copy of this book!

I have a TOP SECRET ANNOUNCEMENT that I’ll reveal November 1, so watch for it in your emailboxes!

====

STORY STARTER

Looking for a little inspiration to start a new chapter or scene? Try out this story starter.

What’s the one main thing that your character carries from their past? What memory causes them the most pain (and probably relates to what their black moment will be)?

With this memory firmly in mind, choose one of the following three sentences to start your scene. Then use five or more of the keywords and see where you can go with the scene!

Starting sentences:

“Ouch!”

Wind seeped through cracks in the windowsill, crying.
"Babe, it's not what you think."

Keywords:

Hand
Desperate
Ring
Cicadas
Crime
Help
Hard
Blue
Yard
Stereotype
Edit
Gulf

====

SHORT STORY – Part 1

The Messenger

By Lacy J. Williams

"Don't kill the messenger!"

The words didn't make it out of my mouth before a bullet bounced off the tin just above my head. I scooted behind the corner of the barn, my ears ringing. A hen and her chicks waddled across the dirt in front of my boots, unconcerned.

How had I gotten myself into this mess? Dirk's promise of wealth and fame rang hollow in my head. Especially with that little mink sending bullets my way. If I walked up to the dugout, I was likely to get shot. If I returned to Smokey Oaks without Dot Martin, I was likely to get shot.

Either way, I was a goner.

I pulled off my worn Stetson and used a red bandanna to sop up the sweat that beaded my forehead. Hootenanny, it was hot in western Oklahoma. So hot a person could hardly think.

"Hello, mister."

I startled at the high-pitched voice. I swung around real slow to face a girl who couldn't have been more than seven or eight. Her red hair hung down her back in two braids and her face was almost all freckles.

"Well, howdy. Who're you?"

She shifted the bouquet of wildflowers clutched in one hand to the other one.

"Who're you?"

"Why don't you tell me first?"

"Tell me first."

Angered by her echo, I struggled to contain myself and pasted a wide smile on my face. What I needed to do was get up to that dugout. "Do you know who lives here?"

She wrinkled her nose. "Ever'body knows." She turned away and squatted to examine a yellow flower. She began to sing, but I couldn't make out the soft words.

An idea burst into my brain. I edged up to the corner of the barn and waved my Stetson wildly. "Halloo!" I shouted. "Don't shoot! I got a girl out here!"

Silence.

"A little girl! Did you hear me?" I glanced over my shoulder and that girl was staring at me with wide blue eyes.

"What do you want?"

Aha.

The voice from the dugout sounded mighty distrustful and a little scared.

"My name's Bo Bradley. I need to talk to Dot Martin."

"Mister." I looked down when I felt a tug on my pant leg. The little girl had smeared mud on my new gray trousers. I waved a hand to shush her and strained my ears to hear the voice from the dugout.

"Why don't you send the girl on up here and we'll talk."

"Mister." A sharper tug told of the girl's urgency. I looked down with a frown.

"What?"

"Don't tell."

"Don't tell what?"

"I ain't to be out here. Mama said I'm suppos'd to be taking a nap."

I felt my stomach sink. "Mama?" I'd throttle Dirk when I got back to town. Either that or find a nice big rattlesnake to put in his bed.

I put my hand on the girl's shoulder and stepped out into the open, trusting that Dot Martin wouldn't shoot me with her daughter in tow. "I'm comin' in!"

It took my eyes a moment to adjust to the darkness inside.

"What do you want?"

Dot Martin blew her blond bangs out of her eyes, not releasing her grasp on the rifle she had leveled at my chest. Her other hand clutched the shoulder of her little girl.

Still not sure I was going to make it out of here alive, I regretted letting loose the girl, but it was done now. I held up my hands in front of me, hoping the woman behind the trigger would notice they were empty.

"Mrs. Martin, I'm just telling you what was told to me. If you don't have the cash for your mortgage payment, I'm afraid the bank doesn't have any choice but to remove you from the property."

Her hand on the gun was shaking now. Not a good sign. "And what, exactly, am I supposed to do then? I have no family, no way to make money other than this farm."

I swallowed, tugged at the kerchief around my neck. "Well, ma'am, Dirk Rodriguez has offered you a job at the saloon."

Her face turned red. Before she could speak, I rushed on. "Playin' the piano, ma'am - ah, Mrs. Martin. Dirk says you sing real good when we get a preacher passin' through, and he heard somewhere that you can play."

The color faded from her cheeks, but not totally. When she spoke, her voice was quiet, but firm. "I want to you go back and give Mr. Rodriguez a message for me. You tell that no-account, dirty-" she glanced down at her daughter and hesitated "man that

there's no way I'll ever step foot in that house of sin." Her chin rose and I noticed the shape of her rosy lips. "You can also tell him that we're not leaving this place. I believe under our loan agreement we have a grace period of thirty days. I'll have the payment by then."

I could tell by the set of her shoulders that the conversation was over. I was back on my roan and out of firing range before a body could say "yeehaw." On the rise overlooking the little valley where Mrs. Martin's dugout was hidden, I turned back and rested on the pommel of my saddle.

No wonder Dirk wanted the land. Judging from the green grass and tree lined creek snaking through it, the valley was fertile. Up until a coupla months ago, Mrs. Martin had had several hundred head of cattle that had grazed here. Rustlers, was what everyone in town whispered.

Yep, Dirk was going to be spitting mad when I gave him Mrs. Martin's answer.

Of a sudden, the sky darkened. I glanced over my shoulder to see storm clouds covering up the sun. Faster than I could blink, a twister dropped out in front, heading straight toward me.

I spurred my mount and headed back toward that valley, hoping against hope to find some shelter. I was halfway between the barn and dugout when the roar of the storm filled my ears to popping.

Something ripped through my shoulder and knocked me from my mount with a loud cry. "YEEEEOOOOOOW!"

TO BE CONTINUED

====

WRITER'S CORNER – HISTORICAL TIDBITS

This column will feature a different topic each quarter. This quarter's feature: Historical Tidbits

Women's fashion changed a lot during the nineteenth century. Near the beginning of the century (roughly 1812 to 1830 is considered the Regency period), the dresses were much simpler than those worn in the Georgian era (nearly the whole seventeenth century). Long, flowing styles loosely based on ancient Greek and Roman styles, with high (empire) waists, came into style. Women wore their hair in graceful updos or part up and part down. White was the color of the day, although pastels and even darker colors were worn, too.

<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/19cdress/> - Check out this great site with a lot of gowns for the whole nineteenth century.

====

RECOMMENDED WEBSITE

<http://triciagoyer.com/>

Have you visited Tricia Goyer's website? She has some great writer's resources and also shares her publication story, which is quite inspiring. Her site looks great with its new and improved look.

====

PASS IT ON

There is no charge for this newsletter. If you want to pass it along, please do so, but PLEASE forward the newsletter in its entirety.

Subscribe to this newsletter by visiting
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/novelinspirations/join/>

Newsletter archives can be found here: <http://newsletter.novelinspirations.com>

Copyright © 2000 by Lacy J. Williams

====

REPRINT RIGHTS

Permission is granted to use any of the articles in this newsletter in your own newsletter, e-zine or web site, as long as you include the following blurb with it:

Lacy J. Williams is an inspirational writer and loves to help others find their inspiration, whether it comes from reading or writing. Visit novelinspirations.com today and GET INSPIRED!

====

Thanks for reading!

Lacy J. Williams
Publisher, novelinspirations.com newsletter