

Workshop Proposal

Ray Rhamey

Tips and Techniques for Successful Self-editing

Literary agent Dan Conaway, Writer's House, said this about the coaching I do on my blog and in my book, *Mastering the Craft of Compelling Storytelling*:

“Learn the critical art of ruthless and rigorous self-editing from a man who understands it better than most. His practical, sensible advice really can help you become a better writer.”

In these lively days of self-publishing, thorough, painstaking self-editing has become more necessary than ever, especially if you cannot afford to hire an editor. In this workshop, I approach self-editing from both sides of the coin, as an author and an editor. The workshop can sharpen and strengthen both fiction and memoir narratives.

Topics and foci include:

Wordcraft: beginning with a discussion of “writing for effect” and the writer’s goal in creating a narrative, we dig into the words you use, identifying and correcting weak, wasteful, and wrong words or usage that weaken and slow a narrative.

Technique: dealing with common flaws in manuscripts, including

- demystifying showing versus telling, and when to do both
- the need for transitions
- the need for setting the scene
- getting rid of the flab of overwriting
- identifying the two types of filters that distance the reader from the story experience;
- conclusion words that cheat the reader out of seeing the story accurately
- the good and the bad of adverbs
- avoiding dialogue techniques that cry “amateur”
- using dialogue “beats” to enhance storytelling
- delivering the “sound” of dialogue
- the key issue of motivation, the causality that must underlie what happens in the story and creates credibility in the reader’s mind

Packed with examples and exercises, writers will learn:

1. how to identify and correct weak language
2. how to spot and strengthen weak technique
3. how to create and maintain a crisp narrative flow and pace

The workshop content is based on my book, *Mastering the Craft of Compelling Storytelling*, which arises from years of editing and writing book-length fiction.

Credentials:

I operate a book editing and design business, Creative Book Editing and Design—I've been freelance editing full-length fiction manuscripts for about twelve years. I also run the "litblog," Flogging the Quill. I get about 9,000 page hits per month.

My independent publishing company, FtQ Press, published my writing craft book titled *Mastering the Craft of Compelling Storytelling* in 2014.

Bestselling author Tess Gerritsen said this about my book:

"For some time now, I've been a fan of "Flogging the Quill," Rhamey's excellent blogsite about the how-to's of writing. Now he's compiled his expertise into a writing guide, and it's a must-have for any novelist--published or aspiring. It's one of the most readable, entertaining books on writing out there."

I'm also a novelist; I've published 4 novels, and have had literary agent representation. My novels are commercial fiction and include speculative fiction; fantasy; and mystery. Samples are at rayrhamey.com.

In screenwriting, I was a story editor for Filmation, Los Angeles, and my screen credits include an adaptation of *The Little Engine that Could* and 20 half-hour screenplays for animated series. I've been a website editor and video producer at two universities, and an advertising writer/creative director.

Workshop experience:

While this is a new workshop, I have done other workshops on the craft of fiction at these writers conferences:

- 2005, 2006 Writer's Weekend, Seattle, WA
- 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012 Write on the Sound Writers Conference, Edmonds, WA
- 2007 Murder in the Grove Writers Conference, Boise, ID
- 2009 Mendocino Coast Writer's Conference, Mendocino, CA
- 2011 Willamette Writers Association, Central Point, OR
- 2012 South Coast Writers' Conference, Gold Beach, OR
- 2012 Wordstock Festival, Portland, OR
- 2013 Willamette Writer's Conference, Portland, OR
- 2012, 2013 Write on the River Writers' Conference
- 2013, 2014 San Miguel Writers' Conference, San Miguel, Mexico
- 2014 Idaho Writers League Conference, Idaho Falls, ID
- 2014 Writer Unboxed Unconference, Salem, MA

Workshops taught at those conferences:

- Crafting a Killer First Page
- 3 Keys to Killer Storytelling
- Create Killer Book Covers for Less than \$50
- Crafting Killer Description and Dialogue

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