

HOW TO GRAB & HOLD A READER'S ATTENTION



**Hooks, Cliff hangers, Contradictions, Using
Emotion and Much More**

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*“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . .
The man who never reads lives only one.”
- George R.R. Martin*



To my fellow writers.

Let's face it... books serve as our gateway to knowledge and adventure. And yet, I can't tell you the number of novels I've started and then stopped because the narrative either didn't grab or ultimately hold my attention. But did you know that research shows that humans now have only an 8-second attention span (down from 12 seconds just a few years ago.)

That means we tend to skim written copy or scroll through things looking for something that will interest us enough to keep reading. Proof of that is that statistics show people spend less than 30-seconds scrolling through a webpage before moving on.

As authors, you should be aware of this and remember that we live in a 'soundbite' world. Much of our job, then, is to learn how to grab and hold a reader's attention if we hope to gather a fan base of readers who stay with us.

As a freelance writer, I've learned a number of techniques to not only hold a reader's attention but to persuade them to act: buy, donate, or click. Writing a novel is different, however, since you're crafting a storyline with characters, conflict, and resolution. You'd think all of that would keep a reader reading, but it doesn't. There are still more techniques for you to learn to keep a reader's eyes on the page.

That's what this short eBook is all about. You'll likely be familiar with some of these techniques. But I've included an entire list for you to practice, so don't get overwhelmed. As you're finishing the first draft of your book, you'll get a sense of where you can go back and deploy one or more of these techniques to strengthen the hold you have over your reader.

Enjoy and learn.

Lynn

GRAB READERS' ATTENTION WITH A HOOK



What is a hook? A hook is a literary technique designed to catch the reader's attention and give them clues about the type of story they are about to read.

The hook is something given right at the beginning of your story that is **new, unexpected, or breaks a pattern**. In other words, by its very nature it 'hooks' the reader like a fish, so they dig in and continue reading.

Hooks can take all forms. They can be:

- a surprising opening sentence or paragraph,
- a joke,
- a bold statement,
- a famous quote,
- a quick story,
- a visual image,
- a question,
- the introduction of a big idea.

Hooks should surprise or even startle the reader. They can even shock the reader or make them laugh. They can create suspense or intrigue about a character, the setting, or even the time period.

Try to focus on the one concept, theme, or piece of information that is central to your story.

Examples of Different Types of Hooks (These are examples from my own books or short stories.)

- **A statement of simple fact. (Opening line from *Mass Murder*)**

Premonitions were taken seriously in the Norville family.

This simple sentence creates a sense of unease and suspense.

- **A statement or paragraph that establishes mood.** (First page of *Inn Keeping with Murder*.)

It was early morning. An insidious breeze skimmed the lake as she stepped onto the porch of her million-dollar home on Mercer Island. The breeze came unchallenged and alone, bringing with it the smell of lake water and pine and just a pinch of foreboding. As the breeze slithered past the branches and rustled the leaves, it seemed to whisper her name... Ellen Fairchild!

When a breeze slithers past tree branches to come unchallenged and alone, something is wrong, and it instantly creates a feeling of danger or suspense.

- **Something unusual and unexpected.** (First page of *Grave Doubts*.)

The hawk rested quietly on the branch of an old oak, gazing imperiously down on the gravesite below. Fresh graves produced tender morsels of food. And the hawk, with its keen eyesight and superior reflexes, would wait patiently until dinner poked its head above ground.

The fact the story opens through the eyes of the hawk is unusual on its own and a little unsettling, which sets up the reader for what's to come.

- **A visceral image.** (Opening line from *If I Should Die Before I Wake*.)

A noise from somewhere in the bowels of the old house woke her.

This reminds readers of all the moments when noises have frightened us.

- **Use of humor.** (Opening line from *A History of Murder*.)

I've begun to think that murder follows me around. No, really.

This gives the reader an instant window into the narrator's snarky personality.

- **A statement or paragraph that forms an emotional connection.** (Opening line from *Murder in the Past Tense*.)

Her body was stuffed into a duffle bag and tossed carelessly into the old well as if it were nothing more than a bag of garbage.

Here, we immediately feel sorry for the girl/woman who has been treated like trash.

- **Drop the reader into the middle of the action.** (Opening line from *The Key to Murder*.)

My uncle was dead before he hit the floor. Not in the literal sense. He would die a minute or so later. But I didn't know that at the time.

These lines take you by surprise and quickly put you at the scene.

- **Start with a strong voice.** (Opening line from *The Other Side*.)

She sat in the bedroom with the baseball bat held firmly between her hands, staring at the closet door. While she waited, the adrenaline burned through her veins, putting every nerve on alert. The walls of her mouth were dry, but her hands were sweating and there was a low humming in her ears. Could she pull this off?

These are very straightforward, declarative sentences that don't leave any room for doubt that there is something very wrong here.

Remember that the goal is to catch the reader's attention and then to hold it. That means you can't pull your foot off the gas pedal once you've written the hook. In fact, I often write the hook after I've finished the entire first draft because so many things change as the story develops.

And don't be afraid to try out different types of hooks. Think about your main character, your theme, the core conflict in your story, the time-period the story is set in, the location, and more.

Decide which of these (or something else) would be a natural lead into the story and then figure out how to do it in an unusual way.

And there, you've got it!

CLIFFHANGERS



We're all familiar with the concept of a cliffhanger. It's a literary device employed by authors to heighten the pace and keep readers turning pages. Cliffhangers are used most often in mysteries and thrillers, but they can be successfully used in almost any form of writing.

How do cliffhangers make people keep reading?

Cliffhangers typically raise a question, reveal an intriguing piece of information, or make a declarative statement that sets up the next chapter in a way the reader is left with a choice; *do I put the book down now and wait until later to find out what happens, or do I keep reading?*

The purpose of a cliffhanger then is to **increase anticipation** for what comes next by leaving something unresolved.

While cliffhangers are most often used at the end of chapters, they can also be used at the end of a book, especially if it is part of a series. Plenty of television shows use this device to make sure you tune in to the following episode.

I used the following question as a cliffhanger at the end of the first chapter of the first book in my Old Maids of Mercer Island mysteries *Inn Keeping with Murder*, which also served as a hook for the rest of the story:

In the flash of an eye, the Lexus crashed through the guardrail and sailed off into the Moon's welcoming embrace leaving Ellen with only one lingering thought...

"What really happened to Rita?"

Here is an example of using a declarative sentence as a cliffhanger from my book *Murder in the Past Tense*:

Giorgio placed the skull back in the body bag. “This just became a crime scene,” he said.

“And you know it’s a crime because she was put in a duffle bag?” the chief asked.

“Yeah. That and the big hole in the side of her head.”

In that example, I’ve answered the question of whether this was murder, but also now opened up the larger question of who the killer is.

You can also use foreshadowing to create anticipation. This example is from *Inn Keeping with Murder*. Pay attention to the second sentence.

I downed a couple of Advil PM with the warm milk and went to bed, thinking only of a good night’s sleep. Boy was I wrong.

And lastly, you can set up a feeling of doomsday that will keep your readers turning pages. In this example from *Inn Keeping with Murder*, I don’t let up on the tension. I remind the reader that despite a terrible car accident that seems like the climax of the scene, the threat isn’t over.

As the shadow of the car floated past, a face turned towards me, a helmet of gleaming white hair shining through the darkness. *The predator was still here.*

Cliffhangers are fun for readers, but they are also fun for writers to create. I get an intense feeling of pleasure when I’ve crafted a good chapter ending that will force readers to question whether they’ll read one more page or go to bed.

Look for cliffhangers in the next book you read or TV show you watch and ask yourself whether the writer was successful.

WHERE TO BEGIN A STORY



One of my favorite subjects is how to effectively open a story, because there are so many possibilities. The challenge is to pick the one that not only effectively opens that gateway into your story, but does it in such a way that draws the reader in to keep reading.

For instance, you may choose to tell a story of how a brutal rape in college nearly destroyed a young woman's life and how she

rose above it to become an entrepreneurial success. How could you begin that story? Here are just a few ways:

- Begin with the woman's childhood, showing how much her family loved and cared for her. This might create a good contrast to what happens after the rape.
- Begin with her in college, on the cusp of graduating and getting married soon.
- Begin with the assault and the immediate aftermath, showing the absolute horror and chaos of her world, interweaving other parts of her life as flashbacks.
- Begin with her as an older woman who has lived through the pain and is now faced with another young woman who, like her, suffered from a brutal attack and is thinking of ending her life.

What is the best way to open that story?

That's for you to decide. All four of those could be powerful openings. I am sure there are more. My point is that stories don't need to be told chronologically, and there is not just one way to begin a story. In fact, there are several creative ways to begin (and then to tell) the same basic story. Your choice depends on what *you* want the focus to be.

Let's go back to the story of the woman's rape. Consider these benefits to each potential opening and then consider what your choice might be:

Begin with her childhood, showing how much her family loved and cared for her. This might be a good contrast to what happens after the rape.

This is a story of contrasts – between the idyllic life of her childhood and the horror of what was to come. It can emphasize what the woman has lost.

Begin with her in college, on the cusp of graduating and getting married soon to her boyfriend of four years.

This shows the pain of having a promising future ripped away from her. It could also show the difficulty of navigating a newly defined relationship with her fiancé.

Begin with the assault and the immediate aftermath, showing the absolute horror her world has become, interweaving other parts of her life as flashbacks.

This choice shows the pounding brutality of the rape, giving the reader real insight into the cacophony of emotions a woman goes through and how she might find her way out.

Begin with her as an older woman who has lived through the pain and is now faced with another young woman who, like her, suffered from a brutal attack and is thinking of ending her life.

This choice is more reflective, allowing the story to unfold (sometimes gently, sometimes not so gently) as she helps a younger woman navigate the same path forward that she did.

In the end, it's up to you to decide what the best opening will be for your story. Think about what it is you are trying to accomplish or emphasize in the story. Then figure out the best way to bring the reader into the story.

THE ROLES OF CONFLICT AND EMOTION



Conflict (could be internal and/or external problems) and emotion are at the center of every good story. Why? Because they connect the audience to the characters in the story and make us care about what happens to them.

People often stop reading or listening to a story because they don't care enough about the characters or the storyline to continue. And once you have lost them, they rarely come back.

How do you fix that? You focus on the conflict, or the problems, barriers, or challenges your main character faces.

In a traditional story, conflict creates the reason for the storyline. What do I mean by that?

The main character (MC) in a novel or movie must chase something (a deep desire or need) which then drives the story forward. Without conflict, however (the person or thing that stands in their way), the MC would achieve the goal too easily, and the audience would become bored or feel like, "Who cares?"

In fiction, conflict often comes in the form of a villain. But it doesn't have to be an individual. It can be an internal problem, erupting volcano, alien invasion, or anything else that stands in the way of the protagonist achieving their goal.

Conflict adds tension to the story and a reason for us to keep reading.

For instance, in the movie *The King's Speech*, King George VI (played by Colin Firth) must make a radio speech to the British empire following the declaration of war on Nazi Germany in 1939. The problem? King George stutters badly, and yet must sound strong and confident when he speaks to his subjects. Everything

depends on this speech, but he has difficulty getting out a full sentence without stuttering.

He summons his speech therapist to get him ready on short notice and dives in for the marathon. The tension is palpable as the deadline approaches, and he tries and fails and tries and fails again.

This is a perfect example of using conflict in a story. Here, the desire/need that King George VI is chasing represents not only his self-esteem but the ability to inspire a nation. The conflict is his inability to overcome the stutter he's had since childhood. The ensuing emotions run high.

Okay, what about emotion?

Well, conflict stands in the way of the main character achieving their goal. And it is the emotion that arises from that conflict that binds the reader to the story. Trust me, you can't help but cheer for King George VI, who does, in fact, succeed in the end.

So, how do we leverage emotion in our writing?

- Put your primary focus on the stakes—what your main character risks losing.
- Create a visual image in the mind of the reader that will help to create emotion and make the story memorable.
- Use descriptive language to make the character and what he/she stands to lose seem as real as possible.

Research supports the idea that talking 'at' the reader won't be as effective as engaging 'with' the reader. Emotion does that. Why? Because it helps people relate to the story in a personal way.

As Anne Lamott says, "...you must risk placing real emotion at the center of your work. Write straight into the emotional center of things."

SHOW, DON'T TELL



“Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.”

—— Anton Chekhov

There is a solid rule in storytelling that as much as possible the author should ‘show-don’t tell.’ The reason behind this is that when you merely tell a reader something, they don’t internalize the information. It doesn’t create a visual image, so they don’t feel anything. You have only given them facts they are supposed to remember.

When you ‘show’ the reader what you want them to know, it not only makes a bigger impact on their brain, but they are also drawn into the story, which means they are more likely to remember it.

Tim Grahl, CEO of Story Grid, says there are specific reasons why you should show rather than tell. He says, showing:

- Enhances engagement by your readers: You have made them active participants, drawing them into the story.
- Deepens emotional connection: Your readers will feel the emotions of whoever or whatever you are writing about, which makes the story more memorable.

- Adds narrative depth: When you only tell your readers what you want them to know, the story becomes flat. When you draw your reader into the narrative, you add layers and texture, making everything more dynamic and compelling.

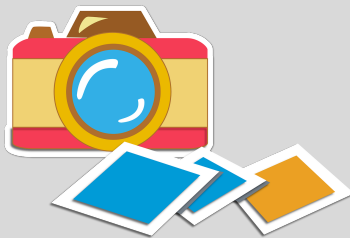
How do you show rather than tell? Here's an example:

'Tell' example: Robert lived in a shelter and was embarrassed by his dirty and torn clothes when he met the clinic director.

'Show' example: When Robert met the shelter's clinic director, he looked down and inwardly cringed at the sight of his shabby clothes, wondering what she would think of him.

Do you see the difference? In the first example, I'm telling you that Robert is embarrassed by his clothes. In the second, I turned that into action when he met the clinical director and looked down at his clothes, cringing with embarrassment.

One is telling. The other is action. In one, the reader feels nothing. In the second, the reader can feel Robert's embarrassment.



The idea is to create a visual image.

When you can create a visual image in someone's brain, they are more likely to focus on your story and remember what you've written. Advertisers do this all the time. Creating a visual image helps to draw the reader into the story and hold their attention.

You can accomplish this in several ways.

- 1) Use descriptive words to create a picture of something in the reader's mind. Here's another example from my YA book *Case of the Missing Will*.

Michael's body was eerily still, and yet the energy that flowed off him was enough to make my skin crawl. *Ever see pictures of a cobra a moment before it strikes?*

I immediately picture a cobra ready to strike, which is much better than if I'd merely written, *Michael stood still and tense*. Boring!

2) Use the five senses (smell, taste, touch, sight, sound) to help your reader visualize what you're talking about.

Stephen King is really good at this. I read Salem's Lot in high school and still remember the smell from the vampire's coffin. Read over these examples from my nonfiction book "Raise More Money Through Better Messaging," which helps nonprofits increase their income.

- When you talk about the gritty smell of dust and mold that many low-income people suffer through when living in squalor, you immediately put your reader where they are.
- When you describe the sound of a hungry baby's grumbling stomach, we remember the pain of our own hunger.
- When you describe the biting cold a person feels living on the street without shelter or warm clothes, we get a chill.
- When you describe the radiance in a new mother's face when she gazes down at her healthy baby thanks to your prenatal care, we share in her joy.
- When you describe the tangy sweetness of a fresh orange in contrast to dumpster diving for day-old bread, we taste the difference.

This is not rocket science. You can access lists of words to describe the five senses online.

I have created an entire free eBook on Show, don't tell, which you can access on my website [HERE](#):

SIMPLE TIPS & TRICKS TO GRAB & HOLD ATTENTION



There are several simple ways you can enhance your writing to grab and hold a reader's attention.

1) **Keep your paragraphs short, even as short as one sentence.**

When people are faced with long, dense paragraphs, they will often either skip ahead or stop reading all together. Short paragraphs pick up the pace and keep things

moving. You can intersperse short paragraphs with longer ones to help readers stay on the page.

2) **Choose powerful keywords.**

Word choice can change the impact of a single sentence. Even switching out one or two words or adding a short phrase can strengthen a sentence and help to hold a reader's attention. Pay attention to the following three examples of how to revise this sentence from my nonprofit book.

Nancy is a single mom who became homeless when she left her abusive husband of fourteen years and moved into the Hope for Tomorrow Shelter.

Unfortunately, this sentence merely talks *about* Nancy in a very impersonal way. Like Joe Friday from the old show *Dragnet*—it's just the facts ma'am.

How can we change the sentence to add more power? Below are three examples.

Nancy is a single mom who became homeless when she **fled** her abusive husband of fourteen years and took **refuge** with Hope for Tomorrow Shelter.

By changing only two words in that sentence, we suddenly feel as if Nancy was in imminent danger and the Hope for Tomorrow Shelter came to her aid. Here's another one;

Nancy became homeless when she was **forced to grab her frightened four-year-old daughter** and **flee** her abusive husband of fourteen years to find **safety and security** at Hope for Tomorrow Shelter.

Here, we have described the frightened daughter and used the word grabbed, which creates a picture of Nancy running out the door in fear for their lives. Giving the daughter's age also makes her more vulnerable. Finally, by adding safety and security at the end, the Hope for Tomorrow Shelter is painted as a safe haven.

Nancy was married for fourteen years to **a man who controlled every moment of her life and then beat her when she had the gall to stand up to him**. Finally, she had to **make the most difficult decision of her life**; she grabbed her daughter and a few belongings and fled **to live on the street, feeling she would be safer there than at home**. Just two months later, **she found an ally** and moved into Hope for Tomorrow Shelter, where she and her daughter would be safe, and she could get back on her feet.

This last example is in more of a story format. It paints a visual image of a controlling, abusive man and a woman who is scared to death of him. She is forced to make the hardest decision she will probably ever make, but finally finding safety and solace with your organization.

Hopefully, you can see from that with simple changes in wording and phrasing, you can create a much more engaging narrative to your story and keep your readers engaged.

3) **Do more with your setting.**

I have an entire eBook written on how to do this with your setting, but let me give you a snapshot of what I mean.

Setting doesn't have to just be the location where your story takes place. In fact, if you can make the setting have real meaning, you will help your reader feel involved in the story.

For instance, use something inherent to the setting to complicate or facilitate the action in your story or to affect your character emotionally or psychologically.

- Perhaps it's something sentimental (a photo, a collectible, a piece of jewelry) that your protagonist responds to whenever he/she is in its presence.
- Perhaps the house in which your protagonist lives is isolated and difficult to get to. How can you use that to complicate the story?
- Perhaps something about the building in which the story takes place constantly frustrates your main character, drawing attention to it. (The knob on the top of the staircase bannister post in *It's a Wonderful Life*.)
- Perhaps the house is hiding something the main character longs to find. Try a secret compartment, room, or tunnel.
- Maybe the town, house, or area brings up bad memories that play on your character's mind throughout the story.

These are just a few ways you can make better use of your setting to hold your reader's attention. To get my entire eBook "SETTING: It's More Than a Location" for only \$7, go [HERE](#).

4) Use contradictory statements.

Using a contradiction in such a small space in time makes your reader sit up and pay attention. Here's an example.

Caroline smiled as she unwrapped the small, square box, knowing this would be the best present of her life. Until it wasn't.

See how the contradiction snaps you to attention?

*Examples for the next set of points are all from my YA novel **Case of the Missing Will**.*

5) Research shows that our brains are designed to be keenly aware of changes.

Change makes us sit up and pay attention. Insert things into the story to reignite your reader's attention. Professionals will tell you that when you surprise a reader, it wakes them up and makes them ready to take in new information. A simple way to do that is to create a question your reader wants answered. Listed below are more ways to accomplish this.

- **Surprise your reader.**

Anytime you can surprise your reader with something unexpected, you'll rearrange their thought patterns. Here Julia, her brother, and their friend Carter are searching an old house for the missing will.

“Hello! Earth to Ben and Carter,” I said, interrupting them. “Let's find Mr. Pendleton's will before you go traipsing off to Buhsneeze or wherever it is you want to go.”

Both boys burst into laughter.

I crossed my arms over my chest. “You can stop laughing, smarty pants. I'm the one who got you in here.”

Ben sucked it up and stopped mid-laugh. “You're right,” he said, wiping tears from his eyes. “But if I ever do get to Buhsneeze, I'll take you with me.”

They began to laugh again, so I stomped over to the wall next to Mr. Pendleton's desk and pulled a book out from the floor-to-ceiling bookcase. The bookcase swiveled inward, opening a door to another room. The boys almost choked on their laughter.

“Whoa!” Carter exclaimed.

Julia's unexpected movement stops the boys in their tracks and catches the reader by surprise.

- **Add almost any kind of action.**

Frankly, any time you add action, even if it's to move your character from one room to another, it forces your reader to pay attention. Just be careful

not to describe unnecessary actions, such as every time they turn a door knob or pull out a chair.

- **Make an absurd statement.**

When you shock the reader, even a little, you wake them up. Here, Julia is thinking about how nervous she is about their plan to dig up a grave that night.

My mother always said, “Life is a choice. You either act or you remain on the sidelines.”

Well, we were taking action. But even I had to admit that digging up someone’s grave was extreme. *How come Nancy Drew never seemed to suffer this kind of anxiety?*

Because Nancy Drew was a fictional character, and this was real life.

Of course, Julia’s thought is absurd, since she’s a fictional character, but it catches the reader by surprise.

- **Create an unexpected dramatic and/or comic moment that will catch the reader’s attention.**

In this example, the kids are in the graveyard at night and Julia has gone to find her friend Kisha, when she sees the ghost of a young boy she’d seen earlier at the old mansion.

“What?” I gasped, stepping backwards. It was the boy from Mr. Pendleton’s house!

My foot hit a tree root, and I lost my balance, stutter-stepping backwards to keep from falling. Suddenly, my left foot stepped into empty space, and I fell with a cry, landing on hard-packed, wet dirt, knocking the breath out of me. I lay there, staring at the moisture-laden sky, my eyes blurring from ... what? Tears? The rain? I wasn’t sure. All I knew was that I couldn’t catch my breath, and my wrist hurt like the dickens because it was tucked under my left hip. *Had I broken it?*

After a moment, I heard Kisha’s voice, and I struggled to sit up.

“I’m here,” I called out in a weak voice. *Where exactly was here?*

I glanced around. “Oh, no,” I muttered, fear constricting my throat.

I had fallen into an open grave that was quickly filling up with muddy rainwater.

Falling into an open grave is unexpected and ultimately humorous, breaking up the rather sombre action of digging up a grave.

- **Quickly shift the reader’s focus.**

In this scene, Julia is anxious about an upcoming confrontation the kids have planned with the killer. You’ll see how it snaps the reader’s attention away from a very serious description of what is about to happen to the need for a bodily function.

All of that was possible. After all, we were just a bunch of kids going up against an adult man who had already killed two people. And he had friends he was likely to bring with him.

Man, I had to pee.

- **Narrow your reader’s attention from the broader view of a scene to something specific.**

I accomplished that with a chaotic scene in *Case of the Missing Will* by having Julia concentrate on using the repetition of a single word to force the reader to zero in on something specific.

I forced myself to control my breathing, thinking “I can’t allow my fear to rule me.”

Okay, what were our advantages? My gaze roamed around the room.

I was pretty sure that Aunt Ruth’s hands were free, something Kurt didn’t know. *Check.*

There were three of us and only one of Kurt. *Check.*

One of the candlesticks lay on the floor just beyond Aunt Ruth's chair.
Check.

A loud clunk made me spin around to find an unconscious Kurt on the floor with Grant standing over him, holding my father's heavy glass ashtray.

Okay, check!

- **Use a character's internal thoughts to draw the reader's attention to an important piece of information.**

In this scene, Julia is pressing a young boy to tell her what he knows about the death of her elderly friend and then realizes that she may know the killer.

I grabbed Peter's wrist. "Peter, did you see anything else that would be helpful?"

He wiped snot from his nose and said, "The ... the man wore silver-tipped cowboy boots."

Damn! Joshua wore cowboy boots.

Let's face it, all of us are probably guilty at some point of skimming pages, maybe even skipping paragraphs to get to the good parts. Therefore, it doesn't hurt to sprinkle in some of these simple ways to change the reader's focus and/or wake them up if you can conveniently and logically fit them into your story. Don't force it, though. You want everything to flow naturally.



IN CLOSING

I admit that I have it easier than authors who don't write mysteries or thrillers. By their very nature, these two genres are replete with suspense and tension, which should (hopefully) hold the reader's attention. In addition, my cozy mystery and YA series are humorous, which also naturally lends themselves to moments that will catch a reader off guard.

But obviously, these techniques can be effectively used in any type of storyline.. I'd suggest you keep a watchful eye out in the next novel you read for techniques used by other authors. I'm sure there are more out there.

Happy writing!

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Would you like to pick up one of the companion books in this series? Click [HERE](#).

If you'd like to sign up for my mystery newsletter, "Let's Talk About Murder," click [HERE](#).



After retiring from a 35+ year career in the nonprofit world, Ms. Bohart launched her own freelance writing company, Lil Dog Communications, and now writes for clients all over the world. She holds a master's degree in theater, has taught "Crafting the Story" through Green River College for 10+ years, and has written for both Patch.com and the Renton Reporter.

Currently, she has eleven paranormal mystery novels, two short story books, and now three nonfiction books on Amazon, along with several books on writing offered through her website.

As a mystery and true crime aficionado, she has redesigned her author website into ***The No Alibi Zone*** to showcase criminal investigations. Her bi-monthly newsletter called "Let's Talk About Murder," includes blog posts and interviews with people who talk about, write about, and investigate crime as well as information on writing, her summit presentations, and her books. You can sign up to receive the newsletter for free by going here on her website: [Sign up here](#).

If you're interested in Lynn's story coaching services, you can reach out to her here: Lildog67@icloud.com or visit her website.

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Detective Giorgio Salvatori Series

Mass Murder

Murder in the Past Tense

The Essence of Murder

Old Maids of Mercer Island Series

Inn Keeping with Murder

A Candidate for Murder

A History of Murder

All Roads Lead to Murder

The Key to Murder

No Place Like Home for a Murder

The Unstoppables

Case of the Missing Will (YA book)

Stand-Alone Books

Grave Doubts

Stand-alone mystery novel

Your Worst Nightmare

Anthology of short stories

Something Wicked

Single short story

Nonfiction Books

When Hope is Not Enough

The Little Book of Unconventional Marketing Ideas

Raise More Money Through Better Messaging

Books on Writing

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Show Don't Tell

From a Great Idea to a Great Story

SETTING: It's More Than a Location

Creating Characters Readers Can't Quit

How to Grab & Hold a Reader's Attention

Narrative Drive: The Engine That Fuels Your Story

Coming Soon: Creating Authentic Dialogue