



SHORT STORIES BY JEFFREY ARCHER

Here are the synopses of 95 short stories by Jeffrey Archer, Britain's bestselling author, **'the greatest storyteller of our age'** - Mail on Sunday.

- The stories feature tales of love, crime, drama, thriller and adventure.
- 65 of the stories are based on true stories.
- Over 3.5 million copies sold worldwide.

MEDIA REVIEWS

The Times: 'stylish, witty and entertaining...Jeffrey Archer has a natural aptitude for short stories.'

Publishers Weekly: 'Somerset Maugham never penned anything so swift or urbanely witty as this.'

The New York Times: 'Jeffrey Archer plays a subtle cat-and-mouse game with the reader in twelve original stories that end, more often than not, with our collective whiskers twitching in surprise'

Daily Express: 'outstanding...white-knuckle suspense and witty denouements', and by the

READER REVIEWS

Over 25,000 5* reader reviews for Jeffrey's short stories, including:

- ★★★★★ **HE IS THE MASTER OF THE SHORT STORY WITH A TWIST**
- ★★★★★ **ENTERTAINMENT IS GUARANTEED**
- ★★★★★ **I AM TRULY ADDICTED**
- ★★★★★ **UNPUT-DOWNABLE STORIES**
- ★★★★★ **EACH TALE KEPT ME GRIPPED TO THE END**
- ★★★★★ **THERE'S A TWIST IN EVERY TALE**
- ★★★★★ **THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THERE IS ONLY 12 OF THEM**
- ★★★★★ **A MUST FOR SHORT STORY LOVERS**



SYNOPSIS GUIDE

#	PAGE	TITLE	TRUE STORY	GENRE	WORD COUNT
1	5	A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE	YES	DRAMA	5,693
2	123	BROKEN ROUTINE	YES	HUMOR	2,590
3	7	HENRY'S HICCUP	YES	ADVENTURE	6,166
4	9	ONE NIGHT STAND	YES	ROMANCE	4,690
5	11	THE CHINESE STATUE	YES	DRAMA	4,379
6	13	THE CENTURY	NO	SPORTS	3,465
7	14	THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN	YES	SPORTS	3,959
8	15	OLD LOVE	YES	ROMANCE	7,789
9	16	THE FIRST MIRACLE	NO	DRAMA	4,185
10	17	THE HUNGARIAN PROFESSOR	NO	DRAMA	3,129
11	126	THE LUNCHEON	YES	HUMOR	2,399
12	126	THE COUP	YES	DRAMA	7,504
13	18	A GOOD EYE	NO	DRAMA	3,659
14	19	BETTER THE DEVIL YOU KNOW	NO	DRAMA	3,073
15	20	BLIND DATE	NO	ROMANCE	1,226
16	21	CASTE-OFF	YES	ROMANCE	7,480
17	23	DOUBLE-CROSS	YES	CRIME	4,472
18	25	HIGH HEELS	YES	MYSTERY	4,530
19	27	I WILL SURVIVE	YES	CRIME	3,577
20	29	NO ROOM AT THE INN	NO	ADVENTURE	3,395
21	31	MEMBERS ONLY	YES	COMING OF AGE	11,110
22	34	POLITICALLY CORRECT	NO	THRILLER	5,215
23	36	STUCK ON YOU	YES	CRIME	4,669
24	38	THE LUCK OF THE IRISH	YES	COMING OF AGE	4,312
25	40	THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY TELEGRAM	YES	DRAMA	1,945
26	41	THE UNDIPLOMATIC DIPLOMAT	YES	ADVENTURE	6,755
27	43	WHERE THERE'S A WILL	YES	CRIME	5,699
28	45	A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS	YES	THRILLER	5,683
29	47	A LA CARTE	YES	COMING OF AGE	5,170
30	50	CHECKMATE	YES	CRIME	2,793
31	51	JUST GOOD FRIENDS	YES	HUMOR	2,391
32	52	NOT THE REAL THING	NO	COMING OF AGE	5,430



33	54	THE PERFECT MURDER	YES	THRILLER	11,893
34	56	THE LOOPHOLE	YES	HUMOR	3,514
35	57	THE STEAL	YES	HUMOR	5,209
36	58	CHRISTINA ROSENTHAL	YES	TRAGEDY	7,099
37	59	COLONEL BULLFROG	YES	DRAMA	4,459
38	61	THE WINE TASTER	NO	MYSTERY	4,309
39	62	CLEAN SWEEP IGNATIUS	YES	THRILLER	2,332
40	63	A GREEK TRAGEDY	NO	DRAMA	2,650
41	64	CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME	YES	THRILLER	7,319
42	66	DON'T DRINK THE WATER	YES	THRILLER	8,287
43	68	IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER	NO	DRAMA	5,453
44	70	IT CAN'T BE OCTOBER ALREADY	YES	DRAMA	4,233
45	71	KNOW WHAT I MEAN	YES	CRIME	4,354
46	73	MAESTRO	YES	CRIME	3,502
47	74	THE ALIBI	YES	CRIME	3,428
48	75	THE COMMISSIONER	YES	CRIME	5,036
49	77	THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON	NO	DRAMA	4,059
50	79	THE RED KING	YES	CRIME	8,150
51	81	THE MAN WHO ROBBED HIS OWN POST OFFICE	YES	CRIME	10,501
52	83	A CHANGE OF HEART	YES	DRAMA	3,252
53	85	A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER	YES	ADVENTURE	4,553
54	87	BOTH SIDES AGAINST THE MIDDLE	YES	DRAMA	3,600
55	88	CHALK AND CHEESE	NO	DRAMA	5,189
56	90	CRIME PAYS	YES	CRIME	6,208
57	92	DEATH SPEAKS	NO	THRILLER	201
58	93	LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT	YES	ROMANCE	961
59	94	OTHER BLIGHTERS' EFFORTS	NO	ADVENTURE	7,177
60	96	TOO MANY COINCIDENCES	YES	DRAMA	10,328
61	98	THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER	NO	DRAMA	7,444
62	100	THE EXPERT WITNESS	YES	DRAMA	3,845
63	101	SOMETHING FOR NOTHING	YES	THRILLER	3,103
64	103	THE ENDGAME	NO	DRAMA	16,728
65	106	THE LETTER	YES	ROMANCE	1,536
66	107	THE RECLINING WOMAN	YES	CRIME	2,239
67	109	NOT FOR SALE	NO	COMING OF AGE	7,712
68	111	ONE MAN'S MEAT	NO	ROMANCE	15,483
69	115	TIMEO DANAOS	YES	ADVENTURE	4,816



70	117	TRIAL AND ERROR	NO	CRIME	21,283
71	120	NEVER STOP ON THE MOTORWAY	YES	MYSTERY	4,479
72	121	SHOESHINE BOY	YES	HUMOR	8,078
73	122	CHEAP AT HALF THE PRICE	YES	CRIME	4,059
74	124	AN EYE FOR AN EYE	YES	CRIME	3,432
75	127	YOU'LL NEVER LIVE TO REGRET IT	YES	DRAMA	3,895
76	128	DO NOT PASS GO	YES	DRAMA	4,620
77	129	CHUNNEL VISION	YES	HUMOR	5,380
78	130	DOUGIE MORTIMER'S RIGHT ARM	YES	HUMOR	6,127
79	131	THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME	YES	CRIME	4,208
80	133	A GENTLEMAN AND A SCHOLAR	YES	DRAMA	3,073
81	134	A GOOD TOSS TO LOSE	YES	DRAMA	2,598
82	136	WHO KILLED THE MAYOR?	YES	MYSTERY	8,337
83	138	THE CUCKOLD	NO	ROMANCE	2,289
84	139	ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR	NO	DRAMA	3,392
85	141	A WASTED HOUR	YES	ADVENTURE	2,129
86	142	CONFESSION	YES	THRILLER	13,358
87	144	THE SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT	NO	CRIME	13,295
88	147	THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS	YES	DRAMA	2,496
89	148	UNIQUE	NO	DRAMA	100
90	149	DOUBLE OR QUITS	NO	ADVENTURE	1,837
91	150	THE CAR PARK ATTENDANT	YES	ADVENTURE	4,882
92	152	VIEW OF AUVERS-SUR-OISE	YES	CRIME	3,076
93	153	THE PERFECT MURDER	NO	CRIME	100
94	154	THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JUDAS	NO	RELIGIOUS	
95	155	A CHRISTMAS CAROL	NO	CHRISTMAS	



A Matter of Principle

Logline: A Scottish nobleman becomes a titan of the construction industry by doing business his way but meets his match when he attempts to bid for a contract in Mexico City.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 5,693

Synopsis

SIR HAMISH GRAHAM is born to a middle-class Scottish family in the 1940s. Through hard work and determination, he rises to become an executive at a multinational construction company. When the company's chairman asks Graham to become its managing director, he realizes he is competent enough to strike out on his own and goes on to build an even bigger company which acquires an international reputation for excellence.

Throughout the 1960s Graham is widely lauded for his business acumen. He makes every major decision at his company himself, which reinforces the idea that his way is the only way that matters.

Graham is highly traditional and prefers to work only with reputable companies and safe ventures, however when the 1970s bring tough times to his industry he is forced to consider riskier opportunities. His brightest executive, DAVID HEATH, suggests bidding to construct a ring road in Mexico City, to which Graham eventually reluctantly agrees.

Heath evaluates the situation in Mexico City and determines that to secure the contract Graham will have to hire a local Mexican who is a friend of the Minister of State as the company's representative. This comes at a substantial financial cost and Graham quickly assesses it for the thinly veiled bribe that it is. Graham is reluctant to proceed but travels to Mexico anyway believing he will be able to sit down with the Minister and discuss the situation like respected professionals.

After arriving in Mexico, Graham schedules a meeting with the local representative, VICTOR PEREZ, but is dismayed when Perez keeps him waiting for multiple days and eventually shows up late and informally dressed to dinner. Perez makes it clear he can secure the contract for Graham but expects a 50-50 profit split.

Graham considers this abhorrent and demands Heath schedule him for a personal meeting with the Minister. Heath objects and explains this is not how business is done in Mexico, but eventually relents and schedules the meeting as requested.



Graham meets the Minister and is pleased to see he is an erudite, upper-class man who was educated in the United Kingdom.

The Minister explains to Graham that Perez is the son of a dear friend who was killed in military service, and that the Minister considers it his duty to look out for Perez.

Although the Minister's body language makes it clear he does not wish to discuss the topic any further, Graham directly tells the Minister about Perez's bribery overture.

Graham believes that the Minister will see the situation from the perspective of two upper class leaders who are appalled by Perez's overt malfeasance.

The Minister states that if after hearing his story Graham still cannot understand why Perez is his agent and how business is done in Mexico, then he has no choice but to show Graham the door.



Henry's Hiccup

Logline: The Grand Pasha of Egypt has a taste for life's luxuries and the deep pockets to enjoy them but discovers that after World War I England has little patience for extravagant indulgences.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 6,166

Synopsis

HENRY, the firstborn son of GRAND PASHA of Cairo, is born in 1900. The Grand Pasha sends Henry to the UK for his education, and Henry grows to become a tall, sophisticated, and handsome man whose deep appreciation for high society makes him "more English than the English."

Due to his social status, Henry is one of the few men on earth who can afford the finest things. When Henry's father dies, Henry becomes the Grand Pasha himself, and continues to live this life of luxury. After World War I breaks out, however, Henry travels to New York to wait out the worst of the fighting.

Ever eager to return to his beloved England, the years in the United States prove difficult for Henry. In 1946, as soon as he is able, he sets sail for "home" to London.

Though he had always been something of a playboy, at a welcome back party Henry meets VICTORIA CAMPBELL, the daughter of a general, and is taken by her beauty and charm. Victoria is a widow; her husband died in the war.

After waiting for one year and keeping his distance from Victoria, Henry approaches her father and asks for her hand in marriage. Henry is overjoyed when both Victoria and Henry agree.

Henry wows Victoria with tales of the rich luxuries they will enjoy, regaling her with anecdotes about hotel GMs and personal porters who have always catered to his every whim.

When it comes time to depart for their honeymoon, however, Henry realizes that although Europe retains an outward veneer of the lavishness it always possessed, the War has claimed the lives of many of the individuals who always doted on Henry in the past.

Henry attempts to plan a honeymoon in Paris, but the journey turns into a nightmare with every leg worse than the last; they carry their own bags, travel on third class tickets, and arrive at their hotel to learn there is no room available for the couple – apart from a converted broom closet.



After a sad dinner in Paris, Henry and Victoria walk slowly through the streets until he comes upon an old woman selling flowers. He attempts to buy roses from her but realizes he does not have any cash on him for the purchase – the first time in Henry’s life that he has ever been without money.

Unbeknownst to Henry, the old woman is an acquaintance he had known many years ago when she was just a young flower girl. She recognizes Henry and gives Victoria the roses for free, saying it is for “old time’s sake.”



One Night Stand

Logline: A dashing businessman prone to infidelity develops a serious crush, only to discover what life is like on the other side of indiscretion.

Genre: Sex/Romance

Word Count: 4,690

Synopsis

MICHAEL THOMPSON is a tall, handsome media executive from England. His childhood best friend, ADRIAN TOWNSEND, is a lawyer. They share many similarities but have an opposite taste in women and have gone through life playing the perfect wingmen for each other.

On his tenth wedding anniversary, Michael admits to Adrian that he's had his first extramarital affair. Only a few weeks later, Adrian crosses the same threshold. The two then finagle simultaneous business trips to New York City, thinking they will take advantage of their time in the United States together to continue to meet women.

At the first party they attend, they meet DEBBIE KENDALL, an executive at ABC studios who somehow manages to embody the physical preferences of both men. For the first time in their lives, they compete over a woman – making utter fools of themselves in the process. Afterwards, Michael and Adrian discuss their boorishness and make a pact that whoever between them first returns to the United States will have a free path to pursue Debbie.

Once back in London both Michael and Adrian do everything in their power to find an excuse to return to New York, with each man subtly trying to foil the other's attempts. Eventually, Michael succeeds and lands an assignment to cover a political event in Washington, D.C., which he uses as an excuse to skip up to NYC and rendezvous with Debbie, who is surprisingly happy to see him.

Michael takes Debbie to a fine restaurant and jazz club and makes his interest in her obvious. While she clearly likes him as well, she knows he is married.

When he walks her home, however, Debbie invites Michael up for a nightcap. The evening turns romantic, and they eventually have sex.

The next morning, Debbie drives Michael to the airport. On the way she mentions that she is recently divorced, and her friends had all urged her to have a one-night stand to get over the memory of her ex-husband, but she had been too shy to jump into bed with a New Yorker.



Therefore, when she met Michael and Adrian, she decided she would sleep with the first one of them to return to the United States and look her up.

With that, Michael realizes she had been the one between them holding the cards all along.



The Chinese Statue

Logline: The great-great grandson of a British diplomat is dismayed to learn a 'priceless' family heirloom is quite ordinary, but even more surprised to discover a different veritable fortune had been hiding in plain sight for ages.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 4,379

Synopsis

Between the 1850s-1880s, SIR ALEXANDER HEATHCOTE rises to become a top diplomat in the UK Foreign Service. His final assignment is as Ambassador to China, which remains quite isolated from the rest of the world.

Sir Alexander has a deep appreciation for art and uses his assignment to tour China and view many national masterpieces inaccessible to the western world. One afternoon, while traveling through the Chinese countryside, Sir Alexander visits the humble home of a local sculptor and is awed by the simple man's ability and craftsmanship.

To impress Sir Alexander, the sculptor shows Sir Alexander a tiny statue which traces its origin back to the Ming Dynasty and has been in his family for ages. Without thinking, Sir Alexander remarks on the statue's beauty and observes how much he wished he could own the statue.

Bound by honor, the humble sculptor must then give the statue to Sir Alexander as a gift. Though Sir Alexander attempts to refuse, his translator explains that not accepting the gift would be an even greater insult than his comment about wanting to own it in the first place. The sculptor affixes a small base on the statue from a junk pile of materials; Sir Alexander accepts the gift but quietly thinks the base isn't quite to his personal taste.

In the aftermath, Sir Alexander treasures the statue but feels horribly guilty about his big mouth and spends the next year arranging a surprise to repay the sculptor. With the permission of the Empress herself, Sir Alexander oversees the construction of a large, lovely "retirement" home for the sculptor near his village. The sculptor is overjoyed, and their arrangement is considered square.

Later, Sir Alexander returns to the UK and concludes his diplomatic career. When he dies, he stipulates the statue will pass into the possession of each firstborn son in his family line. His first son, a Colonel, proudly displays the statue in his military quarters.



Sir Alexander's grandson, a Reverend, is honored to host the statue at his church. His great-grandson, another soldier, brings the statue back into military quarters, where it sits until it comes into the possession of ALEX HEATHCOTE, Sir Alexander's great-great grandson – and a selfish, spoiled brat.

Alex is an inveterate gambler who amasses a slew of creditors and debts throughout the 1960s. Desperate to clear his slate, Alex arranges to auction off the statue for an expected financial windfall but is surprised to learn from an appraiser at Sotheby's that it is actually quite common, and not worth more than seven hundred and twenty guineas.

Frustrated, Alex prepares to go ahead with the sale anyway – just as the appraiser lets him know that the statue's exquisitely rare base is the work of a 15th century genius, and worth around 22,000 guineas by itself.



The Century

Logline: An Indian-origin cricketer at Oxford struggles under the weight of exceeding his father's legendary athletic achievements.

Genre: Sports

Word Count: 3,465

Synopsis

The son of an Indian cricket legend arrives at Oxford and distinguishes himself as every bit the athletic hero his father had been. As a first-year student, he is selected for the annual Oxford-Cambridge match, given the opportunity to earn a "Blue," and thereby exceed the infamous century his father had scored for Oxford decades earlier.

Before the match, he is involved in a small fight at the dining club; he injures his hand and cannot take part. The following year, he experiences a slump and is not selected for the Oxford-Cambridge match.

In his third and final year, he returns to form and prepares for the highly anticipated match, however during his first attempt at batting he is called out on a duck.

In the hours afterward he bonds with the captain of Cambridge's team, ROBIN OAKLEY, an elite cricketer who himself had scored a century against Oxford two years earlier.

During his final attempt at bat, the Indian player has an impressive performance and stands at 99 overs before Oakley fields a ball and is in position to make him out. Oakley, however, seemingly intentionally flubs the throw to allow the Indian cricketer from Oxford (who is never named) to score his century and complete his family legacy.

Minutes later, a thunderstorm interrupts the match, concluding it as a draw.



The Perfect Gentleman

Logline: A world-class backgammon player (and even better person) prioritizes helping a colleague in need over winning the world title.

Genre: Sports

Word Count: 3,959

Synopsis

EDWARD SHRIMPTON, a Manhattan banker, at the Metropolitan Club in New York City, meets a traveling literary agent from London. The two briefly exchange cards and agree to meet for lunch the following day before the literary agent returns to the UK.

That evening, the literary agent has dinner with a family friend, ERIC MCKENZIE, who is also a member of the Metropolitan Club. The literary agent notices Edward Shrimpton's name on a plaque commemorating his second-place finish in the club backgammon championship just before World War I. McKenzie then tells the literary agent a lengthy story about Shrimpton's backgammon skills, highlighting that he had been the literal world champion in Monte Carlo that year, and implies that he skillfully lost the match on purpose to boost the confidence and client roster of HARRY NEWMAN, his opponent, whose business partner had just run off with his then-wife earlier that week. Other than McKenzie, no one else realized that evening Edward has likely allowed Harry to win.

The following day at lunch, the literary agent asks probing questions to see if Edward is willing to discuss his version of the infamous backgammon match, however Edward casually deflects and credits Harry with having played an excellent match. Towards the end of the meal, Harry arrives in the restaurant and approaches the table with his now-fourth wife. He introduces her to Edward, telling her that although Edward had been the world champion during the year of their match, it was Harry who bested him when the chips were down, and stakes ran highest. Harry even goes as far as to suggest that they play again soon, wondering whether Edward might want another crack at him after all these years.

Edward remains a perfect gentleman, responding respectfully and lauding Harry's performance that evening. When Harry leaves the table, the literary agent again tries to bait Edward into sharing a more accurate version of what transpired, however Edward only states that perhaps the literary agent would be interested in a book that told the story of how Harry – who entered the match at the lowest point in his life – managed to use the unexpected victory to propel himself towards lasting success in both business and love.



Old Love

Logline: After years of rivalry, the two brightest students compete for the most prestigious award at school, but instead they win each other's hearts.

Genre – Sex/Romance

Word Count - 7,789

Synopsis

PHILLIPA JAMESON and WILLIAM HATCHARD are two highly intelligent pupils who spend most of their college years competing against each other.

Both Phillipa and William are trying to win the Charles Oldham Award to finally declare who the true winner is, but Phillipa's father's sudden death makes the competition seem insignificant.

From bickering to comforting each other, William and Phillipa realize that there is no one else they would rather be with. They get married as soon as they win the award in a tie. They spend the rest of their lives having friendly competition and bickering proudly with each other.

Unfortunately, all good must come to an end, including Phillipa and William's old love. Phillipa suddenly has a heart attack and dies.

There is a saying amongst the people who know them that the couple can't stay away from each other for more than a few hours. Same is the case with death - once Phillipa died, William follows soon after by suicide.



The First Miracle

Logline - A young Roman boy helps a mysterious young man and woman with their donkey in Bethlehem where he witnesses his first miracle.

Genre - Drama/Odyssey

Word Count - 4,185

Synopsis

For a young Roman boy, his day starts off like any other day in the village. He has a very strict Roman general for a dad, even though he himself is a dreamy, active boy.

His mother tries to give him one last chance to prove that he's a good son by asking him to go to the market and get certain ingredients for dinner.

The boy successfully gets everything he was asked for. On his way back to his mother with the items, he sees a disheveled man with a donkey and a woman walking around the village where the market is. The boy sees the man get rejected to stay at an inn, so he leads the donkey and the large woman to a barn by the inn.

The boy suddenly sees the most angelic, beautiful features on the woman. He kneels in front of her and bestows all that he recently bought at the store. As he leaves, he meets three wise old men on their way to meet "The King of Kings." Confused, he lets them know where Bethlehem is and goes back home.

His worried parents ask him why he was out so late. The boy tells them about his strange encounters. His father is frustrated and gives him 12 lashes to reprimand him. The boy does not flinch, and he leaves with his mother once his father is finished.

The boy's mother checks his back, ready to soothe the area with healing oils, but there is not a hint of injury in that area. The boy's mother tells her son, "Now I know you were telling the truth, PONTIUS."



The Hungarian Professor

Logline - A young English student goes on a trip to explore Hungary, but his best discovery is an elderly Professor full of questions and wisdom.

Genre - Drama

Word Count - 3,129

Synopsis

The Narrator is reading an obituary from The Times about a Hungarian Professor who dedicated his life to translating English books into his native Hungarian language.

The Narrator reminisces on the time he went to Hungary for a student athletics meeting, but was quickly out of the competition when he lost his first race. Suddenly, he has six days on his hands to explore the Hungarian capital.

The Narrator walks around Budapest and looks at the bombed-out buildings with great sorrow and admiration. On the third day of the games, he returns to the arena to support his friends in the semifinals of the four-hundred-meter hurdles.

An elderly man turns to him and asks him many questions about England. The Narrator happily answers and admires this man's curiosity.

At the end of the race, the elderly man, now known to be a professor, asks him to go to dinner to discuss more about England and the English language. The Narrator agrees and the very next day they meet at the elderly man's very small, hidden apartment.

They enjoy a nice dinner together and discuss politics, writing, and traveling until it is time for the Narrator to leave.

The Narrator invites the professor to visit his family in England, but the Professor calmly explains that they will never meet again. Low and behold, the Narrator is reading his obituary many years later and confirms that they in fact never meet again.



A Good Eye

Logline: In 1641, a rural lawyer accepts paintings from a local ruffian in exchange for helping him evade legal troubles, not fully aware he is also building a fortune in the process.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 3,659

Synopsis:

HANS JULIUS GREBENAR, born in 1641 in the Bavarian Hills, is blessed with the gift of a good eye for artistry. Hans Julius works as a lawyer and comes to represent a local ruffian, FRIEDRICH BLOCH, who has little money or decency, but possesses amazing skill as a painter.

Hans Julius assists Bloch with various legal issues, accepting paintings in exchange for his services.

Eventually Bloch is charged with attempted murder, and Hans Julius manages to craft an expert defense that acquits him. For this service, Bloch agrees to paint Hans Julius a dozen full-length portraits of the Lord's disciples.

Hans Julius takes possession of the paintings as they are completed one-by-one. This stretches on for years, but Bloch eventually manages to complete the series. Meanwhile, no one ever sees Bloch's excellent work except for the members of Hans Julius' family.

When Hans Julius dies, he bequeaths the paintings to a local museum. 298 years later, Hans Julius' descendant, MONSIGNOR GREBANAR, is the head of a church in deep physical disrepair.

When the congregation cannot come up with enough money to make urgent repairs, a mysterious stranger arrives and offers to buy one of Bloch's paintings for 700,000 euros.

After the repairs are made, the Monsignor is shocked to learn that the museum where the other Bloch paintings were on display burns down, destroying all of the examples of Bloch's work except for the painting he had just sold. Shortly thereafter, the painting goes up for auction in the United States; the fire had increased the value of Bloch's last remaining work, and it sells for \$42,000,000.



Better The Devil You Know

Logline: A mean-spirited bank chairman on death's door makes a deal with the devil to spare his life, but perhaps should have spent an extra moment reading the fine print.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 3,073

Synopsis:

The Chairman of a prominent bank runs his company with an iron fist. He's built the business into a first-class institution but made plenty of enemies along the way.

For some time, the Chairman has known he has cancer and has fewer than two years to live. When the bank's Board learns this, they insist the Chairman meet with a doctor of their choosing in order to receive an impartial evaluation, believing that this could be their opportunity to both remove the Chairman and ensure the future stability of the bank.

While waiting for his medical appointment, the Chairman is visited by MR DE ATH, an apparition of a man claiming to represent the devil. Mr De Ath makes the Chairman an offer: he will allow the Chairman to switch bodies with a healthy twenty-five-year-old first-year clerk named ROD who has an exceedingly long life expectancy but will then go directly to hell when he dies. For Rod's part, Rod will become the Chairman, destined to live out the Chairman's last few years on earth and then go to heaven immediately after death. Mr De Ath produces a contract, and without bothering to consider the fine print the Chairman signs in agreement.

Later, the "new" Chairman (aka the "old" Rod) attends his medical appointment and learns his cancer is in remission, and he may have as many as ten years left to live. The Chairman returns to the office in great spirits, uncharacteristically complimenting his employees and providing a hefty financial bonus to his long-serving secretary. The Chairman then announces he is willing to accept the Board's retirement package so that he can spend more time traveling and volunteering.

Meanwhile, the "new" Rod applies for a promotion on the Commodities floor, telling his entry-level colleagues he won't be wasting his career alongside them forever. As this Rod steps out of his office, however, he is run over by a motorcycle courier and gravely injured.

As he lays on the pavement dying, Rod notices the motorcycle courier had been carrying a confidential file containing the Chairman's medical report, and he hears Mr. De Ath's voice tell him he should have asked how long Rod had left to live – not only about his life expectancy.



Blind Date

Logline: A blind gentleman at a café speculates about the life of a woman he overhears at an adjacent table and is surprised to learn how much they share in common.

Genre: Sex/Romance

Word Count: 1,226

Synopsis

MR. TREVATHAN, a blind gentleman, is a regular at a café in St. Ives. One morning he overhears a woman at an adjacent table and becomes intrigued, so he strikes up a conversation with her to see how much he can learn about her background.

The conversation flows naturally, however when Mr. Trevathan boasts of his knowledge of art history and the local area, he realizes the woman visits St. Ives regularly and therefore believes he may have made a fool of himself. Still, they bid each other goodbye fondly and she remarks as she is leaving that she enjoyed the conversation.

When the waiter returns, Mr. Trevathan asks him to tell him everything about the woman, specifically related to her physical appearance. The waiter laughs heartily and notes that the woman asked him the very same thing about Mr. Trevathan.



Caste-Off

Logline: The son of a maharaja falls for a woman from a lower caste, defying his family's wishes in the pursuit of true love.

Genre: Sex/Romance

Word Count: 7,480

Synopsis:

JAMWAL RAMESHWAR SINGH, the second son of a maharaja, lives a playboy's life in New Delhi, driving fast cars and pursuing fast women. At a red light his Porsche pulls up alongside a Ferrari driven by NISHA CHOWDHURY, the daughter of a wealthy industrialist. Jamwal is immediately smitten and pursues her, however when they eventually meet, she rejects his advances, cryptically telling Jamwal he hasn't changed at all since childhood.

That evening, Jamwal goes to his girlfriend's house and is shocked to find they are hosting Nisha and her boyfriend, a racecar driver, as dinner guests. Jamwal plays the situation as coolly as possible and learns that Nisha is an old classmate of his girlfriend. Later, the foursome goes out dancing, where Jamwal pays more attention to Nisha than to his girlfriend. To the chagrin of the racecar driver, Nisha shows an interest in Jamwal as well.

The following morning Nisha leaves abruptly for her final semester at Stanford. Jamwal immediately buys a ticket to California and surprises her on campus, where the two spend a wonderful weekend together and fall deeply in love. For the rest of the semester, Jamwal flies from India to California every weekend just to have 48 hours to spend with Nisha.

As the second son of a maharaja, Jamwal had always expected his parents would choose a wife for him from their elite Rajput caste, however now that he has fallen in love with Nisha, he hopes his parents will understand the situation and bless their relationship, even though Nisha is from a working-class caste.

Jamwal returns to his hometown to discuss Nisha with his parents, but his father declares there is nothing to discuss and stipulates Jamwal will be excommunicated from the family if he continues to pursue her. Jamwal immediately walks out of his family's home as his father declares Jamwal is no longer his son.

Jamwal returns to Nisha saddened by his parents' reaction, but more resolved than ever to marry Nisha. They plan a lovely wedding with hundreds of guests, although not a single person from



Jamwal's side of the family attends. After the reception they travel to Goa for their honeymoon, where they spend the first day together in an elaborate suite cementing their deep bond and relationship as husband and wife.

Eventually, the two emerge to take a swim. Jamwal decides to show off for Nisha and dives flamboyantly into the pool, however he does so without checking the depth of the water and suffers a severe spinal injury.

Many years later, a visitor from England encounters Jamwal and Nisha at a dinner party, now both middle-aged. He remarks that they are as handsome as ever and share a deep love and connection that would make many other couples envious.

Jamwal has become a leading executive in the Raj Hotel Group, and Nisha now works for one of India's top fashion houses.

Nisha tells the visitor that they do not have any children, and when the evening comes to a conclusion, he realizes Jamwal is paralyzed at the waist and uses a wheelchair. Despite these challenges, the two remain thankful they chose each other and pursued true love.



Double-Cross

Logline: In exchange for a shorter sentence an incarcerated person informs on his cellmate, only to discover his time on the outside may be less relaxing than he anticipated.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 4,472

Synopsis:

KEVIN BRYANT has been convicted of armed robbery and the theft of twelve million dollars' worth of diamonds from a respected merchant, NEVILLE ABBOTT.

During the investigation the diamonds are never recovered, and DETECTIVE INSPECTOR MATTHEWS suspects Bryant has hidden them and is therefore willing to serve his twelve-year sentence with the belief that the diamonds will be there waiting after his release.

Matthews pays a visit to BENNY FRIEDMAN, an incarcerated person at the same prison. Friedman is a non-violent criminal who periodically acts as a middleman in arranging the sale of stolen items.

Matthews arranges for Friedman and Bryant to become cellmates and tells Friedman that if he can convince Bryant to share where he has hidden the diamonds, he will knock several years off Friedman's sentence.

Friedman is savvy, and over time he gradually earns Bryant's trust. Bryant begins to share more and more details about his trial and eventually admits he hid some of the diamonds on the outside, but also smuggled a handful into the prison by ingesting them in a condom the day before his incarceration.

Bryant then asks for Friedman's help in arranging the sale of the diamonds for cash, but Friedman says he must first see the diamonds to determine their value.

When Friedman examines the diamonds, he tells Bryant they are fake, observing how they only scratch glass as opposed to shatter it. Dismayed, Friedman suggests that Bryant must have been duped by the diamond merchant in a separate scheme to claim insurance money and still hold on to the precious stones.

Friedman then intimates that Bryant could have his revenge on the diamond merchant by telling the police where the diamonds are hidden, thereby implicating the diamond merchant in the



crime and ensuring they'd likely end up spending time on the inside together. Bryant warms to the idea and reveals the diamonds' location to Matthews to take down the diamond merchant.

Later, Detective Matthews meets with Friedman to thank him for his efforts and tell him he will be released in a few weeks' time.

Grateful, Friedman then asks if in a hypothetical future scenario where he is again sentenced to a prison stint, Matthews can arrange for Friedman to serve his sentence at a separate facility from Bryant's.

Matthews declines, telling Friedman he can think of no better way to keep him on the straight and narrow than living with the knowledge that if he goes back to jail, Bryant will be waiting for him inside.

Matthews then adds that because Bryant cooperated with the police and revealed the diamonds' location, the judge decided to cut his sentence in half, meaning that with good behavior he will be released in just a few years' time.

Matthews then warns Friedman that when Bryant is released, it likely won't be the diamond merchant with whom he'll be looking to get even.



High Heels

Logline: An insurance adjuster working his first case relies on a tip from his wife to sort out the mystery behind his client's claim.

Genre: Mystery

Word Count: 4,530

Synopsis

Early on a Sunday morning, ALAN PENFOLD, a rookie insurance adjuster, receives a call to travel to the rural area of Romford, where a warehouse belonging to Lomax Shoes has burned to the ground. Penfold's supervisor is out of town, and this is the first case he is covering alone.

When Penfold arrives at the scene, the fire chief tells him there are no signs of arson or foul play. Penfold then meets with the rep from the insurance company, BILL HADMAN, who (despite the early hour) is drinking at the local pub along with the warehouse owner, DES LOMAX.

Neither Hadman nor Lomax is upset by the fire and both express that they are expecting a quick payout of four million pounds. While Penfold believes something about the situation feels off, he has no proof to support his suspicion.

Later, Penfold discusses the case with his wife, who takes a particular interest due to the high-end shoes that were burned in the fire. Based on this conversation, Penfold requests approval from his claims manager to buy several pairs of Roger Vivier high heels, which had been part of the inventory list of items that were lost during the fire.

Penfold then burns a pair of high heels in his own yard; satisfied by the results he makes an appointment to meet with Lomax at the former warehouse.

Once on site, Penfold tells Lomax he does not believe that there were any shoes inside the warehouse when it burned down, and recommends Lomax consider halving his claim; Lomax still is defiant, chastising Penfold's inexperience and threatening to file a libel suit against him that could end Penfold's career.

Penfold then removes the Roger Vivier high heels from his car and lights them on fire in front of Lomax. When they are finished burning, metal coils from the shoes are still charred but visible,



and Penfold explains that his wife taught him about how Vivier became famous for including metal buckles on his shoes.

While Lomax continues to insist there's no proof that his shoes weren't burned inside the warehouse, he begrudgingly agrees to settle for £2 million.

Later, Penfold discusses the cause with the prominent author. The author tells Penfold that it's a remarkable story and worthy of inclusion in one of his books, but that if he had written the narrative himself, he would have made sure to save an extra pair of high heels to give to his wife as a gift, since it was her first case as well.



I Will Survive

Logline: A mild-mannered antiques dealer lets his obsession with a famous client get in the way of sound business practices.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 3,577

Synopsis

JULIAN FARNSDALE runs a quiet antiques shop in London situated between a jeweler and an art gallery. One morning, a knowledgeable American customer enters the shop and inquires about Farnsdale's one true treasure: a Fabergé egg.

While discussing the egg, both men are distracted by GLORIA GAYNOR, the celebrity singer, who is in London for a concert and arrives via limousine to patronize the neighboring jewelry store.

After some haggling, Farnsdale agrees to reserve the Fabergé egg for £625,000 so that the American has the chance to consult with his partner before completing the purchase.

Afterwards, Farnsdale discusses Gaynor's visit to the jewelry store with MILLIE, the shop owner; Farnsdale can barely hide his jealousy. The following day Gaynor returns and patronizes the art gallery, which makes Farnsdale even more envious.

Three days later, after Farnsdale has nearly given up hope of meeting Gaynor, she again returns to the area and visits the antique shop. Farnsdale bursts with excitement, especially as it turns out that Gaynor has a deep knowledge of antiques and an appreciation for Farnsdale's finest pieces.

After confiding that she likes to take home a souvenir in each city where she performs, Gaynor focuses on the Fabergé egg and asks Farnsdale about buying it. Though it stays on reserve for the American customer, Gaynor offers a higher price and seals the purchase on the spot. She pays by check and asks Farnsdale to deliver the egg to her hotel, where she is staying under the false name of "Miss Hampton."



After Gaynor exits, Farnsdale boasts to his neighbors about having done business – and bonded with – a celebrity.

Later, Gaynor and the American who was originally interested in the Fabergé egg fly together on a plane from London to Paris.

It becomes clear the woman is not actually Gloria Gaynor but rather someone who bears a striking physical resemblance to her, and that they had been working together as part of a fraud team to steal the egg from Farnsworth.

They account for their costs related to the limousine, hotel room, and various “cover” purchases from the jeweler and art dealer at around thirteen thousand pounds, which are more than made up for by the windfall of having bought the egg.

They then speculate about what they will do in Paris while a flight attendant approaches and remarks that the woman looks an awful lot like Gloria Gaynor.



No Room at the Inn

Logline: A young man traveling through Italy has trouble finding a hotel room for the evening but ends up having the night of his life.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 3,395

Synopsis

RICHARD EDMISTON, who has recently graduated university, is on a long trip traveling through Italy. Though he originally planned to travel with his long-term girlfriend, she broke up with him just before departure from London and he is traveling alone.

For his final stop, Richard visits the small, enchanting town of Monterchi, however by this point in his journey he is strapped for cash and must make most of his decisions based on what he can afford.

Richard selects a humble restaurant for dinner, and after confessing to the waitress he doesn't have money to pay for more than a bowl of pasta she slyly arranges for him to have a full meal on the house.

Later, Richard searches for a hotel to spend the evening. He knows he cannot afford the one luxury establishment in town, and instead sets his sights on a basic guest house. Upon arriving, he is stunned by the beauty of the front desk clerk, who promptly lets Richard know the hotel is full and there are no rooms available.

When Richard mentions he has no money for the more expensive hotel and will probably spend the night in a field, she takes pity on him and tells him to wait on the hotel's top floor, where she will hope to find him a room after midnight if one of the guests with a reservation fails to show.

Richard spends a restless few hours hiding on the top floor away from the other hotel guests and grows impatient thinking the clerk plans to leave him in the hallway. Eventually she arrives and



leads Richard into a room which Richard quickly realizes is her apartment; she lives on the top floor of the hotel.

She invites Richard to bathe, and after he is clean, he finds her waiting for him in bed. Interpreting this for the invitation that it is, Richard and the clerk spend the night together having sex before she kindly tells him at 8 AM that she'll be on duty again in an hour, and he must get on his way.

Richard believes this has been the best night of his life and he has now fully put his ex-girlfriend behind him. Upon leaving the apartment he realizes he left his knapsack near the front desk, so he returns to the hotel to retrieve it and runs into the manager.

She questions him sternly about whether he had been a hotel guest, and Richard explains he tried to book a room but could not because the hotel had been filled.

The manager then gives Richard the knapsack and sends him on his way, but remarks afterwards that she must have a word with the front desk clerk – as this is not the first time, she's turned away a prospective guest when there were seemingly rooms available to rent.



Members Only

Logline: Membership at the elite Royal Jersey Golf Club is the ultimate reward for a lifelong love affair with the sport, but for Robin Chapman a lifetime's worth of obstacles stand in the way.

Genre: Coming of Age

Word Count: 11,110

Synopsis

ROBIN CHAPMAN is the second son of a middle-class family in Southend in the early 1900s. His father runs a cleaning company, and no one expects any more from Robin beyond eventually succeeding his old man at the family business.

As a teenager, Robin receives a golf ball for Christmas and is at once intrigued by the sport. While completing his studies and apprenticing at the cleaning company, he devotes all remaining free time to practicing golf and develops into an excellent player. By age 21, Robin is managing Chapman's Cleaning Services and has also become a scratch golfer.

In the mid-1920s, the Royal Jersey Golf Club writes to Robin to inquire whether his Southend club might be up for a trip to the Channel Islands for a match. As Royal Jersey is the home course of Robin's golf hero, Harry Vardon, he can barely contain his excitement at the offer. Upon arriving in the Channel Islands Robin discovers both the most beautiful golf course and most enchanting woman he has ever seen; the woman is DIANA, the daughter of the Club President, LORD TRENT.

Robin returns home and tells his parents he wants to move to the Channel Islands to open a branch of Chapman's Cleaners, though what he really wants is to pursue both golf and Diana full-time. His parents can read between the lines, but they agree to support him anyway.

After a brief courtship, Robin earns Diana's approval and the two are married, however Robin is dismayed to learn that although he becomes a playing member at the Royal Jersey and can even represent the club in tournaments, there is at least a fifteen-year waiting list for full membership at the exclusive club.



The only way to get membership faster is to win the Club President's Annual Tournament, and though Robin is an excellent golfer the tournament is filled with fantastic players. Each year, while waiting for the waiting list to slowly shrink, Robin takes a crack at the tournament, but though he often comes close he is never able to finish first.

In his late 20s, when Robin is in his finest form, he also applies for a job on the lifeboat that supplies emergency rescue services to stranded boaters around the islands. Robin is a natural sailor and quickly earns the respect of his peers, eventually rising to become the unit's head

launcher. During one particularly arduous rescue, Robin leaps into the choppy waters to save the lives of a young couple who had been irresponsibly boating after midnight and capsized. His efforts are lauded as heroic, however during the rescue he also breaks his arm, making it impossible for him to play in the President's Cup during the year in which it appeared he had the best chance to win.

As years pass, Robin's family grows (a son and a daughter) and his name continues to languish on the Royal Jersey waiting list. He develops a sterling reputation on the islands and is lauded by all residents as a true local, and with just under four years remaining to wait he receives a note from the membership committee that his name is due to come up for admission shortly.

Yet only days later World War II breaks out, and though Robin is too old to enlist he remains in service to the UK as head launcher of the lifeboat, now far past the day he had expected to retire.

In late 1939, Lord Trent asks Robin to use the lifeboat to get him to the mainland for an urgent meeting with Prime Minister Churchill. Robin complies – successfully executing another dangerous meeting – but when he returns to the islands he finds they have been requisitioned by German forces under the leadership of COLONEL KRUGER, who immediately imprisons Robin (and his daughter, Diana) for aiding in the escape of Lord Trent.

Robin and Diana spend weeks in prison living on bread and water awaiting news of their deportation to Germany or possible execution. Although their children have fortunately escaped to the mainland, they have no expectation of ever seeing them again.

Surprisingly, one day Colonel Kruger comes to Robin to say that a German ship has crashed into a rock off the island, and he needs Robin's help in launching the lifeboat to save the drowning men and women aboard.

Remembering his oath to aid all stranded sailors in danger, Robin agrees and leads a daring mission to rescue the Germans even though the two countries remain at war.



When the naval action is complete Robin and Diana are permitted to live under house arrest, where they remain until the war concludes in 1945.

Though the island's residents can now return to their homes in safety, the war has changed many aspects of daily life. Robin also finds that the Royal Jersey, which had been used as Colonel Kruger's offices, is overgrown and in barely recognizable condition.

Further, the Germans have destroyed all the paperwork associated with the club – including the membership records and waiting lists.

As life slowly returns to normal, Robin receives a letter from the club stating that it was aware he may have applied for membership in the past and inviting him to reapply with an (again) expected fifteen-year waiting period.

Robin is devastated as it now appears that if he ever receives membership, he will be an old man.

Robin shows up to his interview ready to tell the committee they can permanently remove his name, however he unexpectedly receives the wonderful news that in honor of his wartime heroism and golfing ability the committee wants him to become the new Club President, as Lord Trent has recently passed away.

The Club Presidency comes with instant membership status, leaving Robin feeling content and satisfied that he has achieved his lifelong dream.



Politically Correct

Logline: A concerned citizen isn't sure whether his fixation on an up-to-no-good neighbor is due to terrorism or racism.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 5,215

Synopsis

ARNOLD PENNYWORTHY, a middle manager at a middling bank, moves into the Arcadia Mansions, a large block of flats designed for an upper-class clientele. After living there for several months, he becomes suspicious of a new arrival whose skin is a decidedly darker complexion and who appears to lack the financial resources and sense of decorum one would expect to find in a resident of such a high-status complex.

Pennyworthy asks the Arcadia's porter, DENNIS, to track this new arrival for him.

He assures Dennis he is not racist and specifically draws a comparison between the new arrival and MR. ZEBARI, a long-term resident with similarly dark skin who lives at the opposite end of Pennyworthy's hallway, and who in Pennyworthy's eyes is a model citizen: quiet, respectful, and well-dressed.

Pennyworthy and Dennis spend a few weeks watching the new arrival and continue to grow suspicious as they observe him consorting with other individuals of similarly questionable backgrounds.

One afternoon Pennyworthy returns to the Arcadia after work and notices members of the dubious group have left the door to their apartment open. Pennyworthy looks inside and sees one man standing over another holding a knife – and pictures of a recent terrorist attack in London posted up all around the walls.



Terrified, Pennyworthy runs into his apartment and locks the door. The next day he leaves for the office extremely early, and upon arriving writes down a detailed list of everything he witnessed to preserve the record of his memory.

He then contacts Scotland Yard and makes a full report of his observations to SERGEANT ROBERTS, who is grateful for the outreach and assures Pennyworthy he has done the right thing. Sergeant Roberts also tells Pennyworthy they will look into the case and that he no longer needs to take any action.

Some months later, Pennyworthy moves to a new town to take over a different branch of his bank. Life gradually returns to normal until he is unexpectedly contacted again by Sergeant Roberts, who asks Pennyworthy to return to Scotland Yard for an update. Once there, Sergeant Roberts introduces Pennyworthy to his supervisor, COMMANDER MARK HARRISON, who tells

Pennyworthy that his suspicions were well-founded. After an extensive investigation Scotland Yard determined that the leader of a dangerous terrorist cell did in fact reside on Pennyworthy's floor at the Arcadia, and thanks to Pennyworthy's investigation they were able to disrupt the cell, arrest him, and save countless lives.

Commander Harrison stipulates that due to reasons of national security Pennyworthy's contribution must remain secret, which Pennyworthy completely understands.

Later, Pennyworthy attends a musical with his sister and sees that members of the royal family are also present. During intermission, Pennyworthy spots the same man he originally saw at the Arcadia and informed on to Scotland Yard enter the theater and head straight for the royal box.

Pennyworthy then panics and rushes after the man to stop him, however he is detained by a member of the royal family's security staff, who tells Pennyworthy the man in question is actually a visiting scholar and Pennyworthy should turn around.

Pennyworthy insists the man is a terrorist and that the security staff call Commander Harrison at Scotland Yard to verify his information.

Bemused, the protective officer immediately calls Commander Harrison to put him on the phone with Pennyworthy.

Commander Harrison then tells Pennyworthy that he doesn't know who Pennyworthy is looking at in the royal box at the theater, but that the terrorist from his building – Mr. Zebari – remains under arrest.



Stuck On You

Logline: A regular Joe Blow can't believe his luck when a high society socialite falls in love with him, but his enthusiasm is tempered when she requests his participation in a daring heist.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 4,669

Synopsis

JEREMY is a regular sort of bloke with average means and looks. He attends a horse race and makes eye contact with ARABELLA WARWICK, a gorgeous socialite in the VIP area, who provides him with a racing tip that earns Jeremy a nice financial victory.

Arabella then tells Jeremy to use his winnings to take her out to dinner, and though he is surprised at her offer he's even more shocked when she shows up – but most of all he's flabbergasted that she falls into bed with him on their first night together.

While Jeremy is initially convinced Arabella must be using him for some sort of lower-class dalliance, she continues to dote on him and the two begin to see each other daily. After just a month she confesses her love for him, and on a whim Jeremy proposes. Arabella accepts, and then requests Jeremy's help in orchestrating the theft of an engagement ring.

Arabella provides Jeremy with explicit instructions on how to visit De Beers' ultra-high-end headquarters and enter the private room where its top staff shows off engagement rings to only those buyers they believe can afford to them. With Arabella's help (and the aid of her father's clothes, cufflinks, and watch), Jeremy looks the part and portrays the image of a moneyed gentleman perfectly.

Jeremy examines the rings and focuses on an exquisite 18-carat diamond worth some £800,000, asking the jeweler for a loupe so that he can inspect it more carefully. The jeweler agrees, but when he turns back around after grabbing the loupe, he is shocked to find the loupe is no longer there.



The jeweler calls his burly security staff, which roughs up Jeremy and accuses him of theft. Yet even though they strip Jeremy naked, search his clothing, and x-ray him, they ultimately cannot find evidence that he has taken the diamond and must let him leave.

Jeremy stays calm and righteous throughout the ordeal and informs the staff they will be hearing from his solicitor.

After telling Arabella about his experience, Arabella then visits the same jeweler under the auspices of also looking for an engagement ring. She spends an afternoon trying on dozens but ultimately says she cannot decide without her fiancé, and they will return together.

When Arabella leaves the shop, she somehow has the 18-carat diamond with her, and it becomes clear Jeremy used a stick of chewing gum to affix it under the table while the jeweler's back was turned.

Arabella then reflects on the fact that Jeremy performed his task better than other suitors had and becomes wistful about the fact that she will never see him again but consoles herself with the idea that she already has her next heist – and partner – in mind.



The Luck of the Irish

Logline: An Irish estate agent travels to Majorca and wins and loses a fortune several times over the course of his life.

Genre: Coming of Age

Word Count: 4,312

Synopsis

LIAM CASEY of Cork decides to forego university and enter the real world as soon as possible. He takes a job with an English estate agent and spends three years learning the business before taking his first holiday to Majorca.

On the island, Liam explores the old part of the city and meets PATRICK O'DONOVAN, another Irishman who has lived in Majorca for thirty years and owns an estate agency.

O'Donovan tells Liam that he wishes he were thirty years younger, as he expects that the market will be entering a boom period and he doesn't believe he will be around long enough to enjoy it.

Liam spends a few days investigating O'Donovan's predictions and agrees that the market in Majorca is ripe for expansion; he asks O'Donovan if he can join the business as a junior partner, but his countryman accepts and anoints him a full partner.

Despite the forward momentum, O'Donovan spends two years drinking away most of the company's profits. Liam begins to believe the venture is a failure and makes plans to return to Ireland, however one afternoon O'Donovan visits the local pub during the afternoon siesta and dies drunk, leaving Liam to inherit the business.

Liam invites a local Spaniard who had beaten him on several recent deals, PEPE MIRO, to become his partner, and the two relaunch the business; Pepe caters to the locals, and Liam to the deep-pocketed tourists.



Pepe uses knowledge of Spanish inheritance laws to convince several widows and daughters to sell their land to the company, leading the two estate agents down the path to becoming real estate developers as well.

Business flourishes and by 1999 both Liam and Pepe are millionaires. It seems like nothing can stop them from continuing to essentially print money, and when Pepe catches wind of a megadeal a bank in Ireland doesn't hesitate at handing over a massive loan to complete the purchase of a 23-million-euro property that Liam and Pepe intend to turn into a monumental residential development.

Despite the considerable logistical hurdles involved with this project, all proceeds smoothly until the Green Party earns a surprise electoral victory and decides to halt all further and in-progress development in the exact zone where the partners had begun their project.

Seemingly overnight both Liam and Pepe lose everything. They try to remedy their loss in court, but the legal process takes so long that they still are bankrupt for years.

When their case does eventually come before the magistrate, however, the judges surprisingly decide to award them repayment of damages totaling 121 million Euros.

Shocked and grateful, Liam sells his shares of the business to Pepe, and retires to Ireland – where he pledges to no longer seek planning permission for anything, even an outhouse.



The Queen's Birthday Telegram

Logline: A 103-year-old man discovers a secret about his wife that upends their entire relationship.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 1,945

Synopsis

ALBERT WEBBER turns 100 years old in 2007 and receives a congratulatory telegram from the Queen of England.

The entirety of his small town turns out for a grand celebration and is especially excited about the fact that they will be able to do it all again in three years when Albert's wife, BETTY, will also turn 100.

Three years later Betty's birthday she insists on a more subdued celebration, given that Albert's health has now become increasingly frail.

Nevertheless, family and friends still gather to mark Betty's birthday, though Albert is dismayed that Betty does not receive her own congratulatory telegram from the Queen.

Though Betty tells Albert not to fuss over the missed telegram, Albert continues to stew at the perceived slight to his wife.

One afternoon when Betty is out shopping with their youngest daughter – EILEEN (age 73), Albert uses Directory Enquiries to call Buckingham Palace and speak to the Queen's representative who manages birthday telegrams, HUMPHREY CRANSHAW, who is surprised to hear that Betty did not receive her telegram.



Cranshaw then excuses himself to research the situation and returns later to tell Albert that his records show Betty did receive her telegram – five years earlier, when she turned one hundred years old.

Upon hearing this news, Albert smiles to himself.

The Undiplomatic Diplomat

Logline: A diplomat tries to cement his career in service by discovering and claiming fresh territory for the United Kingdom.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 6,755

Synopsis:

PERCIVAL ARTHUR CLARENCE FORSDYKE hails from an elite family of British diplomats, and from birth it is expected that he will continue in this tradition.

As Percival grows it becomes clear he is exceptionally gifted academically but lacks the social maturity and tact to handle the standards and niceties associated with the diplomatic corps. He is sacked from all three of his foreign postings, and ultimately appointed as an archives clerk at the Foreign Office.

It is a decidedly mundane position, and he spends thirty years working by himself in the basement.

Still, it turns out that Percival is perhaps the most brilliant archives clerk the Foreign Office has ever seen, and he uses his deep mind and memory to develop an unparalleled understanding of arcane diplomatic regulations.

Percival completes an honorable career of thirty years' service, but upon his retirement in 2009 he still feels he has not adequately upheld his family's legacy, so he uses his expertise to craft a plan he feels is sure to bring honor to his name.



Percival then travels to the northernmost area of Scotland, a remote fishing village on the North Sea, where he buys camping and survival supplies and charters a boat to take him deep into ocean waters to a rocky, uninhabited island, where he settles alone and lives for ninety consecutive days.

Percival passes the time exploring the island, listening to the radio, and keeping a meticulous log of activities, and on day ninety he plants the British flag on the island's highest point and claims the territory for England.

The following day the charter boat returns (as they had previously agreed to do), taking Percival back to Scotland and all the way through on his return journey to London.

Once home again, Percival sends a full report of his activities to the Foreign Office and notifies them about the newly claimed territory. Shortly thereafter, Percival receives a call from the Office of the Foreign Secretary requesting a meeting, which Percival eagerly accepts.

At the meeting, the Foreign Secretary tells Percival that they have reviewed his request and have found it following the Territories Settlement Act of 1762, which no one had even remembered existed before Percival had come along to point it out.

The Foreign Secretary commends Percival for his ingenuity and notes that this new claim technically gives England uninterrupted oil and fishing rights within 150 miles of the island.

The Foreign Secretary explains to Percival that although he is pleased with the efforts undertaken by Percival on behalf of the crown, if the UK were to proceed with Percival's claim it could upset the international balance of power and inspire other nations like Russia, China, and the United States to make similar reckless settlement attempts and claims wherever there are barren islands, which would draw the whole planet into conflict.

Percival is speechless and ashamed he had not thought about this possibility. He becomes concerned that in trying to honor his family's name he has dishonored it and laments he has failed to achieve the diplomatic prestige that came so naturally to his ancestors.

Percival tells the Foreign Secretary he will drop the claim on behalf of the UK. Although Percival leaves the Foreign Office feeling rejected, a few weeks later he is buoyed and surprised to learn he has earned the KCMG decoration for diplomatic service, honoring his family's reputation.



Where There's A Will

Logline: A failed actress-turned-escort hatches a plan to ensure she'll never have to work another day in her life.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 5,699

Synopsis

EVELYN MERTZBERGER is born in Milwaukee in 1962. She bears a striking resemblance to Marilyn Monroe, and as soon as she is able, she changes her name to EVELYN BEATTIE MOORE and sets out for Hollywood to become an actor.

Not long after she arrives in Los Angeles Evelyn realizes she has no acting talent, and when she cannot afford to pay her rent, she becomes an escort rather than face eviction and return less-than-triumphantly to Milwaukee.

For several years Evelyn then makes a healthy living discreetly sleeping with wealthy gentlemen, but after turning thirty she decides she needs a new plan to ensure her future long after her looks have left her.

Evelyn decides to move to Florida, which she reads in a magazine is the state with the most millionaires per capita. She changes her name to LYNN BEATTIE and enrolls in nursing school, where she works diligently to graduate near the top of her class.

She then uses her charm (and bedroom-related skills) to be hired at Jackson Memorial Hospital, the preferred end-of-life care facility for some of Florida's wealthiest citizens.



Lynn researches the facility's patients meticulously and settles on ARTHUR J. SOMMERFIELD as her target. She develops a relationship with Sommerfield's physician, DR. WILLIAM GROVE, and arranges for a transfer to Sommerfield's floor and her assignment as his primary nurse. Through a series of indulgences such as whiskey, cigars, and sexual favors, Lynn then ingratiates herself with Arthur.

Arthur is a widower whose two children live abroad, so it is no surprise he becomes infatuated with Lynn and appreciates the attention.

As he approaches his final days, Arthur is discharged from the hospital with Lynn assigned to go with him to his home to serve as his personal care attendant until the end. While they settle into life at his estate, Arthur offers to leave Lynn a small token in his will to remember him; Lynn asks for a single photo and Arthur's cane, and Arthur decides with his lawyer, MR. HASKINS, to execute her request.

When Haskins drops off the completed will at Arthur's estate, Lynn complains to Arthur that Haskins left out the items she had desired. Lynn then volunteers to bring the will to the law firm herself to rectify the omission.

Instead of visiting Haskins, however, Lynn hires a different lawyer, MR. KULLICK, and provides him with a version of the will that includes significant differences.

When Kullick returns to Arthur's residence to collect Arthur's signature, Arthur impatiently tells him he doesn't need to go over the will again clause-by-clause, as it was him who had wanted the amendment to allow Lynn to receive what she wished in the first place.

Dr. Grove acts as the witness to the will, with Lynn assuring him that she won't be receiving anything of Arthur's because she wants to keep her job at Jackson Memorial – and their relationship.

Afterwards, Lynn continues indulging Arthur until he dies a few days later. Arthur's two children return from abroad and are shocked to learn all they are to receive from his will are a photo and Arthur's old cane.

When they visit Haskins to attempt to challenge the fact that Lynn is set to receive about seventy million dollars of their father's money, Haskins tells them that Lynn's con is airtight as she not only arranged for Arthur's attending physician to serve as the will's witness, but also amended the will to donate thirty million dollars to various charities known for being particularly litigious.



Haskins begrudgingly praises Lynn for sacrificing thirty million dollars to save seventy, and with her con now complete Lynn is truly set for life.

A Chapter of Accidents

Logline: After a husband suspects his wife has been unfaithful, he meticulously plans his revenge against his lover.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 5,683

Synopsis

EDWARD and CAROLINE, a married couple in their late 40s, meet PATRICK TRAVERS on a ski holiday in Switzerland. They find him to be charming and bond as a trio over dinner.

Upon returning to London, Travers visits Edward's art gallery and expresses an interest in Impressionist paintings. Edward also notices Travers spends considerable time talking to Caroline, which he believes verges on crossing a line.

Days later, Travers returns to the gallery and asks Edward if he can place a deposit on an elaborate Vuillard to see how it looks hanging in his home. Edward accepts, and after the painting arrives at Travers' home Travers invites Edward and Caroline to dinner to see it.

During the meal Edward notices that Travers pays far too much attention to Caroline and begins to suspect Travers is attempting to bed her, however because he still wants to make the Vuillard sale Edward does not directly confront Travers about it. Not long after the meal, Travers returns the painting to the gallery with a simple note saying he has lost interest.

Edward then runs into an old friend at his health club, PERCY FELLOWS, who tells Edward that his wife left him after having an affair with Travers. As Percy shares the story, Edward realizes Travers' familiar playbook and understands that Travers has in fact been trying to woo Caroline.



Edward becomes obsessed with the idea that Caroline and Travers are having an affair and secretly looks for confirmation, however when he is unable to find any proof, he concludes that the affair must have ended after Travers slept with her and became tired of Caroline.

Even though Edward believes the affair to have been in the past, he still wants to extract revenge on Travers. Edward spends weeks thinking up ideas and eventually realizes the best opportunity revolves around Travers' habit of being the first skier on the slopes each morning during holidays.

Edward waits patiently until he and Caroline's next trip to Switzerland, using the time to improve as a skier and perfect his plan. When it comes time for them to take their annual holiday, Edward insures they will overlap with Travers for just a few days. Edward then plans to be the last skier off the slopes the next evening to give him an opportunity to rearrange the course's guide flags before Travers arrives the following morning.

The next day Edward is the first person to the slopes – beating even Travers.

When the lifts open, they head to the top together, and Edward asks Travers if he will go with him on a single run down the "B" slopes, claiming he wants Travers' advice on whether he is ready to move up to the more advanced "A" slopes. After Travers begrudgingly agrees, Edward baits him into a race and the two set off down the course.

When they reach the area where Edward has rearranged the flags Edward slows down safely into an embankment, but Travers, unable to stop, sails far off the course at high speed, crashing down into a ravine. Afterwards Edward skis back up the course, returning the flags to their proper locations and covering his tracks.

Later that morning, Edward and Caroline hear ambulance sirens. Caroline remarks with hope that it isn't related to Travers, whom she knows to be the first person out on the slopes each day.

The two enter a conversation about Travers and Caroline states she never liked him because he made a pass at her, but she kept quiet about it hoping that Travers would still buy the Vuillard painting from Edward.

Edward turns ashen, believing he may have orchestrated Travers' death over an affair that never occurred. A few hours later the slopes Edward sprains his ankle and heads to the local hospital for treatment.

During a conversation with an x-ray technician, Edward learns that Travers has broken both of his arms and legs and will not walk for months, but he remains alive. Edward is relieved.



On the way home, Edward expresses his gratitude to Caroline for Travers' health, who remarks that given all the effort Edward had gone through to extract his revenge, she'd rather hoped he would have succeeded.

Edward had believed the entire time that his wife had been ignorant of his plan, but it becomes clear she was aware of his intentions – and did nothing to stop him – all along.



A La Carte

Logline: All a local boy wants to do is graduate from secondary and join his friends at the factory, but when a master chef discovers his innate talent, he presents him with another possibility.

Genre: Coming of Age

Word Count: 5,170

Synopsis

ARTHUR HAPGOOD spends his entire adult life in either military service or working on the assembly line at the local automotive factory, and though he earns a decent living his only wish is that his son, MARK, can succeed beyond his blue-collar fate.

Mark turns out to be an excellent student with a strong work ethic and considerable academic gifts, however on his eighteenth birthday Mark tells his father he has decided he does not plan to attend university, and instead wants to join his friends and work at the automotive factory as soon as he graduates.

Arthur is dismayed and tells Mark he spent his entire life working tirelessly to avoid this very scenario; however, Mark says that while he is grateful for his father's sacrifice and certainly academically capable of attending university, he isn't interested in pursuing a bookish life he doesn't enjoy just to satisfy his father's fantasies.

Ultimately, Mark's mother helps the father and son reach a compromise: Mark will spend one year working in a job that meets his father's approval, after which if he still desires, he can apply to work at the car factory.

Arthur then uses his military connections to find Mark a job as a porter at a fancy hotel, working under his old supervisor, SERGEANT CRANN.

Once at the hotel, Crann proceeds to take advantage of Mark by forcing him to work long, difficult shifts and turn over all overtime salary and tips directly to him. When Mark tries to protest, Crann insists that this is the way things have always been done and that one-day Mark will have his turn.

Naturally, Mark detests the job and literally counts down the days until he can join his friends at the factory, all of whom are quick to regale him with tales of their good wages and weekends spent watching football and chasing women.



With just ten weeks left in the year, Mark cannot hold his tongue any longer and loses his job after snapping and talking back to Crann. Mark begs the hotel manager to assign him to a different office so that he can complete the arrangement he had with his father, but the only job available is peeling potatoes in the hotel kitchen.

Mark accepts, though the hotel manager warns him that CHEF JACQUES LE RENNEU is even more of a cantankerous stickler than Crann.

Mark keeps his head down and peels potatoes without incident until his second week on the job, when an overwhelmed chopper slices his finger and can no longer carry out his duties. Chef Jacques installs Mark to replace him, and is so pleased with Mark's neat, geometric slices that he promotes Mark to "vegetable chopper" to better use Mark's knife skills.

Chef Jacques quickly sees that Mark has an abundance of natural talent even though he has no formal kitchen training. To the surprise of the other kitchen employees, Chef Jacques takes Mark under his wing and teaches him basic kitchen skills.

Mark begins to take pride in his work and his last weeks at the hotel fly by, but though he is sad to leave the kitchen he is thrilled to be able to return home and work at the factory.

Chef Jacques is incredulous that someone of Mark's abilities would bypass a promising kitchen career in favor of manual factory labor. He offers Mark another promotion or even to help him find a job in a kitchen closer to his home, both of which Mark flatly refuses before he leaves.

Before boarding the train home, however, Mark reconsiders and realizes he wants to work in the kitchen. Chef Jacques welcomes Mark's return with open arms and begins to train him as a proper chef.

Over ten years alongside Chef Jacques, Mark rises to become the kitchen's master chef. In 1971, when Jacques is offered the opportunity to return to Paris and take over the kitchen at the infamous George Cinq, he proudly brings Mark to go with him.

Later, when Jacques celebrates his 65th birthday and retires from that restaurant, the hotel plans to appoint Mark as his successor – which would make him the first Englishman ever to be *maître chef de cuisine* at the George Cinq.

Mark, however, has a different idea: he asks Jacques to invest in him once again so they can open a restaurant together. Jacques agrees, and the two become business partners.

Eventually they open three restaurants together (two in Paris, one in London), earning Michelin stars over several years. Despite his success, Mark can never manage to get his parents to visit any of his restaurants, as they insist, they enjoy it more when he cooks for them at home.



When he finally earns his third star in 1982, however, they agree to finally make the trip to London for him.

Mark meticulously arranges every detail of his parents' visit. They are extremely impressed with the cuisine, though his father chides Mark that the food is "almost as good as his mother's."

At the meal's conclusion, the head waiter notes it was a pleasure to serve Mark's parents and asks what his father did for a living, assuming he must have been a banker, lawyer, or member of some similarly high-status profession.

Mark explains that his father worked in a factory, and when the head waiter confesses, he can't believe that to be possible, Mark explains his own father never had a father who loved him as much as Mark's had, and who had offered him the freedom to make his own choices.



Checkmate

Logline: A chess champion can't take his eyes off an attractive female opponent, but all she sees in him is an unsuspecting pawn.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 2,793

Synopsis

A local chess champion (never named) is surprised when a gorgeous woman, AMANDA CURZON, arrives at one his group's monthly informal gatherings for pick-up chess and drinks.

The champion can barely take his eyes off Amanda as he muddles through his own match against an accountant who is also playing in the meet-up for the first time.

During a break, the champion strikes up a conversation with Amanda and offers to give her a ride home. She accepts, and as it is not particularly late, she agrees to go with him to his place for a nightcap.

Once inside, the champion and Amanda decide to play some chess together. To make things interesting, they make a wager: if Amanda wins, the champion will pay her ten pounds; if the champion wins Amanda must remove an article of clothing.

The champion easily wins the match and Amanda removes her socks. The two then begin a series of "double or quits" matches as the stakes escalate to the point where Amanda finds herself playing the champion in just her underwear for a purse of £200.

Needless to say, in between matches the champion refills Amanda's wine glass several times, while he himself sips slowly and stays sober.

During the final high-stakes match, Amanda suddenly morphs into an entirely different class of player and quickly wipes the board with the champion.

He at once realizes she is a savant, and he has been hustled.



As he writes her a check for £200, he notices her memory is so skilled that she can replace the pieces with the exact squares on which they were found when she first arrived in his apartment.

The champion is stunned by the turn of events as Amanda then walks out of his house with a big check – right into a car driven by the accountant – the other new player at the event earlier that night.



Just Good Friends

Logline: There's nothing quite as comfortable as a well-worn relationship between two domestic partners, even if one of them isn't quite as human as we would expect.

Genre: Humor

Word Count: 2,431

Synopsis

A female lies in bed next to ROGER and shares the story of their relationship, beginning with how they met several years earlier at a local pub.

The narrator had always been intrigued by Roger, but it was only after he was dumped by his short-term girlfriend MADELIENE that she felt comfortable expressing her interest. The two ultimately left the pub together that night, and the narrator claims she hasn't returned or looked at another man since.

The narrator explains the habits of their daily routines, including the amount of time Roger spends in the bathroom, how he cares for her, and what he typically prepares for breakfast. She enjoys lounging next to him in bed and appreciates the consistency of his character and work ethic.

It is only in the story's final line that we learn the truth about the narrator and her relationship with Roger: she is, in fact, his cat.



Not The Real Thing

Logline: Two childhood rivals go to great lengths to one-up each other in life, love, and service.

Genre: Coming of Age

Word Count: 5,480

Synopsis

GERALD HASKINS and WALTER RAMSBOTTOM have a long history of rivalry dating back to childhood.

Gerald comes from a family with greater financial resources and manages to get the best of Walter, even to the point of stealing his fiancée, ANGELA BRADBURY, another childhood friend, who goes on to become Gerald's wife.

Gerald and ANGELA spend their honeymoon in the backwards country of MULTAVIA (an imaginary locale sandwiched between Austria and the Czech Republic), and upon returning home Gerald takes a job as an engineer with the city's sewerage company.

As Gerald climbs the ranks of the company, Walter enters politics and is elected to become city councilor.

Gerald proves himself as a leader in his profession and is eventually contacted by the King of Multavia with a proposal for Gerald to modernize the country's sewer systems. Gerald completes the work as promised, and though it takes some effort and intervention from the Foreign Office he is eventually paid for his services.

He later attends the opening ceremony for the new sewers at which the King of Multavia awards Gerald the Order of the Peacock (Third Class) in recognition of his work on the drainage system.

Gerald is excited to return home and show off his medal, however disappointment reigns when he realizes the Order of the Peacock is made of poor-quality stones and metals that are decidedly less prestigious than he had thought, and though he begins to wear the medal to various events, he notices no one is particularly impressed with it.

Gerald knows Walter is slated to become the city's mayor in one year's time, and he resolves to whip the Order of the Peacock medal into top shape in advance of Walter's ceremony. At his own (considerable) expense, Gerald outfits the medal with gold-plating and genuine stones; it now



looks fantastic, and Gerald is excited to wear it to the mayoral ceremony and show it off in front of Walter.

Coincidentally, Gerald also learns that the King of Multavia will be coming to Buckingham Palace for a state visit, and due to Gerald's past contributions to the country he and Angela have been invited to a state dinner as honored guests.

During the meal, the King of Multavia notices Gerald's "upgraded" Order of the Peacock and can barely take his eyes off it the medal. The King then arranges for Gerald to be invited to a later event at Buckingham Palace where Gerald is surprisingly awarded an Order of the Peacock (Second Class) medal.

As Gerald ascends the stage to receive his prize, the King tells Gerald he will no longer need his Third-Class medal and swaps it for a dingy Second-Class ornament filled with fake stones.

Gerald has no choice but to remain speechless and grinning during the formal event, even as the King of Multavia steals his prized possession right off Gerald's chest.

Gerald then privately laments to Angela that he will not be able to show off his medal in front of Walter, however Angela informs him that Walter's ceremony has been delayed by a year, giving Gerald enough time to upgrade the Second-Class ornament in appearance (and cost) to make it presentable.

Gerald is relieved, but Angela says that if Gerald is really going to spend all that money outfitting another Order of the Peacock with precious gold and gems, he at the very least better bring her home a tiara from the jeweler.



The Perfect Murder

Logline: A desperate lover tries to cover up a crime of passion and receives unexpected aid from the judicial system.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 11,893

Synopsis

A narrator (never named) calls his mistress, CARLA MOORLAND, and is upset to discover she's canceled their afternoon rendezvous. They exchange a series of sharp words as she tells him not to come over to her flat.

After leaving work that evening, the narrator feels guilty about his conversation with Carla and visits her home with a dozen roses. As he arrives, he sees Carla – wearing a red negligee he had bought for her – romantically bidding goodbye to another man at door.

Incensed, the narrator waits for the man to leave and then rings Carla's bell to confront her; she doesn't deny the other lover, throwing the blame back on the narrator for his refusal to divorce his wife.

First a verbal then a physical confrontation ensues, with the narrator eventually punching Carla in the jaw in a blind rage. As she staggers backwards and falls the narrator panics and flees the apartment.

The next morning, overcome with guilt, the narrator plans to drive past Carla's home on the way to work to leave her a note inviting her to lunch. As he approaches her flat, however, he is shocked to see an ambulance outside and both police and medical personnel wheeling a body on a gurney from her building.

The narrator realizes Carla must have died after he hit her. He is now less concerned by guilt than the fact that he may be convicted of murder.

At the office, the narrator's boss hounds him to finish a series of reports, though he remains distracted by the events of the murder and performs poorly.



The following day he checks the papers for any news pertaining to the crime and learns that it is being treated as a murder investigation – and that a neighbor has reported seeing a man leave Carla’s flat shortly after the suspected time of attack.

The narrator realizes he has an opportunity to pin the crime on Carla’s other lover, so he places an anonymous call to Scotland Yard and provides them with tips about the gentleman’s appearance and vehicle. The next day he is pleased to learn that the other man – PAUL MENZIES – has been arrested and charged for Carla’s murder.

Over the next six months, while Menzies awaits trial, the narrator’s nerves gradually subside. He feels no guilt about Menzies’ plight, though his performance at work continues to decline and the narrator is sacked by his superiors.

The narrator brushes it off, however, noting that he will now be free to attend Menzies’ trial, as a letter he received in the mail requires him to do.

At the trial, the Crown presents the case as open and shut, noting that a parking ticket (the narrator’s tip) confirmed Menzies’ vehicle near Carla’s apartment at the time of the assault, and an eyewitness neighbour found him leaving the flat.

For the defense, Menzies’ solicitor argues that Menzies visited Carla in his role as an insurance salesperson, and that no sexual relations or assault took place.

Under cross examination, however, the Crown casts considerable doubt on Menzies’ version of the events, managing to force him to admit to a sexual relationship with Carla – and a series of domestic violence incidents in his prior relationships.

With this information out in the open, it seems all but certain Menzies will be convicted of murder, however as jury deliberations begin to occur it becomes clear that a few holdouts are convinced of Menzies’ innocence.

Eventually the judge allows the jury to pursue a majority verdict, and the Foreman informs him they have reached a tally of 10-2 convicting Menzies of the murder.

It is only at that point that we realize our narrator is the jury supervisor, and that he ensured his innocence by sending Menzies to death.



The Loophole

Logline - After a heated altercation, two friends sue each other with an unexpected turn.

Genre - Humor

Word Count - 3,514

Synopsis

At the Haslemere Golf Club, longtime friends PHILIP MASTERS and MICHAEL GILMOUR finish a game of golf earlier than usual and are absorbed in a deep conversation that takes a turn.

Philip is frustrated that Michael is not holding himself accountable for his financial issues. Even though they have been friends for many years, Philip and Michael are quite different.

Philip is the owner of a start-up business that is quite successful, while Michael can't seem to hold down a job for more than a few months, including a job given to him by Philip at his company.

Philip and Michael are being disruptive, and COLONEL MATHER, the club president, tries to calm them down. The men get into a physical altercation and are suspended from the club.

Michael goes back home and decides to sue Philip.

No one except him thinks he has a case, especially when he wants to sue him for £100,000. But the Haslemere Chronicle aggravates Michael even more after they write an article about the altercation.

Philip apologizes for his behavior and says he had too much to drink that morning. He will settle and pay Michael in an out-of-court settlement.

Later, Michael receives a letter from the golf club stating that their suspension has been lifted.

Philip and Michael are teeing together at the club, to the surprise of many. Both men laugh and discuss how it was a planned win-win.

Michael gets the money, while Philip does not lose any at all. He can claim the loss as a legitimate business expense.



The only reason that worked was because Philip once employed Michael.

Both found a loophole and they took it.



The Steal

Logline - Every year on vacation, a couple buys a luxurious souvenir. They are surprised when they accidentally find the best souvenir of their lives on their most recent trip to Turkey.

Genre - Comedy

Word Count - 5,209

Synopsis

CHRISTOPHER and MARGARET ROBERTS always plan a vacation to a different country each year. While there, they like to find something luxurious and unique, also known as their “steal.”

They spend 11 out of their 12 months saving up while working at St. Cuthbert’s, a small preparatory school, to afford their travels.

This year, they plan their vacation to Turkey and hope to buy an opulent carpet. While in Turkey, they run into one of their students’ parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kendall-Hume, who also want to buy a carpet.

They lead Christopher and Margaret to a luxurious store with carpets far outside of the Roberts’ price range.

Margaret eyes a carpet, while Mr. Kendall-Humes barter with the shop owner. He ultimately buys a carpet for twenty thousand pounds!

Now alone in the shop, Margaret and the carpet dealer agree on £500 for the first carpet that she loved. The Kendall-Humes’ ask the Roberts to do them a favor and take their carpet through customs.

The Roberts agree.

At customs, a carpet expert informs the Roberts’ that there is a mistake.

The carpet that the Kendall-Humes’ purchased is very much overvalued, and Margaret’s £500 carpet is seriously undervalued.

Her carpet has far more complex handwoven stitching and is a traditional Hereke carpet.



As they are on their way home, the Roberts' remark that they had one hell of a steal!



Christina Rosenthal

Logline - A struggling rabbi finds comfort in reading his son's suicide letter that outlines his son's tragic love story.

Genre – Tragedy

Word Count - 7,099

Synopsis

A rabbi is struggling with his sermon on a quiet Friday night, even though he's done this for the last thirty years. He begins to read a letter.

The letter starts off with My dear Father and penned by the rabbi's son, BENJAMIN, outlines his relationship with CHRISTINA. She's friends with a school bully, GREG REYNOLDS. Benjamin develops a crush on her.

Although they see each other in passing, they do not speak. Benjamin, however, cannot stop thinking about her.

Years pass by, and Benjamin sees Christina at a theatre. She apologizes for her behavior back when they were younger. He asks her to join him for a cup of coffee, and they become inseparable. Christina becomes pregnant.

Christina tells Benjamin that she needs to tell her parents about the pregnancy by herself. But Christina never returned. He goes to her house, but her parents refuse to let him see her. He doesn't see her for the next five years.

Now living in Montreal, Benjamin sees Christina and his child at a bus stop. He discovers that she works at a dress shop and is married. He sends her a note asking her to meet him at a hotel. Once again, after they meet, they become inseparable.

Christina asks for a divorce and her ex-husband accepts with the condition that he gets custody of the son.

Both Benjamin and Christina say yes and days after Christina's divorce is completed, they get married. Christina gets pregnant again but dies during childbirth.

Benjamin is devastated but focuses on the health of his daughter, DEBORAH.



Unfortunately, she dies as well.

Benjamin sees no other way out than to join them.

He thanks his father for everything. The rabbi finishes reading the letter – he’s been reading the same one for the past ten years.



Colonel Bullfrog

Logline - A British Colonel in World War II becomes a POW in a Japanese prison camp. Once the war ends, he must decide how to deal with his former captors.

Genre - Drama/War

Word Count - 4,459

Synopsis

Colonel RICHARD MOORE is a prisoner-of-war, captured by the Japanese, during World War II.

After being forced to march to Tonchan, a heavily guarded camp, Moore is informed by MAJOR SAKATA, the camp commandant, that as the senior most ranking officer captured, Moore is responsible for the welfare of the Allied troops kept there.

Moore endeavors to keep the spirits of his co-prisoners as strong as possible. Sakata and his two subordinates, nicknamed together as “Sweet and Sour Pork” treat the Allied POWs with respect.

One day, Major Sakata informs Moore that the Allies have won the war and that he is now the commanding officer of the camp. Moore oversees the departure of his troops, as well as the now Japanese POWs.

Moore is called upon to be a part of a war tribunal in Tokyo, tasked with handing down punishment to the very men who were his captors.

Moore finds the head of the tribunal, GENERAL TOMKINS, is a mean-spirited racist who plans to kill all of the Japanese military whether they had committed war crimes or not.

Moore refuses to take part in the proceedings and informs his superiors of Tomkins’ methods. Tomkins is replaced by an American Marine who hands out fair sentences and commutes death penalties for over two hundred Japanese POWs.

Moore retires from the military and becomes a priest in Suffolk. During one of his sermons, he recognizes a man in his congregation as Major Sakata, who is now working for an electronics company.



After finding out that the roof of Moore's church is crumbling, Sakata gifts Moore and the church ten thousand pounds. A few years later, he gifts another £25,000.

Almost ten years later, Moore is focused on raising four million pounds to fully renovate his church, but unfortunately dies before finishing his fundraising.

At his funeral, Sakata introduces the Archbishop to the President of the electronics company he works for, a small man who is known as "the sour half of "Sweet and Sour Pork".

He gives Moore's church \$4,000,000 for the restoration.



The Wine Taster

Logline: A wealthy braggart challenges an oenophile's ability to identify the most expensive wines in his personal cellar but fails to see the reward his opponent receives in defeat.

Genre: Mystery

Word Count: 4,309

Synopsis:

SEFTON HAMILTON, a wealthy braggart, attends a dinner hosted by HENRY KENNEDY which also includes the narrator (never named) and FREDDIE BARKER (President of the Wine Society).

Hamilton behaves boorishly throughout the meal, imbibing to the point of drunkenness and ultimately challenging Barker's knowledge about wines.

Hamilton issues a challenge to Barker to identify four of the most prestigious bottles from his vast personal cellar over lunch the following weekend, and though Barker seems to want no part in the ordeal he reluctantly accepts.

On the day in question, Barker and the men arrive at Hamilton's estate and are served a four-course meal accompanied by mystery wine pairings. Barker attempts to identify each vintage but answers incorrectly each time, ultimately losing his wager of 200 pounds to Hamilton.

The narrator observes that Barker appears to be begrudgingly embarrassed by his foibles – and also that ADAMS, Hamilton's butler, behaves noticeably nervously throughout the meal.

Later that evening, Barker, Kennedy, and the narrator depart Hamilton's estate and stop at a local tavern for dinner on the way home.

Barker had previously highlighted the tavern's reputation for having an excellent wine cellar, and upon entering the restaurant Barker tells the innkeeper they defer to his expertise for choosing the wines and meal.

The men are served a light, delicious supper accompanied by wines which the narrator's unsophisticated palate believes to be superior to those tasted at Hamilton's home that afternoon.

The narrator also notices that Adams, Hamilton's butler, is present during the meal and chatting with the innkeeper.



At the conclusion of the meal Barker accepts the bill, which the narrator notices is for exactly 200 pounds.

The innkeeper then hands the check over directly to Adams who promptly tears it up, providing the impression that Adams had assisted in switching the afternoon wines with the evening ones, unbeknownst his braggart of a boss.



Clean Sweep Ignatius

Logline - The newly appointed Nigerian Minister of Finance finds it difficult to make changes after years of corruption, but makes it his personal mission to clean up his country by any means necessary.

Genre - Thriller

Word Count - 2,332

Synopsis

IGNATIUS AGARBI is appointed the new Nigerian Minister of Finance. As he is the seventeenth person to hold the office in as many years, people don't take him seriously as the country is rife with corruption, illegal financing, and bribes.

Newspapers start to take notice when Ignatius begins stripping leaders of their titles, jailing officials for falsifying documents, and deporting financiers for breaking regulation laws. He is dubbed "Clean Sweep Ignatius" and is feared.

GENERAL OTOBI, the Head of State, calls Ignatius informs him that the latest budget report shows that they are still losing millions of dollars in bribes to foreign countries.

Ignatius tells the General that he believes the money is being sent to Swiss banks, but he needs more resources to prove it.

The General gives Ignatius a signed letter of authorization and a special Ambassador rank, granting him full authority to investigate anyone he sees fit, including members of his own Cabinet.

Ignatius secretly takes his family to Florida. Dropping them off at Disney World, he then buys a flight to New York in cash. From there, he flies to Geneva and arrives at a Swiss bank with only a briefcase.

He displays his credentials and requests the names of the people who are customers at the bank. The Chairman of the bank declines. Increasing his threats without success, Ignatius pulls out a gun. Though terrified, the bankers remain strong and refuse to divulge any information.

Satisfied, Ignatius puts the gun away, opens his briefcase and reveals it is filled with five million dollars in which he hopes to open an account, having finally succumbed to temptation.



A Greek Tragedy

Logline: A magnanimous Greek trader explains the root of his generosity comes from another man's sacrifice.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 2,650

Synopsis

GEORGE TSAKIRIS is a wealthy Greek businessman who owns an international salvage company with his brothers NICHOLAS and ANDREW.

He meets the narrator (never named) at a charity event; the narrator is serving as an auctioneer and is grateful George willingly volunteers to bid on a frightful painting that would have otherwise gone unsold.

Over many years the narrator witnesses George engage in the same sort of generous behavior, and eventually George shares an anecdote which explains the root of his munificence.

Many years ago George hosted a wedding for his favorite niece, ISABELLA, on her native Greek island of Cephalonia. George explains to the narrator how he had no control over who showed up, as it was a local custom that everyone who desired could attend, unlike British weddings. As such, the reception turns out to be a gigantic affair.

Towards the end of the evening, well after midnight, ANDREAS NIKOLAIDES walks into the gathering. Andreas is a local legend who defended the island from the Nazis during World War II and is treated as royalty.

George immediately offers Andreas his seat of honor at the head table, and sets about fixing Andreas a sampling of the finest food and wine.

While George is preparing the plate, a guest who had been celebrating the wedding by firing his pistol into the air trips and inadvertently fires a bullet in the direction of the head table; before anyone realizes what has occurred, Andreas has been killed.

George tells the narrator that Andreas had been credited many times for saving the lives of everyone on the island, which now includes George, for he had only moments earlier been sitting



in the same seat where Andreas died. George remains generous with his wealth, for he is simply happy to be alive and able to share.



Charity Begins at Home

Logline: A lonely accountant approaching the end of his career uses his knowledge of the tax code to craft a unique retirement plan.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 7,319

Synopsis

At age 54, Harry Preston is approaching the end of his career as an accountant. Harry is an unremarkable, efficient employee whose reliability is his best trait, though he is certainly considered replaceable in the eyes of his colleagues.

Outside of work, Harry is single and has long since given up looking for a romantic partner.

Harry's company assigns him to prepare a tax return for ANGELA FORSTER, a client who runs her own small business, an events company.

Harry's deft accounting helps Angela get her finances in apple pie order, and as a show of gratitude she invites him to attend an upcoming benefit she is hosting. Harry is so surprised by the overture – it's been years since anyone's invited him anywhere – that he inadvertently accepts.

At the event, Harry is awed by Angela's organizational efficiency and hosting capabilities. After witnessing her in action, he inquires as to why she pays herself such a paltry salary when she raises her clients so much money.

Angela says her clients constantly remind her that they are charities, but Harry points out that she is a professional – not a charity – and deserves to be compensated as such.

Remembering that Angela does a large portion of her business in cash, Harry comes up with a solution to help Angela receive her worth without her clients realizing she has raised her fees.

So begins a secret partnership where at the end of each event Angela hands over a portion of her cash proceeds to Harry, who then takes them to different casinos and launders the money by breaking even at the roulette table.

Harry then passes the clean chips back to Angela, who cashes them out for a check under an alias name.



Harry's plan is a smashing success and over the next three years they clear just over a million pounds in profit.

For operational security Harry and Angela follow strict protocols and never see each other outside of events, except for a single dinner together to celebrate each prosperous year.

As Harry approaches his own retirement at the age of sixty, his ruse finally comes to the attention of one of Angela's clients: Miss FLORENCE BLEKINSOPP, former headmistress of St. Catherine's Convent school, whose eagle eyes spot a missing £820 in cash from the total amount Angela reported she had raised.

Florence immediately assumes Angela is innocent and that her accountant, who suspiciously showed up at the end of the event to count the money, is to blame for the discrepancy.

Florence alerts the police, who track Harry to Angela's next event and observe him take cash from the charity and gamble it away at the casino. They are convinced he's siphoning off money to finance a gambling problem, and quickly arrest him before considering whether anyone else is involved – or how deep the scheme might go.

Ultimately, Harry pleads guilty and receives a paltry sentence of eighteen months as a non-violent first-time offender. Upon his release he immediately travels to Majorca and meets up with Angela, who has settled there with the rest of their ill-gotten gains.

In a brief coda, it is revealed that Harry and Angela are living under the names of Mr. and Mrs. Graham Richards, and that the Royal Overseas Club of Majorca has tapped him as their account, and her to organize their annual ball.



Don't Drink the Water

Logline: A ruthless executive refuses to allow his wife's plans for divorce get in the way of him closing the biggest deal of his life – placing his own life at risk in the process.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 8,287

Synopsis

RICHARD (DICK) BARNESLEY's company has been selected to build a pipeline that would start in St. Petersburg and stretch across Russia.

In order to seal the deal, he arranges for a secret \$2,000,000 annuity to be paid to ANATOL CHENKOV, the Minister of Energy. During a trip to Russia to meet with Chenkov, Dick learns that Russia is facing a serious drinking water crisis and is warned repeatedly not to drink the tap water.

Upon traveling home to the UK, Dick informs his company that the deal is nearly complete, and he will be returning in two weeks in order to sign the contracts alongside Chenkov and President VLADIMIR PUTIN.

By happenstance, Dick then comes across papers on his wife's desk which strongly imply she is planning to divorce him. Dick is shocked, even though he admits to his attorney that he is having an affair with his secretary, and that he and his wife have not made love in years.

Dick's attorney explains there is almost nothing he can do to keep his wife from divorcing him and walking away with half of his assets, which in the case of the pipeline contract alone would equal £30,000,000.

Although Dick's wife reveals nothing of her plans in casual conversation, Dick becomes especially suspicious when she suggests she should accompany him to St. Petersburg to the contract signing, since she has not traveled with him on business in ages.

Once inside their Russian hotel room, Dick removes all the signs warning guests not to drink the tap water, and cruelly comes up with every excuse he can think of to make sure his wife stays hydrated – by means of the contaminated water.

Over the next day and a half, he fills his wife with water until she eventually succumbs and becomes violently ill in the back of a taxi.



Upon returning to the hotel room she passes out, but Dick refuses to call a doctor and tells her when she wakes that she has already seen one, and the only prescription is to drink more water.

The night before the contract signing Dick laments that she is still breathing and it becomes clear he is attempting to not just incapacitate his wife, but kill her.

On the morning of the signing, Chenkov arrives at the hotel and becomes irate when Dick is not waiting for him in the lobby. When Chenkov orders the hotel manager to open the door to Dick's room, he is shocked to see Dick and his wife still lying in bed – both deceased.

The hotel doctor remarks that Dick's wife likely died during the night after drinking contaminated water, but that Dick died only an hour or so earlier after catching the disease as a respiratory infection from her.

The doctor adds that if Dick had only called him after his wife had taken ill it might have still been possible to save him even though by then she was already doomed.



In the Eye of the Beholder

Logline: The only thing more surprising about an Italian football star's choice of wife is the woman he chooses to marry after her.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 5,453

Synopsis

GIAN LORENZO VENICI and PAOLO CASTELLI, two boyhood classmates, have little in common but find throughout life that their fortunes intertwine.

Gian Lorenzo excels academically, attending the finest university in Italy and eventually taking over his father's business as an elite art dealer.

Paolo Castelli, a top footballer on the pitch, becomes the most talented striker of his era and achieves widespread international fame.

Throughout Paolo's career he makes headlines for both his performance on the pitch as well as the array of beautiful women he consorts with in his private life.

Shortly after retirement Paolo shocks the world by announcing his engagement to ANGELINA PORCELLI, the daughter of the chairman of the largest pharmaceutical company in Italy, who is no beauty.

Thousands of guests, including Gian Lorenzo, attend their gaudy wedding and snicker with the assumption that the handsome, athletic Paolo has only chosen Angelina for her father's money.

In the years to come the couple moves to Venice and purchases a grandiose villa. One day Gian Lorenzo travels to Venice to meet with a client looking to discreetly sell a Canaletto.

They happen to find themselves dining at the same restaurant as Paolo and Angelina; Paolo then waves Gian Lorenzo over to share that Angelina is ready to start her own private art collection, and he hopes Gian Lorenzo can do them the honor of helping her to curate it.

In the ensuing years Gian Lorenzo spends a great deal of time with the couple, during which he is impressed by Angelina's studious devotion to art history and her excellent eye when selecting pieces to acquire.



Gian Lorenzo also understands Angelina will spend almost anything to purchase rare paintings as they become available, though he tries to avoid situations where sellers take advantage of her deep pockets.

Throughout it all Gian Lorenzo also finds Paolo to be devoted to Angelina despite the continued assumption that he married her for money.

Years pass, and eventually Angelina dies of a heart attack, leaving Paolo as the sole heir to her father's estate and seventh richest man in Italy. Four years after the funeral, Gian Lorenzo hears whispers that Paolo has begun to date again, and it is not long before Paolo announces his engagement to a mystery woman who turns out to be a local waitress.

At the wedding, all are shocked to discover that the mystery woman bears a strong physical resemblance to Angelina, confirming for everyone present that it wasn't Angelina's money that attracted him to her.



It Can't Be October Already

Logline: A harmless criminal finds comfort in a series of run-ins with the law.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 4,233

Synopsis

PATRICK O'FLYNN throws a brick into a jewelry store window, however he seemingly knows the window is made of glass that will not break, and that throwing the brick only initiates the store's alarm.

Moments later when the police arrive to investigate, Patrick immediately surrenders and seems almost relieved to see familiar faces among the officers.

As Patrick is taken to the police station, he greets the police officers he meets like old friends, though they seem to be exasperated by him and repeatedly remark that they cannot believe another year has already come around.

It's not long before Patrick is brought before a judge, another familiar face to Patrick who issues him a sentence of three months for attempted robbery. Patrick then purposefully mouths off to the judge to bait him into doubling the sentence for a total of six months.

Later, Patrick returns to prison and meets his cell mate. Patrick explains to him that every October when the clocks turn and the weather gets colder, he likes to spend the winter in prison, where he is guaranteed three meals and a place to sleep.

Patrick has done this for so many years that he knows just how to manipulate the system to ensure he spends no more or less than six months incarcerated each year between October and April.

The narrator asks Patrick if he intends to keep living this way for the rest of his life, and Patrick explains that he only thinks in six-month increments. Patrick dies in November of 2005 of hypothermia due to sleeping outdoors in central London, his body discovered by a young constable.



Know What I Mean

Logline: A dishonest lorry driver fights to stay one step ahead of the law.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 4,354

Synopsis

DOUG HASLETT tells another incarcerated person at a minimum-security prison the story of his arrest and sentencing after that person tells Doug he's impressed that Doug seems to have the facility wired.

Doug previously worked as a simple lorry driver hauling goods between the UK and France struggled to make ends meet.

One day at a rest stop he is approached by an individual who asked him to assist with transporting weekly crates of bananas in exchange for the exorbitant sum of 25,000 pounds/week.

After the individual repeatedly assures Doug that he will not be smuggling drugs or people Doug accepts the deal.

To Doug's surprise, the new transportation gig proceeds flawlessly, and it is no long before Doug is making more money than he knows what to do with.

His success leads to a fancy new lorry, a brand-new home, and a wife – SALLY MCKENZIE – who had previously been the estate agent for the home he purchased.

Eventually a customs agent becomes suspicious of Doug's prosperity and seizes his vehicle for a search. After opening forty-one crates of bananas after bananas after bananas, the agent discovers one holding approximately 200,000 pounds of cigarettes (in street value, not weight).

Doug denies any knowledge of the cigarettes, and though the judge listens to his story, Doug is sentenced to four years in prison. He does his time promising his wife that he will be a model citizen upon release.

For a time, it appears this is true, as Doug resumes his hauling route and survives several spot checks from customs officials, though eventually Doug is caught using an empty fuel tank in his vehicle to smuggle cigarettes again.



This time Doug goes away for six years, but once again only ends up serving half his sentence.

After release Sally is now especially skeptical of Doug, in no small part because she had used his time in prison to turn his lorry business into a legitimate enterprise of several trucks and drivers that declared a profit of over 20,000 pounds in its first year.

In spite of this legitimate success, as soon as Doug is able he once again returned to his criminal ways, this time using the multiple trucks and routes to choose different entry stations and rely on a network of crooked officials taking bribes to ensure his illicit goods can enter the UK freely.

When one of these officials is caught and decides to name names, Doug is incarcerated yet again – this time for another eight years – with no provision for release due to good behavior.

Many years later, Doug runs into this (now former) cell mate at a literary event. The cell mate is pleased to learn that the lorry business is better than ever, with the company now having forty-one trucks and an annual profit over five million pounds.

Sally has achieved this by completely extricating Doug from business operations, which he has accepted as an ironic twist of fate.

As Doug walks the cell mate to his vehicle, however, he mentions that the company has received a lot of interest from investors and is preparing to be taken public in the coming weeks.

This “reformed” version of Doug advises the narrator to purchase shares now, while they are still reasonably priced and there is plenty of money to be made.



Maestro

Logline: A resourceful Italian restaurant owner schemes to keep his family in the style to which it has grown accustomed, even in the face of increased attention from tax authorities.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 3,502

Synopsis

MARIO GAMBOTTI, the owner of a high-end Italian restaurant in Chelsea, is known for referring to his customers as “maestro” and for maintaining a lavish lifestyle which appears to far exceed the amount he could earn as a restauranter.

While a frequent customer is serving a brief prison sentence, Mario writes to the prison governor with a request to visit the facility and cook a meal for him; the governor denies the overture, but mentions that Mario had previously been incarcerated at the same facility.

Mario’s incarcerated customer learns that years earlier an official from the Inland Revenue service had become suspicious of Mario’s conspicuous consumption, including his bright red Ferrari and fancy yacht in Monte Carlo.

After a brief investigation, the taxman determined Mario had been underreporting the amount of cash he received by a significant amount and pocketing these illicit proceeds tax-free.

He then further deduced Mario was laundering the money through a literal laundry service that also cleaned the restaurant’s linens.

When Mario was caught, his solicitor advised him to plead guilty to make a quick and favorable deal. Mario complied, and the lawyer even managed to get the trial set for the last week in July, just before the restaurant closes for its annual August holiday.

Mario ended up receiving only a one-month sentence, returning so seamlessly to his business that most of his customers never even realized anything out of the ordinary had occurred.

Six months later, the taxman returns to the restaurant for a spot check. He puts the restaurant through the financial paces and is pleased to see Mario appears to be doing everything on the up-and-up.



Had he paid just a bit more attention, however, or perhaps stayed later into the evening, the taxman would have seen that Mario is now relying on his waiters to smuggle the excess cash out of the restaurant in gym bags and paying them a portion of the proceeds to keep his lifestyle afloat.



The Alibi

Logline: A prisoner realizes the perfect alibi for revenge.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 3,428

Synopsis

MICK BOYLE tells a friend about PETE BAILEY, who he claims managed to kill his best friend while simultaneously serving a six-year sentence for aggravated robbery – and completely get away with it.

Pete allegedly turned on his friend, BRIAN, because Brian violated the cardinal rule of pursuing Pete’s girlfriend KAREN while Pete was locked up.

Pete becomes suspicious of Brian’s situation with Karen after noticing she clams up whenever he mentions Brian, and he later confirms his concerns after a separate friend visits and tells Pete Brian and Karen have moved in together.

To strike back, Pete puts all his efforts into becoming a model prisoner and uses his “enhanced” status to transfer to a cushy prison wing where the security guards pay far less attention to the inmates than one would expect.

Pete then meticulously tracks the guards’ schedules and habits to determine a time when the two laziest guards are on night duty together.

Pete realizes both guards regularly lie and record that they have carried out their foot patrols even when they have not, so he uses the eight-hour overnight window when they are both on duty together to escape from the unsecured prison yard, run eight miles into town, and murder both Brian and Karen in bed together.

Pete is then back in his prison cell by the morning, with the attendance spreadsheet marked off perfectly as if he had also been there all night.

Pete has the perfect alibi, but investigators are suspicious of his story and assume he would have certainly been involved in the two deaths.



Though they cannot prove anything, the prison guards conspire against Pete and claim he has engaged in prohibited behavior while incarcerated, continuously adding months to his sentence for the next six years.

The European Court of Human Rights rules that the practice of adding days to a prisoner's sentence based solely on testimony of guards and wardens is a violation of human rights.

Pete Bailey is released on 19 October 2002.



The Commissioner

Logline: A recidivist offender convinces the Commissioner of Mumbai's police force to give him an honest chance at a new career, creating debate about whether a prison sentence creates capacity for change.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 5,036

Synopsis:

NARESH KUMAR, the Commissioner of Mumbai's police force, has led an honorable life in law enforcement and is just a few months away from retirement when he receives a visit request from RAJ MALIK, a career criminal who has been arrested and locked up three times – two of which came directly by the Commissioner.

The Commissioner agrees to see Malik, who tells him that since being released he has been unable to find an honest job due to his arrest record.

Considering that all three of Malik's convictions are for various forms of fraud The Commissioner remains loathe to put Malik's name in the same sentence as "honest."

Malik pushes The Commissioner by pointing out that in a recent speech the Commissioner encouraged the public to consider employing those who had successfully completed a prison sentence and exhorting the Commissioner to follow through on his own initiative.

The Commissioner's deputy and appointed successor, ANIL KHAN, cautions the Commissioner against employing Malik in any capacity, noting that he has too much to lose at the end of his career to take such a risk, however the Commissioner truly feels that he ought to lead by example, and he arranges for Malik to start work as a lowly file clerk in an office focused on closed cases.

By all accounts Malik is an exemplary employee, and over the next several months his supervisor recommends him for both a raise and a promotion; the Commissioner even lauds Malik publicly, and his reversal of fortunes is documented in the press.

One morning shortly before retirement the Commissioner receives a visit from his friend H.H. PATEL, a prominent banker, who tells him that Malik showed up at his office and told him that he was acting as an agent of the Commissioner and willing to destroy an investigative file the police had opened on Patel in exchange for the exorbitant sum of ten millions rupees. Shocked, the Commissioner admits they did open a file on Patel just after 9/11, but only in the same way they



looked into every institution capable of moving large sums of money, and ultimately the investigation turned up nothing illicit and was closed.

The Commissioner thanks Patel for bringing this issue to his discreet and immediate attention, and Patel notes he only agreed to meet with Malik in the first place because of the recent press articles that chronicled his change in character and described him as a contact and representative of the Commissioner.

The Commissioner wants to immediately sack Malik, but his deputy warns him that even the appearance of impropriety will tarnish the Commissioner's impression in retirement. After some consideration, the Commissioner decides the best course of action is to meet directly with Malik and handle the matter privately.

The Commissioner does so and tells Malik he is so impressed with the job he has done as a filing clerk that he has accepted the recommendation of Malik's supervisor that Malik be promoted – but that the only job available now is as an assistant in the city morgue.

A shocked and disappointed Malik asks the Commissioner if there are any alternatives, and the Commissioner replies that there are: the other option is that Malik can spend the rest of his life in jail.



The Wisdom of Solomon

Logline: To exit a problematic marriage a wealthy doctor will give his wife anything she wants however even that fails to satisfy her.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 4,059

Synopsis:

BOB RADFORD is a wealthy physician who has remained a bachelor well into his 40s. His best friend, the narrator (never named), is married to CAROL.

Bob meets a woman named FIONA and brings her to dinner at the narrator's home, after which the narrator and Carol debate the legitimacy of their relationship.

The narrator feels Fiona is a terrible person and he must warn Bob about her character, however Carol notes that Bob appears to be in love and is in no position to heed the narrator's advice.

The situation comes to a head when Bob phones the narrator to say he has proposed to Fiona and asks him to be his best man; the narrator swallows his concerns about Fiona and accepts.

For the first few years the marriage appears to proceed smoothly and even the narrator feels his concerns may have been unfounded, but soon after Bob's aunt dies and leaves him a large sum of money, Fiona begins to shift her behavior and treat Bob poorly; it isn't long before she is pushing for a divorce.

Bob's solicitor advises him to do whatever he can to reach an amicable settlement with Fiona, but even though Bob is willing to give her half of all his assets (outside of the inherited money), Fiona rejects the offer and insists her petition go before a judge.

At the hearing, an exhausted Bob amends his proposal (against the advice of his solicitor) and offers to give Fiona half of his inheritance as well.

It appears that Fiona will accept, however at the last moment she bursts into tears and claims that she doesn't believe this offer is fair to her either. Eventually the judge notes that perhaps Fiona should draw up a "fair" settlement to which she will agree, considering Bob has made it clear he is willing to give her whatever she wants to end the proceedings.



That evening, Bob laments the situation to the narrator and questions why the narrator never warned him about Fiona; the narrator bites his tongue.

The following day in court, Fiona presents a list of nearly all of Bob's assets claiming she believes she is rightfully owed them, but she also tells the judge she has divided the possessions equitably; Bob grits his teeth and agrees.

The judge then accepts the list and tells Bob and Fiona that since they have both agreed the list is fair and Fiona had the chance to draft it, it is only right to now allow Bob to choose which side of the list he would like to claim for himself.



The Red King

Logline: A white collar criminal doesn't mind being charged for a crime he didn't commit if it keeps the authorities from finding out his actual crime.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 8,150

Synopsis:

MAX GLOVER, serving a three-year prison sentence for obtaining money by false pretenses, shares a cell with the narrator (never named).

Max tells the narrator he isn't complaining about his fate because if he had been locked up for the crime he really did commit he would be serving a much longer sentence.

Max explains that years earlier he became aware of The Kennington Set, a rare type of chess set created during the Ming Dynasty, of which only three complete versions are known to be in existence. The Kennington family seeks to complete a fourth set and is missing only a red-colored king to do so.

The incomplete chess set has been in the Kennington family for eleven generations, though it was only in recent years that ELSIE KENNINGTON began to seek out the remaining pieces in earnest. So began a worldwide hunt to complete the set, with appraisers estimating the full version could fetch over one million pounds at auction.

Elsie ultimately died needing only the red king to finish the set, and decreed in her will that whichever of her sons managed to do so would receive the entire collection for himself. Needless to say, it becomes a top priority for EDWARD, her first son, and JAMES, her second, to find the missing piece.

By chance, Max bonds with Edward over his cricket skills, and during a visit to the Kensington estate learns the family story about the chess set and red king.

Max immediately hatches a plan, "borrowing" the white king from the board long enough for an old mate from prison to fabricate a facsimile, and then swapping the fake with an original piece on display at the British Museum when the rotating guards are out of sight.



Max notes that stealing small objects is his specialty but remains concerned about how he will convince the brothers to sell him the set after completion so he can take possession of the full value.

Ultimately, Max travels to New York and places an ad for the red king with a small auction house unlikely to recognize its value. He then flags the upcoming auction to Edward and agrees to act as Edward's representative on the ground, so as to avoid Edward tipping off his brother with an unexpected trip to New York.

Max then two-times Edward and meets with James, explaining to him that he can monitor the auction himself via telephone; the two agree that if the price exceeds \$50,000, Max will take over the bidding on the ground.

The auction proceeds exactly as Max intends, and he secures the piece in his own name for \$55,000. Max then returns to London to buy the entire set from Edward, who he knows is in debt and is willing to sell it to him now that he can complete it and take sole possession from his brother.

An auction staffer, however, notices that Max's name matches both the seller and buyer for the red king; she tips off the authorities, who pay a visit to Max's home and question him about using fraudulent tactics to drive up the item being auctioned.

Both Edward and James are happy to testify against Max – but he ends up going to prison for fraud, not for theft.

Max tells the narrator that the original chess piece remains with his solicitor and that no one knows the illegitimate means through which he acquired it.

He is set to receive a prison visit from Edward that very day and another from James the following week, so he still intends to pit the brothers against each other and ensure a financial windfall when he is released.



The Man Who Robbed His Own Post Office

Logline: An honest couple resort to desperate means to prevent financial loss.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 10,501

Synopsis:

CHRIS and SUE HASKINS from the seaside town of Cleethorpes meet as children in school, but do not take real notice of each other until both wind up serving at the same Royal Air Force base in Maplethorpe.

Sue, a year older and a Corporal, is the bolder of the two; she asks Chris out on a date in front of his fellow servicemen, and the two are married a year later.

When their tours of duty end, Chris and Sue return to Cleethorpes and have a daughter, TRACEY. Chris works as an Inspector in the local bus company, but after a merger he loses his job, forcing Sue to return to the workforce part-time at a local fish and chips.

It's all smooth sailing for a few years until the couple that owns the fish and chips decides it's time to sell. Sue is worried she'll lose her job when the new owners arrive, but Chris manages to secure a small business loan so that the Haskinses can purchase the shop and become the new owners themselves.

Sue is surprised and grateful, and the couple buckles down and enjoys the first of several profitable years together. They become pillars of their community and enjoy taking annual vacations to Portugal, which they had also visited on their honeymoon and is a special place for them.

Eventually, Chris receives a tip from a fellow rotary club member that the local post office in Victoria Crescent is due to come up for sale. The couple realizes the post office represents a sound investment if it can maintain its "A" level status, so they sell their fish and chips shop and secure another small business loan on top of their savings to make the purchase.

Once again, things start off grand for the Haskins family. The post office generates a steady stream of customers and income, and the Haskinses can pay off their loan in full within the five-year window.



Just when they are getting comfortable, however, they receive word from the corporate headquarters that due to upcoming consolidation the post office will be downgraded from “A” status to “B” status at the conclusion of the year.

Chris and Sue realize this is terrible news and that they will never be able to recoup their initial investment under the new status.

Believing themselves to be victims, they set about a plan to save themselves before the end of the year. Going forward Sue requests more money from corporate as a resupply each month as she knows there won't be an audit until January. Chris, for his part, uses his people skills to find

out which of their regular customers have never traveled abroad – and then applies for passports in their names which will allow the Haskinses to secretly flee the country.

By the end of the year the Haskinses have amassed enough money and passports to successfully put their plan into action.

They are careful to take with them only the cash totaling what they initially invested (so that they don't profit from the scheme), and on Christmas Eve they depart permanently for Portugal.

Just before boarding the ferry for the Algarve they realize they don't have the paperwork to take their beloved dog with them, and rather than leave him behind they turn around to find a vet who will issue them what is required.

On the way back, however, they realize they can't go through with the move after all, and they return to Cleethorpes vowing to run the downgraded post office at a loss until retirement.

Upon arrival they are greeted by police officers who arrest them for robbery; saving everyone the time of a trial, Chris and Sue both plead guilty. The sympathetic judge believes neither is a true criminal, so he sentences Chris to three years and Sue to just one; ultimately, she serves four months, and he does twelve.

After they are released from prison, Chris and Sue move to Portugal and open a fish and chips shop.

Though it fails to catch on with the locals, the hundred thousand Brits visiting the Algarve each year ensure that it becomes a success.



A Change of Heart

Logline: A South African committed to apartheid questions his beliefs when tragedy calls.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 3,252

Synopsis

STOFFEL VAN DEN BERG grows up in South Africa during the apartheid era and distinguishes himself as one of the finest athletes of his generation. He never questions the legitimacy of apartheid and often expresses his outspoken views on the superiority of the white race.

After leaving university, Stoffel is recruited to join Barclays Bank, although it is made clear to him that his priority there is to ensure that Barclays wins the Inter-Bank Cricket Cup. Later, Stoffel is selected to represent South Africa on the national cricket team.

When South Africa is set to host England for an international test match, controversy ensues after England's projected roster contains a black player who emigrated from South Africa to play professional cricket abroad.

South Africa ultimately cancels the match, and Stoffel defends the decision publicly by stating he could hardly have been expected to take the field against a non-white player.

Stoffel subsequently ascends through the bank's hierarchy as his commitment to apartheid hardens.

Eventually he is tapped to stand for parliament and offered a safe seat, however in the weeks leading up to the election he leaves work in a hurry and, while driving hazardously up a steep mountain road, causes a horrific collision directly into an oncoming driver.

Stoffel regains consciousness weeks later and learns that the other driver in the collision died instantly, however the doctors were able to save Stoffel by using that driver's organs to complete a heart transplant. Stoffel is momentarily horrified when he realizes the other driver had been black, however the doctor admonishes him and notes that the body doesn't recognize color.

Although his life has been saved, the doctor estimates that due to the severity of his other injuries Stoffel only has a few years left to live. Stoffel visits the widow of the man who died in the accident; however she is uncomfortable and deferential around him even though Stoffel was



primarily responsible for her husband's death. The incident causes Stoffel to experience a profound change in his views and he decides to dedicate the rest of his life to racial equality.

For the next four years, Stoffel travels to black neighborhoods every day to teach English in the morning and either cricket or football in the afternoon. By the time of his death – only days before Nelson Mandela is elected President – everyone agrees he has played a small part in helping to defeat apartheid.



A Weekend to Remember

Logline: A gentleman must decide if a beautiful woman is interested in him, or simply using his attention to position herself for another lover.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 4,553

Synopsis

TONY meets an American woman named SUSIE at a dinner party in England and is struck by her beauty and sophistication.

He notices throughout the meal that Susie's attention is focused on RICHARD, another American guest – although Richard is clearly there with a girlfriend named RACHEL.

At the conclusion of the evening the host thrusts Tony and Susie together so Tony can give her a ride home, and Tony is surprised and delighted when Susie invites him to accompany her to the Tate Museum the following day.

They spend an enjoyable afternoon together, after which Tony asks Susie what she would like to do next – if she had the freedom to do anything. Susie states she would like to go to Paris and spend the weekend with Tony at a Picasso exhibition, and they spontaneously decide to make the trip.

Tony, a hotelier, uses his connections to book a gorgeous suite a premier property, however when they arrive, he is unpleasantly surprised that Susie requests a room on a separate floor even though she has been flirting with him during the entire journey.

Now somewhat uncertain about her intentions, they head to the exhibit the next day where Tony is enchanted by Susie's artistic eye and knowledge – until they run into Richard and Rachel at the same show.

Tony immediately realizes Susie is merely using him to make Richard jealous, so throws a wrench into her ploy and invites Richard and Rachel to join them for lunch, which makes both Richard and Susie – who Tony assesses are having an affair – clearly uncomfortable. After the meal Susie and Tony return to the hotel and go their separate ways.



Tony then forgets about Susie, though over the years he occasionally hears rumors about her, such as how after her affair with Richard ended, she married an Englishman and had two children before eventually getting divorced.

One afternoon, Susie unexpectedly phones Tony and invites him out for a drink. They ironically decide to visit the Tate Museum and Tony is yet again taken with her acumen, so much so that after lunch they decide to spontaneously visit Paris together again.

This time they do share a room – and Tony implies that not only do they sleep together, but that it was well worth the years of waiting.

For her part, Susie returns to New York and never contacts Tony again.



Both Sides Against the Middle

Logline: An Irish Chief of Police must decide how to handle a unique home that straddles the border between Northern Ireland and Eire.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 3,600

Synopsis

BILLY GIBSON begins preparations for his retirement after thirty years of service as the Chief of Police in Northern Ireland by meeting with his appointed successor, JIM HOGAN.

Together they discuss the unique circumstances surrounding EAMONN O'FLYNN, who by a quirk of the planning department at the Belfast City Council lives in a home that straddles the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Eamonn's father, BERTIE, had been approved to construct the home through a planning committee quirk, and during Bertie's days there had been no cause for concern as he had been a simple man who caused no trouble and had little interest in politics.

Eamonn, however, recognized the unique opportunity having a cross-border home afforded him, and set his sights on getting rich by engaging in smuggling and prostitution.

Chief Gibson is reluctant to turn over his command to Hogan while Eamonn remains a thorn in his side, so together the two craft a ploy which involves inviting Eamonn to the Chief's fancy farewell party.

Initially skeptical, Eamonn is pressured to accept the invitation by his girlfriend, MAGGIE CRANN, who says it will be easy to close to their illicit operation for one night so they can show off their wealth and untouchability in front of the outgoing chief at the party.

At the event, the police use a simple ruse to separate Eamonn from his cell phone so he cannot be alerted when the police raid his property.

Though there is nothing illegal occurring now, the police later claim that they received an anonymous tip of a bomb inside the premises and were therefore obligated to conduct a search – which did turn up several suspicious packages in the garage.



When Eamonn refuses to identify the packages, Chief Gibson tells him that they unfortunately must destroy them in order to ensure no civilians are harmed.

As the police wire the home with explosives, Chief Gibson assures Billy he will be compensated as an innocent victim whose home was unfortunately destroyed by a police action, but that when it is eventually rebuilt it will have to be located completely on a single side of the border.



Chalk and Cheese

Logline: A good-hearted businessman continually finds ways to support his “genius” younger brother, even as the ungrateful artist’s career fails to move forward.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 5,189

Synopsis

JOHN SUMMERS is the older brother of ROBIN SUMMERS; from Robin’s birth their mother relishes in younger son’s artistic potential and tells anyone who will listen that Robin will become a world-famous painter.

She has much less interest in John and considers his sole purpose in life to be serving as a witness to Robin’s unquestioned talent.

Throughout their childhoods John attends several of Robin’s exhibitions, and though he fails to see the appeal in Robin’s work he always keeps his mouth shut and supports his younger brother. After leaving university, John begins a business career with a manufacturing company; his mother is unimpressed.

As time passes, Robin participates in many exhibitions but seems unable to sell a painting to anyone except his mother.

Enthusiasm for his artistic potential dwindles and Robin finds himself hard up for cash to support his bohemian lifestyle, as he is unwilling to work a traditional job and simply tells anyone who will listen that he is a genius whose curse is to have talent unappreciated during his lifetime.

John dutifully attends each exhibition, always slipping his brother a few pounds and treating him and his artist friends to dinner. When Mrs. Summers dies, she leaves her entire estate to Robin.

Robin never shows an interest in John’s life and fails to attend both his wedding and children’s christenings.

As John ages, he begins to develop a serious interest in art independent of Robin, and as he rises in the manufacturing company, he acquires the funds necessary to begin collecting paintings. Meanwhile, John continues to attend Robin’s failed showings and support his brother by sending him money, even at one point financing his relocation to the south of France.



Eventually, John suffers a series of heart attacks and dies unexpectedly. Robin returns from France eager to hear the details of John's will, assured that his brother always appreciated his talent and certainly would have left him something to keep him in the lifestyle that such talent deserved.

When the family solicitor unveils the will, he notes John included a provision stating he had amassed a great collection of 81 paintings he deeply valued; after his wife and two sons had each selected twenty of their choosing, the remaining twenty would be given to Robin.

Overjoyed, Robin spends the evening plotting how he will sell John's paintings – all of which are works by recognized masters – to live a life of luxury.

The next morning a delivery arrives with the remaining paintings to be given to Robin following the family's selections, and he is shocked to learn that all of them had been painted by him – meaning John had been quietly purchasing and storing them over the years to help keep Robin afloat.



Crime Pays

Logline: A clever criminal allows himself to be caught bending and breaking small laws in order keep the authorities from convicting him on larger charges.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 6,208

Synopsis

KENNY MERCHANT is a criminal who does his homework before breaking the law.

He also has a unique criminal specialty: get caught breaking small laws in the service of ensuring a much bigger – and untouchable – gain.

After casing the famed department store Harrod's for weeks, Kenny allows a security guard to catch him shoplifting a pair of cufflinks.

The relatively inexpensive value of the cufflinks ensures that Kenny will only receive a fine rather than a custodial sentence, however at the hearing Kenny tells the judge he has also taken a watch from a different store and is racked with guilt about it.

When the judge sends Kenny and a police officer back to Kenny's residence to retrieve the watch, the police officer is shocked to find over 300,000 pounds of high-end merchandise waiting for him. Kenny insists it's all his and only the watch is stolen, but the Inspector arrests him for theft anyway.

At Kenny's trial, the police are only able to prove 24,000 pounds of items in Kenny's possession can be traced back to stolen goods, and now after having searched and failed to find the items' rightful owners the remaining items legally become Kenny's.

He serves a short prison term of just two years and is able to pawn off "his" items at a high rate, making a tidy profit on the whole exchange.

Later, Kenny takes a portion of his profits and deposits them at a bank in Hong Kong.

When he is paroled from prison and travels there the British police ask the Hong Kong authorities to surveil him, but ultimately, they cannot find evidence that Kenny is up to anything nefarious; he simply purchases large quantities of paper and envelopes, and has filed paperwork to start a magazine called *Business Enterprise UK*.



Over the next several years, Kenny concocts a scheme selling advertising to huge corporations that are so large and siloed that they confuse his own publication with the well-known *Business Enterprise* in which they regularly advertise.

The advertisements Kenny places are of suitably high quality, though his publication has a circulation of only 99 copies. Kenny uses this scheme to take in thousands of pounds annuals, invoicing each of the large companies at 500 pounds per advertisement and benefiting when they “automatically” pay him because they believe he represents *Business Enterprise*.

Eventually one of the companies catches on and realizes the discrepancy, however when Kenny is investigated the authorities realize he has not actually broken any laws, as his behavior is within the law.

Ultimately, the authorities are only able to convict Kenny of a small transgression which carries a fine of £1,000, a pittance considering he took in over a million pounds in revenue that year.

The Chief Inspector tells Kenny he will catch him the following year with a more severe penalty, however Kenny states by that time he will have already moved on, and recommends the Inspector study the new Financial Provisions Act – which Kenny believes contain a number of inviting loopholes.



Death Speaks

Logline: An encounter with “Death” sends a servant scrambling for his life.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 201

Synopsis:

A merchant’s servant in Baghdad visits the local market and believes a woman in the crowd who jostles him is Death; she makes a threatening gesture at him which causes him to flee, concerned, back to his Master.

The servant asks the Master for a horse and says he will ride immediately to the city of Samarra to hide from Death.

The Master complies.

Later, the Master visits the market and meets the woman – Death – who claims she didn’t make a threatening gesture at all but was merely surprised to see the servant in Baghdad as she believed she had an appointment with him in Samarra later that evening.



Love At First Sight

Logline: A banker on his way to an urgent meeting by train has his plans derailed by love at first sight.

Genre: Romance

Word Count: 961

Synopsis

ANDREW, a banker at Credit Suisse in Paris, hurries to meet ELY BLOOM, the Chief Executive of Chase, for an after-work drink at the American Bar at the Georges V hotel.

Andrew is a top performer accustomed to being wooed by competitors and expects Ely to offer him a competitive package which he can leverage for a higher salary or bonus at Credit Suisse.

While waiting for the train to arrive, Andrew stands on the extremely crowded platform and spots a beautiful woman, CLAIRE, standing on the opposite side. He fantasizes about her and wonders what has brought her to the platform that day; as they make eye contact, she blushes.

Eventually the train pulls away leaving Andrew on the platform by himself.

He looks across and sees Claire still standing – also alone – on the opposite side.

The narrator then mentions he learned this story at Andrew and Claire's tenth wedding anniversary.



Other Blighters' Efforts

Logline: A determined diplomat in a far-flung corner of the world is bent on leaving behind his legacy: constructing a swimming pool for impoverished local children.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 7,177

Synopsis

HENRY PASCOE is a mid-level British diplomat posted to the fictional country of Aranga, a veritable backwater located far from internationally relevant action.

Pascoe seems to be the rare overseas government servant more committed to the needs of locals than advancing his own career, and as such is focused on completing construction for a children's swimming pool that has stalled since breaking ground four years earlier.

Through his friendship with BILL PATERSON, a fellow Brit and the manager of Barclays Bank in Aranga, Pascoe learns that the local currency fluctuates in value whenever there are rumors of a coup against the country's President, GENERAL OLANGI; this happens frequently.

Henry then hears the Foreign Secretary will pass through Aranga on the way home from Jakarta as part of a refueling stop and meticulously plans to speak with him about the swimming pool to present the locals' case.

When the Foreign Secretary refuses to make time to consider the issue in earnest Henry realizes he must take the matter into his own hands.

Henry then uses his connections in the press to start a rumor that General Olangi is unhealthy and at risk of being overthrown at the same time he converts the High Commission's local currency holdings into sterling.

When the local currency subsequently drops as the sterling gains value, Henry transfers the profit to a special account geared towards swimming pool construction.

Henry repeats this tactic as often as the environment around Olangi allows in conjunction with organizing bake sales and local financial appeals, but though he raises enough to have construction begin again he cannot acquire sufficient funds to complete the project, and it appears that it will stall, this time perhaps permanently.



As the High Commissioner departs for his scheduled leave Henry is invited to accompany General Olangi on a trip to his birth city, a yearly occurrence designed to show the General's strength and roots which always also bolsters the local currency.

They travel to an especially rural part of Aranga, and just before arriving General Olangi's car is attacked; he is then murdered in the street by COLONEL NARANGO.

As Henry is the only other official present, Colonel Narango tells him to return to the capital to tell everyone that General Olangi's car has suffered a tragic accident and that Narango is the new President.

While returning to the capital, Henry realizes Narango's ascension will cause diplomatic and financial turmoil – and that he has a short window to act before the rest of the world becomes aware of it.

Henry therefore contacts his banker and insists that the entirety of the High Commission's holdings be converted into sterling. Because the High Commissioner is away Henry technically has the authority to do this, however the banker strongly objects due to the considerable risk associated with the instruction.

Sometime later Her Royal Highness Anne visits Aranga for the opening of the much-anticipated swimming pool, which is received with gratitude by the locals.

Presumably it was Henry's currency manipulation that allowed for the funds to complete the effort, however he cannot attend as he has been transferred to the Ascension Islands – another fictional destination located even farther off the map.



Too Many Coincidences

Logline: A woman wonders whether a series of coincidences imply cosmic forces of love at play or a con artist's hidden hand.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 10,328

Synopsis

While docking his boat in Brighton harbor, MAX BENNETT knocks into another vessel belonging to ANGUS HENDERSON and his wife RUTH.

There is no visible damage, and the incident begins a friendly conversation. Max, in his 40s, notices that Angus is decades older than his wife (in her 30s).

The following day while Angus takes his sons to a rugby match Max invites Ruth for lunch in town. Though he knows Ruth is married, Max immediately makes it clear his interest in Ruth is sexual; she hesitates at first, she but does not turn him down.

After the meal they retreat to his boat and sleep together, and in the days to come Ruth cannot get Max off her mind.

A month later Max phones Ruth and mentions he will be coming to her neighborhood to view a property for a client (his profession is an estate agent).

Ruth invites Max to stop by for dinner, and unsuspecting Angus welcomes the visit as it gives him a chance to ask Max's thoughts on a property he wishes to sell in France.

Oblivious Angus not only encourages Max to go visit and view the property over a long weekend, but insists Ruth accompany him to answer any questions related to the sale. By the time the two return to Brighton their relationship has become a full-fledged affair.

In the ensuing months Ruth falls hard for Max and draws a contrast between his virility and free-spending and Angus' old-fashioned ways and views. Though she has never wanted for anything with Angus, Max truly makes her feel alive.

After Max finalizes the sale of the French property, he invites the couple to London to celebrate and takes them to a fancy restaurant for dinner. During the meal Angus becomes severely ill and



returns to Brighton the following morning for urgent medical care. The doctors explain to Ruth that Angus has suffered a food poisoning issue that led to a heart attack, and only days later he passes away.

In the days after Angus' death Ruth visits Angus' solicitor and learns for the first time of her late husband's extensive wealth, which they estimate to be somewhere in the range of 18-20 million pounds. Ruth knew Angus to lead a frugal lifestyle and is shocked by his bank balances. She tells no one of her newfound wealth – not even Max – and changes nothing related to her personal consumption.

Though Ruth is saddened by Angus' death, her grieving is lessened by the love she has for Max. Max proves to be a patient partner who expresses his love for her and makes it clear that as soon as she's ready he would be willing to take Angus' place. Within three months they are married.

The two share a passionate honeymoon in Venice and seem to be deeply in love, though over their first year of marriage Max begins to pull away from her and spend increasing amounts of time in London. Ruth also finds it strange that no one from Max's family or friend circle attends the wedding, and Max constantly makes excuses that prevent her from meeting his work colleagues.

By their second anniversary Max is spending less and less time in Brighton, so much so that Ruth concludes she fell for him at a time of emotional instability and decides she would like a divorce. Ruth also begins an affair with GERALD PRESCOTT, an old friend who she always suspected had feelings for her, and who treats her with love and respect.

In the months preceding their third anniversary Ruth finally has the opportunity to tell Max she is ready to divorce. She offers to make the process easy and allow Max to cite her infidelity as cause for the dissolution of marriage.

Max asks for some time to consider the issue and returns to London, waiting several months to finalize the divorce by sending Ruth the documents necessary for her signatures.

After Ruth receives the papers, her local solicitors in Brighton observe that Max has leaned on Ruth's infidelity to make a claim to 33% of her holdings.

Ruth is shocked, noting she never mentioned her wealth to Max and believed the marriage's short duration prevented him from seeking damages.



The solicitors explain to Ruth that the legal line for such a settlement is drawn at three years, and it appears Max not only knew of Angus' wealth, but also strung the marriage along just to the point where Ruth could no longer contest his claim: three years and eight days.

Ruth is left with no legal option except to pay Max the money, and she wonders whether everything – even the bump of the boats – had been part of his plan all along.



The Grass Is Always Greener

Logline: Employees at all levels of a bank eye envy colleagues who they imagine are exempt from their particular sets of personal and professional problems.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 7,444

Synopsis

BILL is a homeless man who has slept in the archway just outside Critchley's Bank for decades. He tries to live with as much dignity as possible and refrains from causing trouble for the bank, always leaving the area before employees and customers arrive for the day.

Once, he even spotted a suspicious van and tipped off the security staff before an attack on the bank could occur.

Bill envies KEVIN, the security guard who stands just outside the doors, for Kevin's warm coat, steady salary, and the family he returns to each night after hours.

But Kevin is jealous of MIKE HASKINS, his immediate supervisor who sits just inside the bank at the check-in desk, and Mike's son RONNIE HASKINS, who Kevin believes Mike has started to bring around the bank to lay the groundwork for eventually taking Kevin's place (without Ronnie having to put in the expected years of service).

CHRIS PARNELL, an administrative officer at the bank, is frustrated with Ronnie and believes he isn't quite up to speed as a new employee. But Chris is even more frustrated with ROGER PARKER, the Head of Personnel, as Chris believes he should have been given Roger's job years ago.

Roger, however, barely pays any mind to Chris, focusing his attention elsewhere.

Roger wishes he had been selected for the position of Chief Administrator which belongs to GODFREY TUDOR-JONES, whose schedule is so packed Roger can barely get a meeting with him.

But Godfrey is preoccupied because he has recently slept with his secretary, PAMELA, who now claims she is pregnant.

Godfrey contemplates whether he should take Pamela to lunch and try to persuade her not to keep the baby, lamenting that paying for an abortion would be a financial strain, but he can ill afford to raise a love child over the long-term.



As Godfrey considers these issues, he is summoned by PHILLIP ALEXANDER, the bank's recently arrived Chief Executive, who is concerned about the McKinsey report as well as some investments he had urged the bank to make in Russia.

Phillip has been laying the groundwork for someone else to take the fall: namely the Bank's Chairman, SIR WILLIAM SELWYN.

Despite Sir William's long record of distinguished service to the bank he realizes he has been outmaneuvered by Phillip, and he prepares a resignation letter that he realizes will not only end his tenure at Critchley's but prevent him from landing on any outside Boards in retirement as well.

As Sir William exits the bank for what he expects to be his final time, he jealously eyes Bill the unhoused man as he prepares for another night of sleeping under the nearby archway, silently wishing that the two could trade places.



The Expert Witness

Logline: A skilled defense attorney uses the same set of facts to convince an unsuspecting jury of two different conclusions.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 3,845

Synopsis

SIR TOBY GRAY, a top defense lawyer, has a longstanding friendship with Professor HARRY BAMFORD, an expert in munitions, specifically as they relate to murder. The two men play golf weekly and Toby frequently relies on Harry's expert testimony to help his clients evade conviction.

As he often does, Toby relies on Harry's acumen and reputation to assist with the exoneration of MRS. VALERIE RICHARDS, who has been accused of killing her husband.

Toby cites Harry's unimpeachable professional credentials, his success rate as an expert witness (and the implication of trust this creates with a jury), and the location of the weapon after it has been discharged at the crime scene.

Days later, however, Toby is surprised when he finds Harry has been called as an expert witness by a prosecutor representing the Crown against a different client.

The Crown uses Toby's usual line of questioning with Harry against him to make it seem like Toby's client is a cross between Jack the Ripper and Dr. Crippen.

Thinking quickly, Toby turns the examination of Harry on its head, getting Harry to state that his academic credentials aren't recognized in the UK.

His testimony has previously led to a wrongful conviction (just once, and it wasn't Harry's fault), and that Toby has come across a case where a murderer placed a gun in the deceased's hands to make it appear as if he had died by suicide (though this happens very rarely).

All this information leads to another acquittal for Toby.

The following weekend on the golf course, Harry chides Toby about what happened in court, and Toby laughs it off, saying that any jury should have been able to see through the legalese because both of clients were as guilty as sin.



Something For Nothing

Logline: A bored spouse overhears an easy-money tip that will change his life forever.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 3,103

Synopsis

JAKE, a dutiful son, and family man, prepares for a phone call with his mother – even though his daily conversations with her nearly bore him right to tears.

Jake dials her phone to initiate the call, but realizes the lines have crossed and he instead overhears what sounds like two criminals discussing surreptitious payment for a completed job; all the recipient has to do is visit a particular convenience store and buy a copy of the New York Times with a \$100 bill, after which the clerk will hand him a paper with an envelope inside containing \$100,000 cash.

Jake checks his watch and notices the transaction is expected to take place within the hour.

He doesn't believe he has the courage to act on it, but he takes a series of baby steps – first checking the bus schedule and next exchanging some small bills for a \$100 at the bar across the street – before he eventually finds himself entering the convenience store in question just before the appointed time.

Almost without even realizing he is doing it, Jake asks for a copy of the Times and pays with a \$100 bill, and though the clerk eyes him suspiciously he hands him a paper with a fat envelope stuffed inside.

Jake's heart is racing, and on the way home he uses multiple taxis and subway cars to ensure he isn't followed. As he re-enters his apartment, he hears the phone ringing.

It's his mother, and she's angry because he not only missed his call with her, but she has been unable to reach him for the past hour.

Jake tries mightily to cut the call short, but his mother won't have her routine interrupted, which includes telling Jake about "interesting" news items such as a scam she recently read about where criminals will try to convince someone on a "falsely crossed" telephone line that if they go to a specific place at a specific time and pay \$100, they will be given an envelope with \$100,000 meant



for someone else – and all that’s inside it as a fake book with advice on how to make money investing, with an exorbitant retail price of \$100.

Jake suddenly realizes he has been scammed out of \$100 – mother is always right – and, ashamed, he tosses the envelope down the incinerator after the call ends.

Jake then hears a buzz at the door which he believes to be his wife and children returning from the theater, however when he answers it, he is accosted by three burly men with knives demanding Jake give them back their envelope of cash.

Stupefied, Jake tells them that he believed the envelope to be empty and threw it down the incinerator. The ruffians therefore decide to throw Jake into the incinerator as well, just as his wife and children are entering the building behind them.



The Endgame

Logline: A wealthy gentleman in his late sixties decides to test whether his family members dote on him for his personality or his money.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 16,728

Synopsis:

CORNELIUS BARRINGTON is a bold, wealthy industrialist in his late sixties who has recently become a widower. At this stage in life, Cornelius treasures nothing more than his weekly game of chess with his best friend and solicitor, FRANK VINTCENT.

One Thursday evening, after their game, Cornelius tells Frank he is concerned that his remaining family members are only kind to him because they hope to inherit his vast fortune. He tells Frank he has concocted a scheme to test their loyalty and asks for Frank's help in executing it.

The following day, Frank sends a letter to Cornelius' brother, HUGH, his sister-in-law, ELIZABETH, his nephew, TIMOTHY, his own sister, MARGARET, and his maid, PAULINE, telling each of them that Cornelius has made an ill-advised investment in Russia and has tragically lost his entire fortune.

As Cornelius has loaned each of the five some money in the past, Frank asks if they would be so kind as to repay it now in Cornelius' time of need.

First, Elizabeth visits Cornelius and tells him the 100,000 pounds Cornelius gave to her and Hugh are tied up in their hardware store, and thus they are unable to repay him at this time. Elizabeth chides Cornelius for losing his fortune and says that she and Hugh cannot be expected to bear the burden for Cornelius' poor financial decisions.

She also asks Cornelius what will become of his estate and high-end furniture, and Cornelius tells her everything will be auctioned to satisfy his creditors.

Next, Cornelius receives a similar visit from Margaret to whom Cornelius had provided a regular weekly allowance.



Margaret says she has no money to offer Cornelius because the pressure of being his sister always required her to live with a certain set of expectations, and that without him to rely on she needs all of her savings for herself.

Pauline, the housekeeper, is saddened by the news, especially as she used the 500 pounds Cornelius gave her to purchase a car. She asks if Cornelius can give her a reference to find another family to work for (which he does), though she still stops by regularly to help Cornelius out without charging him.

Finally, Cornelius receives a visit from Timothy, his nephew, who lives outside the city and is a student. Timothy says that he embarrassingly doesn't have £1,000 to give his uncle, but offers him some shares of stock in his father's company that his father had given him as a birthday gift, which Timothy believes Cornelius can sell to receive some funds.

Cornelius relishes what he is learning about his family members and sets about planning for the auction of his worldly possessions.

He notifies the five key players that there will be a private auction just before the public auction during which they can each select and bid on a single item which Cornelius hopes they will use as a keepsake and reminder of their family history and relationship with him.

Unbeknownst to the family members, Cornelius includes his prized chess set worth more than 250,000 pounds in the auction, though he tells the auctioneer it is of unknown provenance, so the estimated value is listed as only 300 pounds.

When the day arrives, Margaret and Elizabeth use the auction to try to take ownership of some of Cornelius' top possessions at bargain prices. Hugh, seemingly ashamed and beaten down by his wife, sits silently throughout the ordeal with his head down.

Timothy attempts to buy the chess set (as he often played the game with his uncle), but he cannot meet the reserve and it goes unsold. Pauline, for her part, spends 50 pounds to buy a portrait of Cornelius' son, Daniel, who died at a young age.

After the auction, Pauline gives Cornelius back the picture of Daniel as well as 500 pounds, which she earned by selling her car. Cornelius is devastated by her loyalty and sacrifice but allows the ruse to continue.

He forgets, however, that because no one purchased his chess set during the private auction it has now been included with the rest of his goods for the public portion and is dismayed to learn an unknown bidder purchased it for a mere 450 pounds.



The following day both Margaret and Elizabeth visit Cornelius to ask for his help, claiming they overspent at the auction and have exposed themselves to their own financial ruin in their eager attempts to outdo each other.

Neither realized there would be an additional cost from the auction house, and both say that as the public portion of the auction raised nearly a million pounds it is clear Cornelius is no longer in need of money and can perhaps bail them out.

Cornelius agrees to help, but only if Margaret and Hugh sell him the shares in their company, and Margaret gives him the brand-new luxury car she had just purchased for herself.

He then turns around and gives the car to Pauline and the company's shares to Timothy, explaining that their loyalty and devotion has touched him, and, in the case of Timothy, convinced him that he is the person best suited to manage his father's hardware business.

Later, Cornelius receives a surprise parcel which turns out to be his chess set. Frank explains that Hugh knew the value of the chess set all along; not wanting to raise it with Elizabeth, he sent an agent to the public auction to ensure it could be purchased and kept in the family. Cornelius is

touched and realizes he misjudged Hugh's intentions, though still frustrated that Hugh has allowed his wife such control over his life.

Cornelius realizes he has learned important lessons about each of the five family members, some of which confirmed his suspicions, though others revealed attitudes he had never thought possible.

He moves into a smaller home and sets himself ready for the final chapter of his life, with Pauline as his housekeeper, and Frank still coming over regularly for Thursday evening games of chess.



The Letter

Logline: Every woman engaged in a salacious affair should be lucky enough to have a best friend to blame it on.

Genre: Sex/Romance

Word Count: 1,536

Synopsis

ANNA CLAIRMONT and her husband ROBERT have breakfast at the home of MURIEL CLAIRMONT and her husband REGGIE, where they are all spending a couples' weekend. Muriel enters the dining area with a letter addressed to Anna and quietly slips it to her.

Anna is initially surprised that someone has sent her a letter at the Clairmont's home (how did they even know she would be there?), but upon opening it she realizes it is from her lover, Oberon.

Anna makes sure her husband is distracted by the morning newspaper and begins to read Oberon's letter, which thrillingly recounts their relationship and sexual history as well as disparages her husband, whom Oberon refers to repeatedly as "the prune."

When she finishes the letter, Anna notices her husband is no longer reading the newspaper and is now standing behind her, also reading the letter over her shoulder.

Somewhat cluelessly, Robert asks Anna what sort of scoundrel could have written such a letter to a married woman. Without missing a beat (and right in front of him), Anna slips the letter to Muriel and says the situation in the letter is fascinating, but she hopes Reggie never finds out about it.



The Reclining Woman

Logline: A heist gone wrong creates an opportunity for copycats to profit.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 2,239

Synopsis

A curator outlines the history of Henry Moore's sculpture "The Reclining Woman" to a group of tourists at HUXLEY HALL, most of whom are amateur aficionados and hang on his every word.

In the course of the tale, he explains the concept of "stolen to order," in which significant works of art that are stolen by thieves can subsequently only be moved on the black market if there is a specific buyer who ordered (and can pay for) the work of art in the first place – and who doesn't mind holding the item privately as once it is stolen it becomes too noticeable for public display.

The curator notes that The Reclining Woman has been a target of several theft attempts, most recently in the 1997. While the nation mourned the death of the Princess Diana, a gang of thieves dressed as museum workers visited Huxley Hall with fake papers claiming they were to move the sculpture to a separate exhibition taking place later that week.

As everything seemed in order, the crime went off seamlessly and Scotland Yard found no leads to investigate.

Eventually, a petty criminal named SAM JACKSON who had been busted for a small-time offense offered the police information that he claimed would lead them to The Reclining Woman.

Upon arriving at a remote site in the woods, the police were surprised to discover large amounts of brass which Jackson claimed were the remains of the sculpture after it had been melted down, as the thieves realized after their crime they could never sell it on the black market and couldn't risk returning it.

A forensic examination of the brass indicated Jackson was likely telling the truth, and after an extensive back and forth with the insurance company Huxley Hall received permission to hire an artist to reforge the sculpture out of the original brass.

The "new" piece of art received the rare number 13 to mark its place in Moore's catalogue sequence, replacing the stolen number 6 that had been melted down.



Much later, one of the people in attendance at the museum tour speaks with the Chief Inspector at Scotland Yard, who mentions that in an ironic twist due to these unique circumstances surrounding the sculpture, no one can be sure how many “number 6” editions of The Reclining Woman exist in private collections as “stolen to order” acquisitions around the world, since it has become impossible to prove what happened to the original piece after the theft.



Not For Sale

Logline: A young artist who has the talent necessary for a stellar career learns the public may be more interested in salacious newspaper headlines than the quality of her canvasses.

Genre: Coming of Age

Word Count: 7,712

Synopsis

Almost from the day she is born, SALLY SUMMERS demonstrates immense artistic talent and promise; she wins every creative school prize, and upon graduation decides she will take one year to see if she can “make it” by forging a career out of her original work.

During this trial period Sally feels guilty living off her parents’ money and works tirelessly to produce twenty-seven new canvasses, however due to her fear of rejection she waits until the eleventh month before finally working up to the nerve to show them to a dealer, a recognized industry expert named SIMON BOUCHIER.

Simon, though busy meeting with a client, TONY FLAVELLI, quickly recognizes the potential in Sally’s work and asks if she can return for a more formal meeting. Tony is also taken with Sally and attempts to buy one of her originals, although Simon tells her it is not for sale.

The next morning an art exhibition Sally runs into Tony, who charms her by asking her opinion on other emerging artists.

Tony then invites Sally to see a private showing of the Hockney collection, however when Sally returns that evening for the exhibition Tony admits he conjured the event to have an excuse to see her again. Sally finds the ordeal endearing and has dinner with Tony anyway.

The following week Sally meets again with Simon, who tells her he is willing to put on her debut exhibition if she can deliver twelve more canvasses in five months.

Simon believes Sally has real talent and contrasts her favorably against NATASHA KRASNOSELYODKINA, a Russian émigré who has limited artistic ability but draws a crowd to every exhibition because she is beautiful and often linked to high-society types in the tabloids.

After the meeting with Simon, Tony arrives to take Sally to a celebratory lunch. Sally tells Tony what Simon said regarding Natasha, but Tony continues to focus on Sally and invites her back to



his place after the meal; they drink heavily as Tony seduces her, and they sleep together. Sally observes that Tony is the fourth man she has slept with but is so skilled in the bedroom that she feels like the other men didn't count.

Over the next several months Sally spends all her time either working on new canvasses or sleeping with Tony. As the weeks stretch by Tony gradually becomes more distant and unavailable, however Sally almost doesn't notice because she is so fixated on work.

When the day of her exhibition finally arrives, Sally arrives at the gallery early and is floored by how her paintings look now that they are professionally framed and hanging in a high-end gallery. She then wanders downstairs and reviews a collection of Natasha's works, initially scoffing at them before she notices a nude self-portrait of Natasha's that unmistakably includes Tony.

Distraught, Sally realizes Tony has been cheating on her with Natasha, and she runs from the gallery into the street – where she happens to physically run right into Tony and Natasha as they are walking arm-in-arm together.

Sally is so overcome by emotion that she fails to see an approaching vehicle; she is struck by the car and awakens days later in a hospital with no memory of the incident, but a severely broken leg as evidence of what transpired.

Shortly thereafter, Simon visits Sally and tells her the exhibition turned out to be a smashing success. After the car collided with Sally, Natasha rushed to her side and spoke to every news outlet in the country about what a travesty it would be for the art world to lose such a talent so young.

Though Natasha's motives were selfish, the increased attention created a spotlight on Sally's young career, enabling Simon to sell every one of her canvasses.

Simon then tells Sally he also arranged it so Tony never got his hands on the painting of Sally's that he originally desired – and tells her that with only a broken leg holding her back he expects her to return to painting right away so he can put on her second solo exhibition in just a few short months.



One Man's Meat

Logline: In this “choose your own adventure” tale, a man spots a woman breathtaking woman entering the theater alone – but how the evening ends is up to you.

Genre: Romance

Word Count: 15,483

Synopsis:

MICHAEL WHITAKER is on his way to work in the early evening when he spots the most beautiful woman he has ever seen walking into the Aldwych Theatre. Almost without thinking he pulls his car to the side of the road and rushes out to try and find her.

Once inside the theater, Michael spots the woman near the box office and joins the corresponding queue. He notices that the woman leaves a ticket with the theater, and when it's Michael's turn to order he pretends that the woman has left the ticket for him to purchase as part of will call.

Michael then enters the theater and is relieved to find that his gambit worked. Not only is he seated next to the woman, but she is glad someone purchased the ticket she had been trying to offload.

There's no time for small talk before the play begins, but at intermission Michael introduces himself and learns the woman's name, ANNA TOWNSEND, and that she is a doctor whose partner was held up on an emergency case and thus could not make it to the theater.

Michael laments the ambiguity associated with the word partner.

At the end of the production Michael again chats to Anna as they exit the theater. She seems to have enjoyed the production and the banter, so in a moment of boldness he invites her to join him for dinner.

Right there the narrative pauses as the author asks the reader to choose one of four possible endings to the tale: (1) Rare, (2) Burnt, (3) Overdone, or (4) À Point.

In RARE, Anna accepts the dinner invitation and Michael leads her to a nearby bustling restaurant, where she is eminently impressed, he is able to secure a table ahead of other waiting patrons.

Michael admits he's in the restaurant business and this is one of the spots he manages, which only further intrigues Anna. They enjoy a delicious meal and share natural chemistry and



conversation. Michael even confesses that he followed Anna into the theater and engineered their encounter, and finds she is flattered by the effort.

When the time comes for coffee, Anna tells Michael she'd prefer to move somewhere more quiet, and after Michael assures her he isn't married they agree to drive to his house.

When Michael reaches his car, he is relieved to discover that even though he parked on a double yellow line and left his lights on it hasn't been towed or ran out of battery – it really is his night.

As they arrive at Michael's home, Anna tells him they might as well skip the coffee and head right to the bedroom.

The two spend an incredible night together making love several times, after which Michael falls into a deep sleep. When he awakes in the morning Anna is gone, having left a note at his bedside saying she'll remember the night for the rest of her life.

Michael immediately wants to send Anna flowers and make plans to see her again, so he calls the hospital where Anna works and is put through to her scheduler – who informs him that Anna is not available as she's just dropped her children at school and is on her way to the airport to pick up her husband who is returning from a medical conference.

In BURNT, Anna is about to accept Michael's dinner invitation as her husband JONATHAN shows up explaining that he had been delayed at the hospital, but is grateful Michael purchased the ticket and kept his wife company. Jonathan offers to treat Michael to dinner, but Michael politely demurs and returns to his car – where he discovers that it has been towed.

Michael takes a taxi to the impound, pays a hefty fine, and proceeds to retrieve his vehicle – all during a tremendous thunderstorm that leaves him drenched.

When he reaches his car Michael realizes he left his headlights on and his battery has died, and he waits another 45 minutes before a kind person with jump leads aids in restarting the vehicle.

On the drive home Michael realizes he never checked in with his boss after skipping work to follow Anna into the theater, so he stops at a pay phone to call the restaurant where he works.

His manager answers and tells Michael a regular customer reported seeing Michael in the theater instead of at the restaurant where he's supposed to be the head waiter, and he's therefore immediately sacked without a final pay packet.

When Michael turns around to trek back to his car he finds that a young man has just slipped inside the vehicle and is in the process of stealing it. A hapless Michael must then head back to the phone booth to call the police and report the theft.



Michael then grabs a taxi to the train station where he just makes the final train headed to his home.

Upon arriving he immediately receives a phone call from the police to inform him the young man who nicked his vehicle totaled it by crashing into the kerb (as he was just 15, he was uninsured). When Michael mentions that he had left his keys in the vehicle, the police inform him that insurance won't cover that mistake and Michael is looking at a total loss.

An exhausted Michael heads upstairs for bed, where he finds his wife waiting for him angrily to tell him his boss called to say that not only did Michael never show up to work that evening, but he was spotted at the theater with another woman.

In *OVERDONE*, Anna accepts Michael's invitation to dinner. They walk together to a restaurant in a light rain, but find it's packed and they are unable to secure a table.

Michael then takes her to another restaurant a few blocks away, however it has started pouring and they both arrive soaked. Anna is hesitant to eat there as it's mostly empty, but Michael assures her the food will be good as the restaurant is part of a small group he manages.

The two struggle to make conversation over fettuccini and house wine as Michael embarrasses himself by implying it's unusual for women to work as doctors. Anna dislikes the food and by the end of the meal Michael has trouble seeing her in the same angelic light that led him to stop his car on the side of the road.

When Michael admits that he had orchestrated the whole encounter, Anna laughs and tells him she's a lesbian and the woman she's been living with for a decade will find this whole ordeal hilarious, especially as Michael paid for her theater ticket.

Eventually they return to Michael's car and find that it has been booted for being illegally parked. Anna throws him a final dig and hops in a taxi, leaving him stuck on the side of the road.

Michael grabs his own taxi home, and upon arrival is greeted by his wife who asks him about the fire in his restaurant. Michael realizes he's trapped in a morass of lies and that his wife and boss will both soon understand he wasn't where he claimed to be all night.

In *À POINT*, Anna accepts the invitation to dinner just as her brother, JONATHAN, arrives in the theater lobby and apologizes for his tardiness, explaining he had been held up at the hospital.

Now that it has become a trio Michael begs off the dinner invitation, however Anna tells him she knows he's free and he's being silly not to join, so he relents and accompanies them to a trendy restaurant nearby that Jonathan has wanted to try.



When they arrive at the spot it turns out to be one of a small portfolio that Michael manages, however he signals to the head waiter to keep this quiet and allows Jonathan to lead the way.

Over a delicious dinner, the three make easy conversation until Jonathan receives an emergency call that sends him back to the hospital.

After he leaves, Michael admits he orchestrated the whole encounter with Anna after seeing her from his car and being captivated by her beauty.

Anna is flattered by his effort, and shares that this is the first time she's enjoyed herself on a date since divorcing her husband three years earlier.

The two then walk to Michael's car but are dismayed to discover it has been towed. Michael offers to put Anna in a taxi home, however she's up for an adventure and decides to accompany him to the impound.

When they arrive, Michael finds himself just a few pounds short of the cash needed to pay his fine, but Anna comes to his rescue and produces the twenty pounds he had paid her for the extra ticket to save the day.

Michael then drives Anna home, telling her she had an excellent time and inviting her to come back the following evening for dinner, implying that it's her turn to cook as she now knows it was his restaurant they ate in earlier that evening.



Timeo Danaos

Logline: A bank manager bores those around them with tales of alleged achievements, when all his wife wants is a new dining set.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 4,816

Synopsis

ARNOLD BACON is a middle-manager at Barclays Bank in Hertfordshire who processes loan requests.

Over many years of deciding whether or not to approve a client's asks he comes to believe that he possesses unmatched business acumen and should himself have become an entrepreneur instead of heeding his father's push towards banking.

Arnold's wife, DEIDRE, leads a simple life managing their home affairs and has long ago come to accept her husband's faults. For their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, Arnold decides to book them on a cruise through the Greek islands after he hears that Barclays' Chairman will be sailing on a private yacht in the same area.

Deidre isn't keen on traveling to Greece but hopes to use the trip to pick up a new dining set to replace the depleted version they've been using since their wedding.

After the Bacons arrive in Greece, Arnold is embarrassed to discover the budget nature of the cruise liner and cramped on board accommodations. Nevertheless, he powers through and proceeds to seek out other travelers who he believes are fitting of his station.

For her part, Deidre focuses on learning about Greek pottery and is prepared to make her big purchase at the first port, however Arnold, to impress his new friends, dissuades her and claims the prices will decrease as the voyage proceeds.

The exact opposite turns out to be true, however, and during their final stop in Mykonos the prices have become so high that Arnold tells Deidre that purchasing the finest "Delphi" edition dinner set is now out of the question.

Deidre willingly accedes towards a cheaper model, and Arnold bargains the proprietor down to a 20% discount.



When he exits the shop to cash his traveler's checks, however, Arnold is approached by a local Greek who tells him that the very same pottery in that store is sold for half the price in a non-touristy area just a half hour bus ride away.

Arnold, seeking to leverage this information and prove his business acumen to Deidre and the other travelers, then insists that the group walk out on the pottery they had just agreed to buy to visit the nearby village and get their steep discount.

It turns out the village is much farther than thirty minutes away, and by the time they arrive the group has very little shopping time remaining before they must return by bus to their boat. Deidre is quietly fed up – but she knows how to handle her husband.

As Arnold now feels that he's led the group to a special, inexpensive place that only an expert could have known about, Deidre uses it as an opportunity to purchase the elite Delphi set she had always desired, even though without the discount it comes out to more than it would have been at the first shop.

Arnold realizes he cannot refuse her in front of the folks he wants to impress, so he doesn't even ask the price before paying.

Upon exiting the shop and climbing back into the hot, sweaty, cramped bus, Deidre notices the local Greek who initially tipped Arnold off about the shop drive past them in a new Mercedes.

She realizes the whole story had been a setup, but at least she's returning home with her new dining set – the only anniversary gift she desired.



Trial and Error

Logline: A husband sentenced to life in prison for murdering his wife's lover is convinced the deceased remains alive – and finding him will be the key to getting justice.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 21,283

Synopsis

RICHARD COOPER is a lorry driver by trade. His father owns a small business consisting of just a few trucks and loathes the idea of taking out credit to expand.

However Richard always believed in bigger opportunities, and after inheriting the company he immediately makes plans.

Richard sets his sights on a series of international routes, and during a seminar in 1978 he meets JEREMY ALEXANDER, a high-end corporate lawyer who specializes in overseas expansions.

Richard, who comes from humble means, is quick to draw a contrast between his simple way of living and Jeremy's lavish tastes for life's finer things, however he recognizes the utility in having a man like Jeremy on his side, and although they never become friends it isn't long before Jeremy joins the company as its in-house counsel.

Richard's wife, ROSEMARY, also has an eye for luxury. Though Richard loves her, he admittedly never got over the purity of devotion he felt for his first wife, HELEN, who died during childbirth – their son Tom also died a week later.

As such, Richard's marriage to Rosemary is more of an alliance or partnership than a love affair, so much so that Richard doesn't even seem to mind when he notices Rosemary and Jeremy flirting with each other, and eventually suspects they begin sleeping together.

Richard maintains his own dalliances abroad and doesn't mind Rosemary's infidelities as long as the business continues expanding.

For several years the company has grown by leaps and bounds.

Jeremy even assists with taking it public, and Richard becomes a millionaire several times over. Eventually, however, Jeremy oversteps as Richard begins to realize he is plotting a takeover attempt and using Rosemary as part of his plan to possess most shares for himself.



One evening Richard invites Jeremy over for a drink and confronts him directly about the affair and the hostile takeover. Though Jeremy initially denies the allegations, eventually he relents and taunts Richard, implying he can do little to stop them from happening. In a fit of rage, Richard punches Jeremy and knocks him out before storming away from the house.

Later, the police arrest Richard for Jeremy's murder. While detained, Richard is shocked to learn Rosemary's claim that Richard's punch killed Jeremy, after which Richard allegedly took the body out of the house to dispose of it.

Richard immediately sees this as a continuation of Jeremy and Rosemary plotting against him, but unfortunately, he has little proof to support his theories.

When Richard is formally charged with the murder of Jeremy, he uses his wealth to hire a top defense attorney to represent him.

Although the solicitor's brilliant rhetoric and the absence of Jeremy's body create enough doubt to prevent unanimity of opinion, the jury ultimately reaches a majority verdict in favor of conviction and Richard is sentenced to life behind bars.

Richard remains committed to clearing his name and sees the verdict as just one more setback in a series he will eventually overcome.

Once imprisoned, Richard tries to befriend other incarcerated people and uses their knowledge of the criminal justice system to determine that Chief Superintendent DONALD HACKETT is the most widely respected detective anyone arrested has ever encountered.

Richard then leans on his solicitor to secure a meeting with Hackett, and though Hackett is initially reluctant, Richard convinces him during the conversation that he is innocent and hires Hackett and his small team as private investigators charged with finding Jeremy's body – as Richard is more convinced than ever that he remains alive.

The process takes years, and Richard tries to stay patient as he remains imprisoned. Hackett learns that because there is no body Rosemary is ineligible to inherit any of Jeremy's possessions – including his shares in the company – until after seven years have passed.

Hackett's team then meticulously tracks Rosemary's trail until they find her living on an estate in the south of France. When she places an advertisement for a butler, a member of Hackett's team secures the gig.



Once inside, the new butler becomes an intimate part of Rosemary's life and realizes she travels to a local hotel weekly to place a long-distance phone call to an unknown source; Richard, Hackett,

and the rest of the team are convinced this is Jeremy, but must wait even longer before an opportunity to prove the theory emerges.

During the waiting period Richard's case comes up for appeal and he is released from prison. Hackett expects that as Richard is now a free and wealthy man Richard might decide to take him off the case and stop chasing Jeremy, but Richard remains just as determined as ever to bring Jeremy to justice.

Rosemary's mysterious phone trail eventually leads the investigators to PROFESSOR BALESCU, a Romanian intellectual and refugee who fled the Ceaușescu regime and is now lecturing in the UK.

The investigators visit Balescu's university and are disappointed that he bears no physical resemblance to Jeremy, however Richard notes that Balescu drives the same type of car that Jeremy formerly owned, which Hackett believes is an important clue meriting further investigation.

They all sit in on one of Balescu's lectures, during which Richard notices a small scar above Balescu's eye and some signature physical tells (such as drumming of the fingers) that convince him Balescu is actually Jeremy after all.

Following the lecture, Richard confronts Balescu in his office, walking in at the very moment of a telephone conversation between Balescu and Rosemary which confirms all suspicions. Richard then produces a gun and threatens Balescu's life.

Hackett warns Richard that he'll regret this moment of passion and that he should allow Balescu/Jeremy and Rosemary to be brought to justice, however Richard states that due to the legal principle of *autrefois acquit* he cannot be charged a second time for a crime he's already been convicted of – namely the murder of Balescu/Jeremy.

Richard fires his gun – but at the last moment Hackett's assistant charges into the room and tackles him, causing the bullet to only graze the target's shoulder.

Ultimately Richard is charged with attempted murder and serves just nine months, but Jeremy and Rosemary are convicted of multiple crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The value of their shares crumbles in conjunction with the company, however this has no effect on Richard, who cashed out his position long ago.



Richard then uses a small portion of his wealth to purchase back his company at a bargain price, intent on returning it to the prime position it held just before the night he punched Jeremy.

Never Stop on the Motorway

Logline - A single mother finds herself in the dangerous car chase with a mysterious van.

Genre - Thriller

Word Count - 4,479

Synopsis

DIANA, a recently divorced mom, is on her way to a relaxing weekend at her college friend's farm.

She's suddenly interrupted when she accidentally kills a cat on the road. Back in her car, a mysterious, dark van tailgates her.

At first, she's confused and annoyed, but she then begins to panic, as she realizes a serial killer is on the loose in the same area that she's currently driving in. She tries to maneuver and get rid of him, but has no luck.

She is terrified as she realizes that she is driving with a low tank of gas.

Should she risk her friend and her family's lives by stopping at the farm, or should she continue with no guarantee that she'll have enough gas to make it to the next town? She decides that the farm is the answer.

As she arrives at the farm, Diana signals to her friend that the dark van behind her is dangerous. The mysterious van continues to follow her, finally crashing into her car.

The mysterious driver gets out of the vehicle and shouts the chilling truth that he isn't the killer.

The killer has been hiding in the back of Diana's car.



Shoeshine Boy

Logline - A governor gathers the whole island to play an elaborate charade when a global statesman makes a spontaneous visit.

Genre - Humor

Word Count - 8,078

Synopsis

In the 1970s, after being recently assigned to the title of governor of the island St. George, respected politician TED BARKER and his wife HAZEL have to prepare for the spontaneous visit of Admiral of The Fleet Earl Mountbatten of Burma.

The couple get all residents of the island to join in the elaborate charade that the island is more refined than it actually is.

As soon as the Admiral arrives, both Ted and Hazel suspect that he knows about the lie right away.

Regardless, they continue with the charade and impress the Admiral with elaborate events, hardworking staff, and a beautiful welcoming dinner.

The Admiral leaves his shoes to shine, there is no one else to do it other than Ted.

Now both Ted and Hazel know that the Admiral knows, but does he know that they know?

The Admiral goes back to England with his shoes shined by Ted and laughs about the situation with the Queen and her staff. They send a letter to Ted and Hazel thanking them for their efforts - now both parties know that each other knows about the lie.



Cheap at Half the Price

Logline - When a determined femme fatale finds her ideal birthday gift, she must plan a way to trick her lovers into buying it for her without getting caught.

Genre - Crime

Word Count - 4,059

Synopsis

CONSUELA ROSENHEIM is on the lookout for the perfect birthday present for herself. Her third husband, VICTOR ROSENHEIM, doesn't know it yet, but Consuela is preparing to find her next husband.

A last gift, she feels, is suitable for the occasion. In New York, Consuela hunts for the perfect gift.

She browses through different stores with no luck until she arrives at the House of Graff, run by LAURENCE GRAFF.

A beautiful diamond and ruby necklace - the Kanemarra heirloom - calls her attention. Consuela takes a good look at the necklace and asks for the price. It's one million pounds. Determined, she leaves the store and enacts her plan.

Consuela and her husband have a romantic dinner, followed by a romantic night. The next morning, they go to see the beautiful necklace that she had casually mentioned the night prior. She meets Laurence Graff as if it was the first time and asks for the price - again, one million pounds.

Victor Rosenheim gives Mr. Graff a 500-thousand-pound check with an ultimatum. He can either cash the check in the next 24 hours, or they are not buying it.

Consuela silently begs Mr. Graff to take the money, and he does. Once Victor and Consuela part ways, Consuela meets with Mr. CARVALHO, her lover.



They enjoy a romantic lunch and afternoon.

They, too, head to the House of Graff and meet Mr. Graff as if it was the first time. Mr. Carvalho asks for the price. Mr. Carvalho writes a check of 500 thousand pounds with an ultimatum to Mr. Graff that he either take the money, or they won't buy the necklace.

Mr. Graff takes the check and lets the couple leave the store. Once Consuela is alone, she goes back to the store and happily takes her new gift. Mr. Graff congratulates her on her birthday.



Broken Routine

Logline - A man who is a creature of habit must compete with a kid who challenges him into breaking his routine on a train ride back home.

Genre - Humor

Word Count - 2,590

Synopsis

SEPTIMUS HORATION CORNWALLIS is loyal to his routines. He makes sure his life is consistent at all times - weekdays, weekends, and even holidays. He loves his lifestyle and becomes very distressed if his routine is ever interrupted.

On an evening that starts off like many, Septimus is at work getting ready to clock out at around 5:30pm. His boss suddenly makes him stay a bit longer than usual. He gets out of the office late and reluctantly gets on the 6:30pm train.

He's in a completely different seat with a completely different set of passengers. Septimus is annoyed. But alas, he takes out his Evening Standard along with a cigarette to puff on the way home.

He notices a mysterious boy with Nazi propoganda written on his clothing sitting by him. Septimus minds his own business until the boy picks up the pack of cigarettes from Septimus's armrest. He takes one, lights it, and puffs away.

Septimus grabs another cigarette as a way to compete with the kid and lights it while going back to his reading. The kid grabs the corner of the paper and rips it away from Septimus. Oh, it's on.

Septimus can't think of anything else than to break routine and puff away a third cigarette. The kid accepts the challenge and gets another cigarette as well. Each one tries to out smoke the other, making the carriage full of smoke.

Septimus gets to his ninth cigarette, puffs it at in the kid's face and removes the last cigarette and crumbles the pack in. He then tears up what remained of the Evening Standard and places it on the kid's lap. Septimus is clearly the winner.

As he gets up to exit at his stop, his briefcase falls, and it opens for everyone else in the carriage to see: an extra copy of the Evening Standard and another pack of cigarettes.



Septimus is always prepared to maintain his routine.



An Eye for an Eye

Logline - A conflicted attorney gathers his team and conducts tests to see if his client is telling the truth.

Genre - Mystery

Word Count - 3,432

Synopsis

Attorney MATTHEW ROBERTS is not fully convinced that his client, MARY BANKS, is innocent of killing her abusive husband.

She claims that she was at the hospital after losing her sight when her husband died. Roberts brings in BERNARD CASSON and Mr. HUGH WITHERINGTON, part of his defense team, to further discuss Mary Banks before visiting her at the Holloway Prison to be interviewed.

The three men question Mary while performing different tests in order to see if she's truly blind. Detective Roberts first slowly moves his tea to the edge of the table until it drops to the ground. No reaction from Mary.

RUPERT BANKS, Mary's son, walks into the room and stands near his mom after not seeing her for weeks.

The three men watch attentively as Mary shows no spatial awareness that someone else is in the room. Rupert leaves the room just as he was instructed to do.

Detective Roberts is almost fully convinced that Mary is telling the truth, but there's one more test left.

Hugh Witherington sets a cloth on the table in front of him and slowly pops out his glass eye out of his socket. He polishes it and puts it back in right in front of Mary!

She flinches and immediately tries to compose herself, but it's too late, they've already seen enough. Detective Roberts gets the confirmation he wants and tells Mary it's best for her to plea guilty for manslaughter.



The Luncheon

Logline - When an up-and-coming author is stuck paying for an expensive lunch, he must find a way to impress his lunch date, even if he's cutting it close with the check.

Genre - Humor

Word Count - 2,399

Synopsis

At a Literary Guild cocktail party, an author is approached by an elegant, mysterious woman.

She talks to him as if she has known him for years, but he has no recollection of her. He tries to ask questions that can remind him of who she is such as, "How's your family? Your home?", and, "When was your last trip to London?"

But her replies aren't helpful.

She replies that she hasn't been to London since their luncheon. Bingo!

The author remembers her name is SUSAN and they had an 'unforgettable' lunch.

Flashback - The author is publishing his first book. He receives a call from Susan praising him and suggesting that they should meet for lunch the next time she's in London. He only agrees because he has an interest in Susan's husband, who is a movie producer.

The author painstakingly takes the only money left in his account – 37 pounds – and heads to lunch.

When they meet, he lets her choose from the menu. She helps herself, while the author leans on the safe (and cheaper) choice and gets the chef's salad. His anxiety doesn't let him enjoy his lunch as much as she does.

With a sigh of relief, he pays the bill and follows her outside the restaurant. He finally gets the courage to ask about her movie producer husband, but she breaks the news that they've been divorced for a while.



Now, she's married to the owner of the restaurant they just ate at.

The author is in complete shock - a very memorable lunch indeed.



The Coup

Logline - When a powerful businessman goes to Nigeria to finalize a business deal, he gets stuck in the middle of a coup and has to make an alliance with his worst enemy.

Genre - Drama

Word Count - 7,504

Synopsis

EDUARDO FRANCISCO DE SILVERIA is a man who came from wealth and made even more wealth as a successful businessman for his late father's company.

Eduardo visits Lagos, Nigeria in order to finalize business with the Nigeran Head of State, GENERAL MOHAMMAD. He wants to build infrastructure for Nigeria's capital that would be so big and successful that it would compete with Brazil's own capital.

In between meetings with many important officials, Eduardo recognizes his enemy, MANUEL RODRIGUES. He stays on alert and makes sure his business beats Manuel's in the capital rebuild plans. But everything is put on pause when the Nigerian government is overthrown in a coup.

General Mohammed is killed. All of the people staying at the hotel, including Eduardo and Rodrigues, are stuck in Lagos until airports reopen.

In the meantime, Eduardo's patience is growing very thin. One night, he happens to sit next to Manuel in an empty dining hall.

Both men drink wine and converse about their businesses to the point that they get comfortable with each other and laugh at their lives. The staff for both businessmen are surprised at this camaraderie.

Eduardo gets the unfortunate news that one of his business partners is not cooperating in finalizing a business deal. He asks his new friend if he wants to join in the deal with him. Rodrigues agrees and the former enemies become official business partners.

Soon enough, the airports open again and both leave Nigeria with new business deals.



You'll Never Live to Regret It

Logline – An unlucky couple tries to outplay an insurance company, but little do they know, a pushy insurance broker is onto them and their scheme.

Genre - Drama

Word Count - 3,895

Synopsis

DAVID and PAT are happily together and very much in love. They make a pact that if one of them dies, they would make sure the other is financially secured for the rest of their life.

Due to a pushy insurance broker named MARVIN ROEBUCK and recent events, David agrees to meet to discuss life insurance.

David makes a deal with Marvin for a million dollars' worth of life insurance coverage. A physical is required to finalize the insurance plan, and David makes Pat take the exam for him.

As Marvin walks out of the house after making the deal with David, he says, "You'll never live to regret it!" Everything goes according to plan and the insurance is a go.

Exactly nineteen days later, David dies of AIDS. As procedure, the insurance company plans to have an interview with the beneficiary of the policy, Pat.

All is going according to plan until Marvin calls Pat begging to help him because he might get fired for the policy he made out for David.

Pat agrees to help Marvin and goes to a different physician to have a check-up, and he also finalizes another financial back up plan, but this time under his name for his sister.

Marvin once again concludes the agreement with: "You'll never live to regret it!". A few days later, Pat's lawyer calls him to tell him that they are going to be in a legal battle with the insurance company due to the physical test results coming out exactly as David's.

Pat quickly realizes Marvin was onto them and made sure Pat was caught red-handed.



Out of panic, Pat dies of an asthma attack. Pat's lawyers are able to come to an understanding with the insurance company after his death and give the million dollars to Pat's sister. Marvin happens to live to regret what he had done.



Do Not Pass Go

Logline - The former Minister of Agriculture in Saddam Hussein's government, flies to Turkey to purchase rugs to sell in America, but on his trip back, his plane is forced to make an unscheduled stop.

Genre – Drama

Word Count - 4,620

Synopsis

HAMID ZABARI arrives for his bi-annual trip to Turkey. Hamid is the former Minister of Agriculture in Saddam Hussein's government, but after a year of poor crop returns, he and his wife SHEREEN escaped across the border to Turkey.

While in Turkey, Hamid buys carpets and brings them to America, where he sells them in New York City at a higher price.

Flying back and forth to Turkey for carpets has become his main source of income. After his latest successful trip, Hamid boards his flight back to New York.

During the flight, however, the pilot announces that there's an issue with one of the engines and they must make an unscheduled stop at the nearest major airport: Baghdad.

Hamid becomes terrified and demands to speak with the pilot. He explains who he is and that if he's found, the Iraqi government will capture him and execute him.

The pilots and stewardesses devise a plan to give Hamid one of their uniforms and have him shave his mustache, that way he will blend in with the crew and won't have to show his passport. The crew surround Hamid as they deplane. One of the stewardesses strikes up a conversation with an all-French crew also stuck in Baghdad.

As they wait for the engineer, Hamid sees SAAD AL-TAKRITI, a member of Saddam's personal guard now in charge of airport security. Saad seems to recognize Hamid and calls the pilot to his office.

There, Saad demands to see the passports of the crew. He goes through them, but doesn't see Hamid's passport.



Saad and the pilot go back to where the rest of the crew are, but Hamid isn't there and neither is the French crew. Saad realizes that the stewardess talked the French crew into sneaking Hamid onboard and getting him out of Baghdad. Hamid safely escapes and arrives back home to New York, where he's reunited with his wife and children.



Chunnel Vision

Logline - A man is invited to dinner by a colleague who wants to pitch an idea for a new novel, but the pair are joined by a recent ex-lover, who makes it her mission to make dinner unbearable.

Genre - Humor

Word Count - 5,380

Synopsis

A writer flies to New York to have dinner with an old friend of his, DUNCAN MCPHERSON. The writer is a novelist who has been happily married for twenty-eight years. Duncan, on the other hand, is a screenwriter and journalist who has a different girlfriend every few months.

The writer arrives at Duncan's apartment as Duncan and his, now ex, CHRISTABEL, are fighting. The writer offers to come back another time, but Duncan insists they go to dinner, as he has had a wonderful idea for a novel and wants to pitch it to him. Christabel invites herself to the dinner as well.

At the fancy French restaurant, Duncan pitches his idea for a novel, and the writer watches in awe as Christabel orders expensive drinks, appetizers, entrees, and desserts. Duncan, unaware, continues his pitch. He laments, however, that he doesn't know how to end the novel.

The check comes and Duncan finally sees how much Christabel ordered. As Duncan stares at the bill, a woman sitting nearby comes to the table and tells the writer that she had read his new novel and was shocked at the ending. It is revealed that the novel Duncan is pitching is the same story as the writer's actual novel!

Christabel instilled the writer's novel in Duncan, who took the idea as his own.



Dougie Mortimer's Right Arm

Logline - An American rower at Cambridge returns a bronze cast of the right arm of one of Cambridge's most mysterious sportsmen to the rowing club.

Genre - Humor

Word Count - 6,127

Synopsis

ROBERT HENRY KEFFER III, or BOB, is an American rower, currently studying and rowing at Cambridge. In his last year of rowing, his father tells him it is polite to leave the rowing club with a memento that has value, even if not monetarily valuable.

Bob has trouble coming up with an idea, until HELEN, a girl he's seeing, tells him about Dougie Mortimer. Dougie was a rower at Cambridge known for having the biggest biceps. His teams always won - except for the year they were highly favored and ended up mysteriously losing to Oxford. Helen tells Bob that a bronze cast of his right arm used to hang in the row club at Cambridge. Bob hunts the bronze cast down, pays a bar owner for it, has it restored, and takes it to the row club's year end dinner.

At the dinner, Bob thanks everyone for accepting him into the club and presents them with the recovered cast of Dougie Mortimer's Right Arm. Everyone cheers, except for two old men who used to row with Dougie. Later that night, as Bob is leaving the club, he witnesses the two old men stealing the bronze cast dumping it into the river.

Confused by this, Bob tracks down the oldest living member of the Oxford team, a man named DEERING, who rowed against Dougie and is now a retired priest. Dougie had debts, and Deering implies that Dougie lost the boat race on purpose. Deering tells Bob that the former Cambridge rowers dropped the bronze cast in the river as it was the best place for it.

Having heard the truth, Bob agrees.



The Holiday of a Lifetime

Logline: A retired couple of meager means realizes they can afford anything they desire – provided they remember to take out insurance on the purchase first.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 4,208

Synopsis:

DENNIS PASCOE is a retired deputy station master in the humble area of Audley End, and his wife, JOYCE, is a homemaker. Though their marriage has grown stale and boring, one summer Dennis suggests that they should forego their usual vacation in a nearby rundown beach town in favor of an all-expenses paid trip to the Costa del Sol.

The trip is something of a financial splurge for the couple, but they decide to go for it and have a wonderful time. On their return home, however, the train company loses Dennis' luggage. Although the bag itself was already broken down and contained nothing of value inside, it still netted the couple 34 pounds in an insurance payout – a veritable financial windfall for the pair.

Joyce observes how little due diligence the insurance company conducted on her claim and realizes it can be replicated on a larger scale. The couple then begins a period of using insurance money to purchase increasingly expensive goods, and then claiming those purchases as lost with different insurance companies such that the profits they pocket continue to rise.

The couple's financial position increases significantly for several years until Joyce warns Dennis that she is running out of new insurance companies to use and doesn't want to risk repeating a fraudulent claim. Nevertheless Joyce has come up with one interesting new scheme, which she intends to carry out as part of their trip to Egypt that summer.

At this point our narrative splits into three parts, with the author offering different possibilities for the ending.

In Part A, the Pascoe's travel to Egypt and are immediately alerted by local authorities that there has been a fire at their home in the UK. They quickly return to their residence and are dismayed to find that the situation is a near total loss – except for Dennis' prized stamp collection, which he secretly moved to his country club locker just before traveling.



Joyce is able to cash in three insurance policies related to the fire with the Pascoes which once again earns them a substantial profit. They realize the fire scheme has likely been their final act of fraud, and resolve to live a quiet life off all the money they have made.

Just months later, however, as boredom sets in, Joyce and Dennis to decide to change their names to move far away and once again start looking for the holiday of a lifetime.

In Part B, Dennis and Joyce travel throughout Egypt purchasing the most expensive goods they can find – and then asking the local vendors to provide receipts with amounts 3-4x higher than the purchased price.

Presumably the couple intends to use the receipts as part of another insurance scheme, however upon returning the UK they are designated for a customs inspection during which an enterprising clerk finds the goods and receipts and informs the couple that they owe some 27,000 pounds in import duties for bringing foreign items into the country.

In Part C, the Pascoes travel to Egypt and once again immediately return home to the devastating news that their home has been destroyed by a fire. Dennis attempts to console his wife by pointing out that despite the fire they stand to come out ahead due to the insurance policies on their home, however Joyce tells him she never saw the point of insuring their humble house, so their situation is sure to be a total loss.



A Gentleman and a Scholar

Logline: On the eve of her retirement, a legendary professor receives a tribute from a student who once lived to challenge her.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 3,073

Synopsis:

PROFESSOR MARGARET ALICE BURBAGE studies English at Radcliffe and receives a PhD on Shakespeare from Harvard during a period when women are still outsiders in academia. To everyone's surprise, she earns a professorship at Yale and becomes the university's first female faculty member.

As she begins her first lecture, a series of students shout out of turn to challenge her, baiting her to recite Shakespearean plays and sonnets from memory. Professor Burbage aces the test and impresses the students, earning their admiration for her expertise. One student, ROBERT LOWELL, serves as the ringleader of the challengers, offering his acceptance much more grudgingly than his peers.

Four decades later, Dr. Burbage enters the same academic hall to deliver her final lecture. This time it is she who delivers the initial lines of a sonnet and baits any former student present to speak up and complete the verse. Though her overture is initially met with silence, after some time Lowell rises and answers correctly. Dr. Burbage notes that she can never forget his voice, and that he has lost one arm – undoubtedly during honorable military service.

Dr. Burbage then asks Lowell to cite the act and scene as a bonus. He hesitates before answering, providing the right act but wrong scene. Rather than correct him, however, she simply smiles and tells him that he's quite right.



A Good Toss to Lose

Logline: A professor and his pupil trade barbs in the classroom only to find that years later they oppose each other on an actual military battlefield.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 2,598

Synopsis:

OLIVER JACKSON, a student in secondary school, faces an oral examination from his German professor, ERNST GRUBER, who chides him for his inability to understand Goethe. Jackson admits that he is only enrolled in the class because his father, who works in the Foreign Office, believes that it won't be long before England is at war with Germany, and that if Oliver learns a little German he will be in line for a good posting after England's victory. Gruber observes that Europe is currently enjoying a record period of peace and considers military action unlikely to transpire.

Of course war does come to Europe, and several years later after Jackson has already served three tours at the front he finds himself in command of a young platoon ordered to go over the line and attack the German position. As he completes his charge he realizes he is alone in hostile territory with a single German soldier now approaching him. Just as Jackson braces to attack this soldier he realizes it is Gruber – and they both pause.

Now literally on the battlefield, the two exchange a short, respectful conversation about the irony of meeting at war after their time in the classroom together years earlier. As neither wants to attack the other, they agree to flip a coin and have the loser be taken captive as a military prisoner by the winner. Jackson calls the toss and wins, taking Gruber back to his camp as a prisoner.

For decorum's sake the two agree to pretend they have no prior relationship, though Jackson does put in a good word for Gruber and urges the British to treat their captor with an officer's respect. Gruber ultimately spends two years in a prisoners' camp teaching other German captives English and translating the collected works of another former student, the author RUPERT BROOKE, into German.

Eventually Gruber is shipped back to Frankfurt in 1919, at which point he reaches out to Jackson to see if Jackson is still willing to keep a promise he made to serve as the godfather to Gruber's son many years earlier. Tragically, Gruber learns that Jackson died on the Western Front only days before the Armistice was signed. Jackson's widow then asks if Gruber will return to England to serve as the godfather to her child, which Gruber agrees to do.



A postscript later notes that Gruber was executed by a firing squad in 1944 for the role he played in trying to assassinate Adolf Hitler, and both his son HANS and Oliver's son ARTHUR died serving in World War II.



Who Killed the Mayor?

Logline: A tiny Italian town that barely appears on the map is rocked by the murder of its mayor – a crime for which every one of its residents seems to want to claim.

Genre: Mystery

Word Count: 8,337

Synopsis:

The tiny Italian town of Cortoglia in the heart of the Campania region north of Naples has a population of just 1,463, and for the entirety of its history it has endeavored to remain isolated. Cortoglia's affairs revolve around its only three industries: wine, olive oil, and truffles – and the residents who run each of those businesses also collectively govern the town.

When Cortoglia's mayor dies at the ripe age of 102, it is expected that the vacancy will be filled by his deputy in the same way such matters have been handled for ages, however a mobster, DINO LOMBARDI, unexpectedly arrives and fixes the election, claiming the mayoral office for himself and shocking the locals. For several months LOMBARDI terrorizes the town by insisting the chief businesses all pay him protection money to ward off vague dangers he is never quite able to describe.

Within a year the small town has been turned into hell on earth, and frankly it doesn't come as a surprise to anyone when Lombardi is murdered. Though everyone is glad to see him go and seemingly any of the 1,462 residents could have been the killer, Naples still insists on sending a young detective, ANTONIO ROSETTI, to visit Cortoglia and solve the case.

Rosetti's only clue is that because the body has been cremated, no one outside the undertaker and the murderer will know the cause of death, which is atypical. He sets about attempting to interview the locals, and is immediately shocked to find that to a person they are all willing to admit to the murder – however not a single one can explain the cause of death, causing Rosetti to become fed up with repeated false confessions.

During his weeks in Cortoglia Rosetti also meets FRANCESCA FARINELLI, a chemist and the daughter of the new mayor, and develops an immediate crush on her. They begin to see each other for wine and conversation which eventually leads to a true relationship. Rosetti finds her worldly and intriguing despite her small town roots, and is impressed that she is essentially the only person in town who doesn't waste his time claiming to have committed the crime.



Months later, after Rosetti's boss has closed the case, the local council in Cortoglia asks him to become the town's chief of police – with a generous salary to boot. Rosetti accepts as he also understands that living in Cortoglia is the only way to win Francesca's hand, as she is unwilling to consider ever permanently leaving her home.

The two marry and travel to Venice for a perfect honeymoon, during which Rosetti jokes with Francesca that she is the only person never to have confessed to murdering Lombardi. Francesca claims she was about to confess the first time Rosetti entered her shop before she noticed he seemed more interested in trying to pick her up than investigating the murder.

Rosetti then continues the conversation and teasingly asks her to explain the cause of Lombardi's death – which Francesca perfectly elucidates as a spoonful of cyanide dropped into his coffee.

Rosetti suddenly realizes he has married the killer, though she reminds him with a smile that in Italy a man cannot give evidence against his wife.



The Cuckold

Logline: A man convinces his friend's wife to leave her husband, failing to realize she isn't leaving her husband for him.

Genre: Sex/Romance

Word Count: 2,289

Synopsis:

ADAM WESTON and GARETH BLAMORE are two close friends who meet each Sunday evening to share a bottle of wine and catch up on recent events. Adam is a bartender at the local pub, and Gareth is a successful lawyer who travels frequently to London.

One evening Adam asks Gareth to invest in his pub to help keep the business afloat, however Gareth claims Adam couldn't have chosen a worse time as his wife ANGELA has just filed for divorce. Gareth doesn't know her exact motives, but feels certain there is another man involved.

Later, Adam contacts Angela and tells him that Gareth knows she is seeing someone else. Angela tells Adam not to worry because there is no way Gareth could know about their affair, and that as soon as the divorce is finalized she'll use the money she receives from Gareth to invest in Adam's pub.

The following week, Adam mentions he has found a cufflink under Angela's bed that isn't his, and he's now absolutely certain Angela has been unfaithful. He decides to wait to finalize the divorce until he's had time to investigate and thereby determine the identity of Angela's lover, believing he can use that information to get a better settlement.

Some weeks later, Gareth tells Adam he's finally decided to take Adam's advice and settle the divorce, even though it comes at considerable personal expense. Gareth also mentions he found a pair of tickets to France in Angela's purse and expects as soon as the papers are signed she'll be off to "his" villa there to celebrate.

Gareth then pulls out the cufflink he has found and says he wishes he could have found the other one and therefore figured out who Angela's lover is once and for all. Adam stares blankly at the cufflink, realizing he's never seen it anywhere before.



All's Fair in Love and War

Logline: A wealthy landowner who takes advantage of a tenant on his estate doesn't answer to anyone – except karma.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 3,392

Synopsis:

RALPH DUDLEY DAWSON is a wealthy landowner who holds the title of Squire of the village of Nethercote, which essentially makes him the biggest fish in a very small pond. Ralph is selfish and egotistical and considers himself to be above the others in his town.

At the age of 40, after many years of being a bachelor, Ralph sets his eyes on BETH TREVELYAN, a local girl who he meets while judging a swimming competition, as even though she is “beneath” his station he is captivated by her beauty.

Beth, however, resists Ralph's advances, politely noting she is engaged to JAMIE CARRIGAN, a tenant farmer who rents forty acres of land on Ralph's estate. Though Ralph initially assumes Beth will come around and leave Jamie for him once she realizes his intentions are serious, Beth remains committed to Jamie and continues to reject Ralph.

Eventually Ralph goes to Beth's parents and essentially buys her from them as part of a business transaction. Beth is distraught but goes with the plan as the convenient timing allows her to mask the fact that she is already pregnant with Jamie's child.

When the baby is born seven months after her wedding to Ralph, he doesn't suspect anything untoward, even though the child looks much more like Jamie than him.

Shortly thereafter at the onset of World War II Jamie decides to enlist and fight the king's enemies, claiming he has nothing to live for now that Beth has married Ralph.

For his part, Ralph makes every attempt to dodge the draft, at first relying on his position as a landowner to avoid military service.

Eventually, however, when the selective service age is raised to 50, Ralph cannot avoid the military any longer, and he is summoned to attend officer training school in Berkshire.



While there, Beth writes to him and lets him know she would like a divorce. Beth is secretly pregnant with another child from Jamie – conceived during his leave – and has realized she wants to be with him even if it means angering her parents and Ralph. Ralph, however, ignores the letter, assuming again that Beth will eventually change her mind.

When Ralph graduates from officer training school, he is sent to the front and subsequently avoids any duty that could be considered dangerous.

One day, however, it falls to him to select an enlisted soldier for a dangerous mission taking place over the line in no man's land. Ralph sees Jamie's name on the list of candidates and picks him for the job, believing it will be a one-way trip for the lowly farmer.

Jamie bravely embarks on the operation, and when hours pass, and he hasn't returned Ralph all-but-assumes he has died. Just before Ralph is ready to report the news, however, another soldier spots Jamie returning in the distance and calls Ralph closer for a look.

As Ralph leans forward he is suddenly felled by an enemy bullet and killed.

With Ralph now having died without acknowledging Beth's divorce request she legally inherits all of his land and titles, freeing her to marry Jamie and live happily ever after with their two children – all on Ralph's former estate.



A Wasted Hour

Logline: A student hitchhiking back to college is amazed by her driver's tales of adventures, not realizing until too late that she has shared the car with her hero.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 2,129

Synopsis

KELLEY RAGLAND, a student at Stanford university, always chooses to hitchhike the one hour back to school from her parents' house rather than ride the train.

Kelley has a specific set of criteria that she looks for when requesting a ride, chiefly that the driver be alone, older, married, and decent.

As Kelley is a journalism major, she uses the rides as an opportunity to interview the drivers and learn something about their lives, though she is typically bored by the lack of adventure in their stories.

One day, Kelley meets a driver, JOHN, whose rough handshake implies to her that he has led a challenging life as a farmer. As their conversation develops, he reveals he spent time working on his father's farm after dropping out of Stanford before he could complete his English degree, and Kelley feels satisfied that she has assessed him so well.

When Kelley mentions she is also studying English at Stanford, the driver asks her who the titans of American literature are considered today. Among them she cites John Steinbeck, who she states is her favorite author.

Over the course of their hour together, John tells Kelley all about his three wives, his stint in Vietnam as a journalist working for the CIA, and his involvement with the civil rights movement which led him to meeting Martin Luther King Jr. and JFK.

Kelley finds herself surprisingly engrossed in the tales and by the time they reach Stanford wishes they had more road to travel together.

As she exits the vehicle, John tells Kelley he hopes he lives long enough to enjoy her novels as much as she claims to have enjoyed his. For a moment she is puzzled – before realizing that she has been sharing a car with none other than her literary hero, John Steinbeck.



Confession

Logline: Four French captives in a German prison must each make a final confession, leaving it to the local priest to determine the one among them whose life will be spared.

Genre: Thriller

Word Count: 13,358

Synopsis

During World War II, four Frenchmen from Saint Rochelle have been captured by German forces and are being held in a prison camp.

As the four town councilors they are treated well and permitted to socialize with each other.

The four captives (MAX LASCELLES, the mayor and a lawyer, ANDRE PARMENTIER, the local college headmaster, DR. PHILIPPE DOUCET, the hospital's senior physician, and CLAUDIE TESSIER, the chairman of a bank), have gathered for a late-night poker game when the German prison warden enters to inform them, they will be released and permitted to return to Saint Rochelle by rail the following day.

The Frenchmen speculate that the tide of the war may be turning, leaving the Germans with insufficient manpower to manage the prison. All are eager to return to their homes.

Some hours later, however, the prisoners are visited by their local priest, FATHER PIERRE, who solemnly informs them that there has been a French-led resistance attack on the railways that killed three Germans, leaving the Germans to demand the lives of three Frenchmen in return.

As the Germans do not particularly care which three prisoners will die they have left it to Father Pierre and the imprisoned to choose their fates.

After some debate, they decide Father Pierre will hear a final confession from each prisoner before ultimately determining who among them will be spared from the gallows.

First, Father Pierre meets with Andre, the headmaster. Though Father Pierre expects he already knows the details of Andre's life, he is shocked to learn that a drunken driving incident which claimed the life of an innocent victim and sent Andre's brother to jail was Andre's fault, and Andre has lived with that guilt and lie all his life.



Next comes Claude, who has a contentious conversation with Father Pierre during which Father Pierre ultimately states he knows Claude was responsible for the death of Claude's close friend by revealing to the Germans that the friend's wife was Jewish.

Though Claude denies the allegation he does so unconvincingly, leaving Father Pierre to conclude that Claude is also a murderer.

Third is Dr. Doucet, who admits that many years ago, before he moved to Saint Rochelle, he had as a young doctor treated a wealthy patient and at the same time fallen in love with her niece.

When Dr. Doucet proposed to the niece, she stated she could not marry him because she was the sole heir to her aunt's fortune and needed to be single when the aunt died.

Once the idea of death had been planted in Dr. Doucet's head, he looked for opportunities to hasten the aunt's demise, eventually giving her a quantity of sleeping pills that prevented her from ever waking up.

Dr. Doucet then believed he would marry the niece and live happily ever after but was shocked to see her immediately marry someone else, leaving him to understand he had been used to kill the aunt.

After this series of events, Dr. Doucet moved to Saint Rochelle and lived an honorable life, and Father Pierre tells him that his sincere confession and sorrow have likely earned him the Lord's forgiveness.

The final person to enter the confessional is Max, the mayor, who bluntly admits to Father Pierre that he has been collaborating with the Germans and knows they won't choose him for execution – even if Father Pierre recommends it.

Max states he has played the odds and believes the Germans will win the war, so the collaboration has been a risk he has been willing to take in the name of self-preservation.

Following all four confessions the men have a sleepless night and wait for Father Pierre's decision in the morning. At 6 AM a German official arrives and presents them with four rail tickets back to Saint Rochelle.

A conversation ensues in which the prisoners realize Father Pierre had invented the story about the crash and there were no plans to execute any of them.

The prisoners then make their way to the rail station and board the train with first class tickets to Saint Rochelle. On the way back to Saint Rochelle a bomb that had been planted by French



resistance fighters detonates and destroys the first class carriage. It kills Max, Andre, and Claude – but spares Dr. Doucet, who not only survives but manages to treat other wounded passengers and save many innocent lives as well, implying that Father Pierre’s judgment may have been carried out by a higher authority after all.



The Senior Vice President

Logline: A long-standing bank employee forced into retirement without a pension decides to take drastic action to ensure his financial future.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 13,295

Synopsis:

ARTHUR DUNBAR is the Senior Vice President at the National Bank of Toronto, a position typically held by the longest-tenured employee who has no hope of advancing to further managerial responsibility.

After 29 years of service with the bank – just as he is approaching his retirement with full pension on his 30th anniversary – Arthur is informed that he will be laid off a few months short of reaching that date by the bank's smug general manager, GERALD STRATTON.

Arthur considers his options and reflects on his role as the sole manager of the account for MR. S. MACPHERSON, a mysterious Scottish national with over eight million dollars in assets.

Company lore has it that decades earlier Macpherson showed up at a local branch stating he had made a fortune in the railroad industry before making a deposit of \$871,000 in cash and announcing he would be returning home to Scotland.

Since that date, Macpherson has corresponded solely with the bank via quarterly letters, acquiring a reputation as a shrewd currency trader and investor in the process, though little is known of his personal life.

Arthur observes that for the first time in his memory Macpherson had been late to post his quarterly letter, and after a thorough review of his account noted that Macpherson's normally consistent expenses had decreased, except for his typical payments to HAMISH and MORAG LAIDLAW, the Scottish couple who manage his estate.

Arthur believes this slight deviation in Macpherson's pattern indicates he may have either died or become incapacitated, and realizes it presents an opportunity for him in conjunction with his employment situation at the bank.

Arthur informs his colleagues that he is going to visit his sister in Vancouver before purchasing a series of tickets in cash and traveling to Scotland to make a surprise drop in at the Macpherson



estate. On the way there he stops at a Scottish bank, and posing as Macpherson he informs an account executive that he intends to transfer the balance of his holdings to the Scottish Bank from the National Bank of Toronto in the near term.

When Arthur shows up unannounced at the Macpherson's estate he is confronted by a shotgun-toting Hamish who attempts to turn him away, however Arthur makes it clear that he is there on urgent bank business that must be handled privately. Once inside the mansion, Arthur plays his

trump card and boldly tells the Laidlaws he knows that Macpherson has died and they are continuing to draw checks from his account, even though he has no proof of this; the Laidlaws break down and admit that is exactly the case, claiming that they served Macpherson for decades but were now left without pensions due to his unexpected death.

Ironically, it was the Laidlaws attempt to keep expenses low that tipped Arthur to Macpherson's death in the first place.

Arthur further sympathizes with the Laidlaws' situation as he is now also understanding he will not receive the pension he had worked so diligently towards over many years, so he decides to work with the Laidlaws to make sure Macpherson's account balance supports all of them well into old age.

As Macpherson was something of a recluse and had no family or heirs, Arthur is able to use his intimate knowledge of Macpherson's accounts and financial history to pose as the deceased Scot and create new documents supporting the identity theft.

Arthur then returns to Toronto and waits until Stratton is away on his annual vacation before using his position as the bank's senior officer to transfer the balance of Macpherson's account to the Scottish bank.

Though Stratton is angry to lose the bank's top client, Arthur rightly insists there was nothing they could do to change his mind. Arthur then goes through the motions of holding a retirement party before departing quietly for Scotland to "become" Mr. Macpherson.

Just hours after starting his new life, Arthur is returning to his hotel in Edinburgh when he spots a beautiful woman at the bar who surprisingly initiates a conversation with him. Arthur, who long ago gave up any interest in the opposite sex, uncharacteristically buys the woman – named MARIANNE – several drinks, and then invites her up to his suite for a nightcap.

Even more uncharacteristically she accepts, and the two spend a passionate night together making love. In the morning, however, Arthur realizes his wallet has been stolen, along with a



watch he received as a retirement gift from the National Bank of Toronto. Arthur has been tricked by a common thief.

The Scottish police soon catch Marianne and manage to use the documents in her possession to connect the dots in Arthur's identity theft scheme.

Arthur's old boss, Stratton, that travels to Scotland to inform Arthur that in order to avoid embarrassing the bank they will not press charges provided Arthur agrees to pay back the money he has already stolen from Macpherson's account – and accepts that he will lose his pension.

Arthur reluctantly realizes he has no other options and assents to the demands.

In the process of meeting with Stratton and the Scottish police, however, Arthur realizes that they remain unaware that the real Macpherson is dead.

When the excitement of the moment dies down, Arthur uses what little money he has left to hire a lawyer to defend Marianne and ensure she is released with only a suspended sentence; when asked why he has chosen to help her, Arthur admits that her theft was a small price to pay for the best night of his life, and that he can relate to a chain of events that pushed Marianne into such desperate circumstances.

Arthur also understands that because Stratton refused to press charges and risk embarrassing his bank, no one is aware of his attempt to steal Macpherson's identity, so he sees an opportunity to attempt the ruse again.

Arthur then boldly proceeds with his original plan, recontacting the Laidlaws and moving with Marianne into the Macpherson estate, where he uses his knowledge of Macpherson's correspondence style to continue writing quarterly letters to the National Bank of Toronto as if Macpherson remains alive.

He maintains a spending pattern consistent enough to enable the four to live comfortably and avoids any further financial or law enforcement scrutiny on his affairs.



The Road to Damascus

Logline: A young man destined to inherit a fortune abruptly changes course after reflecting on the role his ancestors played in history.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 2,496

Synopsis:

MARK BAIRSTOW is the son of the Chairman of Bairstow & Son, the biggest iron foundry in the world. Despite his immense wealth he is a decent and fair-minded young man who excels in school and earns the admiration of his peers.

When he is the school captain of the middle sixth, Bairstow participates in a trip to Germany with his classmates and their teacher, MR. COSTELLO.

Although the excursion provides ample opportunity for relaxed, carefree socialization, the boys are severely impacted by their visit to a concentration camp in the small town of Dachau. In particular, BEN LEVY is horrified by evidence that his ancestors had been present in the camp, with only Bairstow seemingly able to offer sufficient empathy to comfort him.

Many years later, as an adult, Levy attends a local cricket match in Yorkshire with a friend, and they are surprised to spot Bairstow in the VIP wearing a Reverend's clothes.

They cannot believe that Bairstow chose religious life even though he had been destined to inherit a life of immense wealth and privileges through his family business.

Later, Levy's friend, a schoolmaster who is never named, leads his sixth form pupils on their own trip to Germany – much as he had done with Bairstow and Levy as children. Unlike his childhood experience, however, this time the schoolmaster manages the fortitude to make it all the way through the camp at Dachau, including the final room where the ovens which cremated deceased Jews in mass are located.

In this horrific room the schoolmaster sees the ovens are labeled as having been built by BAIRSTOW & SONS – and suddenly understands why Mark chose theology instead of the legacy of his family fortune.



Unique

Logline: A stamp collector ensures the piece he wishes to sell remains one-of-a-kind.

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 100

Synopsis:

In this one-hundred-word challenge, a stamp collector attempts to sell a prized piece but is disappointed to learn from the dealer that because there is another copy, its value is only ten thousand francs.

Right in front of the dealer, the collector then lights a match and burns the second copy of the stamp. With a gleam in his eyes, the collector tells the dealer that his piece must be worth even more now – as it is truly unique.



Double or Quits

Logline: A casino manager will stop at nothing to keep his business running smoothly, even if that means giving away money to a few lucky losing gamblers.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 1,837

Synopsis:

The manager of a casino in Monte Carlo spots a man gambling recklessly at the roulette wheel, continually risking everything in a series of double or quits wagers as his wife looks on nervously.

This frustrates the manager as there have been a series of recent suicides from gamblers who had just lost heavily, which has led to political pressure on the local government to consider closing the casino.

The manager has his head of security bring in a lip reader who confirms that the husband and wife are desperately risking all their money at the wheel.

Worse, the manager notices that FRANCOIS COLBERT, a journalist who has written several recent articles criticizing casinos, is nearby and watching the whole scene unfold.

The manager orders a new croupier to take control of the roulette table and rig the game so that the reckless gambler can win, which will presumably prevent him from taking his own life.

Though the new croupier earnestly attempts to stop the roulette wheel on the gambler's chosen number of thirteen, a series of near misses ultimately bankrupt the gambler of what appears to be his life's savings.

Distressed, the defeated gambler runs out of the casino towards the ocean, and moments later everyone hears a single gunshot as the gambler presumably takes his own life.

Desperate to maintain his reputation, the casino manager orders his chief of security to take 300,000 francs in cash and leave them on the man's body, just to prove that he couldn't possibly have chosen suicide as a reaction to having lost money at the roulette wheel.

Hours later, the deceased gambler's wife makes her way to the beach and recovers the cash from his body. She quietly whispers to the gambler that the situation has passed, and he performed excellently, and he responds that he will rendezvous with her and Francois back in Paris.



The Car Park Attendant

Logline: An enterprising car park attendant discovers he can make a fortune as long as he never lets anyone suspect he's earned it.

Genre: Adventure

Word Count: 4,882

Synopsis:

JOE SIMPSON wants to be a professional footballer, but never quite has the talent. After he graduates from school Joe struggles to find a job and dismisses his father's suggestion that he join him working at a local car park as he considers the work beneath him.

After Joe strikes out working at a grocery, however, he gives in and finds a job at the car park. Much to Joe's surprise he discovers he enjoys being outside all day and chatting with his regular customers.

One customer, MR. MASON, invites Joe to visit the showroom where he sells his vehicles. Upon arriving Joe meets Mr. Mason's accountant, MOLLY STOKES, and falls in love.

Joe pursues Molly and she eventually agrees to date him. Things seem to be going OK for Joe and Molly, however when Joe proposes marriage, she rejects him as she does not wish to live with his parents, and Joe cannot afford his own home yet.

Shortly thereafter Joe loses his job due to cutbacks – and learns on the same day that Molly is pregnant.

Joe's father urges them to marry so the child can be born in wedlock, and though all enjoy the wedding Joe wakes up the next day with a pregnant wife in his parents' spare room and realizes something must be done.

Joe's uncle informs him about a possible job at the zoo, and on the way to inquire about it Joe spots a huge plot of land adjacent to the zoo where zoo customers seem to be parking haphazardly.

After a bit of research, Molly and Joe realize the land is in a gray area combining the city and zoo's jurisdictions, so later that year during the Christmas holiday Joe swoops in overnight and paints several parking spaces on the pavement.



Customers immediately believe the lot has been annexed by the local council and that Joe has been appointed to run it, and as no one ever bothers to ask any questions Joe goes right on reporting to work everyday as an “attendant” at a lot from which he is now able to claim all the profits.

Joe keeps right on running his car park for decades, though Molly makes sure they never live beyond their means on a simple attendant’s salary. Eventually the family starts taking vacations to Majorca, where Molly puts down a deposit on an oceanfront lot in cash.

On Joe’s sixtieth birthday he “retires,” and his family then moves to Majorca permanently to live on this beautiful estate.

Molly, who managed the books for Joe’s car park, later admits the family earned £3,422,319 during the years it was in business.

Joe is happy to have retired and grateful for the professional path he traveled, though he laments that when he departed for Majorca the zoo and city both realized their opposite number had never owned the car park land after all, and the situation fell into a protracted legal battle which benefited only the lawyers.



View of Auvers-Sur-Oise

Logline: A police officer uses his knowledge of art history to take down a previously untouchable narcotics kingpin.

Genre: Crime

Word Count: 3,076

Synopsis:

GUY STANFORD has wanted to be a police officer since childhood, however to appease his father, a respected barrister, he spends three years studying art history at Exeter before joining the local force.

At the end of a particularly grueling week not long after the start of Guy's career, he receives an unexpected phone call in the middle of the night ordering him to report for duty.

Upon reaching the station, Guy learns that the police will be serving a warrant to raid and search the house of BERNIE MANNERS, a local drug baron who has heretofore relied on a series of elite lawyers to avoid incarceration.

The police mention they are working with an informant and believe on this occasion they have Manners dead to rights.

Guy is assigned to a team that will search Manners' residence after the warrant is served. The police arrive in force expecting to find Manners in the throes of his fiftieth birthday celebration, however the house is dark and when Manners answers the door he is smugly wearing an evening robe.

Manners consents to the search and pours himself a whiskey as the police frantically look for drugs; he is confident they will find nothing.

After checking and double checking the residence, the police eventually call off the search just as Manners' lawyer arrives and informs the Chief Superintendent that they will be filing a harassment complaint.

At that moment Guy steps forward and announces that Manners is under arrest for possession of stolen goods.



While Manners' attorney scoffs, Guy identifies a Cézanne painting on Manners' wall that had been previously stolen from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and is conservatively valued at a little over three million pounds.

A smiling Superintendent then slaps his cuffs on Manners, telling Guy that a copper never forgets his first arrest.



A Perfect Murder

Logline: A guilty foreman convicts the wrong man

Genre: Drama

Word Count: 100

Synopsis

In this one-hundred-word challenge, a guilty foreman is in an unusual position.



The Gospel According to Judas

Logline: A Gospel as if written by Benjamin Iscariot (Judas's son)

Genre: Religious

Synopsis

The new light on the mystery of Judas—including his motives for the betrayal and what happened to him after the crucifixion—by retelling the story of Jesus through the eyes of Judas, using the canonical texts as its basic point of reference.

Ostensibly written by Judas's son, Benjamin, and following the narrative style of the Gospels, this re-creation is provocative, compelling, and controversial.

The Gospel According to Judas, by Benjamin Iscariot is the result of an intense collaboration between one of the world's most popular storytellers—Jeffrey Archer—and one of the world's leading biblical scholars—Francis J. Moloney.

The project was as bold as it was simple. Jeffrey would write a story for 21st-century readers, while Moloney would ensure that the result would be credible to a 1st-century Christian or Jew.

The book, which is presented in gospel style with two-colour text, ribbon marker and gilded edges, and “written” by the son of Judas, is a highly readable and gripping account of the stories of Jesus and Judas, which will open a whole new debate among secular and religious readers.

NOTE: Professor Francis J Moloney (read biography) is a widely respected scholar, educator, and priest, and the author of 36 books both scholarly and popular, many of which are about the gospel.



A Christmas Carol

Logline: A modern update of A Christmas Carol

Genre: Christmas

Word Count: [TBC]

Synopsis:

Not yet available - to be published soon.