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Willow Lane Writer

SARAH SOCHA

FREELANCE WRITING PORTFOLIO



Hello friend, I'm Sarah.

I write words that sway hearts and linger in minds. From scripted content to developmental editing to executive and memoir ghostwriting and ad campaigns, I've spent the past two decades writing story-driven copy for a variety of companies and clients. As a freelance ghostwriter and copywriter, I run The Willow Lane Writer to help brands and individuals share their story. When I'm not writing, you can find me exploring beachside towns alongside my husband and kids or tending to our backyard gardens under the shade of the trees.

sarah@willowlanemedia.com





Services Include

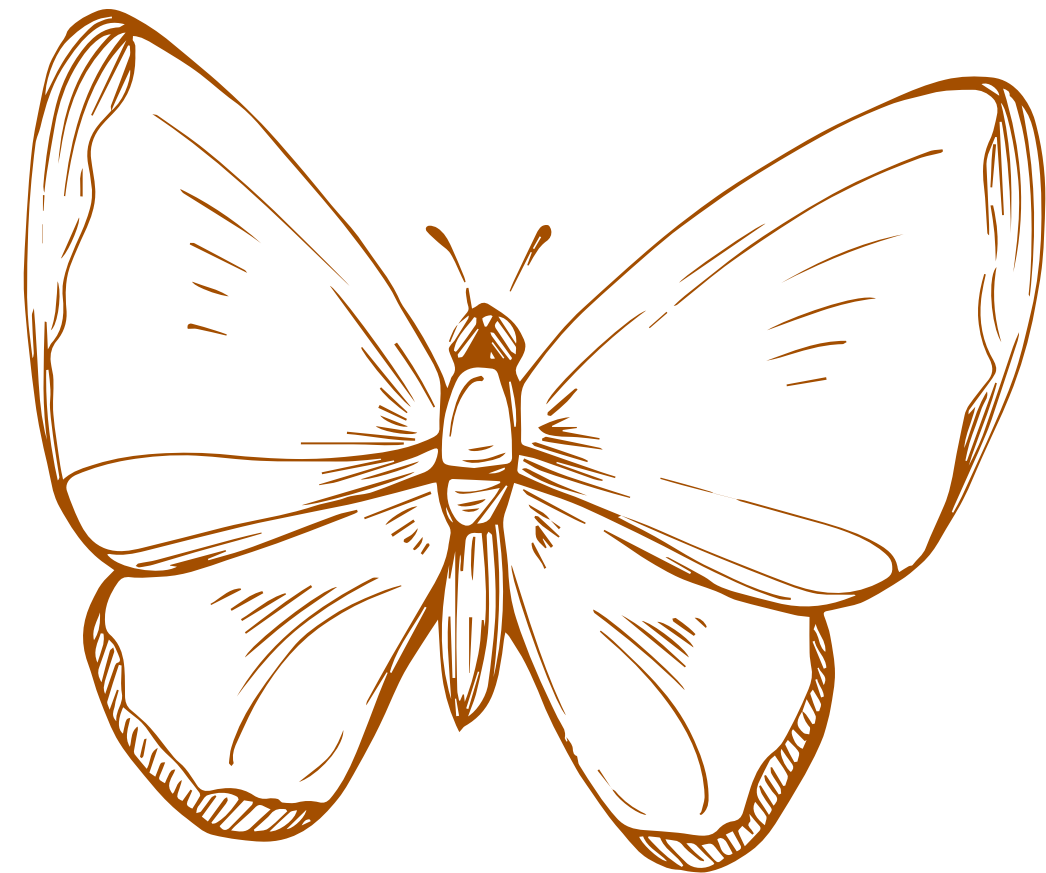
MEMOIR & BOOK GHOSTWRITING

BRAND COPYWRITING

VIDEO GAME STORYLINING

DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING

EXECUTIVE GHOSTWRITING



Some past projects include work for



BRAND COPYWRITING



AT&T U-verse



NIKEiD



REGENERON
science to medicine®

zippo

VISIT BRAND PORTFOLIO

EXECUTIVE WRITING



Trysail
STRATEGIES



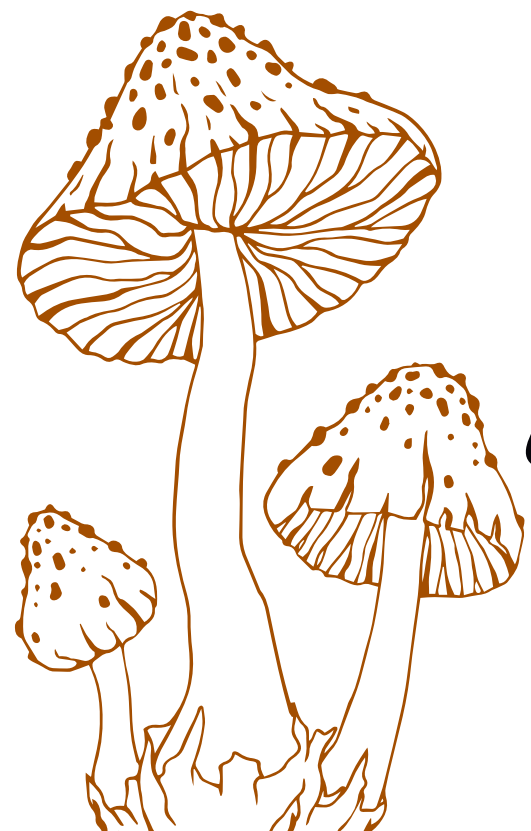
Key Private Bank



Writing Portfolio

Some excerpts of my work.



Narrative Non-Fiction





FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
HISTORY OF GRAYCLIFF ESTATE
GHOSTWRITING EXCERPT

Narrative Non-Fiction

The Martin family's city complex on Jewett Parkway was completed in 1906. By 1925 Mr. Martin had retired from the Larkin Company as one of the nation's highest paid executives and Mrs. Martin, who had long-suffered from poor eyesight, found the house on Jewett Parkway to be too dark inside.

Mr. Martin turned to his friend, Frank Lloyd Wright, to design a summer home at Derby on the Lake. The new house would have an abundance of sunlight, and Mr. Martin made it clear from the onset of the project that Isabelle Martin was to be considered the project's main client. Completed in 1927, Graycliff is an important example of Wright's work. Not only is it considered the only building the architect completed that year and a shining example as a first in many of its design qualities subsequently repeated throughout Wright's career, but it is also a testament to the continuation of the roll of the Wright-Martin story – a story that so affected the lives of both men.

In his autobiography published in 1932, Wright explains how his friend and supporter, Darwin D. Martin saved him from financial disaster just after the Graycliff project had begun. The bank had foreclosed on his home and



Mr. Wright went into seclusion on the West Coast following eviction. Mr. Wright describes his affection for his supporter and the events that followed as, “the same real friend and client, Darwin D. Martin for whom I had been building a summer home on Lake Erie when we agreed to leave for parts unknown. I sent John [Wright’s architect son] to Mr. Martin to finish up the work. ‘No,’ said Mr. Martin, ‘there can be no substitute for Frank Lloyd Wright. We will wait till he is out of trouble.’” Not too soon after, Wright says he received a telegram from Mr. and Mrs. Martin that read: “Taliesin open for your return.”

In spring of 1926 the schematic design for the Martin’s summer home began. On April 18th of that year, Mr. Martin visited the site on Lake Erie and the lot for the Graycliff Estate was acquired one day later. In August, Isabelle Martin visited the location for the first time. It was, and still is, a magnificent natural site.

The lot sits on a high 75-foot cliff overlooking Lake Erie, south of Buffalo. Composed mostly of shale with a clearly outlined horizontal stratum of light-colored Tichenor limestone three-quarters of the way up, it is the natural beauty of the lakeside cliff that gave Graycliff its name and Wright his design inspiration. An outline of light colored, dense limestone cantilevers away from the face of the gray shale cliff, providing a natural platform from which to view a breathtaking expanse of water, sky and sunset. Wright designed the



Martin's summer home around the linearity of this stunning horizon with a complete horizontal grammar unlike other Wright houses in the Buffalo area – all examples of the prairie style situated on urban sites. In contrast to these urban works, Graycliff flows across the plane like sliding doors between land and lake. It is an excellent study in Wright's ongoing design concept of continuity. The home is continuous with the land.

Wright positioned the house a mere seventy-five feet from the edge of the cliffs, making the brink equidistant from the water and house. It is this "L" shape; taken from the relationship of house to land and land to water that becomes Wright's ratio for the overall scope of design. A garden wall that extends at a right angle from the service end of the main house, joining it to the smaller, two-story caretaker's house – creating an overall L-shaped complex, creates a spacious courtyard. The physical geometry of the gray cliffs inspired Wright even further – the unique diamond-shaped pattern made by the Tichenor limestone after it falls to the beach is reflected in the diamond-shaped windows and fixtures he designed for the house.

The main house was conceived as two houses joined by a second story bridge, defining the view of sky and water through the frame of cantilevered upper corridor and stone massing at each end of the home. Many have said that on clear, cool summer days the spray of Niagara Falls can be seen through this opening in the structure.

Narrative Non-Fiction

Our daughter was born in December of 2007, and being new parents, my husband and I were content to spend our time cocooned in our home with our brand new addition by our side. We spent hours reviewing The Baby Owner's Manual. We repeatedly counted our little girl's toes and fussed over her feeding and pooping schedules.

Let the snow pile up outside, we told ourselves. Who needed to venture out when we had everything we could possibly want right there in our living room? Neither my husband nor I wanted to bundle the baby up in a thousand layers of fluffy clothing only to strap her into the infant car seat – that uncomfortable-looking contraption we'd lovingly started to call 'The Baby Bucket,' just for a quick trip to the grocery store. Besides, two fresh-faced parents venturing out into public with their spanking new infant just seemed – dangerous. Who needed to see how clumsy we were when loading her in and out of The Bucket? Or how nervous we were about her feeding habits?

As snowy days lingered late into spring, we realized that parents do need to venture out with their little ones from time to time – turns out a little external





external stimulation is good for everyone. And although we still delighted in watching our little girl bat with glee at the toys we dangled above her head, she seemed to want to do something completely shocking. She seemed to want to move. A lot.

It was around that time – when our then six-month-old began army crawling across our dining room floor like a tiny soldier doing speed drills – that my husband drove past the new Rolly Pollies location on Buffalo Road in Orchard Park. “You should stop in there and see what it’s all about,” he said.

Watching our little one scoot past me on her elbows, I thought, “Good idea.”

I bundled our daughter up, placed her in The Baby Bucket and we were off on our investigative mission. Owner James Fleckenstein greeted me at the door, handed me some schedules and informative brochures and then took me on a tour of the facility. As we walked around the springy floor – similar to those used in gymnastics facilities – he explained how a typical session for non-walking infants (better known as Caterpillars among the Rolly-Pollie “Gymbug” set) unfolds.

He explained that infants who are on the verge of walking need help developing brachiation (chest-muscle and lung development), vestibular



system stimulation (balance and inner ear mechanisms), inversion, spatial relationships and body awareness. The Rolly Pollie curriculum for Caterpillars touches on all of these elements and involves group activities like singing and games as well as both instructor-led and individual activity stations.

After watching my daughter's eyes light up at the sight of brightly colored balls, trampolines and climbing apparatuses, I was willing to give it a try. And when James told me that he had an infant class starting in about fifteen minutes and that we were welcome to participate at no charge as part of their free trial offer, I thought, "What do I have to lose? At least we can spend some quality time together. No television. No cell phone distractions."

That afternoon's Caterpillar class consisted of my daughter and two other classmates plus their respective mommies. (At subsequent classes, I've noted that lots of daddies bring their tots as well – it gives dads some great one-on-one time with their kids doing things that dads seem to like to do best, and it gives moms some precious free time).

At my daughter's first class, we sang, we played on top of a parachute; I helped her to roll over a large, soft ball in order to pick up beanbags scattered upon the floor (this helps to build core muscles) and my daughter loved every minute of it.

I loved every minute of it.

We'd become devotees of "Mr. Jim" and of Rolly Pollies. We immediately signed up for the current 9-week session, which James was kind enough to pro-rate given that the first week of classes had already passed. I later submitted my itemized receipt to Independent Health and was reimbursed the full amount through their Flex Fit program. (Rolly Pollies is currently promoting free Caterpillar class for all children aged 6 months – walking).

Staying Social

Our experience together during those first few classes made me more confident about taking my little one out to group activities. Gone was my worry about my child being the only one to act out from time to time (short attention spans and sleep-deprived meltdowns are routine occurrences during infant and toddler programs; most instructors utilize an arsenal of tricks to help ease sensitive students). My dread about bundling the baby up for an outing vanished.

"We can do this!" I celebrated.

Feeling especially confident one rainy morning, I brought my daughter to the





I torytime & Craft for Toddlers at B is For Books in Orchard Park. Since it's an independently owned bookstore geared toward children, I thought their storytime would be fantastic. I was right. Not only is it free, but it's also structured perfectly for the younger set – both in length and content. And to my relief, my then eighteen-month-old was not the youngest in attendance, and she certainly wasn't the oldest.

The story read at B is For Books was engaging and just long enough to hold the audience captive before the tottering masses started drifting elsewhere.

Immediately following the reading, children and guardians were led in a simple craft relating to the tale they just heard. Our visit included a reading of Amy Krouse Rosenthal's, "Little Pea" and afterward, I helped my daughter decorate a paper plate with photos of her favorite foods. Pretty simple. But also a pretty engaging way to spend thirty minutes on a Thursday morning with your toddler – especially if you have errands to run afterward.

By this point, it was clear that all of this mingling with other infants and toddlers had been socially beneficial for my daughter. She swiftly moved beyond parallel play with her classmates, often surprising me by grabbing another attendee's hand or delivering hugs to familiar little faces at the beginning of class. And, it was socially beneficial for me as well. I met other parents. We shared war stories. I felt less alone during the dreary winter



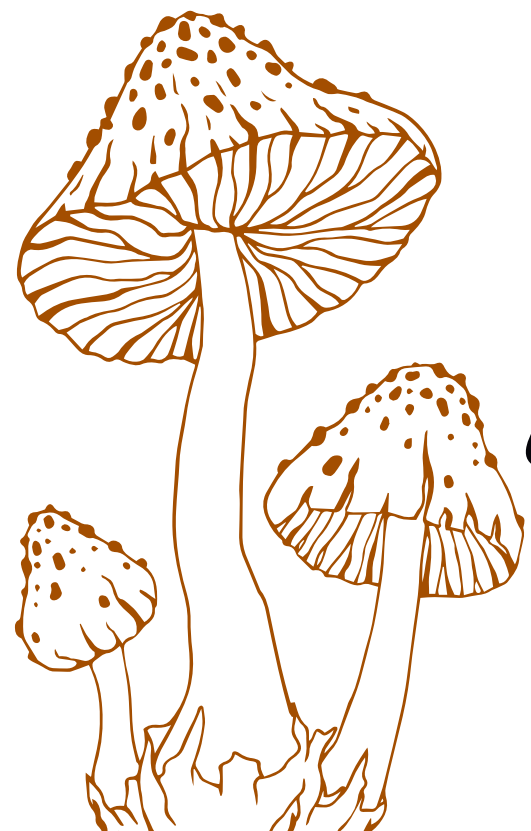
months that often make life in Western New York feel the most isolated.

James finds that parents discover the benefit in bundling their kids up for what the Rolly Pollies programs offer in colder months – both for their children and for themselves. “We often tell people that adults need to talk to other adults during the winter months,” he says.

Holly Nowak found the gym program to be a valuable social asset for her son, William, aged 18-months – especially because he doesn’t attend daycare. “Rolly Pollies provides William with social interaction and some guided play where he can participate as he likes. Attending with two [parents] is nice because it allows each of us to interact with Will during different activities that we deem to be our strong suit. For example, I’m not going in the huge foam block pool and my husband is not fond of the bounce house slide – or singing.”

The Lake Erie wind has suddenly turned cold again and I’ve started to investigate new cost-effective activities to share with my daughter. After discussing this with a local mom in my neighborhood, she asked me if I attended the Music With Mar program. I’d never heard of it. “Oh, it’s fantastic,” the mother of twin two-year-old girls, gushed to me. “There are classes all over Western New York, and the kids sing and dance and learn about music.”

Executive Elements: Long-Form



Executive Long-Form

The Delaware Advantage

The state of Delaware offers individuals and business owners in the United States and abroad a favorable climate for asset protection, wealth transfer and tax savings. Delaware is recognized for its tradition of progressive, advantageous personal trust laws, which allow wealthy individuals, business owners and those in high-risk professions to preserve wealth for themselves and future generations.

Establishing a Delaware Trust may help you fulfill your estate, tax and financial planning goals and objectives.

Some of the advantages available through a Delaware Trust include:

- A higher level of protection from future creditor claims
- Increased flexibility in investment management
- Potential state income tax savings
- Ability to restrict access to trust information by the beneficiaries
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Favorable laws to minimize taxes and enhance wealth transfer



Expanding your options for wealth management

At Key Private Bank, we recognize the unique and dynamic nature of our clients' wealth management goals and objectives. One of the specialized services we offer clients is the ability to use a Delaware Trust through the Key National Trust Company of Delaware.

Key National Trust Company of Delaware offers customized fiduciary and custody services for Delaware Trusts. Our dedicated team of professionals is available to work with you and your professional advisors to guide you through the creation and maintenance of a Delaware Trust based on your specific circumstances and objectives. Let us help you create a customized strategy to protect your assets and minimize taxes.

Who Can Benefit from a Delaware Asset Protection Trust?

A properly planned Delaware Asset Protection Trust can help individuals and families protect their hard-earned assets.

Those who might benefit include:

- Doctors and other professionals in high-risk professions who are worried about professional liability



- Business owners who want to protect their assets – including their interests in a family business – against future creditor claims
- Individuals who are getting married who are uncomfortable with prenuptial agreements
- Individuals who establish a trust for their own benefit – for example, through a charitable remainder trust or a personal injury award – and want to protect trust assets from future creditors
- Nonprofit organizations that want to protect and preserve assets and self-designated endowments from disastrous lawsuits
- Corporate officers or directors of publicly-traded companies whose activities are under increased scrutiny

Protection for What Matters Most

A variety of trust strategies are available under Delaware law to address different financial and estate planning objectives. Your Key Private Bank team, working closely with our dedicated Delaware Trust experts and your professional advisors, can help you design a solution that meets your needs. The following are some of the most commonly used Delaware Trust strategies:

Dynasty Trusts

Many individuals and families transfer their wealth to future generations in

Executive Elements: Speech Writing



COLLEGIATE PRESIDENT
STUMP SPEECH
GHOSTWRITING

Executive Speech

There is an exciting future before us, but it cannot be approached alone. It will take all of us to move forward by allowing upcoming generations of our young and talented thinkers, innovators, and leaders to grow into roles that can move our communities — and our world — ahead. It's humbling to realize that even the youngest members of our society are already dreaming of their futures, right now. And we can only imagine what possibilities these tomorrow-shapers picture for themselves in a decade or more.

As an educational leader, and in my role as President of Villa Maria, I believe it's important we invest in the people whose dreams will take our region into whatever possibilities come next. Together we can foster the exploration, support, and resources needed now so that our next generations can cultivate their interests and talents today. It's an investment that ensures a better chance at a great job and way to make a fulfilling living for every graduate, tomorrow.

Think of those possibilities we have yet to witness others grow into. Think of all the young entrepreneurs ready to take a big chance with successful small businesses.



Think of the hardworking single parents who are on track toward a degree so they can move their families forward. Think about the highly creative high school seniors who have valuable and unique perspectives that will be sought-after in the emerging marketplace. For all of them, and so many others, I know what a difference feeling at home in a place that encourages widening your horizons can make.

For me, Villa Maria is that place.

At Villa, student strengths are embraced and curiosity, cultivated. Students walk up our steps and into a place where they can truly grow into professionals. We like to think we're not just giving students the ability to get ahead in life. We're giving them the tools and support they need to Grow Ahead into viable careers and their future potential.

That's why I actively foster a campus culture that feels like a home. Villa is a place where students can freely ask questions, seek out the support they need, and learn from people who perhaps see things in them that they haven't seen in themselves before. They're encouraged by classmates, motivated by instructors, and supported with experiences, skills, and tools to transform from student into working professional.



We believe there's a path—or maybe even a few paths—that are right for every student at Villa. And our faculty and staff encourage our students to go beyond the status quo to find theirs. Our 8:1 student to faculty ratio ensures instructors know students as individuals, so they can co-create plans that fit their unique goals, strengths, and interests. And, our close relationships with community partners allow hands-on internships, service learning, and volunteer activities that provide gained knowledge about where one's chosen industry is in the moment, and where it's headed next.

Because to make future aspirations a viable reality, none of us can just go ahead and do the expected. At Villa, we believe setting the foundation for life after graduation takes more than fulfilling credit hours. It's not just about getting ahead with a piece of paper. It's about giving our students a chance to Grow Ahead with a degree that puts them ahead after graduation day.

Executive Elements: Press Releases



...st Mexicans in
of these views points Mexicans are se
they have
entered through the proper channels with Yes!

belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to
traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological
defined as
labeled to one hate between races like white and black. Many
among themselves
ism within itself. Racism can also be just unprovoked hatred between
due to skin color, background, sex, language, birth places, or even
influence many things like slavery or the formation of countries and
riority was not this automatic creation. Not all skin types or coloring
inferior. Many years ago the Portuguese discovered how much mo
themselves. An important feature of race is that how on
source? ifics?

Press Release

Postseason Pete Hits the Road for Third Tour of Duty

East Aurora, NY – TBS is partnering with local affiliates to bring The TBS Clubhouse Tour to select markets across the U.S. The TBS Clubhouse Tour provides baseball fans and their families the exciting experience of participating in an interactive zone while enjoying the game.

Families will delight in meeting “Postseason Pete,” a 12-foot, 600-pound baseball player bobblehead. “Pete,” who made his first appearance in 2007, will be outfitted in a uniform similar to the market home team. Participants can have his or her picture taken with “Pete” and receive the photo and photo frame, along with other giveaways. Fans can also step up to bat in an interactive batting cage or try for a strike-out in an interactive speed pitch cage.

The Tour kicked off this year on July 29th in Cincinnati with a full house at Great American Ballpark. In addition to Cincinnati, the 2010 TBS Clubhouse Tour will make visits at Major League Ballparks in Detroit, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Seattle, St. Louis and Boston. In all, the mobile event will travel a total of 11,000 miles during the 10-week mobile experience.



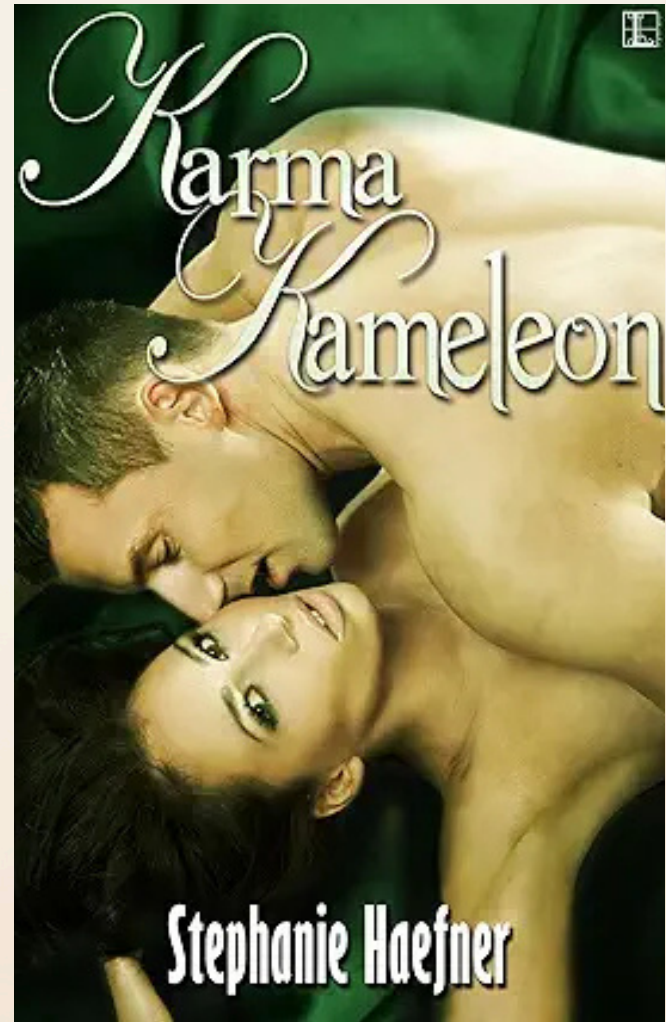
In each market, TBS will partner with the cable operator and provide opportunities for co-branding on the exhibit, as well as the ability to distribute information. This year's tour will include co-branded opportunities for Comcast, Time Warner, and Charter.

According to Gary Brockman, vice president of network marketing and operations, TNS, "The TBS Clubhouse Tour has proved to be a big hit with fans and cable operators. Each season, new features are added to the tour that allow more interaction for fans." Brockman continues, "we have even received requests from Major League teams and cable operators for the tour to visit their market."

About TBS

TBS, a division of Turner Broadcasting System, Inc., is television's top-rated comedy network and is available in 100.1 million households. It serves as home to such original comedy series as My Boys, Neighbors from Hell, Are We There Yet? and Tyler Perry's House of Payne and Meet the Browns; the late-night hit Lopez Tonight, starring George Lopez, and the upcoming late-night series starring Conan O'Brien; hot contemporary comedies like Family Guy and The Office; specials like Funniest Commercials of the Year; special events, including star-studded comedy festivals in Chicago; blockbuster movies; and hosted movie showcases.

DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING
KARMA KAMELEON
SAMPLE CHAPTER



Book Coaching & Developmental Editing

Roda Morgan sighed and rolled her eyes as she answered the question for the third time. “Yes, Mrs. Vandewater, your daughter’s wedding bouquet will be delivered to your house by noon along with all of the attendants’ flowers.”

She slouched down in her leather desk chair and doodled on a yellow legal pad, took the name Vandewater and added horns to the V and a pointed tail to the R. As the owner of a service oriented business, “The customer is always right” became a motto she had no choice but to live by, regardless of how insane it sometimes made her. Numerous times she would have loved to chuck that motto right out the window, watching it splatter on the street like a water balloon tossed from ten stories up. What joy she’d have telling the customer exactly what she thought of them and where they could take their “one last question”. But in the end, her desire to please everyone won out.

“No, I will not get lost on the way to your house. I have the directions you gave me, plus printed directions off the Internet. I also have your home phone number, your cell phone number and your maid’s cell phone number programmed into my phone just in case.”



The door chime sounded and Roda looked up to find a wide eyed twenty-something. She had a glossed-over look in her eyes and began browsing around the shop, stopping to caress a fluffy guestbook pen and smiled. More screeching came from the receiver of the phone and Roda turned her attention back to this year's Momzilla, a severe pain in the ass that had given headaches to her headaches. Each wedding season there had to be one nut and this lady was the whole can. She had driven Roda completely crazy for the past nine months, ever since she and her blue-eyed, blonde, princess, pretty puppet of a daughter on a string walked into her shop, Bridal Blossoms by Roda.

“Yes, I already spoke with the caterer about setting up the centerpieces exactly how you described. Is there anything else?...Okay then, I will see you on Saturday. Have a wonderful day!”

The greeting rolled off her tongue quite naturally with what she called fake niceness, even though her brain was ready to explode. She took a deep breath and let it out, purging her body of all things Vandewater.

“Hello! I’m Roda,” she said as she approached her newest client. “Can I help you with something?”



“Um, yeah, I guess. I uh, just got engaged,” the girl smiled coyly and waved her sparkly little diamond in front of Roda. She admired it, a simple yet elegant setting—one she’d dreamed of seeing on her own finger someday. But first she needed to find a man willing to stick around for more than a month or two.

“Oh, how wonderful! Congratulations! Have you set a date?”

“Yes, a year from now—June seventh.”

The phone rang as Roda showed the bride-to-be around the shop, pointing out various books, magazines and bouquet samples.

“Roda,” her assistant called out. “Line two is for you. It’s Mrs. Vandewater.”

“You’ll have to excuse me one moment,” she said to her customer and sat her down with a photo album filled with snapshots showcasing the beautiful floral bouquets Roda had made for past brides. She dragged her feet over to the desk, plopped into the chair and took a cleansing breath before picking up the receiver.

Mrs. Vandewater and her daughter, Penelope, had sat with Roda at least a dozen times to choose the bouquets and other flower arrangements for the



wedding. Several of those times had been impromptu visits and of course only five minutes before the shop was set to close for the night. In between those meetings, Mrs. Vandewater called at least once a week to ask the most mundane of questions. Each and every time she called Roda cringed, but thanks to her keen acting skills, she proudly maintained her professionalism. This was one wedding she could not wait to be done with. Only three more days to go.

“Yes, Mrs. Vandewater. What can I do for you?”

“I need to make sure there won’t be any of that tacky netting in my Penelope’s bouquet. You know how I hate anything cheap.”

Roda answered her as politely as possible even though Mrs. Vandewater could have found the information herself if she simply looked at her copy of the order form. It had been printed in big bold letters: “NO TULLE WHATSOEVER”.

After reviewing the directions yet again, Roda finally hung up the phone. She looked up to find the new bride-to-be standing in front of a full length mirror holding one of the silk bouquet samples- a simple hand-tied arrangement of white roses and Lily of the Valley. Roda took a rhinestone encrusted tiara off



the shelf, fluffed its finger-length veil and placed it atop the bride's head.
“What do you think?”

“Wow,” the girl replied as her eyes glazed once again. The smiles Roda had seen in that mirror were what she lived for. These moments got her through the insane headache moments of other brides and their mothers and reminded her why she loved her job so much.

The bride pointed to a poster-sized print on the wall. “Will I really look like one of those pictures on my wedding day?”

“I'll do everything I can to make sure you do,” Roda promised.

* * *

After checking on Penelope Vandewater's oriental lilies one last time, Roda turned off all the lights, grabbed her briefcase and headed for the door. Exhausted from a day of constant phone calls, her comfy pajamas and a pint of Death by Chocolate Ice Cream sounded like the ultimate indulgence.

“Roda!” a voice screeched from behind her, the shop's keys dangling from the door. Roda cringed at the familiarity and hung her head low. She wanted to bang it repeatedly against the door ...

Video Game Storytelling





INTRO FOR “DR. GRAPHITTI & THE DRAGON REVIVAL”

Video Game Storytelling

Centuries ago, the world was protected by a sentient dragon named Veyrith, whose very breath emitted a universal belief in magic that kept the fabric of reality intact. When Veyrith was betrayed and turned to stone by the Council of Order, the world fractured into chaos — dreams became viruses, cities turned into moving mazes, and time itself began skipping like a scratched record.

Enter Dr. Graphitti — rogue street artist, failed alchemist, part-time chiropractor, and the world’s only licensed specialist in Soul Restoration™. (The license was issued by a dubious online institute, but technically, it’s valid.) And he’s the last shot humanity has.

But he can’t save the world alone. He joins forces with Indigo Quill, a rouge archivist kicked out of the Central Archive for smuggling mythic files to dreamers and who believes the dragon is more than a forgotten symbol, it’s a catalyst for a return to more imperfectly perfect world. Together they defy order, hack reality, and fight the Agents of the Council. They use Graphitti’s enchanted spray cans to alter reality, resurrect memories, break time loops, and tag emotional portals back into existence — all in the quest to find and



Video Game Storyline

revive Veyrith’s lost soul, scattered in pieces and hidden in surreal sub-dreamworld levels.

To return to a world full of free thought and creativity means beating the Department of Absolute Truth, a colossal bureaucratic-loving AI that classifies all emotion and creativity as “non-factual”. Reviving Veyrith threatens its dominion and the DoAT will do everything in its power to protect itself and the orderly new world order it needs to thrive.

Only Graphitti, with his messy, heartfelt, licensed magic can rewrite what it means to be human. But it will take the power of the dragon’s last true believer – a 10-year old girl – to fully bring the catalyst back to life.



STORYLINE FOR
“DR. GRAPHITTI & THE
DRAGON REVIVAL”

INTRO CUTSCENE 1 & 2

Video Game Storyline

INTRO CUTSCENE: “This Is a Licensed Emergency”

[BLACK SCREEN]

TEXT (typed in, one letter at a time):

In the beginning, there was the dragon. And then... there was paperwork.

[SMASH CUT TO:]

A kaleidoscopic city: half-futuristic, half-crumbling. Floating metro stations. Broken sky-billboards glitching out inspirational quotes. Graffiti tags glow faintly on every surface.

Scene 1: The City of Forms (District 9B: “Existential Claims”)

INT. DMV-LIKE OFFICE — NIGHT

Everything is grayscale. Souls shuffle in line, holding glowing red folders marked DENIED. Fluorescent lights buzz overhead. Elevator music plays — off-key. It is a scene from a drab, dismal world where to exist is to feel numb.



STORYLINE FOR
“DR. GRAPHITTI & THE
DRAGON REVIVAL”

CUTSCENE 1 & 2

Video Game Storyline

A lone figure leans against the vending machine: hoodie up, sunglasses on, a half-empty spray can spinning in his hand.

CLERK

(state-issued monotoned enthusiasm)

Next. Name and license, please.

DR. GRAPHITTI

(slides sunglasses down his nose)

Name’s Graphitti. Doctor Graphitti. Soul Restoration, freelance division. Level 3 credentials with... moderate upgrades.

CLERK

(scanning barcode inked onto Graphitti’s wrist. Squints)

Huh. Expired. Seven years ago.

DR. GRAPHITTI

Time’s fake now. Ask the Department of Reality. They filed Chapter 11 last week.



STORYLINE FOR
“DR. GRAPHITTI & THE
DRAGON REVIVAL”

INTRO CUTSCENE 1 & 2

Video Game Storyline

[SUDDENLY — ALARM BLARES. The building shakes. Lights flicker red.]

ANNOUNCER (VO)

⚠ This is a Licensed Emergency.

Soul Containment Breach in Progress.

Subject: VEYRITH. Risk Level: Mythic.

[Outside: The sky rips open. Reality wobbles like film melting in a projector. A ghostly dragon silhouette flashes across the clouds.]

Scene 2: Call to Paint

INT. DR. GRAPHITTI’S STUDIO — MINUTES LATER

A small studio apartment stacked with relics: ancient spray can schematics, half-finished murals, broken masks. Dr. Graphitti opens a rusted case marked “DO NOT OPEN UNLESS THE SKY STARTS TALKING.”



STORYLINE FOR “DR. GRAPHITTI & THE DRAGON REVIVAL”

INTRO CUTSCENE 1 & 2

Video Game Storyline

He pops the rusted latch and opens the case to find:

- A golden spray can engraved with dragon runes.
- A crumpled note from his mentor:

“If the dragon ever wakes, you’ll know what to do. Paint the truth. And for the love of color — renew your license.”

DR. GRAPHITTI

(sighs, slinging on his gear)

Guess it’s time to unretire.

Let’s go fix what someone else broke... again.

[MONTAGE: Graphitti races across city rooftops, tagging memory nodes, reality flickering back into color. Echoes of the dragon roar through the streets. Somewhere, an ancient heart begins to beat.]

[TITLE CARD: DR. GRAPHITTI & THE DRAGON REVIVAL]

Only he can bring the dragon back. And he’s licensed.

Which means that’s not false advertising.

Short Fiction



Short Fiction

DEPARTURE

Six years have elapsed since my last return. And here I now sit, hunkered into a corner window at the airport, awaiting my impending homecoming with both trepidation and baggage. Random travelers pass through my field of vision as I wait, some people walking, some running, and several others making their way by moveable walkway. A handful of the more unhurried voyagers query my situation as they go by—assessing me at twenty-seven slumped into an expansive pane of laminated glass, spring nylon jacket falling off of both shoulders, eyes glazed, hair nappy, left sneaker partially untied.

Is he heartbroken? Lost? High?

The truth is yes. I've been inflicted by all three ailments, intertwined and intermixed totally dependent and resulted from the other and each uniquely attributed to my sister. She is three minutes my senior and I both love and loathe her. But now she is gone and I am heartbroken. Now she is lost and I'm a twin left staggering behind. And although she can no longer get high, I've had plenty today for the both of us. One last drink, one last drag.



'I'm thankful for the delayed flight and I feel that I've used my past three hours of fortuitous downtime in the terminal quite well — having consumed just enough Jack and Coke to steady weak knees. Even so, as the jetliner draws up and heaves my fellow passengers and me into the sky, the cabin begins to feel stale and numb, my feet swell and my palms perspire. I'm defenseless from fear, from circumstance, from reality. Left with no other choice but to slowly surrender to my temporary confinement

When the fuselage does eventually descend, the cabin illuminates and I can taste a change in the air. There is a small measure of relief contained within those exchanged particles of oxygen. The quality of atmosphere is different at home. Special. It's tactile and visible only upon first return and then shortly after arriving you know it again like the trees. Familiar and always.

TRANSFER

My father greets me at temporary parking and together we hoist my luggage into the trunk of his new sedan. He tells me it's a 2007 Saturn with a custom paint finish called 'Ocean Mist'. I oblige his discourse on the vehicle's mundane laundry list, shoving my hands into my blue hoodie emblazoned with the gold University of Michigan emblem as his left index finger struggles to point out the sixteen-inch alloy wheels and polymer side panels.



That index finger, with flesh and bone removed above the knuckle by a wayward 6-cylinder in 1972, is a stub that now trembles at the very sight of me, an unwelcome reminder of my twin.

Alice attended Ohio State, I went to Michigan and that's the way it is between us. I'm the one way and she's the opposite. Not the way twins are supposed to be, but the way we are and it works for us. One boy, one girl – born together, depart apart. This matter transverses my brain, promptly followed by the visual of Alice's honey-blond hair streaked and clotted with blood. I see her pixie lips, once pink, now gray and cold. A wave of nausea follows my thoughts and the lifeblood drops from my skull faster than a brick to pavement.

My dad and I linger for a moment in the airport's parking garage. A son dressed in nylon shell and hoodie, a father in baseball cap and dirty jeans — with the roar of jet engine above and the thick gritty pavement below us. Finally my father's hands and their short, suffering fingers find a way to my shoulders and squeeze.

“Mom has dinner ready,” he tells me. “Let's get going before rush-hour traffic hits.”

Silence dominates our drive home and the stillness turns unbearable as we



pull up the nearly treeless cul-de-sac to our split-level ranch with russet trim. Inside Mom has a roast warming in the oven just as promised. I take note of the kitchen table set with three dinner plates (not four) and excuse myself to the guest bedroom where I deposit my bags and wash my face in the sink of the adjoining half-bath. I pat my face dry with a pale yellow hand towel. It smells like Alice and it hurts. I find a bottle of aspirin in the medicine cabinet and pop three.

“We need to go to Alice’s apartment to get some things,” my mother says as I settle into my seat at the dinner table. “I’ll need her favorite dress. You know, the blue one with the fluttery bottom and scoop neck?”

My mother’s eyes plead with us over the centerpiece of steaming pot roast and candied baby carrots. She’s looking for reassurance. Searching for some sort of petition with the universe allowing for her hope to materialize; validating her denial. Her eyes want someone (anyone) to say, *Forget the dress*. But my father and I won’t oblige. We chew our food and crush her with nodded yeses instead.

Mom lowers her eyes and fork, defeated by reality. Devoured by the thought of visiting Alice’s apartment sans Alice.

“We’ll pick the dress up tomorrow morning then,” she tells us, “on the way to



the funeral home.”

I can’t finish my meal. The process of chewing and consuming makes me gag and it pains me to swallow. And I think, that’s how it happened — with her throat. This is what she felt, squeezed and squeezed leaving no trace. Just Alice, alone and vacant and cold.

ARRIVAL

My mother wakes me at six a.m. and by seven she has both of us men showered, shaved and fed. At eight the three of us are stepping over the threshold into Alice’s apartment. The morning air hangs in Alice’s place and it’s warm and stagnant. But it smells like her, just like the pale yellow hand towel still hanging in my mother’s guest bathroom — like lilacs and chocolate and sweat. Alice has her field hockey trophies from high school proudly displayed on the mantel and a framed photo of Mom and Dad and another of Alice and me sits among the silver-plated figurines of unnamed victors. Mom is crying now, and my father pulls her close, burying her face and ashen hair deep into his armpit. I’m sure she finds comfort there.

“I’ll go find that dress,” I offer.

I abandon the faint shuh-huh-shuh of my mother’s sobs for the safety of



Alice's bedroom closet. I brush up against her cotton shirts, cashmere sweaters and denim. Every article I touch is a lost reminder of her, of me. And on the dresser rests her diary, her personal things. A snapshot with frayed edges is casually slipped into the upper corner of the boudoir mirror and in it.

I see Alice holding Max, my ex-best friend. He's kissing her head and she's smiling.

I'd never noticed that before. How he made her smile. For the past six years I've loathed him for loving her and hated her for choosing him. But now I hate myself for giving them the opportunity. Because he may have driven her into the wall that broke her neck, but I killed her by letting her go.



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