

PRUNE YOUR PROSE:

TEN (OR MORE!) TIPS TO TIGHTEN YOUR FICTION WRITING

- 1 – Writer, Know Thy Audience/Editor/Genre
- 2 – Gentlepersons, Start Your Engines
- 3 – Out, Out, Damned Author! (Show Don't Tell)
- 4 – Whose Story Is It? (Point of View)
- 5 – Looking Up, We Was Writing Wonderfully (Passives, Gerunds and Adverbs)
- 6 – Laughs, Shouts and Smiles (Dialogue and Beats)
- 7 – Mirror, Mirror on the Wall... (Character Description)
- 8 – Snidley Writerlash (Crafting a Worthy Conflict and a Hefty Villain)
- 9 – Logic, Dreams and Rabbits in Hats
- 10 – A Rose by any Other Name Could be a Begonia (Word Choice)
- 11 – Your Craft of Writing Library

About your workshop presenter:

Winner of the prestigious national book award, the RITA, and recipient of coveted starred reviews from *Publisher's Weekly*, science fiction romance author Linnea Sinclair has become a name synonymous for high-action, emotionally intense, character-driven novels. Reviewers note that Sinclair's novels "have the wow-factor in spades," earning her accolades from both the science fiction and romance communities. Sinclair's current releases from Bantam Dell are GAMES OF COMMAND (PEARL Award winner and RITA finalist) and THE DOWN HOME ZOMBIE BLUES (PEARL Award Honorable Mention), and SHADES OF DARK, with HOPE'S FOLLY on the shelves in late February 2009.

A former news reporter and retired private detective, Sinclair resides in Naples, Florida (winters) and Columbus, Ohio (summers) along with her husband, Robert Bernadino, and their two thoroughly spoiled cats. Readers can find her perched on the third barstool from the left in her Intergalactic Bar and Grille at www.linneasinclair.com.

Your Craft of Writing Library

Dwight V Swain TECHNIQUES OF THE SELLING WRITER
Renni Browne & David King SELF-EDITING FOR FICTION WRITERS
Jack M Bickham THE 38 MOST COMMON FICTION WRITING MISTAKES
Donald Maass WRITING THE BREAKOUT NOVEL
James Scott Bell PLOT & STRUCTURE
Debra Dixon GMC: GOAL, MOTIVATION & CONFLICT
Dwight V Swain CREATING CHARACTERS: HOW TO BUILD STORY PEOPLE

Websites:

Character Archetypes: <http://www.tamicowden.com/archetypes.htm>
Conflict and Essence of Story: <http://www.simegen.com/school/>
Holly Lisle's Forward Motion for Writers: <http://hollylisle.com/fm/>
Uncle Orson's Writing Lessons: <http://www.hatrack.com/writingclass/index.shtml>

A Writer's Thought Cloud

*Don't tell it; show it! Whenever possible, translate information into people doing things (Swain) **
*Every good story starts at the moment of threat (Bickham) * R.U.E.: Resist the Urge to Explain (Browne/King) **
*Readers want to see a character overcome obstacles (Dixon) * Vividness outranks brevity (Swain) **
*Figure out whose story it is. Get inside the character—and stay there (Bickham) **
*Never switch point of view in order to convey information that you can't figure out any other way to TELL THE READER. That will cause you to divert attention from the "ball" and will only frustrate the reader, not inform him. If there really is no other way for the reader to learn something, then they shouldn't know it (Lichtenberg) **
*It's not the experience that creates the trauma but the way the character reacts to it (Swain) **
*If there is one single principle that is central to making any story more powerful, it is simply this: Raise the stakes (Maass) **
*Your main character must light a fire he can't put out (Swain) **
*Conflict generates plot (Lichtenberg) **
*When you use two words (a weak verb and an adverb) to do the work of one (a strong verb) you dilute your writing and rob it of its potential power (Browne/King) **
*Create a character. Give her an obsession. Watch where she runs (Bell) **
*Readers read to experience tension (Swain) **
*Backstory delivered early on crashes down on a story's momentum like a sumo wrestler falling on his opponent. Backstory belongs later (Maass) **