

The Write Stuff

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – November 2024

This month's speakers: Hamid Mirfenderesk and Tina Marie Clark

"*Hamid who?*" I hear you ask, particularly if you haven't been a regular at our recent meetings. You see, he is very quiet (as many good writers are), so you would be forgiven for not having noticed him. But he has entered all the recent competitions, and his work is – well, outstanding, emotioal and very smooth. Hamid agreed to "jump into the breach", after Brian Kennedy unexpectedly advised that he would be unavailable. Hamid immigrated from the country of Rumi – yes, formerly called Persia). We are very much looking forward to learning about Hamid's motivation to emigrate, about himself and about his roadmap to becoming a professional author.



Zimbabwean-born T.M. Clark crafts captivating literature spanning diverse cultures and wildlife, appealing to all ages; she has been nominated for a Queensland Literary Award, is an Australian Children's Book Council Notable, won a Claymore at Killer Nashville, and has been nominated for the Johnno Award, for outstanding services to the Queensland writing community, multiple times. When not killing her 'readers' and hiding their bodies (all in the name of literature,) she is the coordinator for the CYA Conference in Brisbane, Australia, which offers professional development opportunities to both established and emerging writers and illustrators. Additionally, she co-hosts the Writers at Sea retreat. Tina Marie is as passionate about nurturing writers and collecting books for building libraries in Papua New Guinea as she is about saving the wildlife of the world, one rescue animal at a time.

Last month's speakers: Fiona Tarr, Megan Norris

'We wuz robbed!' I wrote in my meeting summary Well, with two speakers, both specialising in one or another form of crime, one would expect to learn stuff like how to put the modified Serenity Prayer into action (Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to hide the bodies where nobody can find them... 😊)



But, of course it was NOT about how to COMMIT a crime, but how to write, how to make it happen, and how to profit from it.

Our main speaker was acclaimed and bestselling Crime author **Fiona Tarr**, (centre in photo above, with Grahame Moore and Megan Norris) who, together with husband George, came all the way from Noosa. Now, if you thought that becoming a successful crime writer was a walk in the park... Fiona and George were for years running a family business (and still are). “I always wanted to write, but I wasn’t an overnight success” she said, “I never called myself a ‘real’ writer until the current series was published. Her first ‘real’ novel presold... 17 copies. In 2014, her first work of the Opal Fields series was published. “But, by the time I had written the third book, I realised that preordered copies were dropping off. I didn’t know how to make a book presentable, marketable, design cover etc” she said. “It doesn’t matter how good a book you write, if you can’t get it into people’s hands... . . . 20 books in the market place, but I couldn’t sell them. I read a lot of books, picked up top 20 of the genre I wanted to write in. I learned how to escalate the story.” The series is named ‘The Opal Fields’ with six volumes. The first volume of the ‘Dawn Grave’ series, ‘Grave Regrets’, is available now, and ‘Grave Intent’ will be released on 30th November. And herein lies one of her methods of success: Serialisation. (Of course, she is not the first one, think of authors such as James Paterson who extended it to franchising his name and concept). And here is another one: When you order online, the first book (in Kindle version) is free of charge.

Megan Norris opened the meeting with an outline of the launching of Lily Arthur's book 'Prisoner of the State' (due for release in January). In support of this, Megan wrote a full feature article for the Sydney Morning Herald's 'Good Weekend' magazine (Saturday 21st September), which made the cover page! If you would like a copy of the article, please reply to this email.



What else happened?

*I will not be
shushed*

*I fell for a librarian
I asked her to be mine.*

*I said 'My love for you
is overdue'.*

She said 'Fine'.

Well... our convenor **Grahame Moore** wrote an entire chapter of his new novel, then lost it. (Computer technicians call this an EBKAC: “Error between keyboard and chair” 😊) **Megan Norris**, in addition to her being published in the SMH, gives classes in Memoir Writing, **Anthony Shelley** researched Mark Twain (or at least his quotes);

We elaborated on the upcoming **Christmas Party on 12th December**, and the clear decision was reached that **members will get the meal free of charge** (paid from what’s left over from our meeting fee after paying for room hire, speaker’s gifts etc.), but their partners and guests would be charged \$40.00 per person. This is very good value, considering that we are getting a private, quiet area, yet with a view and a plated meal. **We’ll be looking for numbers at this month’s meeting.**

Can you improve on that?

When he thought of Charlotte, Gregory felt a terrible exhilaration. Out of all the death had come this redeeming chance. When he thought of the passion she had so transparently conceived for him, he felt singled out by an extraordinary fortune. The chance that of all the

women in the world, the one he loved (and with relief he admitted that this was what he felt) – the thought that she should actually reciprocate his feeling seemed a possibility of incalculably long odds. His incredulous joy at his good luck was almost as exhilarating as the emotion itself. – Steven Faulks – ‘Charlotte Gray’

The Grahame Moore ‘Serenity Challenge:

Deadline for this competition is 5 pm, 14th November 2024 (NOT 24th as originally advertised) - **no exceptions** The third and final of Grahame’s special competition series is on the theme of ‘Serenity’, due in November - see below.

Here are the conditions that apply:

1. The competition is **only open to registered members** of our group (if you received this newsletter via email, you are)
2. **Only one story** per member
3. **No Artificial Intelligence** software (e.g. Chat GPT etc. Yes, we have ways to detect 😊)
4. The story **must be on the topic of ‘Serenity’** - your interpretation
5. It **must not exceed 1,000 words**, including its title
6. Stories must be submitted in **MS Word or Google Docs format** (not PDF). Please name the file **[name]-[title]** - for example ‘John Smith - Noisy Serenity’
7. **Deadline is 5 pm, 14th November 2024 - no exceptions**
8. **Stories to be submitted to this email address: helensvalewriters@gmail.com**

Google says that the word "serenity", is the state of being calm, peaceful, and untroubled. Well, Grahame and the judges await YOUR interpretation!

All stories submitted to be compiled into a book

All the stories from the Fear, Ghost and Serenity competitions will be compiled into an A5 book. Grahame has arranged with [Clark & Mackay Publishers](#) and all **authors will be presented with a free copy at our Christmas party**. Talking about a ‘limited edition collector’s item! Note: **authors will retain their copyright** of submitted stories.

Christmas Party on 12th December 2024



Grahame has booked the ‘Glass Room’ at the newly refurbished **Club Helensvale (Helensvale Bowls Club)**. It is right between the bistro and the bowling lanes. Its major attraction is that the entire room is enclosed in smoky glass, which provides an almost noise free environment, yet you can see out. (Yes, you’ll be able to hear and understand what the person next to you

says!). Lunch (main course and dessert) will be served, drinks can be purchased at the bistro bar. The event is **free of charge for registered members**. Partners and guests are cordially invited for a very low cost of just **\$40.00 per person, payment on the day in cash (note: no credit cards)**. We will gather numbers at this month’s meeting. If you are unable to join us at this month’s meeting, but would like to come to the party, please email us, indicating numbers. helensvalewriters@gmail.com

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- a) **Helensvale Writers Group (that's us) - Grahame Moore competition 'Serenity.** In celebration of his birthday (was towards the end of August). Submissions **close on 14th November 2024.** Only open to registered members. See details above.
- b) Fancy yourself as a Bush Poet? **Man from Snowy River Bush Festival** has both written as well as performance competitions.
[Click on this link](#)
- c) There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on reedsy.com – There must be one or two that suit you!

See you at this month's meeting on **21st November 2024.** Usual time, **10:00 am - 12:30 pm**, location: ground floor meeting room at Helensvale Library. Please try to be about 10 minutes early so that we can start on time; there is a lot to experience!

Best wishes,
Franz Huber
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