

The Write Stuff

<https://www.helensvalewritersgroup.org>

Monthly Newsletter of the Helensvale Writers Group – October 2026

This month's guest speaker: Brian Falkner



I'm not alone if I state that Brian is one of the most entertaining and informative speakers we ever had at our group. He kindly agreed to return to us again on the 15th of October, this time speaking about his long journey as a writer until he became successful. *[But he promised not to sing 'Climb every Mountain'... (Ed.)]* Brian specialises in books for children and young adults *(and my grandkids attest to his success: I got 5 of his books for them (8 – 13) and they simply soaked them up.)*

What else will happen? Well, lots! As always, we'll have our discussion session where members can ask questions, make suggestions, provide critique. And one of the big items will be the (definite) **retirement of our convenor, Grahame Moore**. There will be a coffee and cake, and festivities (sorry, no alcohol on Council premises though).

Last month's meeting

(report by Ralph Mayn)

The shock announcement at this meeting was from Grahame Moore who indicated his intention to leave our group at the close of the October meeting. He intends to relax a little while travelling the country selling his books at various fairs.

Naturally we wish him the very best and thank him for his hard work for our club over the past seven years. He really has been the glue.

Grahame announced the winners of the current 1000-word competition. Entries were judged independently. *(see details below – Ed.)*

The next competition will be titled, 'The Runaway.' Entries to be in to Franz by November 15.

Our first speaker was Ian Harvey (photo left). He discussed writing a memoir. Highly entertaining and thought provoking. We all need to do something about it.

Ian identified the difference between a memoir and an autobiography. He further distributed information on writing a memoir. If you would like a copy, see Ralph at the next meeting.



After morning tea, Kathy Shanks from Turtle publishing spoke on, 'Creating Managing and publishing.' The complexities of getting a literary work to the publishing stage on Amazon were discussed at length. Basically, if a writer doesn't know how to get from the finished manuscript to selling online, it might be best to talk with Kathy. She offers a complete service.

Finally, the Logan Bookfest is on again. **Saturday 24 October.** Kathy Shanks is organising it. **Entry is free.** Click on this link: <https://events.humanitix.com/logan-bookfest-2026>

1000 Word Competitions

We received 12 entries for 'The Face at the Window' Competition. The winners of the have been decided by our friendly Editor in Tasmania, Sally Odgers:

1st: Ralph Mayn
2nd: Hamid Mirfenderesk
3rd: Franz Huber

Congratulations! And a huge **Thank You!** to Sally. As she wrote: "*Crikey! Not a bad one among them! I had to do some major combing to pick the winner(s) and they were all so close.*" All of you, give yourself a pat on the back.

Sally trades under the name of 'Affa the Editor' and specialises in Manuscript assessment and editing. You can contact her on 0417 116 569 or visit her website:

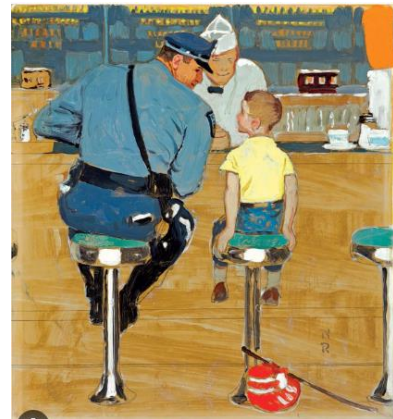
<https://wordkettle.blogspot.com>

4th Quarter theme: 'The Runaway'

Submissions close on Tuesday 10th November. That is in just 5 weeks, in time for the winners to be announced at the Christmas Party and the compilation booklet of all entries of 2026 to be printed).

Genre: it's OPEN – take your pick, from crime to romance, historical fiction, non-fiction, chick-lit, children's stories, fantasy. Anything!

Note: Under the theme/title 'The Runaway', there are various major artworks, including a TV series, a famous painting (see right), even a Black Hole... By all means, look them up, but only original stories please!



The usual rules apply: **1000 words maximum** (including title), no pictures, no Artificial Intelligence (we'll test). Please submit in **MS Word or Google Doc format**, NOT PDF, to helensvalewriters@gmail.com

Copyright remains with the author. This is a private, group-internal competition, and thus does not preclude you from submitting your story to any open competition, nor, as our end-of-year compilation cannot be purchased on the market, can it be considered as "previously published".

Upcoming Writers Competitions

- a) So, you consider yourself to be quite a dash (rather than just a break in a sentence) in **flash story** competitions? 'Flash?' This means that they'll give you just one weekend.

One of the most popular ones are those organised by [NYC Midnight](#). Click on the link to learn more about it, there are several. massive prizes (and prestige) to be won.

- b) **Next Generation Short Story Awards:** Deadline is 28th January 2027. This is one of the largest book awards in the world for Indie (self-published) authors. [Click here](#).
- c) There are another 280 (last time I looked) competitions on [reedsy.com](#) – There must be one or two that suit you!

Can you improve on that?

From a scene in Tess Gerritsen's 'Playing with Fire'. Set in the early years of WW2, a concert violinist found an unpublished manuscript in Venice, and she is playing it for the first time. Even if you have a tin ear, you would enjoy reading this:

The underlying melody had not changed, but now the notes come faster, move up the scale to the E string where they scamper up a series of arpeggios. My pulse quickens along with a frantic pace. I struggle to stay on tempo, my fingers stumbling over one another. My hand cramps. Suddenly, the notes fall out of tune and the wood begins to hum, as if vibrating at some hidden frequency that will make my instrument splitter and fly apart. Yet I struggle on, battling my violin, willing it to surrender to me. The hum grows louder, the melody rising to a shriek.

See you on **Thursday, 15th October 2026. Usual time 10:00 am.**
Helensvale Library, downstairs meeting room. Please be a little bit early, so we can start on time.

Best wishes,

Franz Huber
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The subtlety of choosing the exact, correct word:

If you invite someone to your cottage in the forest, it sounds nice and cosy.
But...

If I invite someone to my hunting cabin in the woods, they are probably going to end up dead.

**The only time the word
'incorrectly' isn't spelled
'incorrectly' is when it is
spelled incorrectly.**

[OK, I'll see myself out... Ed.]

