



NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER WRITER'S TIPS

Teresa's Quote of the Month

"What would a child do with a block? He'd build on it. Maybe writer's block is just a tool to be used to build something better."

I've experienced writer's block. We all have. I remember a time in my career when it really scared me, when I wasn't sure I'd get passed it. But then I came to realize that the block was often trying to tell me something.

Sometimes it was telling me that something was seriously wrong with my story- that I needed to step back and rethink my direction. Often that meant stepping away from the keyboard and seeking inspiration someplace else.

Other times, it was telling me that I had actually lost my passion for or connection to the story, but for some reason, was soldiering on trying to write it. In those instances, it was better to let the story go. In other cases, it was telling me that I was bored with the types of stories I was conceiving and needed a new challenge. Other times, it was telling me that I wasn't yet ready to write that particular story, either because I hadn't developed the skills yet or because there was something psychologically holding me back.

And sometimes, it really was that the ideas wouldn't come. That's the scariest form of writer's block. But I started to notice that even famous writers, composers, and artists would have periods of time-- sometimes even years--where they didn't produce new work. It rarely meant they NEVER produced new work again. But maybe SOMETIMES we just need a break. Once I learned to trust that, I didn't worry so much when the blocks arrived. I'd read more or think more or study more, and in time, the ideas returned, often better and stronger than they had been before. Build on your blocks. That's what they are for!

Writer's Tip

November has become known to many as National Novel Writing Month (or NaNoWriMo to us writing geeks). The idea is to write 50,000 words of a novel in one month. To enter, you visit the website at www.nonowrimo.org and sign up. In addition to helping track your words, the website provides encouragement, support, advice, etc. Reaching beyond the web, many communities now have groups that meet in person to work on their books. Check with your local library or book store to see if they know of groups meeting in your area. I know several writers who have taken up this challenge, and most have finished or come close to finishing their 50,000 words. The point isn't necessarily to write perfect prose, but to *get the story down*. You can always revise it later. If you do NaNoWriMo in November, write to me at teresa@teresafunke.com and tell me how it went!