

100 WORD ASSIGNMENTS
(Excluding the title)

(As checked using: *Review – Word Count* in MSWord)

These were written for the monthly assignments of the
PINELANDS WRITERS' CIRCLE

1959 – 2017

*“The primary object of the Circle is to encourage and foster the art of writing
fictional short stories.”*

The average story was around 2,000 words.
The January assignment was always 100 words - exactly.

The Arrival

She was forgiving. My first attempt at landing her resulted in a perfect flare - ten feet above the runway. Instead of kissing her wheels on the tarmac the old girl simply stopped flying and fell out the sky. Perspiration flooded as I battled to control her. Finally, we ground to halt. The faint whisk, whisk of her idling props the only sound. I glanced at the instructor who had sat motionless through it all, his hands on his knees, impassively staring ahead. Slowly he turned to me, "Johnson," he intoned, "That was not a landing - that was an arrival."

Arrogance

100 words using, **toggle**, **Kiev** and **xenophobia**.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," began Sir Ralph Mortimer Benjamin Baxter-Britain, "I have called you together here today to establish a new cultural organization."

He flipped a **toggle** switch and the words, "The Society for the Propagation of the English Language and Culture", appeared on the overhead screen.

"We few English, here in **Kiev**, need to keep our cultural heritage alive. I don't care if we are accused of **xenophobia**, I firmly believe that the English are far superior to all other races.

Uttering the words, "You arrogant English pig," Ekaterina Lyudmila Tchernicheva, his Russian wife, stood up - and shot him.

Encounter

Guard duty in troubled times is nerve-wracking enough. For the mollycoddled seventeen-year-old, alone in the small hours on a cold, starless night, it was stupefyingly terrifying. Every bit of sensory data reaching his addled brain fuelled the fantastic fears his mind conjured up. A rustling in the grass sent a surge of adrenalin spiking through his veins. He pushed the safety catch. Too far. "H-h-halt," he stammered hesitatingly before his finger clamped around the trigger. His arms battled to hold the bucking FN as it spewed lead in an uncontrollable arc. He hardly noticed the terrified dog streaking past him.

The Seductive Portrait

The bewitching eyes in the old portrait seemed intent on seducing me. As I gazed, enchanted by the thought, I imagined her metamorphosing from the frame, tossing my heavy bedclothes aside and straddling me. Spellbound, I watched as she moved slowly, deliberately, while beguiling me with an ethereal smile. All too soon my eyelids drooped in an explosion of ephemeral pleasure. Gripped by a sudden chill, I shook my head to clear my boyish daydream and opened my eyes. Shooting bolt upright, gripped by an icy fear, I realised the bedclothes were nowhere to be found

The Search

She was actually awesome. Just before Christmas I had occasion to trawl the N1 Mall and amused myself by seeking the most attractive woman there. My avid anticipation began abating alarmingly as all the women were attired appallingly, their atrocious apparel accentuating hairstyles that appeared to cry out in anguish for any attention. I had abandoned all hope when I espied her. She was alluringly attired in an amazingly attractive alabaster coloured frock with an enchanting artistic pattern. Adrenalin flowing, firmly anchored, I ogled like a yokel. Alas, she did not flinch, for mannequins are seldom known for their ardour.

A Successful Ploy

She was my co-project leader so we kept our relationship strictly professional. But when we were sent to London to attend a course I felt the rules changed. On our first evening I took her to a local bookshop where I'd seen some titillating sketches before. I pointed to one I'd coveted and watched her involuntary response. Direct as ever, she smiled, "You're good. That's the most cunning pass I've ever had. How did you know I've craved that?" Smiling at the success of my subtle insinuation I asked, "Tonight?" Her unequivocal, "Deal," set the scene for a memorable fortnight.

A Lesson

She was fresh out of varsity, having graduated cum laude in computer science. This meant that teaching her the programming language was easy. The two of us worked on our own and spent an intense forty hour week in each other's company. We also invariably lunched together.

On a personal note, she was far from home, young, vivacious, and lonely. She was at that age when an older man can so easily flatter a young lady and set her hormones on edge. That was something, which I in my naivety, unwittingly did on her birthday, with a single red rose.

Never Judge a Book by . . .

She was demure, correct, and a lady to her fingertips - and an excellent secretary. She was quietly religious with a fiancé who was a leading light in their church. Playing on her good nature, and what seemed like a cast iron value system, I loved to tease her. On the rare occasions that she made some minor error I'd threaten to take her, "to the woods." One day I jokingly suggested that it was about time that I carried out my threat during her next afternoon off. She shook my value system to the core with a blushing, "OK."

Temptation

She was intelligent and exhibited that maturity that only marriage and motherhood brings. Despite working closely together every week day she insisted on calling me "mister". Perhaps it was one of those annoying vestiges of apartheid or our age difference.

One day, while leaning over her shoulder, to assist her with a problem, I inadvertently brushed against her back. She turned her face towards me with an expectant look, a look that spoke of hidden feelings. Our lips were only inches apart. I hesitated briefly before nature took over. As I moved closer she raised her lips to meet mine.

The Opening

She was not your ordinary woman. With an honours degree in literature we shared many similar literary interests.

Her significant other dropped her off early in the morning and we fell into the habit of discussing our pet loves over early morning coffee and during our lunch breaks.

We never split the bill. She insisted on paying her exact amount.

"That way we are never beholden to each other."

One day, returning from a particularly stimulating lunch, she caught me off guard and started my mind on an entirely new tack by boldly asking, "Are you becoming sweet on me?"

An Equitable Solution or How to Lose Weight

"Janet, what's this note all about?"

Janet smiled weakly, "Its true Sam. You know Tim and I are also fond of each other. "

"You could at least have told me that the two of you were romping in the hay while I'm at Tuesday classes," Sam challenged.

"Forgive me Sam. I thought that you wouldn't mind sharing him just one day a week," Janet pleaded.

Secretly delighted, Sam hugged her friend, "Of course I don't. Here's what we'll do."

Tim stared incredulously at the two girls marking the calendar,

"Mondays he's yours, Tuesdays he's mine"

Birthday Surprise

I closed my fingers around her birthday locket, "That's so beautiful."

"Thank you."

Realizing my fingers were resting gently on a breast I eased them slightly, but she followed.

Sensing something, I smiled, "You've got beautiful breasts for a 60 year old mother."

She returned the smile, offering her lips.

Letting the locket slip, I cupped both breasts in my hands.

Lips lingering as long as we dared in the office, I eased back, whispering, "Where and when are we going to make love today?"

"There's no one at home till after five."

Our staggered departures were on different pretexts.

Close Encounter

The bullet severed Estelle's spine, instantly.

Vivienne sneered, "Look at that, even in death your slut's legs are wide open."

"Doesn't that turn you on? You liked screwing her - fancy a bit of necrophilia?"

Alan almost retched with fear and disgust.

Vivienne pointed the Colt at him.

His face contorted in fear.

She taunted him, "Go on, join her. You cheating bastard."

Alan closed his eyes, "No, Vivien," he stammered.

The ear-splitting explosion from the Colt snapped his eyes wide open.

Nausea wracked his body.

The remains of his wife's head were spattered all over

The Job Applicant

She was an extraordinarily gifted young lady. Science, literature, music, all buckled before her enormous talent and boundless enthusiasm. She soon rose to prominence as a brilliant concert pianist. Her beauty and sparkling personality complemented her technical ability and enhanced her public popularity. Yet, all too soon boredom set in and she no longer found the concert circuit satisfying.

The world of modern computing intrigued her and posed exciting new challenges and possibilities.

Her interviewer studied her Curriculum Vitae with its music scholarships, accolades and awards.

Genuinely puzzled he enquired, "Have you never held a proper job - like waitressing?"

A brief interchange

"I want to tell George that I've already sent this so that he can't fiddle with the content. But that's a lie."

"Well, why don't you send it to me? Then you'll be telling the truth."

"But you're not the intended recipient."

"You're deceiving him, not lying."

"Ah, but a lie is an untrue statement with intent to deceive. So, I'd still be lying."

"Your intention is not to lie to him, your intention is to prevent him changing the message. Surely that is a noble aim?"

"You're a cunning manipulator. Where did you learn that skill?"

"I study women."

Caveat Emptor I

In my matric vacation I sold paint for a respected hardware firm.

Me, who came from a family whose men were unaware of the meaning of the letters DIY.

One day I convinced a dear old man that brushes were better than rollers as rollers could not get into the corners of the walls and that the skirting boards would present similar problems.

He left with paint and a wide range of brushes, after thanking me profusely for my expert advice.

Years later I imagined him shouting at his neighbour, "I'm telling you, brushes are better, an EXPERT told me."

Caveat Emptor II

My employer enrolled me on a proprietary computer methodology course. Alas, a two week course does little more than acquaint you with the basics of the product. Only intense use results in workable knowledge.

One day my boss told me that a client had bought the course and I was to conduct it.

So, before you meekly accept a sales pitch from some plausible salesman, or think they are an expert, do some research on their pedigree.

However, for me the upside was that I learned that in the land of the blind he who has any sight is king.

Uncomfortable truths

100 words using, **curate**, **potion** and **village**.

In centuries past it was the custom of aristocratic families to send their eldest son to Sandhurst for a career in the military. The youngest was invariably put through an ecclesiastical degree before being farmed out to one of the numerous villages, whose men were frequently away defending the realm. Resultantly, the **curate**, being a noble and a male, gallantly served the **village** women. He proved invaluable in improving the bloodline of the local population. On the odd occasion when a wife did not relish the return of a husband, the curate dispensed a handy **potion** to solve the problem.

Ray Hattingh