



I ~~don't~~ blog: I brag, celebrate, and shamelessly advertise!!!

**Welcome!** to the director's cut of my newsletter. You know, or should know by now, I'm *dyslexic*. Relax. Put away your red pen. Sit a bit, let's chat and spend a few minutes together.

Kathryn's Beach and High Tide and Storm Surge are available **NOW**.  
[www.NadineLamanBooks.com](http://www.NadineLamanBooks.com)

## Writing News Briefs:

The big news isn't about my novels or WIPs, works in progress, but about a writing contest I'm holding on my blog.

It was not my intention that my blog be a writing tips blog, but it often is. So it seemed natural to sponsor a writing contest.

### Contest Guidelines:

**Genre:** Short Story, any genre. Unpublished.

**Voice:** First person, present tense. No exceptions.

**Topic:** Any topic except torture, child abuse or domestic violence, and nothing racial or gender degrading.

**Category:** Two, published and unpublished author.

**Word Count:** 500 to 1,000 words (+/- 10).

**Limit:** One entry per person.

**Eligibility:** Everyone is eligible to enter, unless prohibited by law. Under age writers should get their parent's permission.

**Format:** Standard ms format. Send submission in Word or WordPerfect document. All entries will be converted to pdf for your security. Writer's names will be removed from the judges' view.

**Submission:** Send your work as an attachment to your email. In your email include contact information and which category you are entering.

**Fee:** None.

**Deadline:** Entries must be emailed to me at [NadineLaman@aol.com](mailto:NadineLaman@aol.com) by **February 22, 2010**, Arizona Time Zone. (GMT -7 hours).

**Prize:** \$50 USD to one winner of each category.

Judging will close **March 14th**. All entries will be posted on a hidden page on my website and only the judges will have the address. It will be set up similar to the archive newsletters on my site.

Judging guidelines are on the judges' page which will become available at the close of submissions.

Winners will be contacted by email. Have a 30-word bio ready and a pic that can be used to announce the winners on *First Draft*.

Here is the link to the page on my blog:

<http://nadelaman.blogspot.com/2010/01/contest-information.html>

There are links at the bottom of the post that might be helpful to contestants.

### Judge's Guidelines:

I've decided to make this reflect the industry. When agents or publisher's acquisition editors read works, they don't score them. The work either delivers or it doesn't. Close only counts in horseshoes.

As the gatekeeper, I will screen out any entries that have not followed the guidelines. I am not expecting to disqualify any entries. However, the point of the guidelines, besides giving everyone some idea of what to do, is they are an exercise in submitting to agents. It is well known that one must follow "to the letter" any submission guidelines set by the agent.

So with that cold reality in mind, these are the areas the judges will consider:

**Title:** Does it fit, is it interesting, does it encourage the reader to keep reading.

**Voice:** Is it active or passive. Active is what we're after. Too much telling - not enough showing.

**Pace:** Does the pace fit the piece, does it change to fit the circumstances.

**Sequence:** Good flow of events from beginning to end. Logical.

**Character:** Interesting, believable, developed.

**Dialogue:** Accurate for the character, realistic.

**Use of Literary Devices:** Use any literary devices that fit. These are tie breakers.

**Grammar:** It goes without saying, do your best. It doesn't have to be letter perfect, but do make sure that you don't slop through and miss full stops (periods) or indenting paragraphs, subject/verb agreement, the basics.

**Overall appeal:** Was this an interesting read.

The element is either present or it isn't. Almost doesn't count.

The judges are from France, England, and the USA. They are editors, writers, educators, beta readers, and proof readers. You do NOT need to Americanize your spelling. We're all cool with the 'z' being replaced with 's' and no full stops after titles, like Mr and Dr.

There are lots of writing tips in my blog. Go look.

I ♥ my blog: **First Draft**  
<http://nadinelaman.blogspot.com>

### And from our shameless advertising dept.

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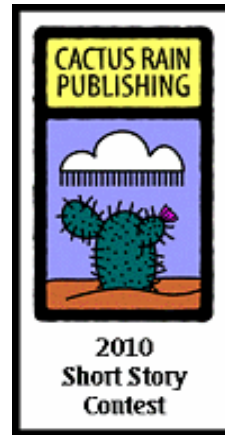
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## I get...the **LAST WORD!** (Naturally!)



Have you ever read a book and said, "I could write better than that!"

Have you ever thought of a better (alternate) ending to a story and wrote it?

Do you write during your free time, even if it is only at lunch?

Do you write because you can't not write?

Whether you have been writing for years or thinking about writing, or even if you are a closet writer and no one knows you do it and you'd die if they found out, this is the contest to enter.

You might have more talent than you realize. There is no fee to enter, so what have you to lose?

Lots of first time writers are entering. This is a good beginning contest. The published and unpublished writers have their own section and compete with their peers.

What can you gain? You gain a chance to win \$50. Bet you can come up with some way to use fifty bucks, right? You gain the imposed discipline to write to a deadline and by specific criteria.

Plus, if you win, you get bragging rights.

We can easily talk ourselves out of doing things we secretly do want to do. Don't talk yourself out of entering this contest.

It is easy to procrastinate and let opportunities pass untested. Jump on this one and enter.

This might be the nudge you need. It might be the \$50 you want.

I believe in you. Go for it. Write your best story and submit it before the deadline.

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