The **Loser Story** Assignment



*Use Format #2 please. At no point in time ask your teacher how long this assignment should be. You will not use the words “I,” “you,” “me,” “my,” “boring,” “interesting,” “felt,” “good” or “better.” Of the short stories you’ve studied this semester, choose one that you feel is the worst of the bunch.*  *Here is what you must do for the “loser” story:*

**Think about what makes a good story:**

* dramatic **things** happening,
* complex **plots** with twists and turns, lies, surprises or secrets,
* characters with clear **motivations** for what they’re doing,
* characters with **backstories** which let you know who they are,
* great **description** which helps the reader imagine everything (characters and setting and events) but is subtle and not too long,
* characters or events which the writer makes **believable** even if they are pretty imaginary,
* suspense-causing **conflicts** (inside the characters, between the characters, physical, mental, beliefs, motives, emotional, against the forces of nature/the setting). Characters with conflicting motives or agendas.
* Good **dialogue** (talking)
* **Humour**
* Good **word choice** and “**narrative voice**” (if you like the person telling the story, and how he or she talks, or at least find him or her interesting and readable).
* **Settings** the reader can picture, with a strong mood to them.

Now, circle three things from the above list that the loser story’s author is *not as good at* as the authors of the other stories.

**Paragraph One**: Start out by clearly identifying the inferior story’s **title** and **author and** saying it was **not as good** as the other three stories, each of which you will **name** and tell the **authors** of. You may only use one sentence for all of that.

**Paragraph Two:** Start with a sentence claiming that one of the things you circled is important in a good story. Then do more sentences, claiming that the author of one of the other stories did it much better. Identify the **title** and **author** of the story that did it better. If you feel that more than one of the other stories did this thing better, mention the other stories, briefly explaining how they did it better too. When writing, do not say “the story” or “the author” nor “the main character.” Actually name them each time. In no way mention yourself or the fact that this is something being done in a school.

**Paragraph Three:** Same thing as Paragraph Two, but with a second thing you circled above. Mention a different story that did it better. By the end of this assignment, you will have to have mentioned all of the “better” stories.

**Paragraph Four:** Same thing as Paragraph Two, but with a third thing you circled above. Mention a different story that did it better.

**Paragraph Five:** conclude by repeating what you said in Paragraph One, but worded differently.

For each **comparison paragraph**, quote from your story once (or else quote from one of the other stories which is better) to make your points really stick. You must put your story quotations inside sentences like this:

Tim Arden writes conversations between his characters that are very lacklustre. Arden’s characters say uninspired things like “\_Hello. I am tired. Are you tired too? ” Normal teenagers talking in the hall at school say more colourful things than Arden’s characters every day. By contrast, the characters in Ralph Ellison’s “Mercury Rising,” and Mary Shephard’s “Cupid’s Forge” are given much more colourful dialogue.

or

In “Cupid’s Forge,” Mary Shepherd describes her characters in enough detail for readers to picture them quite clearly. Less impressively, Jeff Irwin doesn’t really describe his characters at all. When Ace walks into the room at the start of the story, Irwin just writes “Ace was a man.” That’s it. Consequently, the reader has no idea what Ace even looks like.

You must use a bunch of these expressions:

Comparison Language

**Formal language useful in grouping the good stories together and saying what they were good at:**

* Likewise, …
* Similarly, …
* Subsequently, …
* …, therefore, …
* …, thus ….
* By the same token, …
* … significantly more effective use of …
* As a result, …
* ...feature masterful use of...
* ...make effective use of...
* Consequently, …
* For this reason, …
* …, hence, …
* …, as a rule, …
* For the most part, …
* Generally, …
* Generally speaking, …

E.g.:

Generally speaking, *Lord of the Rings, Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* are movies that are believable and are written with fully developed characters. By the same token, they include good back stories and clear motivations for characters such as Frodo, Aragorn, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Harry, Hermione and Ron. As a result, they are powerful money makers.

**To contrast the loser story with the good stories, and say it was worse:**

* Sadly, …
* When compared to the other stories, …
* Less impressively, …
* … perhaps a bit too …
* … significantly less effective use of …
* …came up a bit short in that department.

*(and to put after the author’s choices that made the story bad):*

* Consequently
* As a result
* For this reason, …
* …, hence, …

*And these words talk about the better stories:*

* Conversely, …
* Instead, …
* On the other hand, …
* Rather, …
* …, yet, …
* …, but, …
* …, however, …
* …, still, …
* …, nevertheless, …

E.g.:

…they are powerful money makers. By contrast, Kip Moon in creating *Revenge of the DragonFist Ninja 2* came up a bit short in that department. Less impressively, Moon appears instead to have spent no time at all in fully developing a back story for Kip, the DragonFist Ninja of the title, nor in making him or his mission in any way believable. Consequently, it is impossible to even remember what kind of person Kip is, nor what he was doing or why, even one week after watching the movie. As a result, *Revenge of the DragonFist Ninja 2* has not sold as many DVDs and BluRays.