

Back to the Beginning Again

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You can't go back and
change the beginning,
but you can start
where you are and
change the ending.

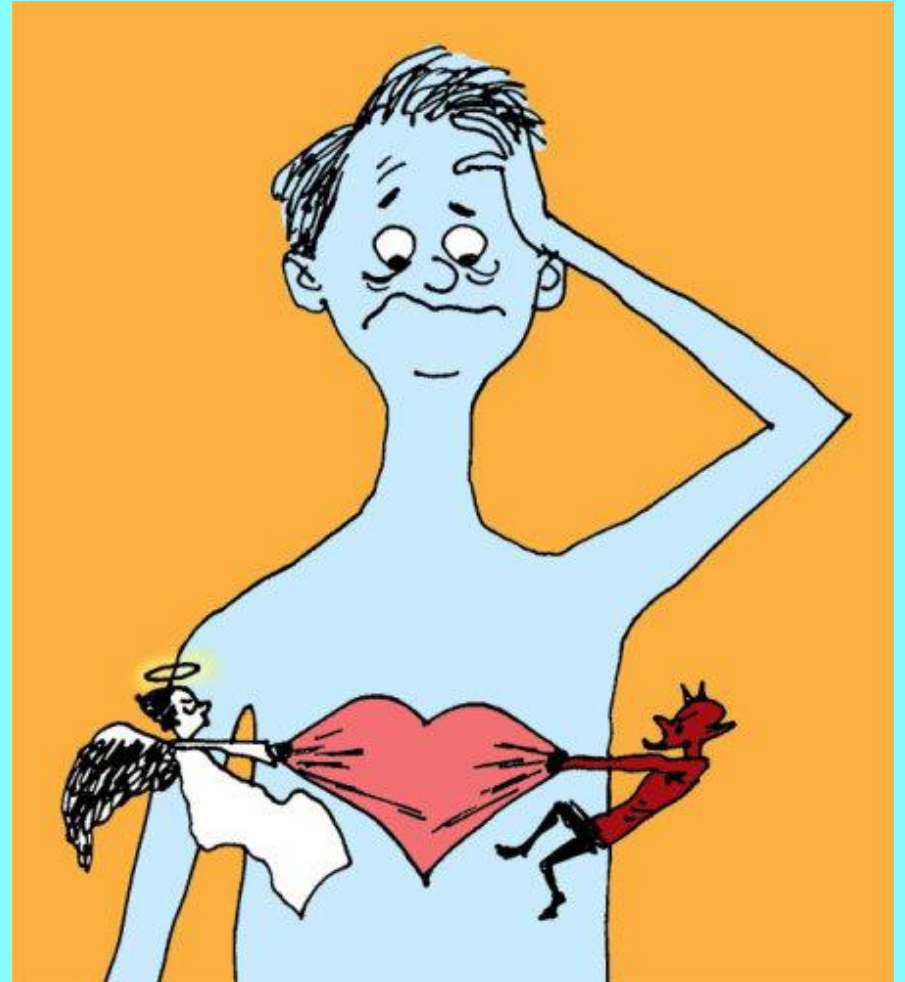
—C.S. LEWIS



Try It At Home

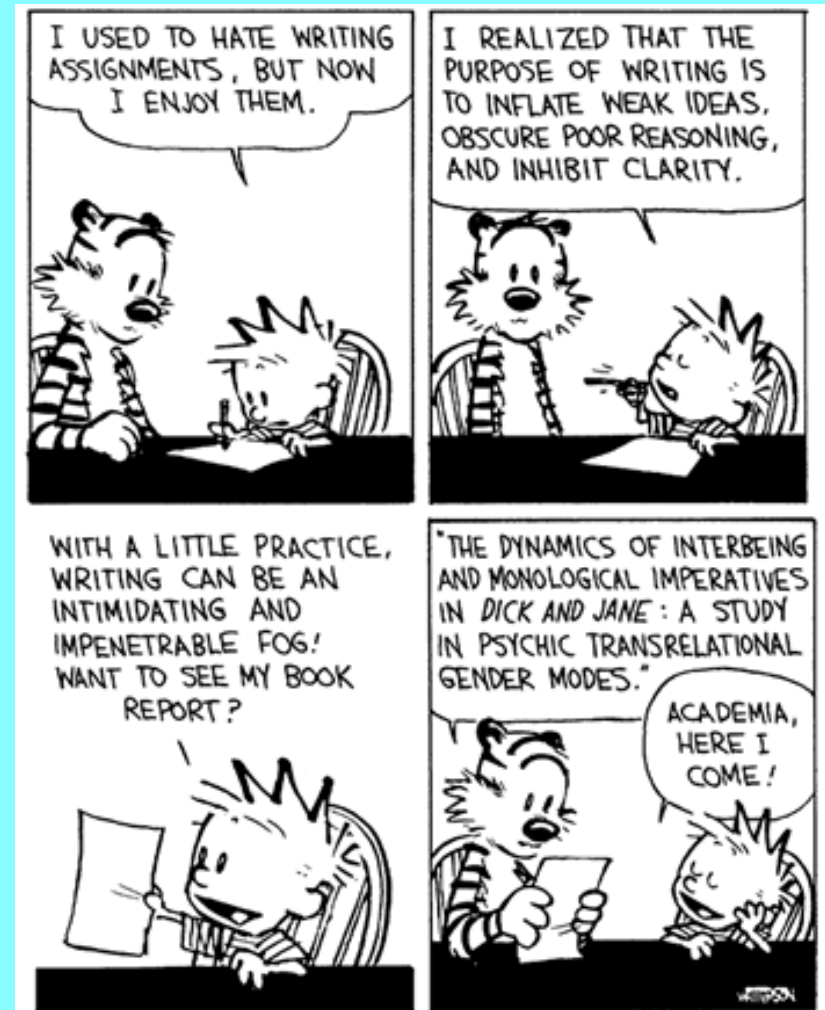
Come up with a list of things you want that are in conflict with other things you want.

Can you write a paragraph or two about having to choose between these two desires?



Let's Walk Through the Steps

1. In this exercise, I am controlling the POV. You will all be writing from your own point of view, in first person, present or past tense.



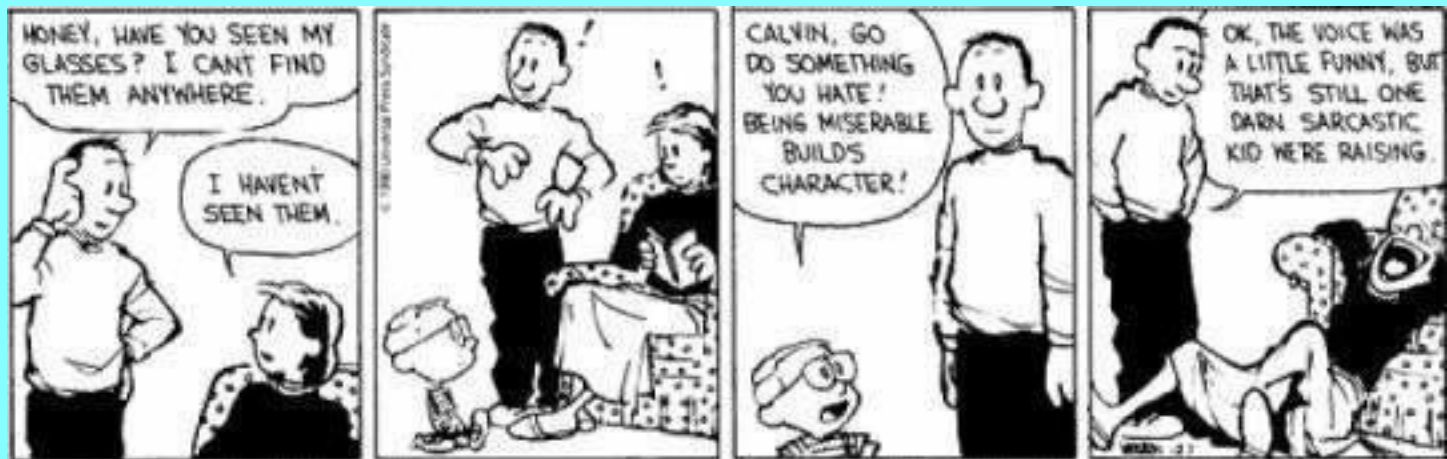
Let's Walk Through the Steps

2. Under what kind of circumstances do these conflicting desires come up? Where? When? How? Why? (These are things like plot, setting, some of the pressures or perturbations)



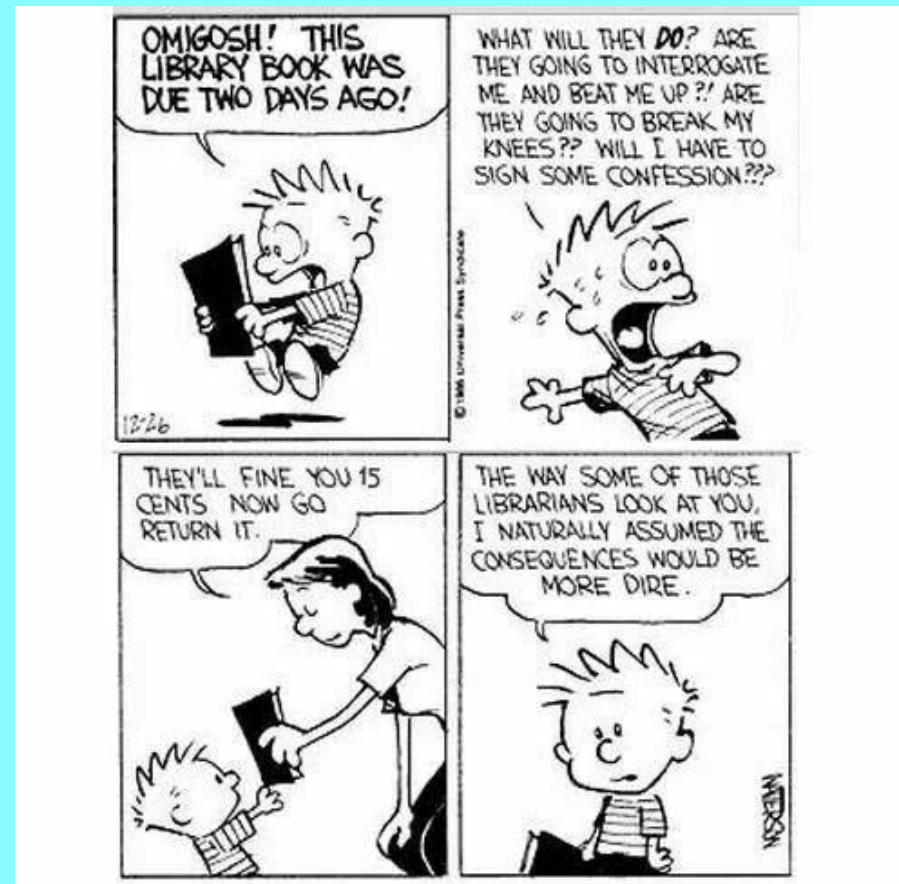
Let's Walk Through the Steps

3. What kind of people do you get involved with when these conflicting desires come into play? Write down three of them, give them names, ages, attitudes. (These are characters in your story)



Let's Walk Through the Steps

4. What kinds of things could you get if you go with option A? What kinds of things could you lose? Brainstorm these possibilities. (In a story, this is called the “risk”).



Let's Walk Through the Steps

5. Why would you go with option A? Why would you go with option B? (This is motivation. We don't always need to know it outright in a story, but we do need to be able to make guesses.)



Let's Walk Through the Steps

6. What is the inciting incident? What sets off this chain of events wherein your character (you) has to choose between two things they really want but which are mutually exclusive? Start writing right now, right in the thick of this incident. Get right to the heart of the issue in the first two sentences. Eg. Goldie knew she had a problem when the whale she was photographing swallowed her leg. She had promised her entire family she wouldn't get that close to the cetaceans.

Let's Walk Through the Steps

7. You know there have to be (at least) three acts to this story, so you need at least three challenges that make the situation more and more complicated and the choices harder and harder.



Let's Walk Through the Steps

8. How can you forgive yourself for the choice(s) you make in this story?



Try This at Home

Write 200 words per prompt

*an exercise by Lucy Ives

1. Describe your earliest memory
2. Describe something that happened yesterday
3. Describe something that happened a week ago yesterday
4. Describe something that happened five years ago yesterday.
5. Describe something you have completely forgotten.

If you are asking a question like “But how can I describe something I’ve completely forgotten?!” you are on the right track.