

# Creative Writing Class

After School Village – Tarzana CA

Teacher:

Goldie (like the Labrador retriever) Goldbloom

# Captain Happen

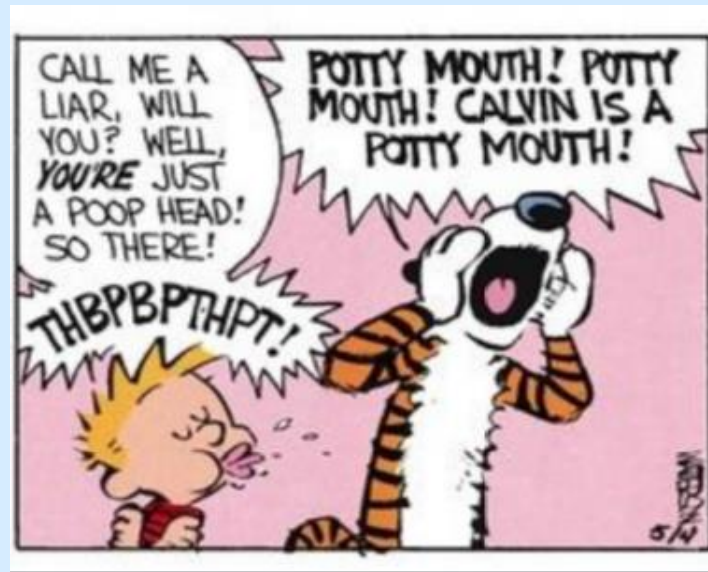


Forcing Conflict to Happen

# You had homework!

- One day you find a zipper under your tongue and when you unzip it, you find someone else is living inside you. That someone wants something diametrically opposed to something you hold near and dear. Unpack the consequences.

In fiction, we want characters that create scenes that in real life, we'd avoid.



What this means is that you have your character blurt out the kind of thing he might think, but not usually say.

# But that's hard to do!

- Why is it hard to make your main character (protagonist) say what he's thinking?



If your main character doesn't say what he's thinking, the story often sputters to a halt...  
That's not good!

- What is this character thinking?
- What is something he wouldn't want other people to know?
- What will happen if he blurts it out?
- What situation would be the very worst place to blurt out whatever he is thinking?



# Forget Your Manners!

Would this still be a good cartoon if Calvin politely pushed the rice to one side and said “I’m not very hungry right now”? Why does it work now?



# Which is more interesting to read?

“I’m going to huff and puff and blow your house down!”



“Oh, my apologies, I’ll go away now.”

Which one of these options sets up the story for more action in the future? Why?



# Some of Your Stories So Far...



What could the piano say that would tell us something about the boy?

What could the boy say in response that would teach us something about how he feels inside?

How effective is the conflict in the image above? When no one speaks, how can you convey conflict?

# More Stories:



When the girl's mother says she shouldn't be messing around with fairies and monsters, what could the girl say in response? (remember: your job as a writer is to get your characters into **HOT WATER**)

If she says, "Okay, Mum, I won't," and then goes off to read in her room, what happens to the story?

# More Stories:



When the dog tries to sell itself to the man by offering a wish, what might be the outcome if the man says okay and then wishes that the dog disappears?

Would that be good or bad for the story?

# Calling Captain Happen!

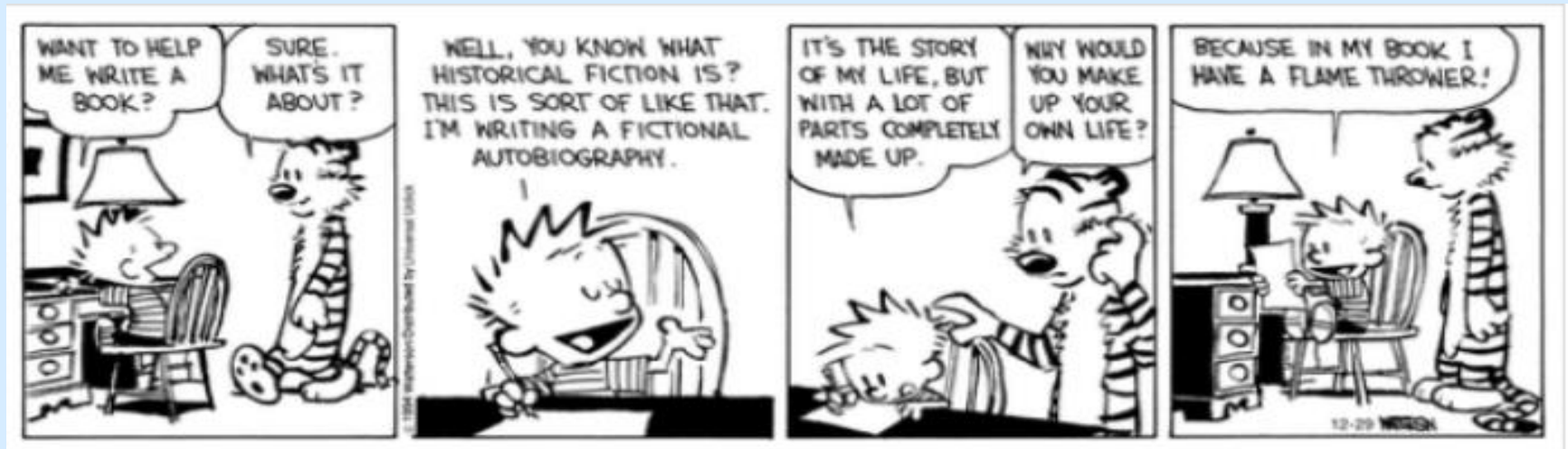
- Do you know somebody who always says exactly the wrong thing, or manages to provoke fights wherever they go? That person is a Captain Happen. Think about the Captain Happen you know and tell us a short story about this person.



How does this person's bad behaviour make them more memorable?

# Not all of us are Bill Watterson...

- Most people have a hard time making their main character behave badly.



But you can usually add a third character who behaves badly and crashes into the story, making all kinds of things happen, and saying all the stuff your protagonist (main character) couldn't say. This is a Captain Happen.

# Add Captain Happen to your story

- Take the person you talked about, and introduce him to your main character.
- How does your main character react to him? (Her buttons are getting pushed! She's upset!)



Hopefully, that has the effect of a meteor crashing into the earth's atmosphere. Drama! Fireworks! Intensity!



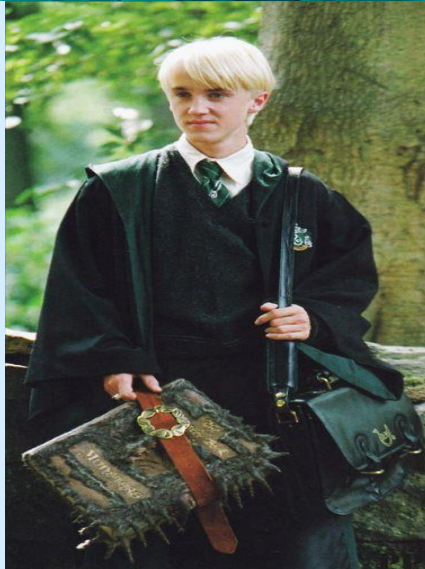
# Can you imagine Harry Potter without...



Voldemort?



Belletrix Lestrange?



Draco Malfoy?



Snape?



# Don't be afraid of having your characters act badly!

- It makes them more memorable
- It makes them more realistic
- It makes the story more exciting
- It makes the story less predictable



Say NO to boring stories!

# Homework

- Choose a story you think will lead to interesting developments and write a conversation for that story:

A.

A little girl finds a hamster and gives it food to eat and keeps it in her bedroom. Her mother thinks the hamster is cute and they talk about what they will name the hamster. The mother brings the hamster some oatmeal.

B.

A little boy finds an abandoned car at the end of his street, and when he looks inside the trunk, there is a woman inside, who is covered in leaves. The woman opens her mouth full of pointy teeth and says, "Get out of here, Chippy! Can't you see I eat little boys?"

