

Artisan ReviewSM

Quality Control for Independent Publishers and Writers Wondering What to Do Next

5-page beginning of a crime short story:

1. (Sentence mentioned characters Sarah and Jessica) I suggest you rename one so you don't wind up sounding like a celebrity magazine.
2. There are several ways for her to "hold her head in her hands." Is she obstructing her face? Is anything dribbling from her face? Does she have her fingertips on her temples, her palms pressed against her cheekbones, both hands holding her forehead as if she might be sick?
3. If the two live in the same condo development, you need to be very clear about how close their units are, more "the next street over" than "a few minutes from here."
4. This is the first a dog has been mentioned. Where is it now? Has it been kept out of the crime scene? Did the cop even know of its existence?
5. This extended story about the dog pulling at her leg (pants or skin?) is too thought out for her state of distress. And if she thought Sarah was in the shower, why would she even think of taking the dog out?
6. When did the cop learn of the suicide note? (Just a reference to where it was found).
7. There was an extended and distracting account of his very brief encounter with the victim yesterday, before we knew almost anything about either of them. Now, when he sees her clothes strewn on the bed, might be a better place to remember meeting her before.
8. You have him going through her drawers, looking under things for her diary, but then saying he had to "wait for the techs" to look for anything on her computer. Is that because he assumes they'll have to break a password? Or does he mean crime-scene techs, who should be the ones to do an orderly search?