

# The Proof Angel Summary of

## Posts for authors: September 2014

A high proportion of first time novelists who approach me for editing are not aware of the amount of work needed before they get a professional involved. Sometimes I'm told that the first draft has just been finished, so now it is ready for editing.

Oh no it isn't.

Finishing the first draft is a huge milestone, but a lot of refinement is needed before it is ready for publication. The more of this you do yourself, the better the book will be, and the cheaper and easier the editing process will be. Here is one author's take on [getting your manuscript ready](#).

### Writing dialogue

Dialogue is an important part of life. That makes it an important part of any story. So it must be an important part of a novel.

Doesn't that sound logical? Unfortunately, real dialogue is usually pretty bland stuff. It holds the attention of participants, but rarely grips other people. Anyone who uses public transport regularly is painfully aware of that.

So how do you get realistic dialogue into your novel and keep your readers interested at the same time? [Here are some tips to help](#).

### Should you begin at the end of the story?

Opinions vary about how much you should plan a book. I think a lot depends on what sort of book you are writing, and how your brain works. What suits one scenario won't suit another.

Here is a post on why you should [write the end first](#). I'm not convinced that they are all extremely good reasons, as the title claims.



The Proof Angel is the trading name of Sarah Perkins, freelance editor and proofreader.

## Traps for the unwary mystery writer

Writing a mystery? Here are [17 traps to avoid](#). Well, no one said it would be easy.

## What an editor can do for you

Here are two posts about editing:

- Why [editing is expensive](#), but editors aren't rich?
- What is the [value of an editor](#)?

## Clear the clutter in your book marketing

Are you marketing your book? It is difficult with so much out there already. This post has five ways to [break through the clutter](#) when you are promoting a book.

Speaking as a hoarder in the middle of a house move, I can say you need far less clutter than you think!

## How to use viewpoint

Viewpoint is an important concept in fiction. Read how to use [10 different viewpoints](#).

## Carry out an autopsy on your writing

We all have weaknesses. That makes us human. If you are aware of your weakness, you have more chance of doing something about it.

Some people only review their writing to look for ways to improve that piece. That is an important task, but by focusing on one piece at a time, you might miss a trick.

If you look at your work more generally, you might spot consistent weaknesses and bad habits. By working on improving those areas, all your work should improve.

You still need to re-write your material, but the process is easier if the basic standard is good. This post explains how to carry out an [autopsy on your writing](#).

## How to find and work with a designer

There is no question that a book cover is crucial. Read a little more about [finding and working with a designer](#).

## Getting round to it

When I was a child, seaside souvenir shops started to sell a small china saucer called a round-to-it. The decoration explained that this was the ideal gift for the person who was always going to do that vital job when they got around to it. I wonder how many arguments that joke caused?

There are always going to be tasks that are put off. Sometimes it is because we would prefer to do something else. Other times we want to do it, but we feel we should be doing something else first.

Establishing a regular time for the task can be a good way of solving the problem. Here is a post about how to sort out [a writing slot](#).

## Writing about regret

Regret is difficult. It causes all sorts of problems, and can easily get out of proportion. You can say the same for writing about it. Read more about how to [handle regret](#).

## How to liven up your characters

Do your characters jump off the page, full of life? If not, these notes from a workshop with [James Scott Bell](#) may inspire you to greater things.

## How to make a video

We hear a lot about the importance of moving images. So how do you go about getting your material together? This post explains how to make a [low budget video](#).

## Does a blog tour work?

A blog tour can be interesting, adding variety and broadening horizons. But do they have any impact on sales? Here is the [experience of one author](#). Here is another about [how to do a blog tour](#).

## Can you make an audio book?

Making your book widely available is fundamental to increasing sales. You need to be where your potential customers are looking.

So why not cast your net wider and try an audio book as well? Because it is too hard? Nonsense. [Try this post](#). While we are on the subject, here is a useful post about [reviews on Audible](#).

## Improving your manuscript

If you have just finished the draft of your book, here are some ways to [improve your manuscript](#).

## Should you crowdfund your book?

Publishing can be an expensive business. If you don't have enough resources to spare, crowd funding might be the answer. Find out more [with this post](#).

## The key habit for a writer

We see lots of guidance about the habits you need to develop if you want to become a successful writer. It is true that there are many aspects to the craft, and some are helped along by good habits.

Underlying all of them is this one habit - [collecting detail](#). If you have not observed carefully, even the most interesting story will lack life.

## Plot design

This is a complicated subject, and one that you can't expect to cover in one blog post. Which is probably why this is a long post. There are [some good points](#) in there though.

## Is show, don't tell all it is cracked up to be?

We hear a lot about how important it is to show your readers what is happening. When they imagine the situation properly for themselves, they feel more involved in the story. This post gives [another perspective](#).

## Choosing key words for your book

Choosing key words is an important stage in your book marketing plan. They are a fundamental part of any search the reader runs when they are on the lookout for something new. Get the keywords wrong, and your target audience won't find you. Here is some guidance for when you choose [key words for you book](#).

## Character types

Want to liven up your plot with a different sort of character? Finding it difficult to get a contrast with what you already have? Try this method of analysing [character types](#).

## How to price your books

Anyone who has thought about this for more than a couple of moments will realise that this is a complicated issue. There are so many factors to take into account.

With issues like that, it never does any harm to have a slightly different perspective. So get your calculator and jotter, put on your concentrating hat, and [give this a go](#).

## Quick book marketing ideas

Are you too busy to market your book? Here is a list of things you can do in [a session of 15 minutes](#). It is amazing how far you can get if you do a little on a regular basis.

## Submitting to literary magazines

For those of you with lofty ambitions, here is a useful piece about [how to submit your writing to literary magazines](#). It is always worth going about these things with a proper plan.

## Romantic plots

If you are stuck for ideas, here is a way find your new [rom-com plot in five easy steps](#). Something tells me that it is a bit optimistic...

## Get more readers through your local library

Libraries may be an endangered species, but there is still life in them. Here is a post about how authors have reached readers by making [contact with the local library](#).

## **Have you thought about using Apple iBooks to sell your work?**

One way to increase your circulation is to be in more places. You need to be where your readers are looking, and be available in the format they want to use. Here are some pointers on how to use [Apple iBooks](#).

## **Do you know what you are doing with a sub plot?**

A sub-plot adds a lot to a story. Find out about the different [types of sub-plot here](#).

## **Does your author website need a face lift?**

Here are some ideas for brightening up [your author website](#).

## **Should you look into Google Play?**

I'm a great believer in spreading the word about your book as widely as you can. Google Play looks like an option that might be worth exploring. [Find out more here](#).

## **Making description work**

Getting description right is an important aspect of fiction writing. When it works, the story is alive in the reader's mind without them noticing the effort they make.

When it doesn't, your readers plod through long dull passages. They might even skip a chunk, or even give up. Here are 5 ways to [get descriptions right](#).

## **Improve the discoverability of your book**

Here are some useful tips about improving your [discoverability](#). It is one area where a little thought can make an enormous difference to the success of your book.

## ***Why do indie publishers need book fairs?***

If you are an indie publisher and are wondering about the relevance of book fairs, you [may find this interesting](#).

## **Classic book design**

If you are thinking about the design of a book, this is a [useful guide to classic ideas](#).

## **Working with a designer on your cover**

A cover is an important marketing tool for any publication. To make a good job of it, you need to talk to someone who knows what they are doing. But if design isn't your field, how do you start? [Find out here](#).

## **The partnership between an author and an editor**

This discussion of the relationship between authors and editors is more sensible than its title suggests. Starting with [how to train your author](#), and using words like adversary doesn't fit with my experience of the process.

I think the fundamental message is that by working as a team, everyone achieves more than they can on their own.

## **The science of storytelling**

This is an interesting infographic about [how our brains react to stories](#). I'm not convinced the knowledge helps much with the writing process, though!

## **What you can learn from Jane Eyre**

We can all learn by analysing the work of an expert. Here is what [Jane Eyre](#) can teach you about mind-blowing heroines.

Yes, I know Jane Eyre isn't the expert here, but it keeps it snappy.