Advice Sheet: A guideline on how to be prepared when writing short stories

Some of you may be a bit confused about the idea of ‘short stories’. Normally, when you look at a short story, it appears to be at least 500 words long. In this guideline, you will be shown a number of tips on how to write a proper short story.

Introduction:

Start with an engaging hook that sets the scene for you. Using sensory imagery and nuanced details helps imagine the world inside them. Make sure the reader knows exactly what you are talking about and provide lots of details so that the reader can fit into the protagonists’ shoes. This can be done by adding details across the text. For example, you might like to describe a character a bit in the intro, then add more details as you progress along the text.

Rising Action:

This is optional. Sometimes, you may like to gradually build up the tension in a completely different paragraph. This is called the Rising Action. It is the part where writers use foreshadowing to make the reader feel more interested so that they don’t want to close the book and stop reading.

Problem/Complication:

There doesn't always have to be a problem after the introduction. If you would like, you can put the complication at the start so that you can add a bit more tension and suspense and engage the reader. The complication must be the most interesting part of the story where all the tension and actions unfold. A good writer makes sure that their compilation is not too boring and more interesting than just normal complications. Some normal complications, for instance, could be losing an object, or getting lost yourself. Those are examples of problems that are too boring or ordinary.

Falling action:

This is where most of your complication is solved. Remember, it is not completely solved, but a majority is. This is where you ease the tension and make the characters feel a little bit less scared. This is also optional because you don’t have to include some of the resolutions in the falling action and some of the resolutions in the revolution; you can just solve the problem in the resolution only.

Resolution:

Like the falling action paragraph, this is where you tie up all the loose ends so that the character doesn't end the book with questions. For instance, there might be a character who ends up in a mysterious place, and finds a secret portal to her normal world. You do not want the book to end with the character just going to the secret portal, you want the character to fully go into the secret portal and end up in the normal world so that the reader doesn't think: What if she didn’t go into the portal fully? What if she was stuck?