

Cultural Daily

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Writing Prompt: The Interview

Charity Hume · Wednesday, March 19th, 2014

Charity Hume shares a new writing prompt for the week: The Interview.

Interviews can be like treasure hunts. I was once assigned a story for a community paper that wanted an article about a tour boat on Vancouver Island. When I first began the story, I thought I was going to do a summer article about cruises for school groups. I met the captain of *Duen*, a beautiful old sloop, on a dock outside Sidney. On the brief tour of the “pilot’s cabin,” I noticed a small newspaper clipping, with a photograph of a group of Norwegian men during World War II. When I came home and began research on that photo, I learned that those young men were members of the Norwegian resistance. Further research revealed that *Duen* had been part of the Shetland Operation, and the men had barely escaped Nazi capture during a crucial episode of the war, during the same time when similar boats had been seized and searched, their passengers executed and imprisoned. My article took an unexpected and dramatic turn into history.

In an interview, think like Sherlock Holmes, and try to find the buried story. Follow the clues that lead to the richest material. Everyone, absolutely everyone, has a story to tell that would never cross your mind on first meeting. The art of finding that story, however, involves a little detective work on your part. Follow your instincts and the clues you are given to dig further. The interview is a tango, in that it takes two. Another interviewer will find a different story. Focus on the information that most inspires your interest and curiosity.

As your creative writing prompt, tell *that* story.



“Conversation” by Pierre August Renoir, (undated) courtesy of Creative Commons, Wikimedia

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