

Self-Analysis

The old woman approached the bed slowly, the knife gleaming in the moonlight streaming in through the bedroom window. A small smile appeared on her gaunt, wrinkled face as she raised her arm, fully intending to

OK, that's a good start. But this isn't leading anywhere. She kills him. Then what? Maybe you should rethink this.

fully intending to pierce his heart with the knife and

This really isn't going to work. You know that, don't you? Besides, you've used the word 'knife' twice in the first two sentences. You do know what a synonym is, don't you?

fully intending to pierce his heart with the blade and gain her freedom. She moved closer, trembling with anticipation. Her husband lay immobile in the bed, his breathing hardly audible in the quiet of the room. She moved closer still

I really think you should reconsider this. Murder and intrigue aren't really your style, you know. Why not start over and try something a little lighter? You haven't written a story about Bonnie in months.

She moved closer still, the knife shaking slightly as she stared down at the man she had hated all her life. One swift, clean stroke, and

You're intent on following this through, aren't you? Think about it. Where is the story going? And there's going to be blood. Lots of it. You hate blood.

One swift, clean stroke, and then the pillow, to absorb the blood. She raised her arm higher, close enough to see her husband's face. A small bubble of saliva escaped from his lips as his stentorian breathing

All right. If you're going to do this, the least you can do is clean up your writing a little. 'Stentorian'? What kind of word is that? Is it even a word? And I really think you should provide a little more description of the husband. Lack of character detail has always been the biggest flaw in your writing. I've noticed that.

A small bubble of saliva escaped from his fleshy lips as his chest rose and fell. He lay in front of her, the bedsheets wrapped in disarray around his body, his thinning grey hair, damp with sweat, plastered to his scalp. She imagined him waking in fright as the blade plunged into his chest, and she smiled again.

OK, that's a little better. But are you sure you want to write a story like this? It's not too late to start over. You've never written something like this before. And it's probably too scary for Jesse ... you know she had nightmares after watching Bambi. What will this do to her?

I don't care. It's my story. Just let me finish it.

I don't see how you can get much further with this. And we don't even know why she wants to kill him. Maybe you should provide a little more background here.

She had hated him for years.

Well, that's a start. But you can do better than that.

She had hated him for years and years.

You're not taking this seriously, are you? I'm trying to help here. You could be a little more respectful.

I didn't ask for your help. I can do just fine without your suggestions. I'm having fun. Go away.

No, I think you need my help. This story is so out of character for you ... you're floundering. You don't know where to go from here, do you?

She had hated him for years. Everything about him turned her stomach, kept her on edge. The way he slurped his cereal every morning

What? She's going to kill him because he slurps his cereal? That's a little weak, don't you think? Put some more thought into it.

Everything about him turned her stomach, kept her on edge. The way he flounced about every morning, wearing her dresses

Stop it. If you won't take my suggestions seriously, how are you ever going to improve?

I don't like your suggestions. And I am improving.

Well, I don't see it. Your stories about teachers weren't bad, but this ... this is way over the line.

The line is where I draw it. Can I get back to the story now?

All right. If you must.

Everything about him turned her stomach, kept her on edge. Her hatred for him

Maybe that should be 'hatred of him' ...

Will you stop?!

Just trying to help. Words are important. You do want to be a writer, don't you?

Everything about him turned her stomach, kept her on edge. Her hatred of him was all-consuming, and she knew that the only way to escape was to put an end to him, once and for all.

They had been so good together, once. He had been considerate and caring, and her world was full of laughter and love. But then he had changed.

You really like alliteration, don't you?

That was an accident.

Are you going to fix it?

No.

Don't be like that. I'm only trying to help.

They had been so good together, once. He had been wonderfully caring, and her world was full of happiness and love. But then he had changed.

It had begun with the drinking. She never knew why he had started, but what began as an occasional drink after dinner had

You do listen! There, see? That's much better. Now what?

It had begun with the drinking. She never knew why he had started, but what began as an occasional drink after dinner had turned into drinking all day long, and after he had lost his job, it just got worse.

I think that paragraph was a little weak. Maybe you should rewrite it. What do you think?

It had begun with the drinking. She never knew why he had started. But alcohol had not been kind to him. It had turned him bitter. It had cost him his job, and gradually the laughter between them had turned to recrimination.

OK, better. We really do make a good team, don't we?

You do occasionally make a good suggestion. Are you liking the story so far?

Well, I think you do better with humour. But let's just see how this goes.

He'd been a lawyer, and a successful one. There's always been plenty of money, and they had enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle together. At least, until the drinking had started to change him.

Why a lawyer? Lawyers are unpleasant people who only care about money. Why would she have married a lawyer?

Hey! That's stereotyping of the worst kind. There are some lawyers who are decent people. I think. Besides, I know a student who wants to be a lawyer, and she's a nice person. And really smart.

OK, I'm sorry. I probably shouldn't interrupt so much. But you're right, this is fun. When's she going to kill him?

Soon, I think. I haven't thought that far ahead.

You mean you don't plan the plot of the story before you start? You're just making it up as you go along?

Uh ... yeah.

Well, frankly, I'm disappointed. I thought you were a little more organized than that.

Can I keep going now?

All right. I'll check in on you when you're done. I hope it turns out to be one of your better stories. But I still think you should stick to humour. Look at the endless possibilities you've got, with Bonnie and Darren as characters. I don't know why you stopped doing those.

Bonnie said if I wrote any more stories about her, she'd get even. I didn't want to find out how.

I see.

OK, I'm going to keep writing now. And I think I've figured out how the story is going to end. She's going to realize, as she's standing there, that she really does still love him, that she forgives him and can't kill him. But he wakes up and sees her standing over him with the knife, and has a heart attack and dies ...

Oh, I get it. A knock-off of Romeo and Juliet. Very clever.

I have my moments.

All right, continue. I won't interrupt any more.

Thank you.

At least, until the drinking had started to change him. He became cruel and vindictive...