

Quotidian Things and Situations

(Things to write if you get stuck– Make them be a part of your novel)

These objects and simple scenes might appear– and have appeared– in incredibly different works of art and entertainment. Since they are all ordinary, every day objects or occurrences, they might happen to almost anyone. The point here is to use them to stimulate your writing– to accumulate more material around the quotidian things as the oyster makes the pearl around a grain of sand.

- Main character wakes up with a hangover (literal or figurative)
- A character opens a drawer and finds...
- Someone chooses a gift for someone else.
- Someone wakes from sleep– suddenly or slowly.
- A character has a dream in the night...
- A character has a daydream.
- A kiss. This could be passionate or respectful or anything else.
- An unexpected guest
- Someone from the past
- An upsetting phone call
- A news item
- A sudden shock
- A dialogue scene in which two people are after different things from the conversation.
- Two characters are talking, and there is a subtext– something else is going on.
- Two characters are talking about some ordinary object– a bottle of wine, a painting on the museum wall– but they are really talking about something entirely different.
- People share a meal.
- Someone is putting on new shoes– how they look at feel, what they show about the character.
- an adult is making a child suffer (can be verbal or inadvertent as a doctor gives a shot to a reluctant toddler)
- Music
- Put an apple in your narrative. Include a close description of the object.
- There are many objects that can be used this same way to begin a scene, or perhaps to set a character off remembering or into a flashback.. Start by describing, perhaps with the character observing or handling the thing, or just watching it, and then let that take you wherever it goes:

Bird (alive? Roasted?)
Rose
Used towel
Dog (or any other animal)
Knife
Tattoo
Shoes

Hair (baldness? A strange style?)
A sport (observed, or character playing)
A child (again, observed or part of story)
Feet
hands
Mug
wing nut