

The truth is...we gather on the Third Monday of each month to practice our writing skills. We listen and share in each other's work. We are small in number and our commitment is strictly to produce and foster creativity among our members.

We started in July 1999 and consist of adults that enjoy writing memoirs, commentaries, essays, poems, and/or prose. Our simple method each month is to use a pre-selected word or phrase as the basis of a story, an idea, an opinion, a derivative of, or an implied essence of and write a 1 to 1 ½ page document. We share our stories, comment, and in that way build up our writing skills through practice and presentation. The atmosphere is friendly and supportive, and the feedback is gentle.

Curious? Always wanted to try writing for fun, entertainment, or even profit? Come visit with us at any of our open meetings. Bring a sample of your work. Sit in and see what we do. If you like it, join us every month and become a member.

**Original Works by Members of the Pen & Ink Writers' Group
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January 2019 selection – Gumption

**A Writers' Group Discussion in Dialogue Style
Presented January 21, 2019**

**The Road to Gumption
By N. Stewart**

(H) “Look at that sign...Gumption Gulch 5 miles. Let's take the turn off and see where it leads. We planned on spending the day in the country, so let's see what the town looks like,” said Hannah. “It's almost noon, time to stop for lunch anyway. Hope we can discover some quaint, cute, little off the beaten path restaurant where we can get a fabulous homemade meal, check out the place, and find an antique store with hidden treasures.”

(Z) “Who would name a town Gumption Gulch, anyway?” Zoey said, exiting the highway.

(H) “That must be it up ahead. Looks to be a main street with a few buildings and some old, old houses.”

(Z) “There. That's what I expect to see... a local dive bar, a church and a cemetery. No matter how small the town all of them have those same three. You gotta drink, you gotta pray, and you gotta die. Those houses look like they haven't been lived in for years.”

(H) “Over there’s a general store, slash post office, slash sheriff’s station and there is an antique shop with an open sign in the window though it looks kinda shady,” said Hannah. “Dare we stop and go in?”

(Z) “It’s too creepy looking because of the dirty, cracked windows and besides I’m hungry. Who knows, perhaps a member of the Bates family owns it and if we step inside, we may never be seen alive...ever again. Is there a pond out back to hide our car and bodies?”

(H) “Stop it. Zoe. You’re scaring me. There’s a restaurant further down the street and there are a few cars parked outside. Drive by and we can take a look.

“Did you see all the heads turn in our direction as we went by? It was probably the sight of a strange car going through town that got their curiosity going. I bet it has been days or even months since any one has ventured through here. This town is so desolate, isolated, and back-woody.

“Turn around, go back through town, pass the restaurant and see what they do this time. Maybe stop for lunch?”

(Z) “Now, who’s being silly, Hannah. There is nothing here for us and I’m not *that* hungry. I’m heading back to the main road to find a McDonald’s,” said Zoey, turning in the middle of the street.

(H) “Oh no! There are flashing lights behind us from a sheriff’s car. We’re in for it now. You’d better pull over.”

(Z) “Ya think?”

“Ladies, you made an illegal turn back there. May I see your driver’s license and your car registration,” and taking them, he walked back to the squad car.

(Z) “He’s talking on the radio. Probably checking out my ID.”

(H) “Now what’ll happen? I hope we don’t end up in jail in this one-horse town. Do you have any cash? I have some.”

(Z) “You mean to bribe him? Hannah, are you nuts? That will land us in jail for sure.”

(H) “Of course not. I meant to pay the fine or bail us out. How much can it be? God, please get us out of this town before anything really bad happens. Here comes the Sheriff.”

“Ma’am, I am going to let you go on your way with a warning. Try to be more careful in the future and have a great day.”

(Z) “Thank you, Officer,” taking back her license, registration and rolling up the window.

(Z) “Let’s get out of here asap,” said Zoey, sighing with relief.

(H) “Oh, look...there’s that eerie antique shop we passed earlier. Shall we stop and look around? This is such a warm and welcomingly sort of place. I’m sure we could find some interesting treasures...or alarming characters in that quaint little shop.”

(Z) “Sometimes, Hannah, you can be so mean. We are not stopping. We are out of here.”

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Story Analysis and Discussion

Five Elements of a (Short) Short Story – The Road to Gumption Gulch

Characters (who):

 Zoey, dialogue represented by paragraphs labeled Z, driver with a business-like attitude.

 Hannah, dialogue represented by paragraphs labeled H, passenger with carefree attitude.

 Sheriff - minor character, introduces potential conflict.

Plot (what): Two adult women, investigating a small town off the beaten path for hidden treasures.

Setting (where and when): Old small town in the middle of nowhere, current timeframe.

Theme (why): Be aware when seeking hidden treasures.

Style (how): First person, present tense, all dialogue without narration.

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