

Once Upon a Time



Writer's handbook

Credits

Author: Kelly Olmstead

Editor, Graphic Designer, and Layout: Michelle Nephew

Artwork: Omar Rayyan

Proofreader: Roberta Olson

Publisher: John Nephew

Once Upon a Time Card Game Creators: Richard Lambert,

Andrew Rilstone, & James Wallis

Publisher's Thanks: To Jerry Corrick and the gang at the Source.

Author's Dedication: In memory of Mrs. Marty Rice. You always knew I'd get here someday. You are missed.

Acknowledgements

An author is always in debt to many people by the end of a book — this case is no exception. I give great thanks to the following people, without whom this book couldn't have been completed:

Dr. Tim Lloyd and the American Folklore Society for their kind permission to use Vladimir Propp's Functions of the Folktale.

Richard Lambert, Andrew Rilstone, and James Wallis, the creators of the *Once Upon A Time* card game, for letting me put their game to a new use and for sharing its history with me.

Michelle Nephew of Atlas Games for all her efforts in organizing permissions for this project, and John Nephew of Atlas Games for publishing it. I just wrote this thing — they did the rest.

Bill Bodden, for all the wonderful help and advice on what to do with this crazy idea of mine.

Erik Carlson, for many years of writing support as well as comments on this project.

Kaci Koltz, for her valuable critique despite our stylistic differences.

Alex Hogg, for taking the time between work, grad school, and pampering his pregnant wife to read the manuscript.

And most of all, my husband Russ, for the support, the milk baths, and banishing me to my writing desk when I slacked off. I love you.



© 2012-2013 Trident, Inc. d/b/a Atlas Games.

All rights reserved. *Once Upon a Time* is a trademark of John Nephew, used under license.


Digital Version 1.0

www.Atlas-Games.com

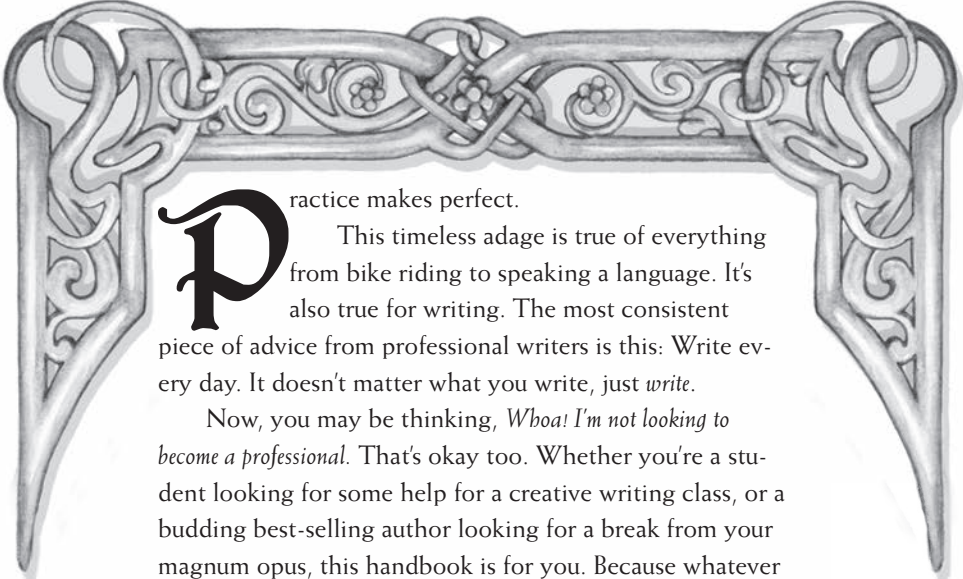


Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter One: How to Use This Writer's Handbook	6
Chapter Two: Story Ideas	12
Chapter Three: Structure, Plot, & Style	30
Chapter Four: Putting it All Together	59
Chapter Five: Ever After	92
Afterward	101
Appendix A: List of Recommended Reading	109
Appendix B: Revised Sample Story	112
Appendix C: Vladimir Propp's Functions of the Folktale	122

A decorative border surrounds the page. The top left corner features a floral vine with leaves and small flowers. The right side is dominated by a complex, interlocking Celtic knotwork pattern. The bottom left corner has a circular element containing the page number. The background is a light, textured grey.

Introduction



Practice makes perfect. This timeless adage is true of everything from bike riding to speaking a language. It's also true for writing. The most consistent piece of advice from professional writers is this: Write every day. It doesn't matter what you write, just *write*.

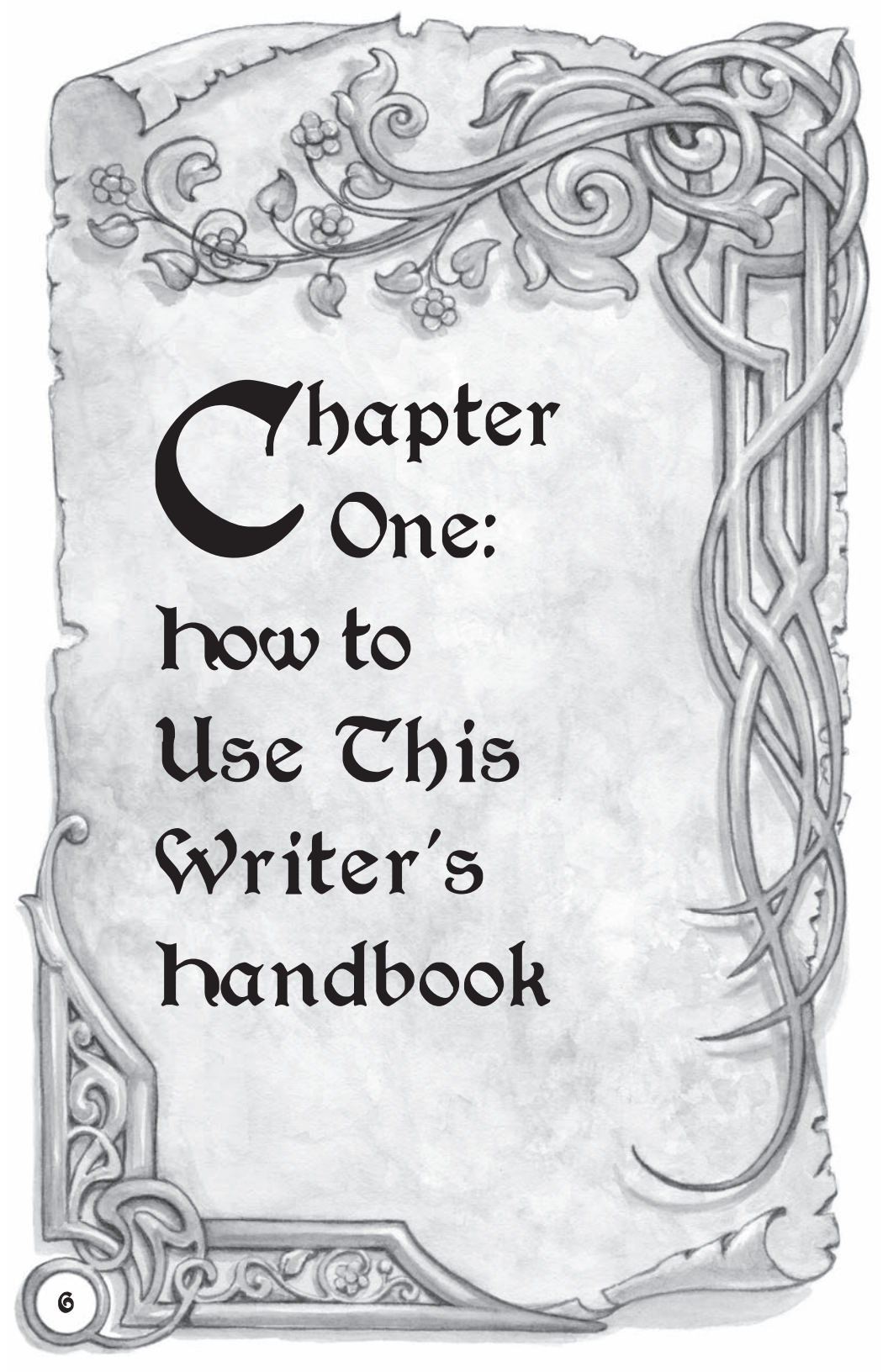
Now, you may be thinking, *Whoa! I'm not looking to become a professional*. That's okay too. Whether you're a student looking for some help for a creative writing class, or a budding best-selling author looking for a break from your magnum opus, this handbook is for you. Because whatever your motivation to write, you'll probably at some point run into every writer's bane.

Writer's block.

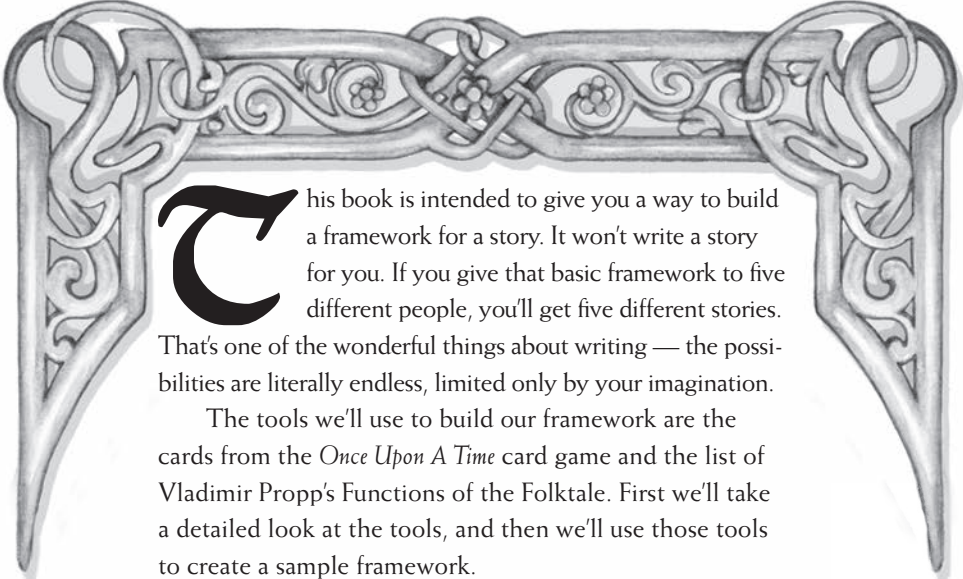
It's great to say "write every day," but when you're staring at your blank monitor that empty white page can seem to go on forever.

"Just write." Great. Write *what*?

Welcome to the *Once Upon A Time Writer's Handbook*.



Chapter
One:
how to
Use This
Writer's
handbook



This book is intended to give you a way to build a framework for a story. It won't write a story for you. If you give that basic framework to five different people, you'll get five different stories.

That's one of the wonderful things about writing — the possibilities are literally endless, limited only by your imagination.

The tools we'll use to build our framework are the cards from the *Once Upon A Time* card game and the list of Vladimir Propp's Functions of the Folktale. First we'll take a detailed look at the tools, and then we'll use those tools to create a sample framework.

Once Upon a Time

Once Upon A Time is a storytelling card game published by Atlas Games and designed by Richard Lambert, Andrew Rilstone, and James Wallis, in which a group of players create a story using different cards. The game consists of two groups of cards: 110 Story cards, and 55 Ending cards. For the purposes of this book, I'll refer to these as *Once Upon A Time* cards if I'm referring to all of them at once. In the game one player at a time is the Storyteller, who tells the story in such a way as to try to use all the cards in his hand and work the story around to the ending on his Ending card. The other players will try to interrupt the Storyteller and take over the story so that they can use up the cards in their hands and steer the story toward their own endings. The first player to empty his hand of Story cards and fulfill his Ending card wins the game, but the greater goal of the game is to have fun telling a satisfying story.

The *Once Upon A Time* cards are aimed at fairy tales or folktales, but with a little thought these can be used for any genre. Blank cards can be purchased separately, too, so you can add your own Ending and Story cards. You

Once Upon a Time™

The Storytelling Card Game



Tell your own fantastic tales of
brave heroes and daring adventure!

Get your copy of the award-winning storytelling card
game today, and start telling your own fairytale stories!

Find it at your friendly local game store, or online:



www.Atlas-Games.com/ouat3

Stock #AG1030 • ISBN 1-58978-131-7

©2012 Trident, Inc. d/b/a Atlas Games. Once Upon a Time is a trademark
of John Nephew, used under license. All rights reserved.