

Some Guidelines for Writing Untethered Tales

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Additional stories are available on my personal website.

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An untethered tale is written by at least two authors, taking turns, and with a minimum of consultation between them. There shouldn't be any consultation at all concerning the intended direction of the plot. Indeed, that can be somewhat of a contest between the authors as each author tries to steer the action in a particular direction. Such consultation as happens should be limited to resolving actual inconsistencies and conflicts that can easily creep into the story as the authors vie for control of the action and, particularly, when one author misinterprets or incorrectly understands what the other author has just written. In such a case, an author might have to rewrite his most recent part of the story to make it consistent with the intended meaning of the previous parts of the story.

There isn't any particular length requirement for an author's part of the story. Courtesy is a good guideline. An author can make his part of the story as short as he wants. He should not make it so long as to unreasonably monopolize the telling of the tale.

An author can go back and rewrite one of his previous portions of the story, so long as such changes don't invalidate any subsequent part of the story that was already added by another author, prior to the rewrite.

If an author writes a part of the story that is invalid by reason of some logical conflict with a previous part of the story, then generally the burden should be on the latter author to make the necessary changes to bring his subsequent part of the story into logical consistency with the previous part of the story. However, if the previous part of the story was ambiguous or difficult to understand, then there might be a burden upon the author of that previous part of the story to clarify the part of the story that's causing the problem.

It's customary that the names of the authors appear in the byline in the same order as their first parts appear in the story. It's also customary for each author to have a specific text color. Each author's name in the byline and that author's text in the story should appear in that author's text color.

I'll be adding to these guidelines from time to time, as I think of new things that make the untethered tales work better.

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