

The Final Entry

Word Count: 1081

Writing: 1 hour

Editing: 22 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 22 minutes

Dear Reader,

From *40,000* I wish you a final, Merry Wednesday! Since starting this project, I've planned on writing an introduction to the anthology. I feel that to explain the raw format of the book and stories and what it is they were meant to accomplish from the beginning, into what is now the end, a little background is necessary. So with that in mind I decided the best possible way to introduce a collection such as this, is to write it in one hour, and edit it in thirty minutes. Leaving a rough and only slightly edited thousand words to describe how my brain fell onto the following pages.

When I started this collection last January, I began it as a fun way to keep myself busy between writing projects (I had just finished the first draft of my new SciFi novel and had to start getting it ready for publication). It was also a good way to show how my writing differs now from *The Bird Room*, which has stories that are years old.

Quickly, as the weeks past I began to look forward to Monday's (which ended up turning into Wednesday's) when I would get to wake up, drink coffee, and make up a thousand words of whatever my heart desired. Should I write about robots today? *Sure!* How about a little boy who cares for his rotting mother in a dystopian future America? *Absolutely!* Aliens? *Duh!*

No matter what I was writing about, though, I made sure I stayed true to the idea behind every story. To force it out. Not one story that's been written took more than the allotted time, and all of the timestamps at the top of every page, are one-hundred percent accurate. With every story's word count totaling between 800 and 1,300 words creating an anthology of 42,637 (that's including the short intros before each story, but excluding what you're reading right now).

The thousand-word short story format is one of my personal favorites. In high school, I had a writing teacher who would have us write a thousand words a week. While the rest of the class spent their time that week thinking about what words they were going to use to fill up those empty lines, I went about my life partying and carrying on like a drunken pirate. Then the night before the assignment was due would roll around, and I'd have to hurry up and finish my thousand-word story. And despite what I thought about them, from what everyone told me, they didn't suck.

Flash-forward to a decade later, I was on Twitter and saw a hashtag called 1k1hr trending (this is where authors attempt to write one-thousand words in an hour) and it took me right back to those stories in high school. Right back to that elusive place where the mind goes when it is forced to squeeze the creative juices out. It was also at this time that I was thinking about ways to get more of my writing out into the world so when people asked me what it was that I wrote about, not only would I be able to tell them what kind of stories I write, but there would be a place I could send them to where plenty of examples lived.

I didn't however, have a ton of time to devote to a new project and virtually no money to spend on any sort of publishing expenses (I was already committed to my upcoming SciFi novel). Still, I wanted to be actively writing something that the world could read right away. It didn't take long before the lightbulb appeared over my head and *40,000: A Rough Draft*, was born.

I would give myself one hour to write a thousand word short story, then thirty minutes to look it over and make any quick changes I thought were necessary, before publishing on my blog and sharing through various sources on the internet. This way I was enjoying writing stories that didn't take too much time away from my other work and people knew going in they would not be reading a polished piece of

writing.

Each morning I would go into my office, or to the coffee shop, with basically no idea what I was going to write about. There were even some mornings when I was having a tough time starting and would scan those, *first-line generators*, for any kind of inspiration. I felt like starting blank was true to the writing format of the stories, forcing myself to be creative, even if it came out as complete crap. It would be a creative pile.

Now, I have forty, one-thousand word short stories that are about so, so many different things. They aren't all winners, but I like to think that most are decent at the very least (although I'm pretty sure after finishing every single story, when asked what I thought about it, my response was, "eh, I don't think it's that great," with a reluctant shrug). It's been a fun project and a great exercise that I recommend for anyone trying to stimulate their creativity. I can't wait to start taking some of these stories and helping them grow into the novels that they are destined to become.

Finally, as my time limit and word count are coming to a close today, I want to thank anyone and everyone who took the time to read these stories as I was releasing them. Getting online and seeing that somebody opened and read the story in their email, or that I had a new comment or vote on my blog or on Wattpad, it made my day every time. So a sincere thanks to you all.

Now onto the next thing. Look for the announcement of my new novel coming soon, and starting in a couple weeks I will be re-releasing the first book in my *Jack-o and the Amulet* series exclusively on Wattpad with new posts every Wednesday.

Finally, I plan on getting *40,000: A Rough Draft*, line-edited to take care of all the grammatical mistakes for anyone who doesn't want the rough draft version (which you can get free by signing up for my newsletter). It will be available in the near future as an ebook for \$0.99 on Amazon.

I've had a blast writing these stories and I hope you find something among these pages that intrigues and inspires you. Please Enjoy!

Chad Hofmann
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