

## Sci-Fi/Fantasy

**Exercise 1:** In groups of 2 or 3, consider the following scenario: It's August 2011. There has been an alien invasion, but not from outer space. For thousands of years, a highly intelligent race of beings has lived at the deepest level of the oceans, protected by cities far beyond our technology. But global warming has shifted the oceans temperatures, and the cities have been crumbling.

So now the underwater aliens—we humans call them the Deep Dwellers—have come above ground. They breathe in, oxygen, but they exhale carbonic acid, which is highly toxic to us. As the Deep Dwellers started moving into our cities, humans began dying in large numbers, poisoned by the acidic air. If you are within two feet of one of the aliens, your throat will begin to close up, and you'll be dead within two minutes. If you avoid direct contact, you're safe. But the aliens seem to know they can hurt us merely by breathing on us—maybe they blame us for the global warming that destroyed their own cities—and they are hunting us like animals. They are visiting every city across the country, travelling quickly through the air on wings the color of fish scales.

You are the only one left of our entire family—you had run out to the car to get your jacket when the aliens arrived at your home. You were afraid to go back in your house, so you ran away with only the clothes you're wearing. The streets are mostly empty, and you think the aliens have wiped out most of the population in Birmingham.

You've just met the other members of your group outside of an abandoned house, and you've decided to go in and spend the night. And that is where your story begins. Designate one person as the writer and come up with answers to these questions.

- 1) What is your goal as a group? Or do you have multiple goals? Are short-term and long-term goals different? Think about how your goals—and your needs—determine what you need to find in this house (or anywhere else.)
- 2) What are you looking for in the house? As a group, decide on the top five most important items to find and take with you. What about a top ten list?
- 3) Will you stay in the house or leave? This is a crucial question: Is it safer to stay or leave? If you stay, what kinds of precautions do you need to take? If you leave, where will you go? Why? How will you get there? On foot? By car? What are the dangers of each?
- 4) How does how you travel effect what you can take with you?
- 5) Do you have multiple stops you want to make? If so, explain.

**Exercise 2:** Using the scenario you've developed, imagine that you've become separated from the group. Writing in the first-person, develop a story set during this invasion. Your story should begin on the outskirts of Birmingham.

- 1) Give us plenty of good details, letting us know how the world around you looks and sounds. How do you feel, emotionally and physically? Work those kinds of details into the story.
- 2) As your story evolves, let us know what you want. (Remember one of the basic rules of storytelling: Every character should want something.) Let us know where you're headed and what's in your way.

- 3) Somewhere in your story, encounter an alien. Take your time creating your alien, which may be different from everyone else's. Describe it. Think through how it might interact with you—maybe it does something surprising.