

**Title:** Wake Up, You Snowflakes: Torture Your Readers, They're Begging for It

**Synopsis:**

In this sardonic exploration of modern storytelling, The Snark dives deep into the allure of apocalyptic and dystopian fiction, examining how the increasing immediacy of our fears, amplified through phones and media, has fueled a hunger for chaos in narratives. The blog humorously argues that writers should lean into this desire, acknowledging that the best way to engage readers is by torturing them emotionally—because, let's face it, that's what they crave. From "The Last Selfie" to the ever-present reality of climate change, readers aren't just looking for distraction—they want the raw, unsettling, and deeply uncomfortable truths of the world, played out on the page. So, what's a writer to do? Embrace the chaos, feed the hunger for disaster, and let the world burn (figuratively, of course).

The Snark's Blog: [here](#)

**Discussion Questions**

*Use these questions to spark conversation and reflection in the classroom:*

- Why do you think there's such a widespread fascination with apocalyptic and dystopian stories? What do these narratives offer that traditional stories may not?
- How has technology (phones, social media, etc.) changed the way we perceive and engage with fear and disaster? Are we more removed from reality, or more connected to it?
- The Snark urges writers to "torture your readers." Do you agree with this sentiment? How can creating discomfort in readers lead to a more engaging story?
- How does the concept of "mediated immediacy"—disasters happening "through our phones"—affect how we write and consume stories?
- In what ways can writers balance dark, uncomfortable themes with the need to entertain? What are the potential risks of going too far in terms of emotional distress in fiction?

**Writer's Prompts**

*Creative exercises to help students apply the themes of the topic:*

- **Prompt 1: The Last Selfie on Earth.** Write a scene in which the last group of people left on Earth records their final moments on a phone. What happens in those last few seconds of the world, and how do they reconcile the end with the digital image they're leaving behind?
- **Prompt 2: Torturing Your Characters.** Create a scenario where a character must confront their deepest fear—publicly and for an audience. What do they learn about themselves in the process, and how does the world around them react?
- **Prompt 3: The Comfort of Catastrophe.** Write a short story set in a post-apocalyptic world where the survivors have created a comfortable, mundane routine out of chaos. How do they cope with the ongoing disasters, and what does their sense of normalcy look like in a world falling apart?

- **Prompt 4: A World Without Technology.** Imagine a world where all technology (including phones) suddenly stops working. How do people react to the loss of their primary connection to the world? How does the protagonist’s sense of connection and identity change in the absence of constant updates and notifications?
- **Prompt 5. You’re the Virus.** The world is ravaged by a virus that is transmitted via the digital space—social media, phones, everything online. Write about how people react when their online presence starts to literally infect the real world. What happens when you become part of the chaos?
- **Prompt 6: The Great Disconnect.** A character spends their life glued to their phone, even as the world crumbles around them. Write a scene where they get disconnected, forced to interact with the real world for the first time. How do they react to the sudden, uncomfortable shift from the virtual to the tangible?

### **Class Activities**

*These activities will help expand on the themes of the topic:*

- **Group Discussion:** In groups, discuss what makes apocalyptic fiction so compelling. Is it the thrill of danger, the exploration of human nature under pressure, or something else? How can writers use that appeal to create a deeper connection with readers while also playing with the readers' discomfort?
- **Design Exercise – The Last Selfie:** Have students design a “last selfie” for the end of the world. What would they want to capture in their final moments? What kind of image or message would they want to leave behind for future generations (or no one at all)? How does the imagery differ from other kinds of “final moments” in apocalyptic fiction?
- **Debate – Comfort vs. Chaos:** Hold a class debate on the role of comfort versus chaos in storytelling. One side argues for the power of discomfort and pushing boundaries to engage readers, while the other argues that stories should provide some degree of escape from real-world fears and chaos. Which side is more effective for writers?
- **Collaborative Story-Building – The End of the World as We Know It:** In small groups, students collaboratively write a scene depicting the end of the world. Each member writes a different section, but they must include specific elements such as the last social media post, the final phone call, and a moment of self-realization. How do these fragmented elements tie together to tell a coherent story?

### **Closing note from the blog’s writer, The Snark**

*And there you have it, scribblers—dive into the chaos, the contradictions, and the messiness of the human condition. From apocalyptic selfies to the torturous beauty of discomfort, explore how the very things that make us uncomfortable—our fears, our regrets, our looming disasters—are what give our stories depth and substance. It’s not about running away from the discomfort, but embracing it, leaning into the panic, and watching it unfold. After all, the best stories are the ones that make us squirm, laugh, and maybe even cry a little.*

*So, go ahead—torture your readers. They’ll thank you for it... eventually.*