

**Title:** Omnishambles... The Art of Total Disaster

**Synopsis:**

In this blog, we explore the concept of "omnishambles," a term popularized in British politics to describe a chaotic, out-of-control disaster that touches every facet of a situation. From catastrophic government websites that break everything they were designed to fix, to chaotic weddings involving chocolate fountains and rogue hawks, the concept of omnishambles is a celebration of how things can go wrong in the most beautifully disastrous ways. The blog invites readers to embrace the joy of unexpected chaos, drawing parallels to writing and the creativity required to turn messes into stories.

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

**Discussion Questions**

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

- Why is the word omnishambles so inherently amusing?
- What elements of an omnishambles make it so inherently entertaining or satisfying to witness from the outside?
- How does the unpredictability and extreme nature of an omnishambles help writers? Can a story with too much order and control be boring?
- Why do we, as humans, sometimes delight in the downfall of highly organized, authoritative systems?
- How can the concept of omnishambles be applied to character development? In what ways can a character's failure or mistake serve as a powerful tool for growth in a story?
- Discuss the role of humor in omnishambles. How can a writer use humor to balance the chaotic nature of the situation without downplaying its consequences?

**Writer's Prompts**

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

- **Prompt 1:** The Omnishambles Wedding: Write a scene where a character's perfect wedding day is ruined by a series of progressively absurd events. Think chocolate fountains, rogue animals, and unexpected disasters. What would make this the worst wedding day ever? How does the character respond to this mounting chaos?
- **Prompt 2:** The Government Website Fiasco: Create a story where a bureaucratic attempt to create an all-in-one, user-friendly government website goes disastrously wrong. The website doesn't work, it generates absurd results, and in the process, it shuts down essential services. Who is responsible, and how do they scramble to fix the mess?
- **Prompt 3:** The Omnishambles Detective Case: Write a detective scene where the detective, while investigating a seemingly simple crime, is met with a series of bizarre, unrelated incidents that throw them off-track. What starts as a straightforward investigation quickly

spirals into an out-of-control series of events that completely derail the detective's original plan.

- **Prompt 4:** A Hero's Fall: Write a short scene from the perspective of a character who has always had their life planned out perfectly, only for a single unexpected event to unravel everything. What's the tipping point, and how does this person react when their carefully curated life turns into a complete mess?
- **Prompt 5:** The Public Relations Disaster: Write a scene about a CEO or high-ranking official who is forced to handle a PR disaster involving a product recall, an environmental scandal, and social media backlash. How does this character try to spin the situation, only for things to keep getting worse?

### **Class Activities**

These activities will help expand on the themes of the episode:

- **Group Discussion:** Break the class into groups and assign each one an example of an "omnishambles" from history, current events, or fictional situations. Have them discuss what made each scenario an omnishambles and how it could be used effectively in a story. What lessons can be learned from each event that writers can incorporate into their own work?
- **Omnishambles Design Exercise:** Have each student design their own omnishambles scenario for a specific setting (a wedding, a government office, a corporate environment, a school, etc.). They should consider the key elements that make a scenario an omnishambles: chaos, absurdity, and a snowball effect. Once designed, have students present their omnishambles scenario to the class, explaining how it could unfold.
- **Debate:** Host a debate on whether omnishambles should be used in serious writing or if they're more effective in comedic settings. Half of the class will argue that chaos adds realism and excitement to serious stories, while the other half will argue that it's best reserved for comedic or satirical works.
- **Collaborative Omnishambles Story-Building:** Have the class create a story in groups where a central character or event is at the heart of the omnishambles. Each group will take turns adding absurd twists, missteps, and chaotic events to the story. The goal is to see how far the story can spiral out of control while still making sense in the context of the world they've created.

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

*Ah, the beauty of a well-executed omnishambles—nothing quite like it, right? It's the unexpected, the chaotic, and the absurd, all colliding in a beautifully messy mess. As writers, we have a special power: the power to create utter chaos while still making it work, and surprise our readers in ways that turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. So, the next time you sit down to write, think of an omnishambles. Throw in a curveball, toss your characters into chaos, and watch them flounder. And most importantly, don't be afraid to laugh at the mess you're about to make—because*

*sometimes, that mess is exactly what makes the story. Embrace the chaos; it's where creativity thrives.*