

So we had another cool visitor at Marianopolis today. This time, it was Lori Weber, author of *Klepto*, *Split*, *Strange Beauty* and *Tattoo Heaven*. Lori did a general presentation that was open to all students, and later a special workshop on setting for my "Writing for Children" class. So I'll devote today's blog entry to sharing some of her wisdom. During her general presentation, Lori surprised us by pulling a stack of rejection papers out of her bag. "I always bring my rejection letters to presentations," she told us. Like most successful writers, Lori found the strength to keep writing despite those early rejections. Her message was clear: Don't give up!

In response to a question about finding inspiration, Lori advised students to "look inside. Shut off the technology. Turn the lights out. Sit on your bed. Think about: What gives me a rush? Or do I have a really strong memory of something that once happened to me and that's still with me?" Those kinds of things can be good jumping-off points for a new project.

In her workshop on setting, Lori read excerpts from some of her books and showed us how setting can be used to reveal important information about your characters. "Make use of your setting," Lori told my class. Lori added that if you've ever been in a strange place you could include it in your story: "If you're going to be a writer, remember the weird places you stumble on."

It's nearly dinner time -- and I've got to pack for GritLit, the Hamilton literary festival where I'll be reading this weekend. Hopefully I'll get to chat a bit with Don Aker (a YA writer who'll be at the same events as me) -- and perhaps be able to report back with some of HIS writing tips next week. Have a happy safe weekend!