



TWO BIRDS
Author Services

25

MISTAKES

You Don't Want to
Make as an Author

Common-Sense Tips for Writers

www.twobirdsauthorservices.com

  
@twobirdsediting



When it comes to putting out your best book — one that you're proud of and one that sells — it's important to think like a savvy businessperson. Finding success as an author means learning how to make the right moves and avoid the rookie mistakes that will take you far afield from your goals as an author.

At Two Birds Author Services, we believe in helping authors at all stages of their career make the best moves and put out books that they're proud of. And that starts with knowing what to do and what not to do. These 25 tips can help you make sure that you're on the right track to having the author's career and bookselling success that you desire. We hope they're helpful to you!



twobirdsauthorservices.com

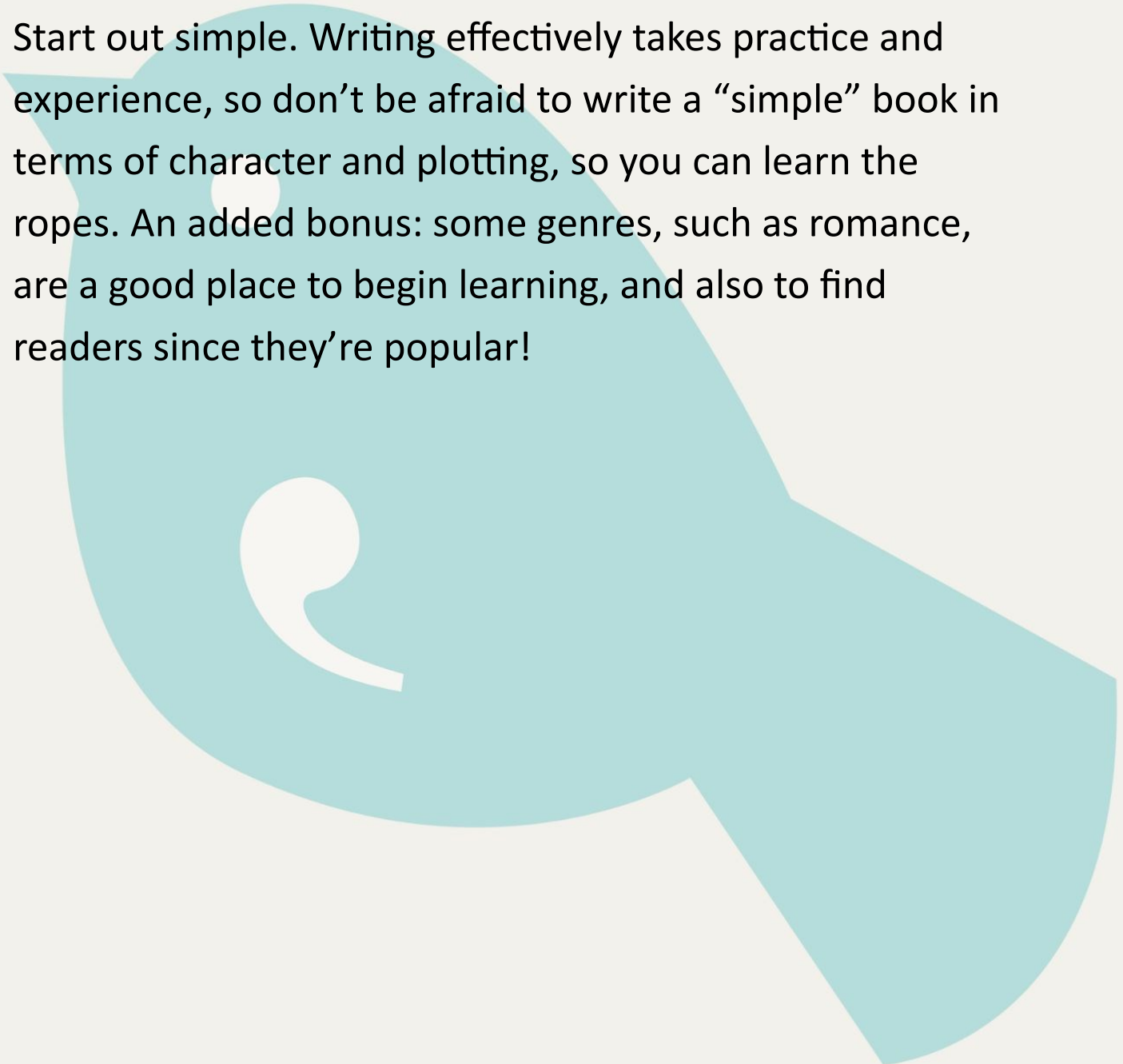
twobirdsauthorservices@gmail.com

Mistake #1: NOT STUDYING YOUR CRAFT

Definitely do study your craft! There will be elements of fiction you naturally gravitate to and write well (description maybe, or dialogue), while other aspects you'll have to work to get better at (fight scenes, sex scenes, etc.). Read craft books, study successful writers, and take suggestions from your editor so you can improve.

Mistake #2: JUMPING INTO THE DEEP END WITH YOUR FIRST BOOK

Start out simple. Writing effectively takes practice and experience, so don't be afraid to write a "simple" book in terms of character and plotting, so you can learn the ropes. An added bonus: some genres, such as romance, are a good place to begin learning, and also to find readers since they're popular!

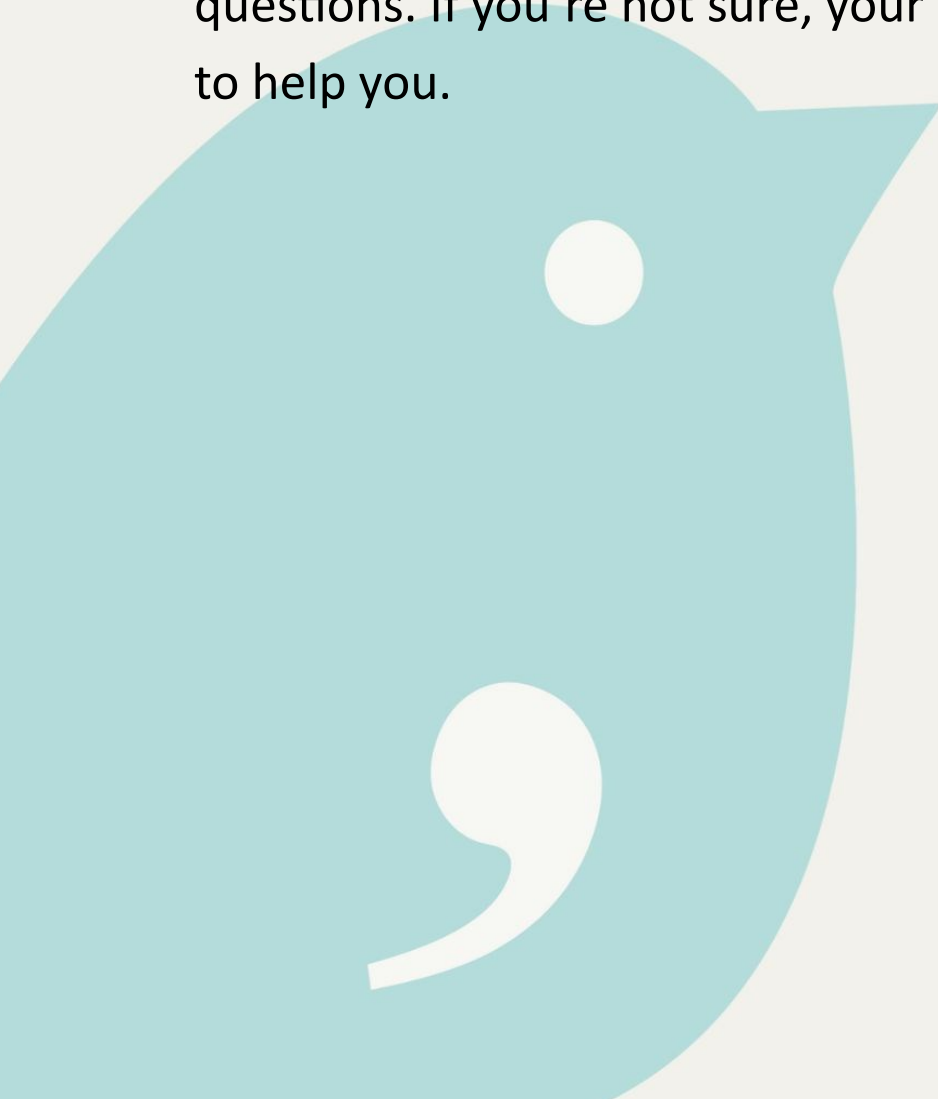


Mistake #3: REWRITING YOUR FAVORITE BOOK

Don't try to rewrite your favorite book, especially if it's complex or unusual in some way. Tolkien wrote elf languages because he was a linguist. And he wrote mythic style because he was a professor of ancient mythic texts like the Edda (which most of us haven't even heard of, much less read in its original language and analyzed in relation to historical events). You may not have the chops to do that, but also ... you don't have to. Concentrate on what makes you unique.

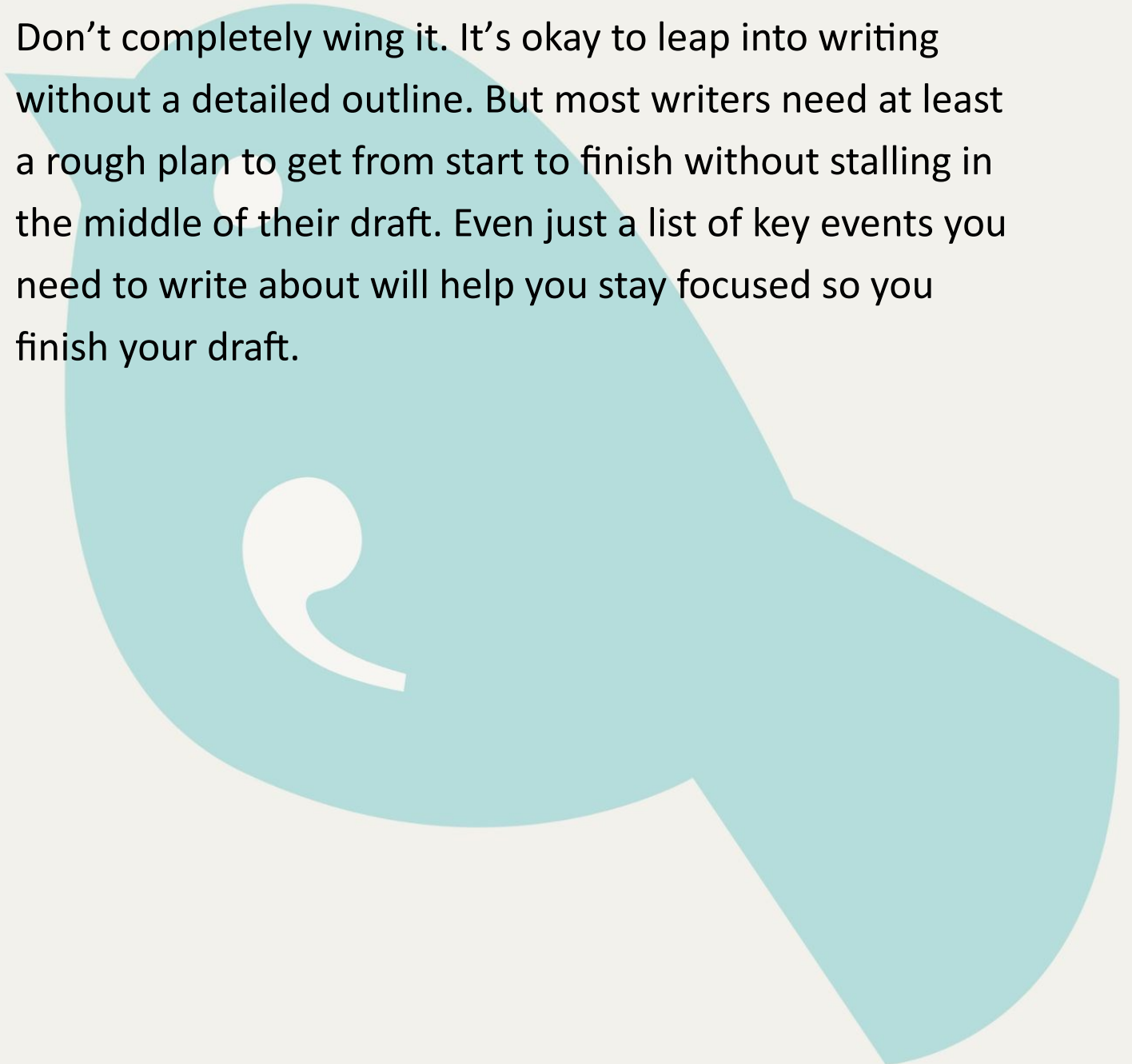
Mistake #4: STRAYING FROM YOUR GENRE CONVENTIONS

Are you writing for the right genre? Does your story have the conventions of others in your target genre? Try to be as honest as possible with the answers to these questions. If you're not sure, your editor should be able to help you.



Mistake #5: “IT’S OKAY, I’LL JUST WING IT”

Don't completely wing it. It's okay to leap into writing without a detailed outline. But most writers need at least a rough plan to get from start to finish without stalling in the middle of their draft. Even just a list of key events you need to write about will help you stay focused so you finish your draft.



Mistake #6:
**KEEP REWRITING CHAPTER
ONE AGAIN AND AGAIN AND
AGAIN...**

It's all too easy to want to go back and edit your first chapter over and over, but don't spend all your time rewriting a few scenes—you have to finish your first draft too. Complete the draft, then revise.

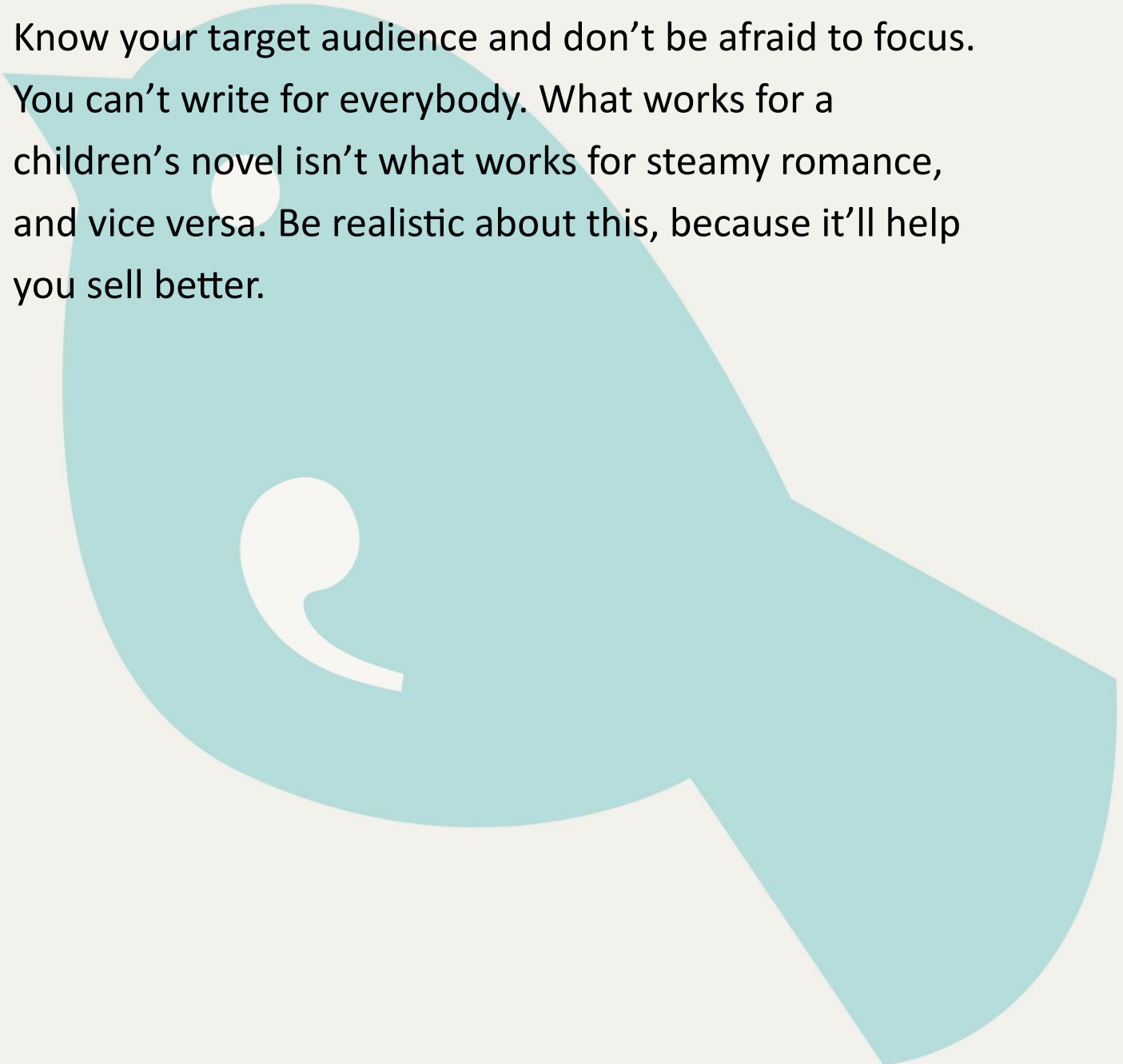


Mistake #7: STARTING A SERIES WITHOUT KNOWING HOW IT ENDS

Don't jump into a series without planning it out first. Plunging ahead might seem like a good idea, especially if you're excited and ready to start writing! But taking the time to plan could save you precious time later. Consider things like how many books will be in the series and what kind of series you want to write. (All about the same character? About a group of characters? Centering around a location?) Plus, have a clear picture of your story arc for each book as well as the whole series. A little flexibility is good, but too much could prove problematic.

Mistake #8: WRITING A BOOK THAT WILL “APPEAL TO EVERYONE”

Know your target audience and don't be afraid to focus. You can't write for everybody. What works for a children's novel isn't what works for steamy romance, and vice versa. Be realistic about this, because it'll help you sell better.

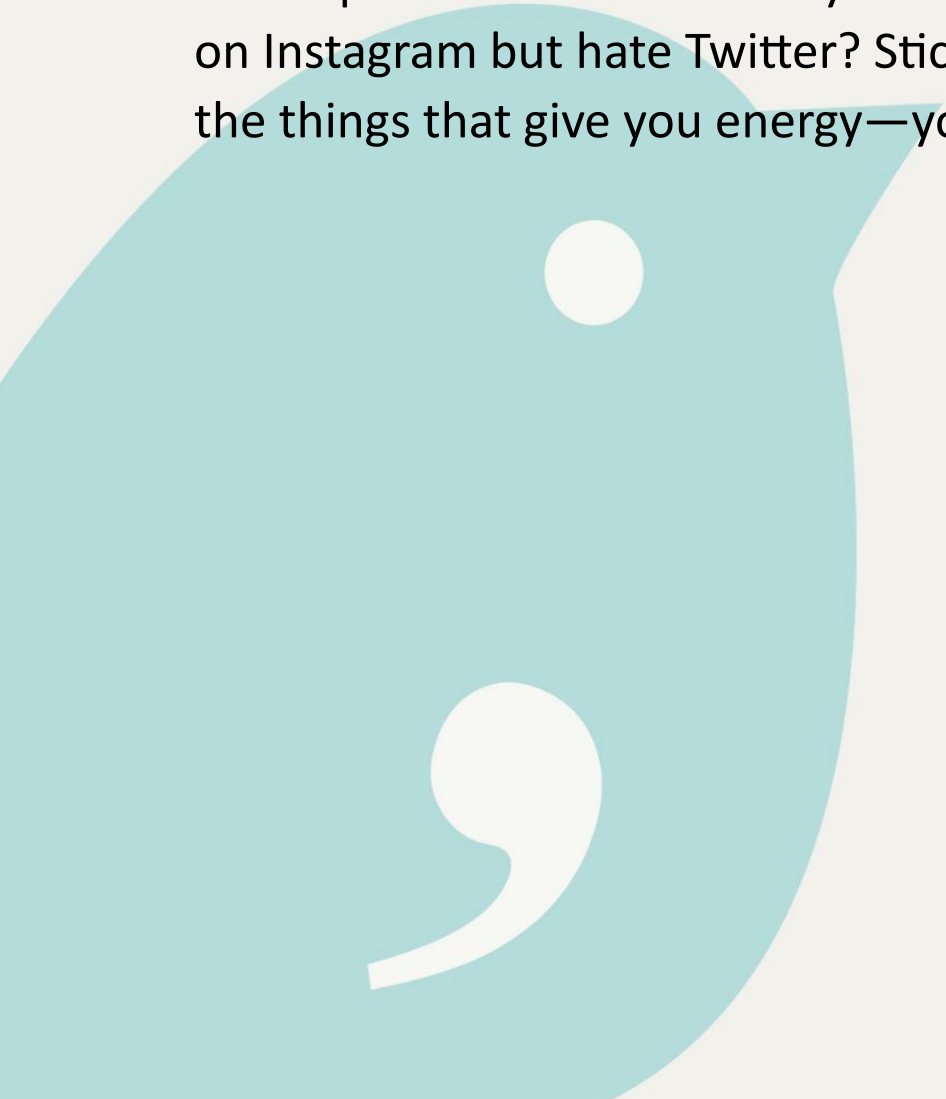


Mistake #9: RUSHING YOUR RELEASE

Don't fall for FOMO and rush your writing. Gone are the days of putting a hurried piece of writing on Amazon and watching the bucks fly into your bank account! Granted, those days have been gone for a while, but it is increasingly important to emphasize quality over quantity. Besides, techniques like rapid release are only sustainable for certain kinds of writers, and that may not be you. And that's okay. Put out books you're proud of.

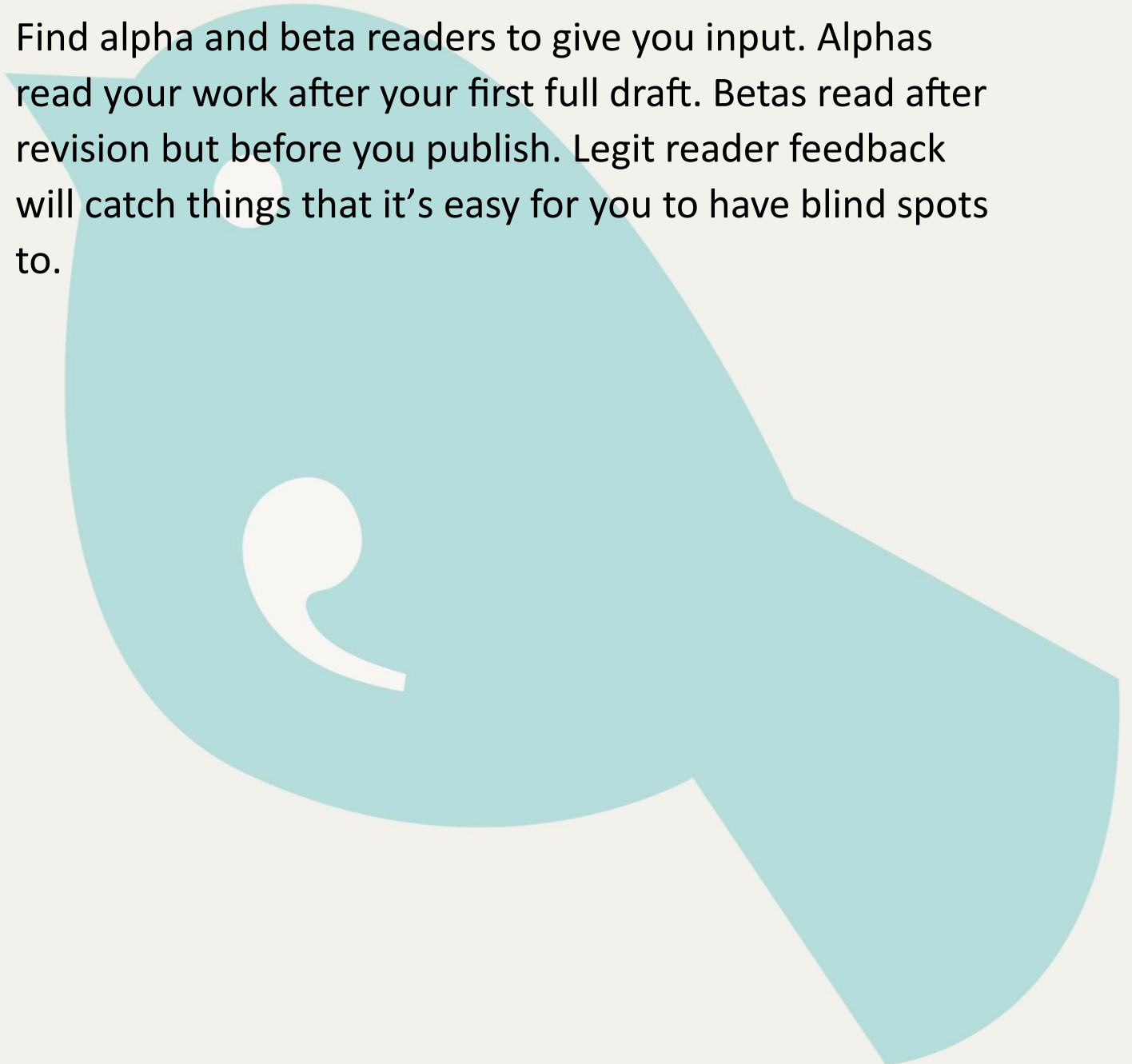
Mistake #10: OBSESSING OVER YOUR WEAKNESSES

Focus on your strengths, not your weaknesses. What kinds of things are you good at? Are you great at creating suspenseful scenes but not so great at in-depth character development? Then write to your strengths! Enjoy being on Instagram but hate Twitter? Stick with Insta! Stay with the things that give you energy—you'll get farther.



Mistake #11: NOT SHOWING YOUR WORK TO ANYONE UNTIL IT'S DONE

Find alpha and beta readers to give you input. Alphas read your work after your first full draft. Betas read after revision but before you publish. Legit reader feedback will catch things that it's easy for you to have blind spots to.



Mistake #12: CHOOSING AN EDITOR BASED ONLY ON WHAT THEY CHARGE

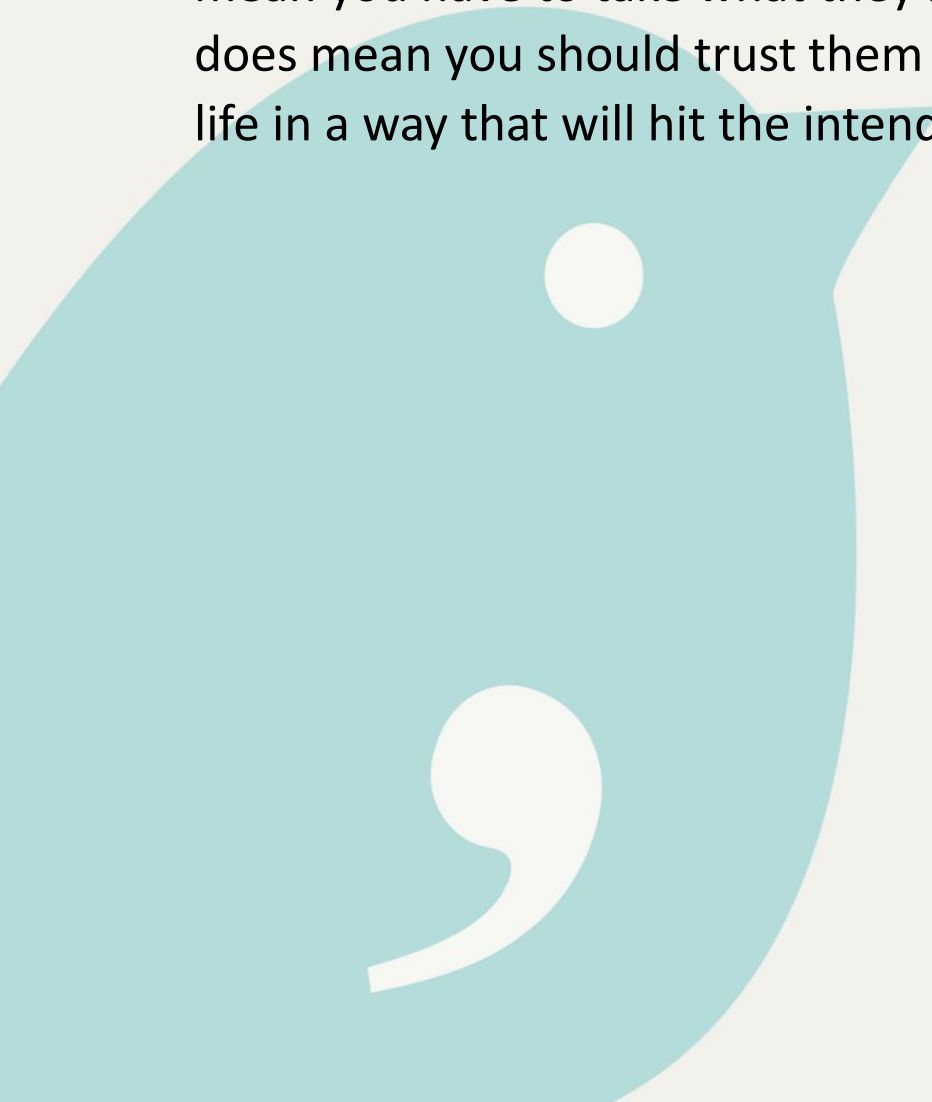
Don't pick an editor solely on price. Get referrals, ask for a sample edit, and ask questions. Make sure your editing team is a good fit for you, and not just the cheapest one. Things to consider are what genres they work in, what their specialties are, and whether they provide clear feedback. And don't underestimate your intuition! If you get a good feeling from your sample edit, that's worth something.

Mistake #13: IGNORING GENRE CONVENTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR BOOK COVER

Do your research on book covers in your genre. Study genre expectations carefully and learn all you can. What covers do you like in your chosen genre? What about them catches your eye? Look at the top-selling books in your intended category. What do they look like, and what elements do they have in common? You may have the “perfect look” in your mind, but if your masterpiece doesn’t follow genre conventions, readers won’t know what to expect and they may not hit that buy button.

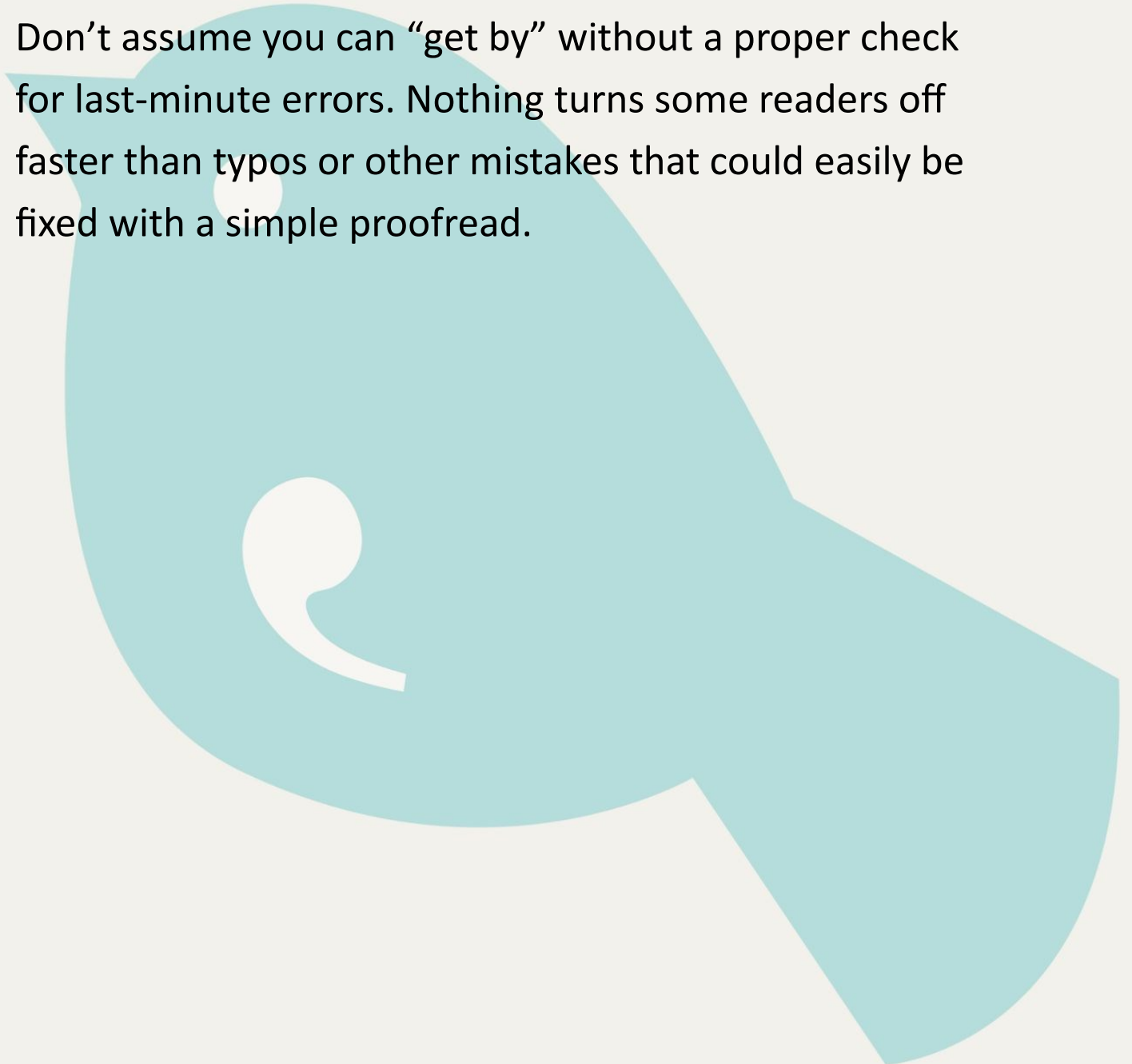
Mistake #14: FINDING THE CHEAPEST BOOK COVER YOU CAN

Don't skimp on spending for your cover. Guess who will know all about cover expectations for your genre? That's right—cover artists who work in your genre! That doesn't mean you have to take what they recommend, but it does mean you should trust them to bring your vision to life in a way that will hit the intended mark.



Mistake #15: SKIPPING THE PROOFREAD

Don't assume you can "get by" without a proper check for last-minute errors. Nothing turns some readers off faster than typos or other mistakes that could easily be fixed with a simple proofread.



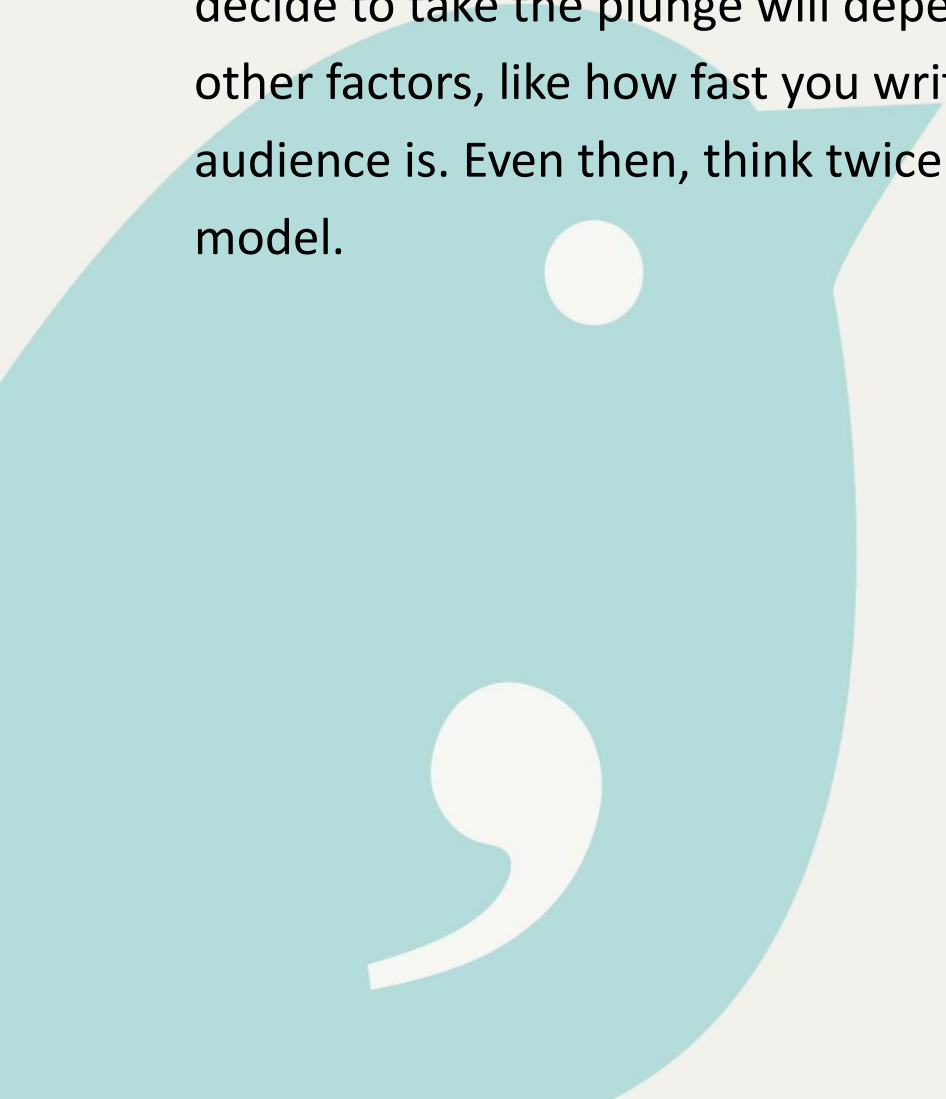
Mistake #16:

FAILING TO PUT MUCH TIME INTO WRITING YOUR SALES BLURB

Spend money on a blurb or a blurb course. Let someone help you craft your sales copy, either by writing a blurb for you, or giving you feedback on the one you've written. Remember, this is the first thing a prospective buyer will read about your book! If you don't have money to hire help, study the sales copy of your favorite books and the top sellers in your genre. Read as many as you can and copy their conventions.

Mistake #17: ENTERING KINDLE UNLIMITED WITHOUT CONSIDERING ALL YOUR OPTIONS

Don't assume KU is the best place for you to be. We know this can be an unpopular stance, but all we're suggesting is that you do your homework first. Whether or not you decide to take the plunge will depend on genre and many other factors, like how fast you write and who your audience is. Even then, think twice about your business model.



Mistake #18: FAILING TO CHECK OUT YOUR COMPETITION

Don't forget to research your comps. What are other successful authors in your genre doing? Look at their covers, blurbs, Amazon categories, and maybe even read a few of them! You don't have to copy anyone, but being well-educated about the genre you're writing in will help you understand the tropes that readers of that genre are looking for.

Mistake #19: EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE

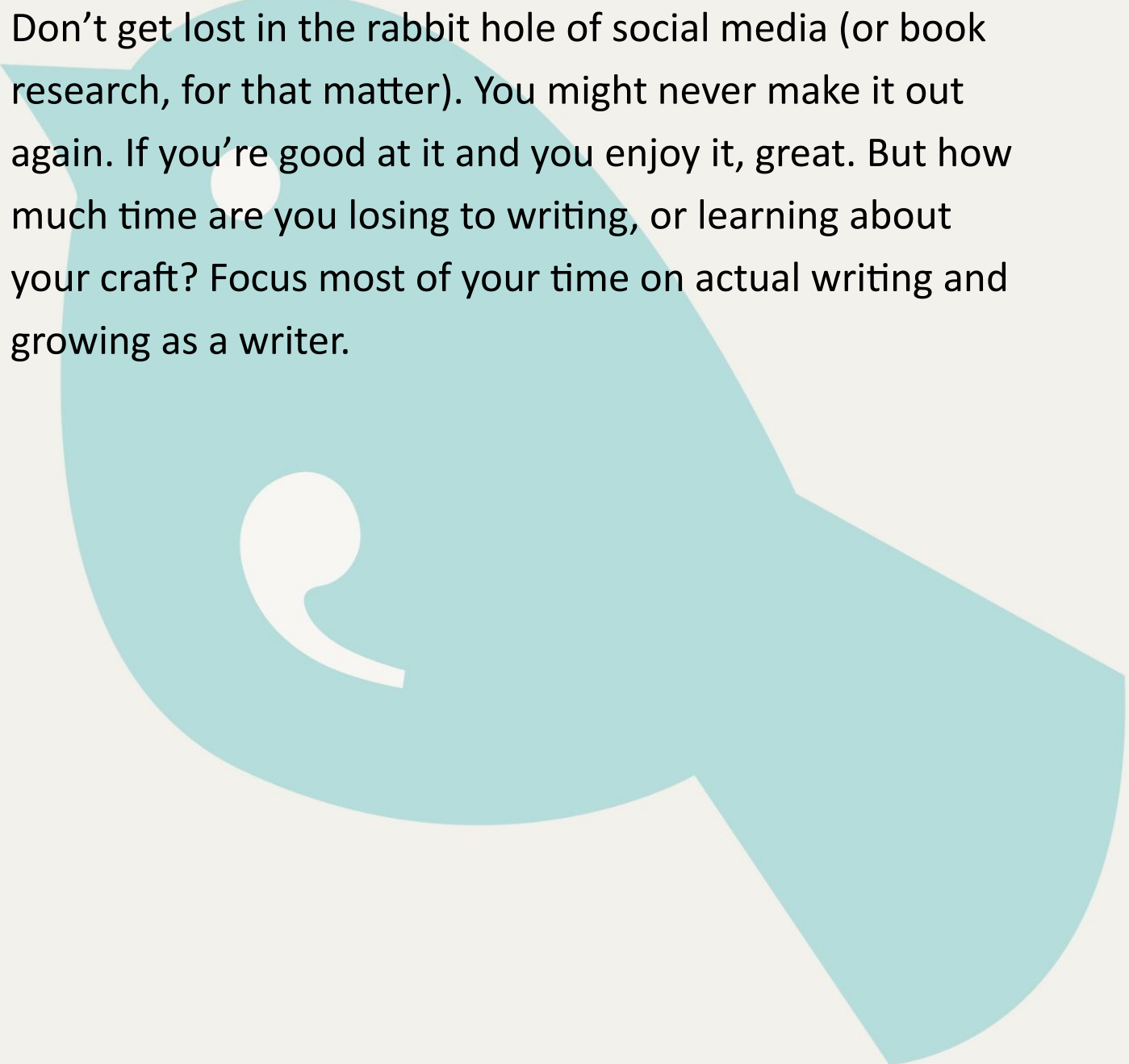
Don't feel like you need to do *all the things*. Pick a few key things to focus on so you don't overwhelm yourself. Everyone (and their dog) is trying to sell you a course on Amazon ads, blurb writing, newsletter writing—the list is endless! We're not saying those aren't good courses, but don't let the options overwhelm you. If you want to learn new things, pick just one to start with. It's tempting to believe the one thing that'll act like your magic wand is just one book, course or webinar away... But is that a rabbit hole you can afford (both financially and time-wise) to go down?

Mistake #20: SURE, YOUR NEWSLETTER CAN WAIT...

It's never too soon to start your mailing list. While you can't do everything, this is an important one to make time for. You might have a lot of social media followers, but the only information you can truly "own" is your mailing list. If TikTok went away tomorrow, how would you reach those people? Your newsletter! It should be in place before your book comes out and ideally before you start promoting your book.

Mistake #21: THINKING SOCIAL MEDIA IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR YOUR SUCCESS

Don't get lost in the rabbit hole of social media (or book research, for that matter). You might never make it out again. If you're good at it and you enjoy it, great. But how much time are you losing to writing, or learning about your craft? Focus most of your time on actual writing and growing as a writer.



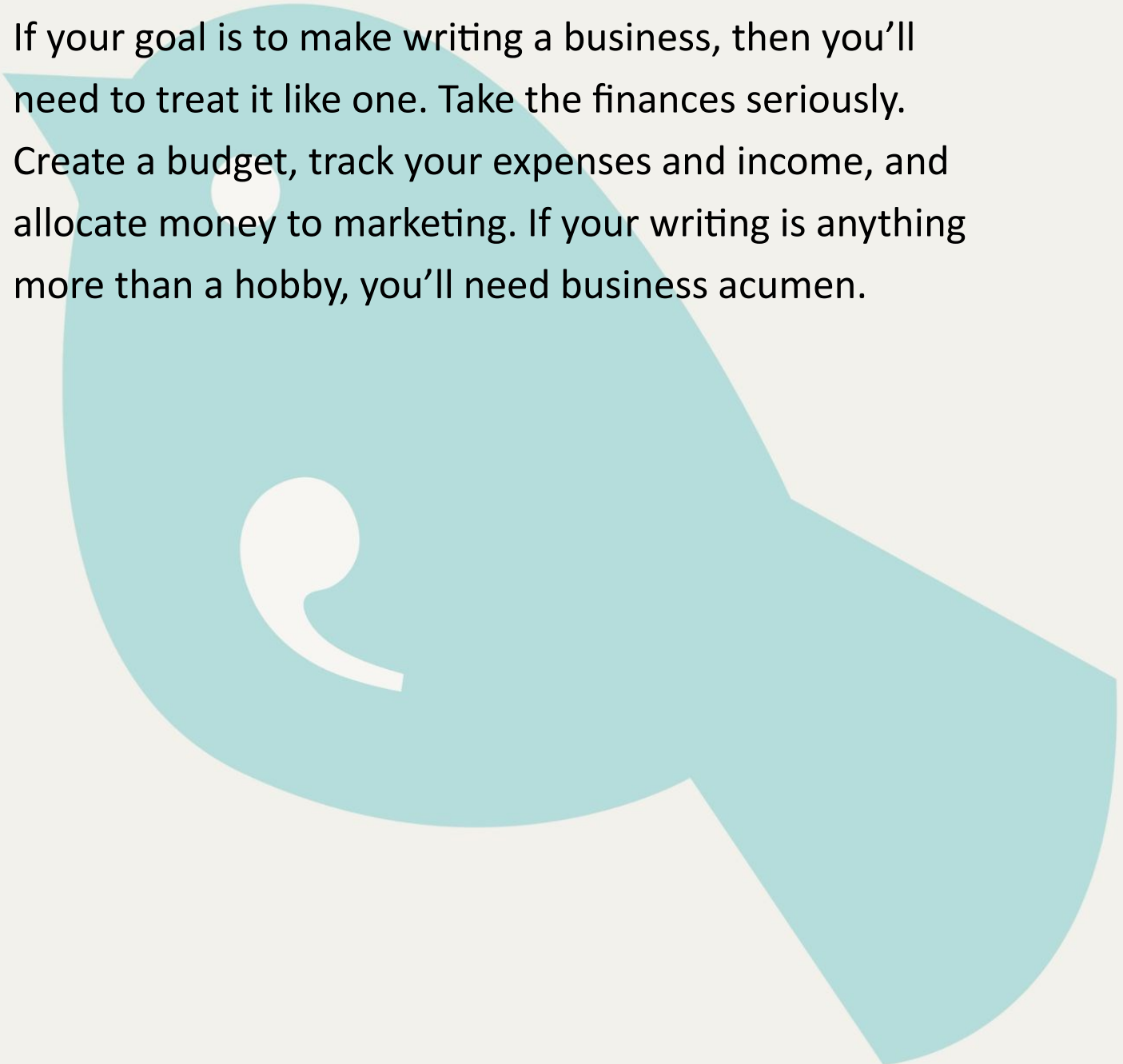
Mistake #22: CHASING THE NEXT BIG THING

Don't chase trends. By the time a trend is clear, it's already on its downswing. It's like timing the stock market. Almost impossible to do. Instead, write a book you believe in. That way, you'll be proud of the work, no matter what.



Mistake #23: ASSUMING YOU DON'T NEED ANY BUSINESS SMARTS TO BE A PROFESSIONAL WRITER

If your goal is to make writing a business, then you'll need to treat it like one. Take the finances seriously. Create a budget, track your expenses and income, and allocate money to marketing. If your writing is anything more than a hobby, you'll need business acumen.



Mistake #24: HOPING SLICK MARKETING MAKES UP FOR POOR STORYTELLING

When it comes right down to it, a well written, well edited compelling story is the most important thing, so make it a priority! It's easy to get lost in all the noise about marketing and promotion, etc. But that won't mean a thing if your story isn't in top shape.



Mistake #25: BELIEVING YOU'LL BE AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

Don't expect overnight success. Finding an audience takes time and effort. So does crafting a book you're proud to put your name on. And don't worry, Two Birds is here to help!

