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Writing the NOVEL

FROM PLOT TO PRINT



A step-by-step guide from idea through outline to the final sale.

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Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print

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Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print

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Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print Lawrence Block

For years, readers have turned to Lawrence Block's novels for mesmerizing entertainment. And for years, writers have turned to Block's "Writing the Novel" for candid, conversational, practical advice on how to put a publishable novel on paper.

Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print Details

Date : Published October 28th 2002 by Writer's Digest Books (first published 1979)

ISBN : 9780898792089

Author : Lawrence Block

Format : Paperback 197 pages

Genre : Language, Writing, Nonfiction, Reference



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Marne says

Block is a prolific author and his book of writing advice speaks to his years of experience (and hundreds of published books). Once you got past the fact that he was typing everything...on paper...all the other guidance was timeless. His examples and metaphors were awesome and his insights were helpful. It was very much written in the "I don't know what's going to work for you, but this worked for me. Have at it." tone.

Written in 1979 (!) I was struck by this insight in particular. "Openings are important. In a more leisurely world - a couple of centuries ago, say - the novelist had things pretty much to himself. There was no competition from radio and television, nor were there many other novelists around. The form was new. Furthermore, life as a whole moved at a gentler pace. There were no cars, let alone moon rockets. One took one's time and one expected others to take their time - in life and in print. Accordingly, a novel could move off sedately ... Things are different now. Novels, crowded together like subway riders at rush hour, stand on tiptoe shouting 'Read me! Read me!' ... the reader expects a book to catch his interest right away; if it doesn't, it's the easiest thing in the world for him to reach for another."

He hits the nail right on the head, doesn't he? So often I pass a book by because the Kindle sample didn't grab me. When we read books from "a more leisurely world" (I'm looking at you, Tolstoy), we find ourselves flummoxed by all the characters and loooooong descriptions.

We've been spoiled by a plethora of good books. #GoodProblemToHave

Dan Schwent says

Writing the Novel from Plot to Print to Pixel is a book about writing by the legendary Lawrence Block.

Lawrence Block sent me this in an email a couple weeks ago, asking me if I was interested in reviewing his upcoming book about writing. Once I changed into pants that weren't as soaked in my urine, I eagerly agreed to read and review it before getting stuck in the holiday quagmire.

I've often said that reading a book about writing is like asking a psychic for lottery numbers. If they can already predict the winning numbers, why are they offering them to me? However, Lawrence Block clearly has had the winning lottery numbers in his pocket for years and his books on writing are the only ones I take seriously.

This particular volume, WTNFPTPTP, is a revised, expanded, and cybernetic version of his writing book from yesteryear, Writing the Novel from Plot to Print. Instead of taking the lazy route and changing references to typewriters and the library to computers and the internet, present day Block tacks his thoughts on the end of his past-self's chapters. After all, the man has learned a thing or two in the decades that have passed since writing the original version of this book.

In addition to old reliable topics like developing plots and characters, rewriting, developing your style, and breaking into the business, Block also addresses the increasingly important topics of self-publishing and all the pros and cons that go with it.

If you're looking for a new book on writing, this is it. The odds are good that none of us are going to be the next Stephen King but Lawrence Block gives you enough tips to at least get a book written, if not published. The man is responsible for the Matthew Scudder series and once wrote a porno novel over a weekend so clearly knows his stuff. Four out of five stars.

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Tiffany Reisz says

Sage writing advice from a dry-witted gentle guru. I appreciate Lawrence Block's honest and work ethic. He started his career writing "sex novels" and he's entirely without an elitist bone in his body. His writing advice is excellent and wise and all unpublished writers who want to be published would do well to heed his commonsense approach to the business. (Warning: This was written in the 1970s so ignore the advice about

photocopies and typewriters unless you're a hipster).

J.F. Penn says

Fantastic to read tips from a writer who has worked so long in the business. I have pages of notes

Douglas Wilson says

Good stuff.

Shane says

I thought this was one of the better books on novel writing. It gives a lot of emphasis on how to dissect other writers works and shows the building blocks of good fiction.

Andrew says

"... it's my contention that the beginner at fiction ought to focus his attention on the novel not sooner or later but right away. The novel, I submit, is not merely the ultimate goal. It is also the place to start."

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Amy says

Pretty good but I think Telling Lies for Fun & Profit is better and would recommend reading that instead.

Benoit Lelièvre says

I'm in a strange place regarding writing manuals right now because I've read an obscene amount of them, gained good knowledge of their basics and yet it got me nowhere. There is a lot of material that Lawrence Block goes over that I was already familiar with, but he did teach me a couple things: novels are naturally looser than short stories stylistically, beginning and ending a novel properly is key to its "sellability" and first

and foremost, I am not alone in the struggle. Several others face the same roadblocks as me.

WRITING THE NOVEL reads as much as a manual as it reads like a literary memoir. It is also a book that any writer can pick and relate to, really as it discusses the writing process from its most conceptual stage to publication. Much more conceptual than your run-of-the-mill writing manual, lot more pleasant to read too. Of course it has its limitations as no writing manual will ever write a novel for you and you eventually need to write the damn book, but it's an option I would recommend if you're looking for guidance.

Brandon says

Back in 1978, Lawrence Block released a book detailing his advice for prospective novelists. Now, nearly forty years later, while much of the material is still relevant, Block decided to add and expand the text with the digital world in mind. Now dubbed, "Writing the Novel: From Plot to Print to Pixel", Block's gives important information for both amateur and professional authors alike by offering guidance in moving through the fields of writing and publication.

I received a copy from the author in exchange for an honest review.

This marks only the second book I've read to date about writing - the first being Stephen King's On Writing - and just like King's, Block's tips mirror those of several other authors whose advice I've taken in: you have to write for yourself first and most importantly, there's no ONE way to approach the craft.

Applying the lessons within Writing the Novel isn't like picking up a cookbook and producing a perfect meal, but rather taking what's offered and using it to form your own routine, your own method of attack when it comes to forming a story. When it comes to the sections on both seeking publication as well as approaching self-publishing, the direction offered is invaluable. Block knows both worlds well and it shows in the details he offers up regarding the pros and cons of each option.

Being a prospective writer myself, I found this book informative and would recommend it to anyone looking to venture into the literary world. It's given me renewed interest and has me eager to apply what I've learned.

Stephanie says

Lots of outdated advice (acknowledged by block in an afterward), simply due to the nature of the changing world (PCs vs typewriters etc), but there's still a decent amount of good stuff in here.

Kevin says

I'm interested in reading therefore it only makes sense to me that I should be interested in writing too. Not that I have any plans on writing but I believe knowing some more about the craft of writing while deepen my appreciation for what I read. This book was very informative about the process as it was in the late 1970s, while tastes and tech have changed the basic process of creative writing remains the same. Brain dreams up great idea, record the idea into a novel.

For me the most interesting chapter was Chapter 3 Read Study Anyalyze, it tells ways in which to break up

an existing novel into its parts through an outline.

If you're interested in becoming a novelist you could get advice from worse authors then Block who's had a long career as a novelist.

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