

The Keys to Novel Writing Success

by Harvey Chapman

Most people, it seems, dream of trying their hand at novel writing. And for most people, unfortunately, that is as far as it goes.

Why is that?

Maybe they don't have the time. (Though I believe we can always find time if we want to do something badly enough.) More likely, they simply don't think that they have "what it takes", as if writers were somehow a breed apart.

If you have any doubts about your own abilities, here are what I consider to be the three most important keys to successful novel writing...

1. Writing a Novel Takes Talent

I'm not talking genius here. We can't all be Dostoevsky. You simply need a love of language - a "way with words", if you like. Oh, and a good muscular imagination won't hurt you, either.

Now, I don't know you, of course, but my guess is that you wouldn't be reading this article in the first place if you weren't the daydreaming kind, and if you had the literary equivalent of two left feet.

So far, so good...

2. Writing a Novel Takes Hard Work (and Plenty of it)

Not that the work isn't also stimulating and fun and amazingly rewarding. It's just that you'll never make it much beyond the first few pages of your novel if you prefer a gentler life.

You need to be clear about the purpose of all this hard work, too. Yes, there is money to be made from writing fiction, but if it's money that motivates you...well, let's just say there have got to be easier ways of turning a buck. The same thing goes for chasing fame.

The best reason for writing is to do it for its own sake. Write a novel because you want to write a novel. If you go on to sell it, that's just the icing on the top.

3. You Need to Know the Novel Writing "Rules" (and Know When to Break Them, Too)

This is the part of creative writing that can be taught, and the good news is that there is plenty of help out there.

Go into any decent bookstore and you'll find dozens of titles on the art and craft of writing novels. They range from the general to the specific (entire books have been

written on Narrative Voice alone), and from the great to the frankly not-so-great. Needless to say, there is a similar range of available help on the Internet, too (though here, the "not-so-great" can be truly awful).

Anyway, I hope this article has convinced you that there really is nothing stopping you from getting to work on your first novel.

You have the talent.

You have a willingness to work at it.

And if you "wouldn't even know where to start", you know there is plenty of help and advice out there to point you in the right direction.

What are you waiting for?

About the Author

Harvey Chapman is a published writer and a full-time teacher of creative writing. He founded his Novel Writing Web Site in early 2008 (<http://www.novel-writing-help.com>). The Site offers free and expert advice on planning, writing and selling novels.

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