

## **FOR THE LOVE OF WRITING**

**By Chris Allen**

So, you've decided you want to be a writer. The thrill of putting words to paper. The want to be heard and express yourself has driven you to pick up that pen for the very first time. If Stephen King can make millions putting words on the page, certainly you can, too.

I hate to tell you this, but editors will not be pounding on your door, agents will not beg to represent you and money will not fall from the heavens in the wake of your genius, at least not any time soon, and perhaps never.

Now, now, before you decide to stop reading, let me tell you the good news. Writing is the most wonderful and difficult thing I have ever had the pleasure of doing. The hours spent writing have been both trying and a huge relief to my soul. I write because I really love doing it.

Before you decide to pick up that pen and become a writer let me ask you a few questions.

1) Do you read?

If the answer is no, do not proceed any further. You will never learn to write, and write well, if you don't read. Have you ever wondered why the books written by doctors are just so damn boring you want to rip out your eyes just to keep from having to read another word? Well, the reason is simple, they really don't love the written word and would much rather droll on about their intelligence instead of the story they are trying to convey. This is not true of all doctors who write, but I'm talking about those dull scientific journals that no one but a doctor would ever want to pick up. Pouring over these is much like having a root canal, often necessary, but never much fun.

2) Do you want to be rich?

If the answer is yes, I'm sorry but you'll probably never make it in this career. I mean money, not as a writer. Seriously consider this question, though. If you are writing just to sell something, just because the market is wanting that sort of book or story, its likely that you won't sell it. Why? Because if the subject matter is not something that invigorates you, you can't put your soul into it. Which brings me to question three.

3) What are you writing?

Are you writing Romance because you have a better chance at a sale, or are you a romance lover? Are you writing this story because it inspires you, or because

## Articles

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someone said you should? Write what you care about in some way, something that you enjoy, love or even hate. Something you feel passionate about, and you might have a chance.

For arguments sake, lets say you answered all of these questions and got fair results. You now want to know where to begin.

The beginning is the easy part, sticking to it is hard. But to answer the question, begin with yourself. Write what you know. So cliché, but true nonetheless. Everyone says it so often you have those words forever stenciled in your brain. But it's also a cheap answer, a half answer. The better answer is, write what you know--and what you don't, find out. This really means you have to take bits of yourself to get your story told. Your fears are in one character, your pain in another, your opinions in another, and so on. Bits of your father and your mother are in these characters, and your best friend's neurotic traits are in another. See, you have plenty enough to have a cast of millions.

What you don't know, find out. Well, that's easy enough. People love to talk about themselves or their jobs, so, if you want a fireman in your story, talk to one. They usually love to have a new ear to tell their stories to. And, if you're nice, they'll let you sit in the big red truck too. Besides, you might find a piece of this guy that's just perfect for character #2.