

Creative Writing

By Carrie Daws

Unit 1: Why Write Fiction?

Once upon a time, there lived a great truth-teller. He knew story could reveal deep truths, truths people often did not want to look at for themselves. So He chose to put those truths into tales, which not only got the people listening but also remembering.

His name? Jesus.

If you look closely at the parables of the Bible, you'll see that Jesus rarely mentions God or the Temple. His stories are filled with ordinary people going on about their ordinary lives. And so, Jesus' listeners paused to hear Him; they stopped to enjoy His tales. It was only after the truth was in their heads that they realized what they'd just experienced was more than they previously thought.

That's why we write fiction! Nonfiction relates through logic. It involves the brain and invites the reader to follow a path of argument or assumptions. Fiction invites the reader to involve their heart, their emotions. And when the reader accepts the invitation, picks up a novel, and begins to read, the writer has an opportunity to speak truth and to change the reader's heart.

Perhaps the question shouldn't be, "Why write fiction?" Perhaps it should be, "Why *not* write fiction?"

Week 1: Think About It

Every time someone picks up a book, there's an unspoken agreement between the reader and the writer.

The reader wants to be entertained, to enjoy a good story, to live in a different place, or explore a different time. They want to escape their own life and experience someone else's.

The writer wants the reader to read all the way to the end of the story, to pay attention to the scenes and the characters, and to immerse themselves within the story.

The writer is the one with the most to lose. If the reader's not happy, he just puts down one book and picks up another. But, if the writer's book is put down, not only will that story not get read, but future books by this author likely won't get picked up. If a reader is disappointed, he rarely just gives up on that single book; he frequently gives up on the author.

All the pressure is on the writer. To win the reader over, the writer must think about the reader. The reader is the most important person for whom the author writes.

Consider the answers to these questions.

1. What is the title of the last book you read by your own choice?
2. How long ago did you finish that book?
3. What kind of books (genre) do you most like to read? (e.g., classic, historical, adventure, fantasy, mystery, humor, mythology, realistic, etc.)
4. How often do you read a book outside of your favorite genre?

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