



How to Grow a Novel: The Most Common Mistakes Writers Make and How to Overcome Them

By Sol Stein

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Each year thousands of fiction writers, from beginners to bestselling author, benefit from Sol Stein's sold-out workshops, featured appearances at writers' conferences, software for writers, on-line columns, and his popular first book for writers, *Stein on Writing*. Stein practices what he teaches: He is the author of nine novels, including the million-copy bestseller *The Magician*, as well as editor of such major writers as James Baldwin, Jack Higgins, Elia Kazan, Budd Schulberg, W. H. Auden, and Jacques Barzun, and the teacher and editor of several current bestselling authors. What sets Stein apart is his practical approach. He provides specific techniques that speed writers to successful publication.

How to Grow a Novel is not just a book, but an invaluable workshop in print. It includes details and examples from Stein's editorial work with a #1 bestselling novelist as well as talented newcomers. Stein takes the reader backstage in the development of memorable characters and fascinating plots. The chapter on dialogue overflows with solutions for short-story writers, novelists, screenwriters, and playwrights. Stein shows what readers are looking for-- and what they avoid-- in the experience of reading fiction. The book offers guidelines-- and warnings-- of special value for nonfiction writers who want to move into fiction. Stein points to the little, often overlooked things that damage the writer's authority without the writer knowing it. And this book, like no other writing book, takes the reader behind the scenes of the publishing business as it affects writers of every level of experience, revealing the hard truths that are kept behind shut doors.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Sol Stein likens the reader of fiction to a baseball fan. The "tension, suspense, anxiety, and pleasure" a spectator experiences are "all the things readers hope for when they turn to a novel." In *How to Grow a Novel*, Stein coaches fiction writers in providing exactly those things for readers. First off, says Stein, you must write what you read; don't try to pull off a romance novel if you are a student of serious literature, or a literary masterpiece if you thrive on thrillers. With that in mind, Stein gears his book toward both "those who are trying to write a good book and those who are trying to write a good read." Most of *How to Grow a Novel* delineates what Stein considers to be a writer's obligations to his readers. A writer, he says, should be "amusing, entertaining, interesting," should create characters with character, and should maintain interest primarily by "never tak[ing] the reader where the reader wants to go." Stein illustrates his points with examples from his own experiences as a novelist and as a fiction editor.

The final section of the book is devoted to the responsibilities of the publisher. Any but the most stalwart writer can't help but be disheartened by the book business. It has often been said that a publisher determines a book's fate--barring a miracle--long before it is even released, by the funds allocated to publicize it. Stein takes this one step further, positing that a book's positioning is determined "when the agent submits it for consideration.... There are reportedly nearly a thousand literary agents in North American alone, but fewer than a dozen have clout."

Still, take heart, and try to enjoy the process. "Writing is the second most exciting activity a higher power invented for human beings," says Stein. "And when you get to your eighties, it's the first most exciting activity." --*Jane Steinberg*

From Library Journal

"Come sit. We need to talk." With this simple invitation, novelist, editor, and writing instructor Stein invites the reader to listen as he shares what he has learned from his extensive experience in the fields of writing and publishing. This book, his second (following *Stein on Writing*), stands apart from the wide field of instructional writing books by putting the writer's focus on the reader. Stein states bluntly right from the beginning that "liars say they write only for themselves" and that a "lack of courtesy" toward the reader is one of the chief faults of unsuccessful writing. While this is perhaps a controversial notion, prospective writers will nonetheless be well rewarded by reading this collection of tips, methods, and numerous anecdotes. In this delightful instruction session, Stein proves once again that he is still a vibrant and talented force in the writing and publishing professions. Highly recommended for libraries supporting fiction writers or fiction writing instruction.

-*Angela M. Weiler, SUNY Libs., Morrisville*

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Review

"[Stein] shares what he has learned from his extensive experience in the fields of writing and publishing. This book stands apart from the wide field of instructional writing books by putting the writer's focus on the reader. Highly recommended." ?*Library Journal*

"Stein is a fascinating guide and teacher. This should be required reading [for] 90 percent of published authors . . . Wonderful." ?*The Daily Mail (London)*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joseph Owens:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style with this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. Using book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Books can also inspire a lot of people. A lot of author can inspire their reader with their story or perhaps their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the data about something that you need illustration. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your children, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors on earth always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some study before they write with their book. One of them is this How to Grow a Novel: The Most Common Mistakes Writers Make and How to Overcome Them.

Timothy Lumpkin:

Does one one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt if you find yourself in the book store? Aim to pick one book that you never know the inside because don't judge book by its protect may doesn't work here is difficult job because you are afraid that the inside maybe not while fantastic as in the outside appear likes. Maybe you answer is usually How to Grow a Novel: The Most Common Mistakes Writers Make and How to Overcome Them why because the wonderful cover that make you consider about the content will not disappoint you. The inside or content is definitely fantastic as the outside or perhaps cover. Your reading sixth sense will directly direct you to pick up this book.

Shaun Sae:

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