

(Download) On Becoming a Novelist

On Becoming a Novelist

John Gardner

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John Gardner : On Becoming a Novelist before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On Becoming a Novelist:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent, highly recommended.By Mark BThis is an excellent, unorthodox book about fine tuning your writing to actually sell a story. I would say it is almost brilliant, with great insights and very clear criticisms of the way MFA programs and writers' workshops miss the point. There are so many excellent tips and lessons that I need to go back through each chapter and pick up the highlights. It's a good sign that I have lots of mark-ups in this book.It has made more of a difference in my writing and is a great companion to The Art of Dramatic Writing, another hard-hitting book.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Exception in its GenreBy Vazhaspa SpitmanI found this book beyond my expectations, showing the pitfalls I had experienced directly, and echoing what I warned my colleagues and students. It is in fact not just a guide for a "young" novice trying to be a novelist but a critical advice for even the professional or the elitist who may easily forget about the magic of writing, or as Gardner puts it, neglect the magical job of creating an incessant vivid "dream" in the minds of the readers,not interrupted by anything. In this regard, the book is really exceptional in its genre.It warns the writer not to forget about the entertaining/ charming core of story-writing, or not to be mesmerized by the elitist or critics' approach. Even though language is very important it should not be overdone unless you want your story or characters being devoured by the dragon of a bombastic language; and even though technique is a significant part of any story-writing it should not be so heavy to crash the story by overloaded trite tropes or superficial symbolism ... The book is not a writing-made-easy, but rather about the hard work of acute observation, years of hard-work, revising and constant editing until

it turns into a satisfactory work of art. It is, however, a WORK not just piece of art! I read the book with an aesthetic joy ... And I think any writer would find the book quite useful and enjoyable even if it just crystalizes what you have directly experienced or learned as a professional writer! P.S. Perhaps the only drawback I found in the book is in the middle when the author, explaining the mystery of "epiphany" resorts to an example from his own novel and goes with a long descriptive interpretation of the denouement. But this few pages seem rather like a digression and it is not so negative to make me demote the book by giving it four stars! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A classic by Sky-blue My favorite quote: one common set of standards for good fiction creation of a vivid and continuous dream, authorial generosity, intellectual and emotional significance, elegance and efficiency, and strangeness. Especially good chapter on The Writers Training and Education which holds up good models of a creative writing workshop, which should help the student find his own way. (83) Pages. 138-145 have a clear exposition on how a new novelist can learn craft using small increments to build a short story. Writing a novel is like running grain through a hammer mill: one has to get the central action rolling, and then feed in the background, or sprinkle in the larger implications, whenever and wherever one can do it without losing a finger.

"Answers exactly the questions that a dedicated writing student would be most likely to ask . . . a miraculously detailed account of the creative process." --Anne Tyler, Baltimore Sun

.com Picture the poor, young, serious-fiction writer. He toils alone at a pace not so different from that of Lincoln Tunnel traffic at rush hour in New York. His spouse has a "real" job, or perhaps he has a trust fund. His college friends are cashing in on their dot-coms and wondering if he's ever going to join the real world. He is not hell-bent on publication; he is trying to write "serious, honest fiction, the kind of novel that readers will find they enjoy reading more than once, the kind of fiction likely to survive." He's likely to have no idea whether he's succeeding. Nobody understands him. Well, almost nobody. John Gardner understands him. Gardner's sympathetic *On Becoming a Novelist* is the novelist's ultimate comfort food--better than macaroni and cheese, better than chocolate. Gardner, a fiction writer himself (Grendel), knows in his bones the desperate questioning of a writer who's not sure he's up to the task. He recognizes the validation that comes with being published, just as he believes that "for a true novel there is generally no substitute for slow, slow baking." Gardner also has strong feelings about what kinds of workshops help (and whom they help), and what kinds hinder. But a full half of Gardner's book is devoted to an exploration of the writer's nature. The storyteller's intelligence, he says, "is composed of several qualities, most of which, in normal people, are signs of either immaturity or incivility." In addition, a writer needs "verbal sensitivity, accuracy of eye," and "an almost demonic compulsiveness." But wait--there's more. A writer needs to be driven, and to be driven, he says insightfully, "a psychological wound is helpful." --Jane Steinberg A classic of its kind. --Joyce Carol Oates Few, if any, American writers in our time understood the theory and practice of great literature better than novelist John Gardner. With imagination and breathtaking dedication, he trained a generation of young writers to reach for the highest artistic standards. That legacy is contained in "*On Becoming a Novelist*," one of the essential books for any writer's library. --Charles Johnson, National Book Award-winning author of "*Middle Passage*" John Gardner taught me how to write. I've read this book countless times, underlined it in many different inks, taught it, quote it, write by it. . . . Alone in my basement after my day job, I pawed through "*On Becoming a Novelist*," hoping to understand what it was I was trying to achieve, and why. John Gardner answered these questions and many more--and still does. Currently there are a number of popular writing guides--all worthwhile I'm sure--but there's no substitute for experience and the hard work of composition. John Gardner put in countless hours at his desk sweating over the depth, generosity and elegance of his fiction. That after his death he continues to share his practical knowledge with us is a gift. --Stewart O'Nan, author of "*A Prayer for the Dying*" and "*A World Away*" John Gardner's book is worth a thousand pictures of the writer writing--bemused, puffing a pipe, one hand on the keyboard, one in his hair. John was a devoted teacher, and those of us who witnessed his generous attention must be grateful for these pages and his enduring example. "*On Becoming a Novelist*" evokes the life of the writer, the student, the teacher, as few other documents can. --Nicholas Delbanco, author of "*Old Scores*" There are three books I keep on my desk so that I'll have them at the ready at any given moment in my writing life: the Bible, Roget's Thesaurus, and "*On Becoming a Novelist*." There is no better book on what it takes to be a writer than Gardner's classic. Period. --Bret Lott, author of "*Jewel*" About the Author John Gardner's gripping James Bond novels include: *Seafire*, *License Renewed*, *Icebreaker*, *Role of Honour*, *Nobody Lives Forever*, *No Deals Mr. Bond*, and *Never Send Flowers*.