



The Lie That Tells a Truth: A Guide to Writing Fiction

By John Dufresne



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"This is the most practical, hard-nosed, generous, direct, and useful guide to writing fiction."?Brad Watson

Finally, a truly creative and hilarious guide to creative writing, full of encouragement and sound advice. Provocative and reassuring, nurturing and wise, *The Lie That Tells a Truth* is essential to writers in general, fiction writers in particular, beginning writers, serious writers, and anyone facing a blank page.

John Dufresne, teacher and the acclaimed author of *Love Warps the Mind a Little* and *Deep in the Shade of Paradise*, demystifies the writing process. Drawing upon the wisdom of literature's great craftsmen, Dufresne's lucid essays and diverse exercises initiate the reader into the tools, processes, and techniques of writing: inventing compelling characters, developing a voice, creating a sense of place, editing your own words. Where do great ideas come from? How do we recognize them? How can language capture them? In his signature comic voice, Dufresne answers these questions and more in chapters such as "Writing Around the Block," "Plottery," and "The Art of Abbreviation." Dufresne demystifies the writing process, showing that while the idea of writing may be overwhelming, the act of writing is simplicity itself.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A novelist and teacher, Dufresne (*Deep in the Shade of Paradise*) shares his blunt views on writing in this instruction book, which draws heavily on the tenets of realist fiction and method acting. Divided into two main sections—"The Process" focuses on habits and emotions; "The Product" emphasizes narrative mechanics—Dufresne's manual often adopts the tone of a fiery professor advising a group of wide-eyed young freshmen. "Fiction writing is arrested development," he declares. "Just know that you should quit right now if you can." Readers may sometimes feel lectured by his many stern instructions—"Thou Shalt Not Be Obscure," "Thou Shalt Show and Not Tell," "Thou Shalt Steal"—but the author hits his stride when he covers the mechanics of story. Particularly valuable is his advice on choosing character names, occupations, and points of view. A principle of acting teachers Konstantin Stanislavsky and Michael Chekhov—that exterior movement leads to interior feeling—forms the basis of one of Dufresne's two chapters on characterization. Elsewhere, he skillfully analyzes the work of his favorite writers Anton Chekhov, Frank O'Connor and Eudora Welty. (Dufresne also mines his own work for examples of process and technique.) Each chapter closes with a set of writing exercises. Although this volume is unlikely to displace classic fiction guides like E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, many readers may respond to the author's encouraging, exhorting tone. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

Like so many writers' guides, this one talks about creating a character, finding an idea, constructing a plot, and the rest of it. It does all of that quite well, too, but what makes it stand out in this popular genre is its tone and approach. Novelist Dufresne, the author of *Deep in the Shade of Paradise* (2002), lays out the storytelling process clearly and simply. "Fiction is telling the truth, not telling the facts." His tone is light, amiable, conversational: a professional storyteller talking to someone who wants to be a professional storyteller. Writing, he tells us, is about trusting our feelings, about describing the essence of a scene without getting bogged down in irrelevant details. Peppering his text with inspirational and instructional quotes from a variety of writers (Joseph Heller: "Every writer I know has trouble writing"), Dufresne delivers a book that is both a tremendous inspiration to novice writers struggling with their craft and a useful guide to the technical aspects of turning words into stories. *David Pitt*
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Review

"Dufresne makes it all good fun, from first to last, from guggle to zatch. See for yourself." (George Garrett)

"An engaging covers-all-the-bases guide?sometimes moving, often funny, full of goodwill and good sense." (Janet Burroway)

"Frank and friendly talk about the approach to and the craft of fiction....a welcome companion." (Ron Carlson)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gail Cote:

The book untitled *The Lie That Tells a Truth: A Guide to Writing Fiction* is the book that recommended to you to study. You can see the quality of the book content that will be shown to a person. The language that article author use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The author was did a lot of exploration when write the book, and so the information that they share for your requirements is absolutely accurate. You also can get the e-book of *The Lie That Tells a Truth: A Guide to Writing Fiction* from the publisher to make you a lot more enjoy free time.

Clifford Caldwell:

In this time globalization it is important to someone to obtain information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to you is *The Lie That Tells a Truth: A Guide to Writing Fiction* this guide consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented just how can the world has grown up. The dialect styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some exploration when he makes this book. That's why this book acceptable all of you.

Robert Mills:

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