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Posted on 24 January 2018 By Stephen King

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!Free Kindle ? On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft ? Long Live The King Hailed Entertainment Weekly Upon The Publication Of Stephen King S On Writing Part Memoir, Part Master

Class By One Of The Bestselling Authors Of All Time, This Superb Volume Is A Revealing And Practical View Of The Writer S Craft, Comprising The Basic Tools Of The Trade Every Writer Must Have King S Advice Is Grounded In His Vivid Memories From Childhood Through His Emergence As A Writer, From His Struggling Early Career To His Widely Reported Near Fatal Accident In And How The Inextricable Link Between Writing And Living Spurred His Recovery Brilliantly Structured, Friendly And Inspiring, On Writing Will Empower And Entertain Everyone Who Reads It Fans, Writers, And Anyone Who Loves A Great Story Well Told Back Cover I know it s like saying puppies are cute, but it bears repeating everyone who wants to write, whether for a living or not, simply must read this book On Writing did for me as a writer than anything, and any success I ve found as a storyteller can be traced to my reading it. There s this magic thing that happens sometimes I can t wait to reread a book I haven t even finished yet It s a rare feeling, but one that happens whenever I m in the midst of a new favourite book I m reading these amazing scenes, freaking out over fantastic passages, and already looking forward to the second time I ll read them, when they ll be even clearer and start to feel familiar. It s a rare occurrence, it only happens a few times a year, but it happened with On Writing The moment it started I knew I would be flipping through it for the rest of my life It s that moment where you find a new favourite book. If you care about writing at all, if you want to be a writer or are fascinated by the world of writing, I absolutely recommend this gem. A 87% Extraordinary Notes The first novel length book I d ever finished over the span of one day Done over two sittings, with a nap in between. I read this shortly after finishing NaNoWriMo National Novel Writing Month this year, actually it would be accurate to say I devoured it This is full of great writing advice, and I ll need to get a copy and read it 1 2 times a year Most helpful The section on grammar Seriously, I never really learned grammar Gould said something else that was interesting on the day I turned in my first two pieces write with the door closed, rewrite with the door open Your stuff starts out being just for you, in other words, but then it goes out Once you know what the story is and get it right as right as you can, anyway it belongs to anyone who wants to read it The writer s original perception of a character or characters may be erroneous as the reader s Running a close second was the realization that stopping a piece of work just because it s hard, either emotionally or imaginatively, is a bad idea Sometimes you have to go on when you don t feel like it, and sometimes you re doing good work when it feels like all you re managing is to shovel shit from a sitting position You can approach the act of writing with nervousness, excitement, hopefulness, or even despair the sense that you can never completely put on the page what s in your mind and heart You can come to the act with your fists clenched and your eyes narrowed, ready to kick ass and take down names You can come to it because you want a girl to marry you or because you want to change the world Come to it any way but lightly The object of fiction isn t grammatical correctness but to make the reader welcome and then tell a story Writing is seduction Good talk is part of seduction Once I start work on a

project, I don't stop and I don't slow down unless I absolutely have to. If I don't write every day, the characters begin to stale off in my mind; they begin to seem like characters instead of real people. The tale's narrative cutting edge starts to rust and I begin to lose my hold on the story's plot and pace. Worst of all, the excitement of spinning something new begins to fade. The work starts to feel like work, and for most writers that is the smooch of death. If I have to tell you, I lose. If, on the other hand, I can show you a silent, dirty-haired woman who compulsively gobbles cake and candy, then have you draw the conclusion that Annie is in the depressive part of a manic depressive cycle, I win. And if I am able, even briefly, to give you a Wilkes-eye view of the world if I can make you understand her madness then perhaps I can make her someone you sympathize with or even identify with. The result? She's frightening than ever, because she's close to real. What you should probably be doing is writing as fast as the Gingerbread Man runs, getting that first draft down on paper while the shape of the fossil is still bright and clear in your mind. The scariest moment is always just before you start. After that, things can only get better. Writing is magic, as much the water of life as any other creative art. The water is free. So drink. Drink and be filled up. Reading is the creative center of a writer's life. So it's become very clear to me now that very few writers actually write about the craft. The only Latin American writer to do so: Mario Vargas Llosa who took several years off of his busy novel writing to write about his now ex-pal Gabriel Garcia Marquez. But I suddenly forgot who the King was no, I mean literally I've not read him in years. High school being the prime time for Stephen King, all the guy has useful insight, no shit, because he is not only prolific uber-successful he got 400,000 for his first novel *Carrie*, but because, let's all admit it, he's pretty damn good. Maybe prose is not the forte per se, but story sure is. Think of how many times he has tapped the vein of the zeitgeist to produce visceral, emblematic and modern monsters. It's interesting to compare this with the only other non-fiction I've read of late, *The Perpetual Orgy: Letters to a Young Novelist* by the already mentioned Peruvian auteur. They both Vargas Llosa and King tell us to seriously commit to writing, to write, write, write, WRITE, but, even splendidly, they endorse heavy reading. Duh. I love Stephen King quotes, like this little morsel of truth: If you don't have the time to read, you don't have the time or the tools to write. Take that, non-reading punks verging perilously close to ignoramuses. Let me recall some of the stuff I've learned the rest has been absorbed as if by osmosis: 1 rewrite at least two times once the novel has been completed, 2 write/read for at least 5 hours every single day, 3 IMPORTANT look for an editor they are eager for new talent, King says, 4 VERY IMPORTANT begin a serious submitting process. L. Williford has always emphasized the importance of this, 5 write solely to your IR Ideal Reader it's all super helpful. Perhaps the Toolbox section is its weakest part inversely, MVL's bag of tricks is on glorious display in *Letters* though he never mentions the publishing process like King does. Going over rudimentary English is, I am forced to admit, quite lame. But King does seem enthusiastic throughout as only the best teachers are in the classroom his tone is one of slight optimism.

for the developing novelist He cheers you on THE Stephen King Bottom line INVALUABLE stuff, a few awesome for the fans confessional tidbits, some golly good pointers. The book is great and if you like writing, it is probably a must read. I could write a summary of the book, it is easy enough to summarize and there are only a few important points that King presents, but then I don't want you to get it for free Go and read the book yourself, it is worth it Rude As King says, if you expect to succeed as a writer, rudeness should be the second to least of your concerns The least of all should be polite society and what it expects If you intend to write as truthfully as you can, your days as a member of polite society are numbered, anyway Here is are a few excerpts from the book that might inspire you to take my advice If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others read a lot and write a lot There s no way around these two things that I m aware of, no shortcut. I m a slow reader, but I usually get through seventy or eighty books a year, mostly ction I don t read in order to study the craft I read because I like to read It s what I do at night, kicked back in my blue chair Similarly, I don t read ction to study the art of ction, but simply because I like stories Yet there is a learning process going on Every book you pick up has its own lesson or lessons, and quite often the bad books have to teach than the good ones. It s hard for me to believe that people who read very little or not at all in some cases should presume to write and expect people to like what they have written, but I know it s true If I had a nickel for every person who ever told me he she wanted to become a writer but didn t have time to read, I could buy myself a pretty good steak dinner Can I be blunt on this subject If you don t have time to read, you don t have the time or the tools to write Simple as that. The trick is to teach yourself to read in small sips as well as in long swallows. Talent renders the whole idea of rehearsal meaningless when you nd something at which you are talented, you do it whatever it is until your ngers bleed or your eyes are ready to fall out of your head Even when no one is listening or reading, or watching , every outing is a bravura performance, because you as the creator are happy Perhaps even ecstatic That goes for reading and writing as well as for playing a musical instrument, hitting a baseball, or running the four forty The sort of strenuous reading and writing program I advocate four to six hours a day, every day will not seem strenuous if you really enjoy doing these things and have an aptitude for them in fact, you may be following such a program already If you feel you need permission to do all the reading and writing your little heart desires, however, consider it hereby granted by yours truly. I love this book because it agrees with all my preconceptions Feels nice to be on the right track It is also quite inspiring when it comes to kicking you into putting on your writing cap. I couldn t resist putting in this anecdote about James Joyce as well One of my favorite stories on the subject probably myth than truth concerns James Joyce According to the story, a friend came to visit him one day and found the great man sprawled across his writing desk in a posture of utter despair James, what s wrong the friend asked Is it the work Joyce indicated assent without even raising his head to look at the friend Of course it was the work isn t it always How many words did you get today the

friend pursued. Joyce still in despair, still sprawled facedown on his desk Seven Seven But James that s good, at least for you Yes, Joyce said, nally looking up I suppose it is but I don t know what order they go in Of course, the book is not intended just as a writing manual Even if you never intend to write, the memoir is a wonderful graphic tale on King s life and like all his stories, it does not lack in imagination or entertainment. Meanwhile, let me get down to some actual writing

THE ACCLAIMED *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

STEPHEN KING

"A one-of-
a-kind classic."
—*The Wall
Street Journal*

*On
Writing*

A MEMOIR OF THE CRAFT

January 6, 2018 review I'm kicking off my fifth year on Goodreads with a re-read of the best book about writing that I've read to date. I've considered that *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* by Stephen King's contribution to the crowded field of *How To Write a Novel*, published in 2000 might hold this slot due to King being one of my favorite living authors. Ball players can tune out a coach who never made it in the pros quicker than a guy who did and was a superstar to boot, and I'm certainly likely to heed the advice of a guru who didn't attain his divinity by mysterious means. The author of *The Shining* certainly had my attention. King begins his instruction by doing something I wish my teachers did on the first day of class: he tells us about himself. Raised by a single mother in Maine in the 1950s and 60s, King recounts his childhood, his earliest discoveries in fiction, his first forays into writing and publishing, his breakthrough debut novel *Carrie* some ten years later in 1974 and his near-collapse from alcohol and drugs. The writing advice kicks in, covering vocabulary, grammar, the elements of style and much. This was the book King was chipping away at in June 1999 when he was struck by a negligent driver while on an afternoon walk, and this life-changing experience is recounted as well. Even when King isn't dispensing writing advice and when he does, it's helpful to anyone from students writing a paper to writers with dreams of being the next King of Horror: simply reading his prose is a motivation and a delight. Holder of a Bachelor's of Arts in English from the University of Maine at Orono, King's manner or style has always reminded me of a character in a King novel, an English instructor perhaps, but likely a guy who works at the hardware or auto parts store in town and who loves 1. talking to people, and 2. helping people by sharing his expertise. King's forte is storytelling, with a minor in popular culture. Imitation preceded creation: I would copy *Combat Casey* comics word for word in my Blue Horse tablet, sometimes adding my own descriptions where they seemed appropriate. They were camped in a big dratty farmhouse room, I might write it was another year or two before I discovered that *drat* and *draft* were different words. During the same period I remember believing that *detail* were *dentals* and that a *bitch* was an extremely tall woman. A son of a bitch was apt to be a basketball player. When you're six, most of your Bingo balls are still floating around in the draw tank. I was born in 1947 and we didn't get our first television until 1958. The first thing I remember watching on it was *Robot Monster*, a film in which a guy dressed in an ape suit with a goldfish bowl on his head. *Ro Man*, he was called, ran around trying to kill the last survivors of a nuclear war. I felt this was art of quite a high nature. But TV came relatively late to the King household, and I'm glad I am, when you stop to think about it, a member of a fairly select group: the final handful of American novelists who learned to read and write before they learned to eat a daily helping of video bullshit. This might not be important. What I don't understand, Stevie, she said, is why you'd write junk like this in the first place. You're talented. Why do you want to waste your abilities? She had rolled up a copy of *V.I.B. 1* and was brandishing it at me the way a person might brandish a rolled-up newspaper at a dog that has piddled on the rug. She waited for me to answer to her credit, the question was not entirely rhetorical but I had no

answer to give I was ashamed I have spent a good many years since too many, I think being ashamed about what I write I think I was forty before I realized that almost every writer of fiction and poetry who has ever published a line has been accused by someone of wasting his or her God given talent If you write or paint or dance or sculpt or sing I suppose , someone will try to make you feel lousy about it. I wasn't having much success with my own writing, either Horror, science fiction, and crime stories in the men's magazines were being replaced by increasingly graphic tales of sex That was part of the trouble, but not all of it The bigger deal was that, for the first time in my life, writing was hard The problem was the teaching I liked my coworkers and loved the kids even the Beavis and Butt Head types in Living with English could be interesting but by most Friday afternoons I felt as if I'd spent the week with jumper cables clamped to my brain If I ever came close to despairing about my future as a writer, it was then. I had written three other novels before Carrie Rage, The Long Walk, and The Running Man were later published But none of them taught me the things I learned from Carrie White The most important is that the writer's original perception of a character or characters may be as erroneous as the reader's Running a close second was the realization that stopping a piece of work just because it's hard, either emotionally or imaginatively, is a bad idea Sometimes you have to go on when you don't feel like it, and sometimes you're doing good work when it feels like all you're managing is to shovel shit from a sitting position. Put vocabulary on the top shelf of your toolbox, and don't make any conscious effort to improve it One of the really bad things you can do to your writing is to dress up the vocabulary, looking for long words because you're maybe a little bit ashamed of your short ones This is like dressing up a household pet in evening clothes The pet is embarrassed and the person who committed this act of premeditated cuteness should be even embarrassed Remember that the basic rule of vocabulary is use the first word that comes to your mind if it is appropriate and colorful Two pages of the passive voice just about any business document ever written, in other words, not to mention reams of bad fiction make me want to scream It's weak, it's circuitous, and it's frequently torturous, as well How about this My first kiss will always be recalled by me as how my romance with Shayna began Oh, man who farted, right A simpler way to express this idea sweeter and forceful, as well might be this My romance with Shayna began with our first kiss I'll never forget it I'm not in love with this because it uses with twice in four words, but at least we're out of that awful passive voice. The best form of dialogue attribution is said, as in he said, she said, Bill said, Monica said If you want to see this put stringently into practice, I urge you to read or reread a novel by Larry McMurtry, the Shane of dialogue attribution That looks damned snide on the page, but I'm speaking with complete sincerity McMurtry has allowed few adverbial dandelions to grow on his lawn He believes in he said she said even in moments of emotional crisis and in Larry McMurtry novels there are a lot of those Go and do thou likewise. I am approaching the heart of this book with two theses, both simple The first is that good writing consists of mastering the fundamentals vocabulary, grammar, the

elements of style and then filling the third level of your toolbox with the right instruments

The second is that while it is impossible to make a competent writer out of a bad writer, and while it is equally impossible to make a great writer out of a good one, it is possible, with lots of hard work, dedication, and timely help, to make a good writer out of a merely competent one. Smith wasn't looking at the road on the afternoon our lives came together because his rottweiler had jumped from the very rear of his van into the back seat area, where there was an Igloo cooler with some meat stored inside. The rottweiler's name is Bullet. Smith has another rottweiler at home that one is named Pistol. Bullet started to nose at the lid of the cooler. Smith turned around and tried to push Bullet away. He was still looking at Bullet and pushing his head away from the cooler when he came over the top of the knoll still looking and pushing when he struck me. Smith told friends later that he thought he'd hit a small deer until he noticed my bloody spectacles lying on the front seat of his van. They were knocked from my face when I tried to get out of Smith's way. The frames were bent and twisted, but the lenses were unbroken. They are the lenses I'm wearing now, as I write this.

I could keep going and going with excerpts, which with only a few of the digressions that turned it into a 444,414 word kiddie high chair and Under the Dome into a 334,074 word boat anchor, are just by their free flowing honesty inspirational to anyone who seeks to communicate thought to print. Instead, I think I'll dust off my half finished manuscript and channel the spirit of Carrie White to get to writing.

January 8, 2014 review

It's not every day you can buy two great books for the price of one, but with *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, readers are treated to both an engaging autobiography of one of the 20th century's most prolific novelists, and his illuminative thoughts on the craft of writing. Stephen King had been publishing for than 25 years when this memoir arrived in 2000, and while he's probably been asked "Where do you get your ideas" or "How do I become a novelist" enough times over to want to either strangle someone or answer that a book, I love how balanced and unassuming his approach was in going about the latter. Rather than document the genesis of every novel he ever wrote as if they were masterpieces most are far from it, including *Cujo*, which King admits he can't remember writing through the cocaine and beer, or offer novelists a definitive instruction manual on how to become a bestselling author like him, King dabs his pen in each of those inkwells with welcome doses of humility and insight. King writes about his youth watching his grandfather tote a giant tool box outside for the seemingly mundane task of repairing a screen door, or writing *Carrie* in the laundry room of the trailer he shared with his wife as well as his near death in 1999, when the author is struck by a distracted driver.

My greatest takeaway from the sections of the book which deal with craft is King's revelation that for him, writing feels less like dreaming up stories and like paleontology, pulling a fossil out of the ground. A story is buried somewhere. King touches on the tools a writer can use to dig it up. Whether you're a writer, or a fan of King's, or both, this memoir is like opening up a safety deposit box you've been given the key to and finding rich stuff to borrow an expression from *The Goonies* inside. Let's be honest Stephen King is

not one of the greatest writers of all time He will never win a Pulitzer or a Nobel he might win a Newberry though, if he ever decides to tap into the Kids Young Adult market , and on the few times his books are featured in the New York Times Book Review, the reviewer will treat the book with a sort of haughty disdain, knowing their time could be better spent trashing Joyce Carol Oates None of this should suggest, however, that King is not qualified to write a book about how to write Sure, he churns out pulpy horror stories that are proudly displayed in airport bookstores, but the man knows how to write a good story, and he s probably one of the most well known, non dead American authors in the world So he must be doing something right I m not the biggest fan of King s books, but I really enjoyed On Writing He talks about writing frankly and practically, mixing tried and true pieces of advice fear the adverb, never write replied remarked muttered yelled etc when you can write said , and don t be afraid to kill off your favorite character with anecdotes about how some of his books came about I especially liked the story behind Carrie King was working as a janitor at a high school, and one night he was cleaning the girls locker room He asked the other janitor what that little metal dispenser box on the wall was, and the other man replied that it was for pussy pluggers At the same time, King had been reading about how psychic abilities often manifest in girls just beginning to go through puberty He combined the two ideas and wrote out a couple pages that would turn into the opening of Carrie if you haven t read it you should Many thanks to King s wife, who rescued the pages from the wastebasket after King first decided that the idea was stupid and threw them away So, in conclusion even if you aren t a fan of Stephen King s work, he has some very good advice about writing and storytelling, plus some good stories of his own Sure, you can call him a sellout But I like him Also, he once said in an interview that Stephenie Meyer can t write worth a darn You stay classy, Mr King. Like the curate s egg, this is good in parts I can see why writers, and budding writers find this book inspirational, and fans of his oeuvre will enjoy learning how certain stories came to be But it s several very different books and booklets, within a single set of covers curious that a book about writing doesn t seem to know what sort of a book it is. In one of the three forewords, King says Most books about writing are filled with bullshit I found a fair bit here, too But I also found good things, including a passionate passage about books being a sort of telepathy, culminating with the delicious Books are a uniquely portable magic. This book isn t about how to write in general, it s about how to write like Stephen King, and for that, it may be excellent.¹ C.V 4 memoir, 118 pages, or 33% of the book This is a charming scattering of snapshots of King s childhood, and snippets of adulthood and advice the CV of how one writer was formed I enjoyed a peek into ordinary 1950s small town USA He points out that he is one of the final handful of American novelists who learned to read and write before they learned to eat a daily helping of video bullshit He was 11 when the family got their first TV He missed most of first grade because of ear related health problems, so retreated into comic books and writing stories in a similar vein His mother always encouraged him, and the importance of

encouragement is the strongest message of the book Conversely, a teacher criticised him for wasting his talent writing junk, and King remained ashamed of what he wrote until his forties The junk was a novelisation of the film of *The Pit and the Pendulum*, which he had been selling at school unaware that it was originally a short story by Poe His wife, Tabitha, also gets much credit for her belief in his ability and her consequent encouragement, even when they could barely pay the bills They have much in common, but what ties us most strongly are the words, the language, and the work of our lives. The other key message is that there is no repository of great story ideas They come from nowhere The writer has to spot, recognise, and polish them, and King gives examples of how he came upon the seeds of many of his stories King points out that even the author's perception of his characters may be wrong I don't disagree, and it may be related to his not realising that he was writing about himself when he penned Jack, in *The Shining* But in a foreword, he makes an extreme generalisation, The editor is always right An interesting case study is to compare Raymond Carver's short story collection, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, in their originally published and heavily edited form with his originals, now published under the title *Beginners* Sometimes I think the editor was right, but in several cases, I prefer Carver's version I've explored the differences a little in my reviews [HERE](#) and [HERE](#), respectively.

2 Toolbox 1 grammar etc, 34 pages Writing is seduction. Not necessarily Reading this short section, the only thing that prevented me from throwing the book across the room was that it was borrowed from a friend It does what most prescriptive guides do conflates stylistic preference with grammatical rules, and makes sweeping generalisations such as the best form of dialogue attribution is said. , largely ignoring the paramount importance of context and audience It's easy to teach and test rules, but serious writers need to cultivate an intuitive feel for language in a variety of styles, rather than being bogged down analysing parts of speech. King taught grammar, but gives examples of Tom Swifities that aren't, and keeps talking about the passive tense , though later correctly says passive voice He decries it, using ludicrous, unidiomatic examples My first kiss will always be recalled by me He decries adverbs by using a convoluted passive they seem to have been created with the timid writer in mind and an adverb saying writers use them when not expressing themselves clearly , and says both passives and adverbs are the resort of timid writers He claims, The road to hell is paved with adverbs. One is OK, but they're like dandelions prone to multiply In section 3, he berates pronouns too, using a pronoun I hate and mistrust pronouns, every one of them as slippery as a fly by night personal injury lawyer Why Strunk and White's in famous rule 17, Omit needless words , is lauded It's hard to disagree with, but it's no help with discerning which words might be needless. King says this section is short because readers probably know enough grammar already, but he then agrees with Strunk and White, that if readers don't, it's too late So much for encouraging timid writers And yet many find this book helpful I'm pleased for them, but a little surprised There are some good points He stresses the importance of an extensive vocabulary, and says it should be acquired

through reading widely, rather than conscious effort He describes paragraphs as maps of intent and the basic unit of writing rather than sentences And there is a nod to context, negating much of what precedes it, Language does not always have to wear a tie and lace up shoes. Amen to that.³ On Writing 3 how he writes, 143 pages, or 40% And suddenly it's back to memoir-ish, but with focus on the process of writing, and a smattering of prescriptive absolutes and empty homilies alongside fascinating insights and ideas King promises Everything I know about how to write good fiction. , along with encouragement, but with the caveat that you can't make a bad writer a competent one, or a good writer great, but you can make a competent writer good, as long as they master the basics in the previous section vocabulary, grammar, and style King stresses the importance and joy of reading, in all and any situations, developing an ease and intimacy with the process of writing. But for writing itself, he says you need good health though poor health was what got him started, and he was successful when a heavy drinking alcoholic , a stable relationship don't many great writers emerge from the opposite , strict routine, and your own space no distractions, and a door to close Put your desk in the corner Life isn't a support system for art It's the other way round. Good fiction always begins with story and progresses to theme Starting with the questions and thematic concerns is a recipe for bad fiction. The ideas about story and plot were fascinating and liberating in stark contrast with the straitjacket of the previous section You need a concrete goal, but Don't wait for the muse and Write what you know He lists only three components of a story narrative, description, and dialogue Don't worry about plot because our lives are plotless Stories are found things, like fossils and the writer has to give them somewhere to grow fossils growing , thus My books tend to be based on situation rather than story The situation comes first The characters come next Then there's narration, and he lets the characters figure things out not always as he expected Ultimately, The story should always be the boss The story, not the plot Plot is the good writer's last resort and the dullard's first choice. And There's a huge difference between story and plot Story is honorable and trustworthy plot is shifty and best kept under house arrest. Huh Fortunately, Bryce came to the rescue in the second comment on her review here Plot is a series of events But story is about the motivations behind those events Her example is that plot is The king died and then the queen died The story is The king died and then the queen died of grief When you've finished the first draft which you should never show anyone else for comment , you have to step back, to see the wood for the trees, and figure out what the book is about Work on a second draft, then take a break and let someone else review that Description is what makes the reader a sensory participant in the story , but you must beware of over-describing Description begins in the writer's imagination, but should finish in the reader's. That sounds wise and wonderful, but I'm unsure how to apply it Still less, The use of simile and other figurative language is one of the chief delights of fiction , when you're supposed to be hunting down adverbs, pronouns and other allegedly needless words It's not about the setting it's always about the story.

Absolutely always I think not So many of my favourite works of fiction are about the setting that I have shelves called Landscape Protagonist and Sea, Islands, Coast One of the cardinal rules of good fiction is never to tell us a thing if you can show us. Never Again, it's the absolutism I object to And then relax Try any goddam thing you like If it works, fine If it doesn't toss it Toss it even if you love it. Hooray 4 On Living 3 surviving a life threatening accident, 22 pages This is a moving addition to recent editions and briefer versions have been published separately King writes of when he was out walking in 1999 and was hit by a driver who could have been from one of his books It recounts his serious injuries, multiple operations, and slow recovery Writing didn't save my life but it makes my life a brighter pleasant place. 5 And Further 3 annotated example of first and second drafts This has a very short story that King invites readers to edit It is followed by an annotated version, with explanations of the suggestions Most of them are cuts back to Omit needless words King reckons editing should trim at least 10% The other key thing is follow through, If there's a gun on the mantel in Act I, it must go off in Act III, otherwise it will be either pointless or a deus ex machina See Checkov's Gun.6 Booklists 3 books to read, mostly fiction There are two fiction booklists, mostly novels, but a few short story collections It's a varied mix of classics and modern, highbrow and less so King's first main list Notes I tried to read this with an open mind I was bored by the only other King I've read The Shining, my review [HERE](#), and I generally abhor the narrow prescriptivism of How to write guides Most of it defied my fears except for the grammar stylistic advice But what do I know I'm not a published author, let alone one as successful as Stephen King For a strident critique of Strunk and White's Elements of Style beloved of many US students and largely unknown in the UK, see Prof Geoff Pullum on Elements of Style. Image source for classic Punch cartoon, The Curate's egg

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The Hobbit, or There and Back Again
Dune
The Host
Vampire Academy

Little Women

The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency

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