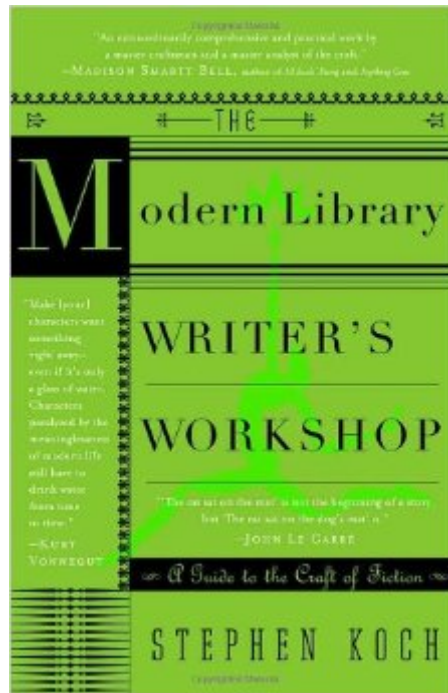


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The Modern Library Writer's Workshop: A Guide To The Craft Of Fiction (Modern Library Paperbacks)



Synopsis

“Make [your] characters want something right away” even if it’s only a glass of water. Characters paralyzed by the meaninglessness of modern life still have to drink water from time to time. • “Kurt Vonnegut’s “The cat sat on the mat” is not the beginning of a story, but “the cat sat on the dog” is.” John Le Carré “Nothing is more inspiring for a beginning writer than listening to masters of the craft talk about the writing life. But if you can’t get Vladimir Nabokov, Virginia Woolf, and Gabriel García Márquez together at the Algonquin, The Modern Library Writer’s Workshop gives you the next best thing. Stephen Koch, former chair of Columbia University’s graduate creative writing program, presents a unique guide to the craft of fiction. Along with his own lucid observations and commonsense techniques, he weaves together wisdom, advice, and inspiring commentary from some of our greatest writers. Taking you from the moment of inspiration (keep a notebook with you at all times), to writing a first draft (do it quickly! you can always revise later), to figuring out a plot (plot always serves the story, not vice versa), Koch is a benevolent mentor, glad to dispense sound advice when you need it most. The Modern Library Writer’s Workshop belongs on every writer’s shelf, to be picked up and pored over for those moments when the muse needs a little help finding her way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You will find, when you start shopping for books on fiction writing craft, that there are many of them.

Most are well-intentioned but you will only read them once and the verdict will be: "Thanks for sharing." Stephen Koch's title is one that many working authors of my acquaintance dip into frequently. It is a motivational work as much as a writing guide, but don't underestimate the value of such a cattle prod, especially if you can't quite find your way into your masterpiece or you are trying to develop your writing as a beginner. Perhaps more than people in highly structured occupations, authors can fall prey to procrastination, fruitless self-questioning, and creative blanks. Author, Stephen Koch comes at his subject from the position that a writer writes and that a story reveals itself as the writer works on it. After more than twenty years as an editor and fiction author, I am inclined to agree with him. I have found that his small volume delivers some thoroughly practical advice while at the same time prompting the writer to get on with the process of writing. Throughout the book, Koch offers quotes about the craft from notable authors. Some people seem to find these inspiring and interesting, and believe they can learn something from accomplished peers. A few I've spoken with do not welcome this content and wish Koch had focused more on craft methodologies. While he covers various bases, it's certainly true that other guides will offer a much more thorough technical treatment of character, narrative, plot etc. Yet, writing is not all about a "correct formula". One of the most helpful aspects of Koch's approach is that of mentoring.

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