



The 90-Day Novel: Unlock the story within

Alan Watt

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Alan Watt wrote the first draft of his novel *Diamond Dogs*, in eighty-eight days, and later sold the North American rights for \$500,000 to Little, Brown in a bidding war. The book became a national bestseller, won a slew of awards, and is soon to be a major motion picture.

Get the first draft down quickly! The 90-Day Novel is a day-by-day guide through the process of getting the first draft of your novel onto the page. The 90-Day Novel has been used at the L.A. Writers' Lab over ten years and has helped hundreds of writers complete their work. Some of Watt's students have gone on to become bestselling authors and win major literary awards.

The 90-Day Novel is structured into three parts. Part One describes the process of getting your story from imagination to the page and prepares you, through a few simple, powerful writing exercises to access the story within. Part Two is a series of 90 daily letters that will guide you through the hero's journey. Writers often tend to get stuck halfway through, mired somewhere in their "idea" of the story. The 90-Day Novel will show you how and why you got stuck, and how to get to the end of your first draft. Part Three is a compendium of stream-of-consciousness writing exercises designed to access the primal forces in your story, as well as the Structure Questions that will invite up images at key stages in your hero's journey.

The 90-Day Novel teaches you how to distill your plot to its nature, and clarifies the mysterious process of assembling vague disparate images into a coherent narrative. Working in this way, story structure (which is often taught as a formula) becomes a springboard, setting you free to explore the far reaches of your imagination. "There are no rules," Watt tells us. "Stay out of your left brain, and let your unconscious do the heavy lifting." The 90-Day Novel clearly articulates the process of marrying the rigor of story structure to the wildness of the imagination, and in the process reminds us of something we so often forget . . . that writing is actually fun.

For more information, go to www.lawriterslab.com.

"For years I have been fascinated by the industry legend of how Alan Watt wrote his masterful novel, *Diamond Dogs*, in 90 days. Now, at last, he shares his secrets. The 90-Day Novel is smart, insightful, thorough and wise. It's also one of the best books on novel-writing I have ever seen. I feel confident that anyone who takes this program seriously will have a solid manuscript to show for the effort."

- David Liss (national bestselling author and Edgar winner of *A Conspiracy of Paper*)

"Let Al Watt take your heart by its hand and get your 90-Day Novel onto the page. It will be the experience of a lifetime."

- Viki King (author of *How to Write a Movie in 21 Days: The Inner Movie Method*)

"The 90-Day Novel is the real deal. Alan Watt gets down to it by brilliantly articulating the fusion of the muse to the rigor of story structure. If you've been struggling with your story, or really want to get dangerous on the page, read this book. Follow it, and you will have a first draft in 90 days."

- Eric Miles Williamson (Pen finalist for his novel *East Bay Grease*, and author of *Say It Hot*)

"The 90-Day Novel provides the inspiration, focus, and structure that every novelist needs to finally put

down on paper what has been alive inside him, perhaps for years, struggling to get out."

- Allison Burnett (author of Christopher, finalist for Pen Center USA's Literary Award in Fiction)

"The 90 daily letters are absolutely worth the price of admission. A friendly nudge, a gentle reminder of our commitment, a powerful blast of insight: all serve to boost our flagging morale, or comb out our confusion, or intercede with the bitter fight against our creative impulses."

- Mary Shannon (Professor of Creative Writing, Cal State Northridge/90-Day Novelist)

About the Author

Bestselling author Alan Watt has received many awards for his writing, including France's 2004 Prix Printemps (best foreign novel). He founded LA Writers' Lab in 2002. He lectures on the creative process and teaches The 90-Day Novel workshops to writers throughout the world.

The 90-Day Novel: Unlock the story within Details

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From Reader Review The 90-Day Novel: Unlock the story within for online ebook

Carleena Angwin says

The rabbit trail of book discoveries has led me down several paths the last two years, and this little gem falls in one rockin' rabbit hole. Let me explain. I saw David Sedaris live at the Tivoli Theater in Chattanooga a couple years ago and before he started talking about his own work, he held up a copy of EILEEN by Ottessa Moshfegh. For five minutes he waved that book in our faces and told us what a twisted, disturbing, funny, once-you-start-you-can't-put-it-down sensational piece of literature it was. Well, I couldn't put that damn book out of my mind and when it was time to leave, instead of buying David Sedaris' book in the lobby, I went straight to the EILEEN table and put down the bills. Within six hours of nothing but page flipping, I knew David Sedaris was right.

Of course, this particular review is NOT a review of EILEEN, it is a review of Alan Watt's book.

In one of Ottessa's interviews, she referenced THE 90-DAY NOVEL and credited it for helping her write a first draft of EILEEN in a few weeks, then rewrite a final draft within a few months. My interest piqued. I went into grad school with the naive idea that an author wrote a book and published it within a couple years. When I learned authors could spend 10-15 years on one book, my immediate thought was - oh no, I will be 50 before I publish my first book. Not good news for an impatient person.

So back to the rabbit hole. When David Sedaris told me I needed to read Ottessa's EILEEN, and Ottessa told me I needed to read Alan Watt's 90 DAY NOVEL, I couldn't stop halfway down the hole. I kept going. I read it, highlighted, and made connections between Watt's advice and what Ottessa wrote. He discussed beginnings, endings, status quo, universality, humor, point of view, backstory, etc. I dissected EILEEN and Ottessa's use of storytelling tools through the lens of Watt's book in this post on my website:

<https://carleena.net/2017/04/09/561/>

Did the rabbit hole end with Watt's book, you may ask. The answer is no. Somewhere along the way, I learned about the monomyth, or the hero's journey, a story structure termed and outlined by mythologist Joseph Campbell. Many of the terms and tools Watt covers in his book came from the ideas set forth by Joseph Campbell. Which made me realize, we all have rabbit holes that inform our work. Watt most likely went down a rabbit hole that intersected with Joseph Campbell, Sedaris intersected with Ottessa, and thanks to them, I intersected with all four.

Elie says

Because of this book, I actually **did** write a memoir in 90 Days. So, if you want to cheat writer's block and have your story in your head--or heart--go for it. For those of us stuck in edits, it looks like there's a sequel in the works...

Leo says

To anyone used to reading this sort of book, Watt has a very unique and, for me, a very useful approach. If this book does not get you writing, well, maybe take up knitting? Archery? Crosswords?

Jerry Brown says

I needed a workshop to overcome a serious block, so I googled everything that was available, from online miracle cures to neighborhood reading clubs.

The only one that stood out was called "The 90-Day Novel Workshop." Unlike the others, most of which were built around structural techniques, this one said forget about structure, we need to probe our unconscious to find the truth about the story we want to tell. And let the structure reveal itself as part of the process. Two meetings a week, two hours of writing a day, both guided exercises and free form, and a first draft novel in 90 days.

It turned out to be the most important google search of my life. First, I discovered that the block was the result of trying to write the wrong book. The story that was lying in wait, bursting to get out, was an idea I'd shoved in a drawer years ago, thinking it too difficult. When I let go of my resistance, it just started pouring out, full of startling character and detail. Some of it even art. Or thereabouts. I have been astonished -- and grateful -- every day since.

I read a pre-release of "The 90-Day Novel" and was delighted that it so fully captures the spirit of the workshop. Alan is a superb writer and a wonderful teacher. Now that he's put everything down in book form, those of us who've taken the workshop have a valuable hard copy of our experience. Those who haven't taken the workshop can look forward to a nonstop, eye-opening adventure into the heart of personal story telling.

Trust me, this man knows the secret. You will not always like it, and it can become extremely uncomfortable. The truth is never what we want it to be, and getting to the truth, recognizing and accepting it for what it is, and even more difficult, writing it down honestly and without prejudice, is the core of this process. But through both the bleak and exalting days, and all the ones in between, Alan is always there to coach you through it. Even in print.

All in all, a wonderful achievement.

Judy Croome says

Written in a friendly approachable style, THE 90-DAY NOVEL takes an unusual approach in that it makes a good effort at explaining the unconscious aspects of writing. Combining tips and secrets, quotes and writing exercise, Watt encourages the reader through the dynamic process of completing a first draft of a novel within a 90-day period.

His explanation of showing versus telling to add life to a story was very good, as were many of the writing secrets he revealed. At last I feel comfortable being a writer who prefers to write with only the vaguest sense

of where the story is leading me!

While repetition is a good teaching technique in a live workshop environment, encouraging students to remember core concepts, there was a lot of repetition in this book. At times this was annoying.

I'm also not a fan of writing books that have writing exercises as an integral part of reading the book – my only reading time is late at night, in bed, which makes doing writing exercises difficult. Other readers who like doing practical exercises to help them understand may find the book easier to read than I did.

I did pick up many useful tips on writing a novel quickly, the main one being to trust my own writing process and not to fear writing the forbidden.

Michael Shreeve says

These days I only read "how to write novels in 5 days or less and make 1 million dollars" for pleasure. It can be an interesting exercise to look into the mind of another writer. Just realize it is another writer. It isn't you.

I desperately wish I could have the same success as Alan (writes a novel in 90 days. A few weeks after that sells it for \$500,000. Not a bad way to make a living.). But this guy is writing a book with some serious survivor bias going on.

Good tips, but there is a long list of other books I would recommend to learn how to write a novel.

Carolynstotes says

"Couldn't Have Done it without Alan Watt and the 90 Day Novel!"

The 90 Day Novel is a savior!! Having never written a full piece before, I signed up for one of Alan Watt's 90 Day Novel Workshops and now am forever grateful!

I truly believe I never would have finished my first novel without the brilliance of the 90 Day Novels guidance. The structure it gives along with a 90 day time commitment creates an environment for creativity to freely flourish within the natural journey towards a transformation. The Daily Writing Exercises that stoke the fire of the imagination, along with the Structure Questions give a perfect balance through the writing process.

Now having experience how effective this way of working is, I am thrilled to begin my next project, and the 90 Day Novel will be there the whole way. This book is an inspiration, an illumination, and a solid instrument of story which allows anyone to play the beautiful symphony of their heart and mind toward a tangible creation. It's a must have for any writer, and after reading several other books on writing, it is my number 1 choice and recommendation.

Steve Sasaki says

The 90-Day Novel is a book and a process I believe in, and in my view may be larger than the author himself. Alan Watt's methods coax, guide, and encourage, so virtually all can find a story within, worth telling. He was able to take a novice, me, and provide an on-going writing process. I'm thrilled I continue to work with a sense of purpose and urgency.

In the past I had taken many writing courses and seminars. Most emphasized the elements which comprised a great story, but none provided a method and/or guidance for tapping into a creative Source to develop these elements. Al's teachings contained in this book, lead one to write meaningful words and wonder, "Where did that come from?"

Others seem to encourage manufacturing a "product" made up of known parts. The 90-Day Novel provides the means to create a story from the inside out. The only downside...writing is required to bring it to the page. You may already know I recommend this book.

John Gilbert says

Alan Watt has hit on an excellent (if not unique) method for leading novice - and experienced - writers towards the goal of writing a good first draft novel. Using stream of consciousness techniques he begins 90 days of writing exercises by exploring the fears of the writer, arguing that even they can be used to form the nucleus of any novel.

He then gets the reader/writer to mine and explore theme, character, and images that could be used to create a novel plot. I say, could, because Watt stresses the importance of holding the story very loosely during these 90 days, not adding structure but surveying the unconscious and what moves within it to eventually create a well structured worthwhile story.

Thought it's not magic, the way in which the novel forms during the 90 days gave me a shiver down my spine. I have to admit that some of the exercises in the book are repetitive but the reason for that is, apparently, that even the same questions can elicit different responses in the same writer over a given time.

As you reach the end of the book, you realise that Watt is not teaching a technique, he is encouraging you to find your own method of writing - which is, after all, the best way to work as a writer.

If you have always wanted to write a novel and are serious about it but need some hand-holding, go get this book. It, more than any other 'how to write book', has shown me a way of exercising the writing muscles whilst forming your own methods of starting and writing a long project.

Kathryn says

A friend wrote the words, 'Al Watt. The 90 Day Novel' on the back of her business card and handed it to me with an emphatic, "Check it out." The next thing I knew I was writing the book I'd put off for over a year.

In my experience, The 90 Day Novel provides an ideal balance between specific guidance and no hard and fast rules, and AI keeps the process moving at a pace that discourages resistance and promotes progress. There is an alchemy to it whereby decisions are made, protagonists come to life, and pages get written. And it's fun. I highly recommend it to anyone who blocked, stalled, short on confidence, or otherwise staring at a blank page.

Jenna says

This is a fantastic resource for anyone who wants to write a novel. I spent years laboring under what I thought my story was, and using this method, I wrote a first draft in only 90 days!

There is so much freedom in this method, but the book also teaches much about story structure. Most books on writing I've seen focus on either structure or freewriting - this book combines both, and beautifully.

I am told that he is working on a book called The 90-Day Rewrite also, so we will have additional tools at our disposal soon! I am looking forward to the release of that one!

I've spent a lot of money on books and workshops - thousands of dollars. This book and workshop helped me the most by far. I now know how to deal with my fears and write the book I was supposed to write without dealing with any needless grief.

The subtitle of this book is "Unlock the story within". Trust me, it ain't kidding. The lock doesn't even exist for me anymore.

Gwyn Haller says

I pull this book out everytime I need to get going writing. It's not that I have writers' block but have writers' doubt. We have to pay our "dues"; have thick skin; and be open to critiques from anyone--and still get started on the next story. I'd write even if I never published. I'm a word smith and at heart the old fashioned story teller. So Mr. Watt is my comfort and acceleration tool until I'm pounding the keys on my own. I've read his book and the second time around actually did all the exercises in less than sixty days--I have ADD--don't hurry through the book. It's a great and useful tool. Thanks Mr. Watt.

Mary says

I read this book AGES ago. Followed some of the advice, but in the end you end up with nonsense. It would be cool if your subconscious could produce a great novel, but it really can't. It takes quite a bit of research and motivations and things that are well thought out.

On the one hand though, I found out my subconscious makes really questionable choices.

Jessica says

This book is a practical how-to book on writing fiction. Many of the how to books are inspirational and theoretical as well as biographical. This book is about the nuts and bolts of getting the story out and onto the page.

The main idea in it is to write the first draft fast, fast, fast. It is messy and ugly and terribly flawed- but it has potential. And it gets you in the habit of writing past your inner critic. The next step is to work with the material it generated to hone a finished work.

This book is a very good first step but it's technique needs to be let go once the first draft has been written. It will not take you through the process of completing a manuscript.

The book is mainly a calling card for the authors group classes. Having worked with him for several years I am sad to say he is no different from the cliché writing teachers who fling arrogant attitude around and feel compelled to ridicule students in public. I've watched him single out and make many individuals cry with harsh words and flippant attitudes, creating a very uncomfortable environment that focuses mainly on him and his importance. There is a sadistic quality to his workshops I could not continue to subject myself to.

When this book came out he offered his students little discounts if they would leave a high review. So the volume of reviews here were bought and are biased in favor of the author.

But I do think the suggestions in the book are helpful mainly because it asks questions about the characters you are developing. The message was useful once the messenger was untangled from it.

All the best in your writing endeavors!

Cathryn says

I've read over fifty books on the craft of fiction. The 90-Day Novel stands in the top five. Using the exercises in this book changed the way I write fiction. At the risk of melodrama, the book was life-changing in that it opened the door to help me understand why I write the kinds of stories I do, and gave me incredibly deeper access to my Voice. I highly recommend it.
