



The Secrets of Sensational Stories

Everybody loves a good story. But it's just as true that everybody hates a bad one. There's a lot on the line when you write fiction. Readers have high expectations. Many have been reading great stories by the world's best writers since they were old enough to hold a book in their hands and turn the pages. Personally, I find this quite intimidating. I make no secret of the fact that I am afraid of writing fiction. But that doesn't mean I won't give it a try. Especially if I have a little help.

A few years ago, I learned that if I want to write a good story, I need to know the Five Facts of Fiction:

- **Fact #1: Fiction is all about character.** The best stories are built around rich, complex, extremely interesting characters.
- **Fact #2: Fiction is all about what your character wants.** Your character wants one thing more than anything else in the world and that one thing drives everything your character does.
- **Fact #3: Fiction is all about how your character gets or does not get what he or she wants.** Some characters get what they want, others fail. This is how you develop the plot of your story.
- **Fact #4: Fiction is all about how your character changes.** After everything that happens, your character is forever changed. This is what makes your story meaningful.
- **Fact #5: Fiction is all about a world that you create.** You choose the people, places, things, and ideas in your story. Your choices influence the meaning of the story and your readers' level of interest.

Fiction is the hardest kind of writing to do well. It challenges even the most competent professionals. But with the right tools, even fearful fiction writers like me can give it a good shot.