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Reference

Outwitting Writer's Block: And Other Problems of the Pen
Jenna Glatzer
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Fear. Boredom. Premature editing. These are just a few causes of writer's block. This book gives writers the equivalent of a Craftsman professional toolset for breaking open its locks. Not the little red box that Dad kept in the back of his truck with a hammer and couple of screwdrivers, but the big-old-chest-in-the-corner-of-the-garage toolset.

Included are writing prompts that go beyond the usual "describe what you see in front of you" to include such thought-provoking subjects as deciding what the character will die for and then proving it. Sidebars from published authors give advice on how they overcome this barrier, letting newcomers know that it's a problem that all writers face. Websites for writing message boards, contests, relaxation techniques, and potential publishing arenas are listed throughout.

An inner critic is often the culprit in writer's block. This voice prematurely edits or, worse, discredits words before they even hit the page. Suggestions for combating the inner critic include forging ahead with the wrong word now (it can always be rewritten later) and turning off the computer monitor so the critic can't see what's being written.

Rejection letters from outside critics are abundant in any writer's life, and they can either stall the writing process or be used as a tool to restart the engines. The author recommends writing a rejection of the rejection letter (without mailing it, of course—no need to burn bridges). "Begin your rejection letter reply with a simple 'Dear Sir or Madam,' or, better yet, something snide such as, 'To Whom It May Concern in the Department of Broken Dreams, Trampled-on Promises, Crushed Hopes, and Daggers in the Back.'" This exercise both releases the negative emotions attached to rejection and is in itself an act of writing, which may then snowball into moving past the block.

Glatzer writes both fiction and non-fiction pieces, from books to screenplays to articles published in national magazines such as Woman's World, Prevention, and Writer's Digest. She is also editor-in-chief of the on-line magazine, Absolute Write. The prompts, exercises, and

examples offered in this book encompass a variety of writing styles and genres, recognizing that today's writer is often tackling many different types of writing.

Whether writing fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays, or greeting cards, writers of all forms will find that this book helps them beat back the obstacle stopping them short (perhaps with a sledge hammer from that big tool chest) and let the writing flow again.

Christine Canfield