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The WOW Factor: The Art of Writing a Novel

Robert C. Powers
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According to the Institute for Publishing Research about 195000 new titles were published in 2004—up from about 114000 in 1995. And while 70 percent of Americans haven't visited a bookstore in five years the Jenkins Group reports that 81 percent of the population feels they have a book inside them. These two publishing statistics should encourage those setting out to write a novel to pay strict attention to competitive factors.

In chapter one of his book *The WOW Factor The Art of Writing a Novel* author Robert C. Powers a Ph.D. in world politics sets the stage: "We are going to have an adventure together … exploring how to write a novel … while writing one!" To that effect Powers uses a novel of his own *The Unknown Horizon* as a model of how to employ basic creative principles.

One of the first things a writer should think about is how to develop a scenario and Powers claims that the best way to do that is to ask basic questions like how and where. "Right away the reader needs to know where the characters that are going to be speaking and taking action in the scene are." He offers an example from *The Unknown Horizon*:

Malapok and his friend Stakto stood hidden in a stand of cypress and pine trees in the Grand-Salt-Water-Swamp … Malapok was a tall strong Brave with intense darting eyes. Stakto was shorter and carried more weight … his heart bursting with eagerness to see Alanoas … the mysterious gloom of the swamp … "They are behind those tall cypress and pine trees." … "I will follow her along the path to the village."

Plot development is another stumbling block for novice writers. The author urges writers to identify the main character's problem and the associated goal as early in the plot as possible. Again asking questions like What characters are required to evolve the problem in the story? and What are the implications of the problem? can help. Powers challenges writers to see the scene before starting to write the scene. "Feel the atmosphere … immerse yourself in the scene."

The art of writing a novel is not says Powers a formulaic process. Many people think they can write he explains; but like anything else they must learn how to do it right. *The WOW Factor* offers readers a set of tools to reach their goal of writing a marketable novel. The book also includes valuable information for those interested in publishing including distribution options book reviews advertising marketing book signings websites and profit analysis.
JOAN PHELPS (October 20, 2006)

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