

If You're In It For The Money, You're In the Wrong Business

We often associate authors with fame and fortune. That's because the media follows the exploits and lives of "celebrity" authors. This is what we're exposed to and that's what forms our opinions.

We're all familiar with someone like J.K. Rowling and her rags to riches story. It's quite an irresistible story, really. A down on her luck mother, writing for survival, who comes up with a series of hugely popular books that make her a millionaire several hundred times over. We all like a happy ending, and there is no doubt that for Ms. Rowling, the ending was delightful in the extreme.

However, Rowling was not writing for money when she produced Harry Potter. She was writing because she had to write. It was a compulsion. She couldn't stop writing. Her urge wasn't monetary, it was creative. She was simply lucky enough to have her output strike a universal chord. It was a lot like being at the right place, at the right time with the right thing. It's important, though, to see that her level of success is based more on chance, than on talent. The same is true of any famous author you admire. They were lucky enough to get their talent noticed.

That's why if you're writing for money, you're in the wrong business. That's not to say that there isn't money to be made by writing books or that compensation for your efforts is wrong. It's simply a realistic statement based on the facts. To paraphrase Abe Lincoln, most authors make some money, some authors make a lot more money, but not every author will strike it rich.

If you write what you know to the best of your abilities, you increase the chances of financial remuneration. However, even when you interest a publisher with your manuscript, any money you receive as an advance is set off against the future royalties on your work. This means that, while you get to keep the advance no matter how your book sells, you won't see a single royalty payment until that advance has been paid back. This could take a very long time.

Of course, you can self-publish your book and have a internet shipper like Amazon handle electronic delivery of your work. However, you remain responsible for all promotion for the book and Amazon will take a cut of each sale for its trouble. The

bottom line is that you should write for love, for self-promotion or even for marketing purposes. Consider any money that comes your way as a result as a bonus for writing well.