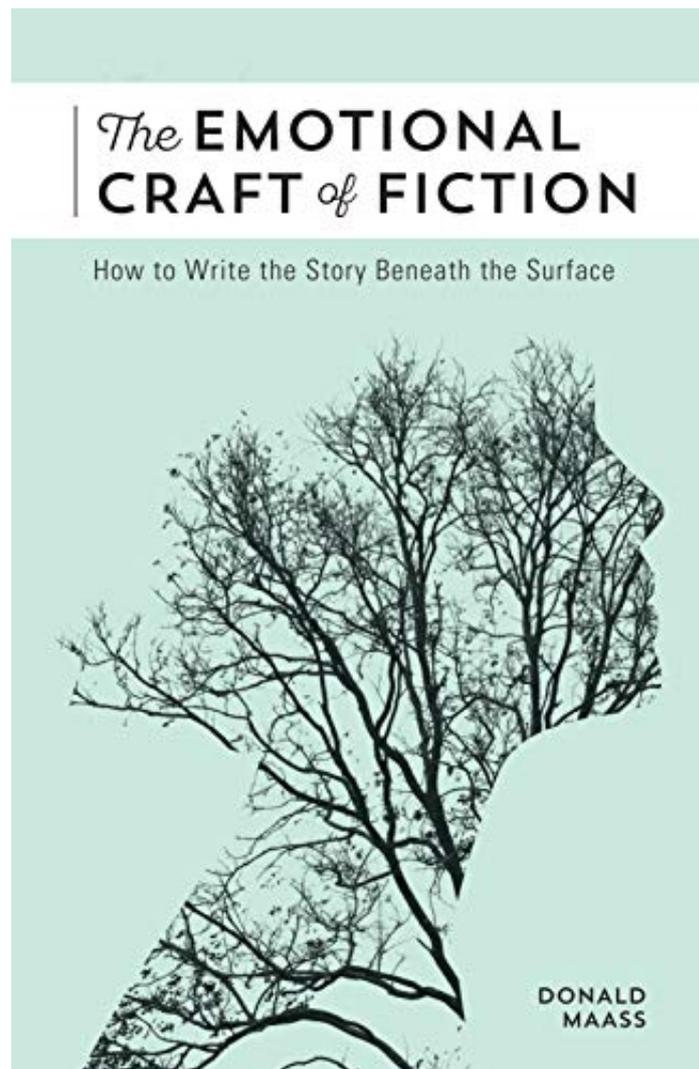


# The Emotional Craft of Fiction: How to Write the Story Beneath the Surface

*by*

**Donald Maass**



**DOWNLOAD E-BOOK**

## Synopsis

Engage Your Readers with Emotion While writers might disagree over showing versus telling or plotting versus pantsing, none would argue this: If you want to write strong fiction, you must make your readers feel. The reader's experience must be an emotional journey of its own, one as involving as your characters' struggles, discoveries, and triumphs are for you. That's where *The Emotional Craft of Fiction* comes in. Veteran literary agent and expert fiction instructor Donald Maass shows you how to use story to provoke a visceral and emotional experience in readers. Topics covered include:

- emotional modes of writing
- beyond showing versus telling
- your story's emotional world
- moral stakes
- connecting the inner and outer journeys
- plot as emotional opportunities
- invoking higher emotions, symbols, and emotional language
- cascading change
- story as emotional mirror
- positive spirit and magnanimous writing
- the hidden current that makes stories move

Readers can simply read a novel...or they can experience it. *The Emotional Craft of Fiction* shows you how to make that happen.

## Sort review

"If you peek under the sofa cushion or into the mind of a cartoonist, mostly you will find crumbs, a couple of cheap ballpoint pens, some candy wrappers, a remote you lost in 1998, and a few greasy pennies. But every once in a while, you will find something that is really, really funny, like an anteater or a pair of jodhpurs. Joe Dator's wonderful book illuminates the idea-path to an actual cartoon. It's hilarious, too." —Roz Chast, #1 New York Times best-selling cartoonist and author

"Joe Dator's *Inked* is full of cartoons that make me laugh. What's more, he tells you how you, too, can be a top cartoonist, sort of, but not really. Which also makes me laugh." —Ron Hauge, writer and producer of *The Simpsons*

"Joe Dator likens pitching *New Yorker* cartoons to getting fired every week and applying for the same job again the following week. We are thankful for his perpetual nightmare—one that includes squirrels with nut allergies, palindromic dinosaurs, and breakfast plates arranged as happy faces. This welcome collection of his cartoons and rough sketches had me laughing so hard I snorted Pepsi out my nostrils [and I was drinking milk at the time]." —Barry Blitt, Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist and illustrator

"I enjoyed this look at how Joe's particular brand of sausage is made, but it didn't do much to quell my deep-seated resentment at just how damn good he is. If I see a gag and hiss, 'I wish I'd thought of that,' chances are pretty good it's one of his. It's enraging. Go to hell, Joe." —Emily Flake, *New Yorker* cartoonist and author of *That Was Awkward: The Art and Etiquette of the Awkward Hug*

"What a strange, brutal world Joe Dator inhabits! Who needs it? Why do he—and other gag cartoonists—put themselves through such pain and frustration, week after week, late-night-hour after late-night-hour? I guess because they have to. And thank goodness for that. Better them than me. I loved this book." —Mike Sacks, author of *Poking a Dead Frog*, *Here's the Kicker*, and *Stinker Lets Loose*

"Joe Dator doesn't look like a man whose mind spirals into the realms of

sarcasm, obscure thoughts and twisted imagery. He looks like just a regular dude with a day job. He has the 'cartoonist's disguise.' Looking normal allows us to disappear into the crowd and to communicate what we see . . . undetected. A cartoonist's talent goes beyond the ability to draw well. A successful cartoonist is astute, sarcastic, irreverent, and stupefyingly silly. Cartoonists are 'actors' on their own two-dimensional stage. Joe Dator's stage is about 8 inches square, I'd guess, Strathmore Bond, perhaps. Maybe he uses Windsor Newton ink. Whatever it is that propels his wonderful imagery into the universe is just a tool. And, one could say, that Joe is a tool himself. For a man of few words, he is a talented writer: a rare bird who ruffles feathers and doesn't mind laying an egg once in a while. He is an observer, a postulator, an inquisitive who pushes the envelope—and he deserves every honour he has received. I am honoured to be one of his colleagues in this creative, curious, and often complicated industry, and it is a privilege to be asked to contribute to this book. This is a great book! Even his rejects make me laugh out loud. I like his art, I like his humour, and I too, wonder where in the world he gets his ideas. He looks like such a regular guy!" —Lynn Johnston, creator of For Better or for Worse "Witty, insightful commentary and delightful cartoons make Inked a joy to read." —Foreword Reviews "Joe Dator has written a cartoon book like no other . . . a book full of quirks and quarks of racy, punny, satirical, and hilarious gags showing the common idiosyncrasies of everyday life. It belongs on the shelves of every artist, cartoonist, and budding cartoonist." —New York Journal of Books--This text refers to the paperback edition. About the Author Joe Dator has been a cartoonist for the New Yorker since 2006 and has also contributed cartoons to M.A.D. Magazine and Esquire. He is a recipient of the National Cartoonists Society's Silver Reuben Award and has been featured on CBS's 60 Minutes. Dator has presented humorous lectures on everything from Japanese movie monsters to fictitious comedy albums and is the co-host of the Comedy Film Funnel podcast. He lives in New York City. --This text refers to the paperback edition.

[Download to continue reading...](#)



























## What people say about this book

Ned Barnett, "The Single Most Distinctive Writing Book I've Ever Read. I've been a professional writer since '72, and have been reading how-to books on writing (and taking classes) to improve my craft, for nearly as long. Over this long time, I have quite literally never come across a book like this before. Don Maass, a New York literary agent, writes about how to evoke emotional responses in readers - not in characters (though he covers that, too). Instead, he makes the case that having characters experience emotions doesn't always trigger that in readers (in fact, he suggests that usually doesn't work). Then, having shot down (logically, and with support) the idea that characters experiencing emotions equals readers experiencing emotions, he then shows how - in several chapters - how to reliably evoking strong, memorable and satisfying emotions in your readers. This isn't a 30,000-foot overview, this is down in the weeds, with specific examples and details. I'm finding all kinds of useful tools in this book, including 34 sets of exercises, usually involving writing or rewriting a scene or chapter in your book to evoke emotion. These exercises are usually divided into ten to twenty steps - this is very detailed. In reading this book with my trusty yellow high-lighter pen in hand, I not only terminally colored the book bright neon yellow, I've filled my notebook with about 40 pages of scrawled ideas that will make my in-progress novel a lot better - and this is before I get to doing the 34 sets of exercises. Seriously, if you read this book with an eye on really learning how to improve your fiction writing, this book is an entire college class's worth of material (I say that, having taught writing and book/author/publisher promotion as an adjunct prof at four colleges and universities). To really understand all the insights (I've been writing professionally since '72 and I'd never encountered most of these ideas), you have to study the book, taking notes as if each chapter or sub-chapter was a classroom lecture. Then, doing justice to the 34 sets of exercises will take months - but that will be time well-spent. This will work best if you have a novel you're working on or have recently finished in draft form. Going through the exercises will make your book measurably better. Which is why this is unlike any how-to writing book I've ever encountered. Bottom Line: If you're serious about this book, you'll learn a lot. One final note. Don Maass also uses examples from classic and current books- these are presented as icons of successful emotional impact (he doesn't find fault, but finds positive examples). My favorite is *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but he cites others that had such impact that I've ordered them from Amazon. If you want your characters to be more than cardboard, and want your readers to respond emotionally, get this book and make it your study-guide."

Shelbel, "First with your head, then with your heart.. After being told for years that I should "just sit down write a novel", I decided to do just that; sit down and write a novel. Surprise! It doesn't work like that--although in my Aspie brain I was certain that it worked like that for every other writer on the planet and I was just intrinsically, and irreparably, lacking. Surely, I thought, there must be a book or two on how to write books? I can't possibly be the only person in the world

who can't pound out best-selling first drafts in six weeks, right? Right?The universe sighed and shook its head. "Oh, child...."And so I have spent the past year reading every book I can get my hands on regarding everything from voice to POV, from syntax to context, from showing to telling, from snowflakes to arcs. I discovered there is more fine-tuning of technical aspects in writing than there is in ice-dancing a Russian ballet. Still, something was missing."But universe," I whined, "I want to take people on a journey. I want them to feel like they're on an emotional rollercoaster. No one talks about that, so am I just some touchy-feely, over-the-top idealist who needs to turn it down a notch or five?"The universe answered by chucking this book at my head.The first thing I gleaned from this book was that I wasn't flawed but rather I had been inherently right in my need to write from the heart. I learned that my characters can't be real until I give them that spark of life that comes from me. I learned I wasn't wrong in what I wanted to accomplish.What I did learn was how to accomplish it.Like "Bird by Bird", this book was a game changer for me. The examples given clearly demonstrated the techniques being discussed. The assignments, as they were, helped me explore aspects of my characters and my story that I had always felt were there, but hidden. I now have more avenues available to develop a deeper, more meaningful journey for the characters and the readers. This book will be close by, a constant reference, as I finish my first draft and happily begin my second.If you enjoy books on writing craft, then this is one you will treasure. Where others teach you how to write with your head, this one will show you how to write with your heart.Thank you, Mr. Maass."

Norma B, "Going for greatness. Donald Maass would like more great literary fiction in the world and in this book he shows how to provide it.Best bought if you've completed a first draft and want to go for greatness at the editing stage.UPDATE Been asking myself why the book currently has only three other reviews to date.. Might be because writers want to keep the worth of this book under wraps.. Well, I side with Donald Maass. The more great literary fiction in the world the better. (If it doesn't save us, it will show us what we've lost.) Perhaps writers looking for help to deepen their work will realize the lack of reviews is actually a mountain of unintended praise, get hold of this book and go for greatness."

Elaine French, "Excellent. When you think you've finished reading all you need to know, to write your great novel, read this. It's liberating. It will give you the courage to write what you felt you needed to write all along."

taoistjo, "Brilliant. I bought this on Kindle after reading about from another author on fb. OMG, I've only done the first two exercises and it is incredible! I've had to order the hard copy now as well. Don't doubt, buy it! Currently experimenting in my manuscript, really glad I bought it."

Book lover, "I have read a lot of craft book but this .... I have read a lot of craft book but this is one of my favourites. It has transformed my writing and my crafting of characters."



[DMCA](#)