



BE A BETTER WRITER

WRITE, WRITE, WRITE

Write all the time. Write pages of disposable rubbish. Carry a notebook and don't care who's watching when you pull it out. Write down any idea that hits you, no matter how small. Listen to your dreams, by day and night. Tiny seeds grow into big trees if you can learn to clear the forest around them.

DEVELOP A THICK SKIN

One day someone will be reading your writing unless you want to only write for yourself forever, and where's the fun in that? Get used to giving your writing to people to read. Accept what they say about it. Sometimes the hardest advice or opinions to hear are the most useful.

DITCH THE OVER-WRITING

Short sentences are as good as long ones. Use a thesaurus but don't sound as though you've swallowed one. Cut out any writing you feel proud of because it sounds clever, it's probably the worst bit. Tell stories with simple tools- don't cram them with imagery, long sentences and fancy punctuation.

SHOW DON'T TELL

Dialogue where people have real conversations is dull. Dialogue needs to keep the story moving, give us new information, tell us more about a person. Hunt down cliches and dispose of them ruthlessly. A good trick is to come at your ideas from the side. Imagine you're banned from 'saying' it.

IT'S A CRAFT

Learning a craft takes time and is hard work. The first draft is the easy bit. Rewrite and rewrite - but also know when to leave things alone and step away. And write what you are called to write, not what you think you should be writing. Stories choose us, not the other way round.