



Fondling Your Muse

John Warner

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A note from the author: "Writing is a solitary and often scary enterprise. I alone have heard your silent screams, so I have written this book to help you achieve what everyone who has the courage to live the creative life deserves: complete, utter, slavish adoration and worship. Also: incalculable wealth that insulates you from the concerns of ordinary people."

And there you have it. *Fondling Your Muse* is John Warner's innovative and slightly insane book of instruction for those who want to write, and those who think they already can. It's packed with quirky (possibly deranged) advice guaranteed to make you laugh out loud in the most embarrassing fashion possible. You know what we mean. It also includes a special chapter entitled "Everything Stephen King Knows About Writing Successfully: Plus Some Things I Know That He Doesn't Because He Isn't That Special." No other book currently available has this chapter!

And *Fondling Your Muse* provides the kind of wise, insightful guidance that's missing from all of those self-serious, mind-numbingly awful books that promise riches and fame by writing only 20 minutes a day.

Let's say you're looking for a tried-and-true recipe for literary success. Warner reveals all of the best ones, including these succulent concoctions:

- * Contemporary Romance Quiche al la Nicholas Sparks ("Tasty with a side of hackneyed potatoes.")
- * Tom Clancy Techno-Thriller Surprise ("Preparation is usually subcontracted to others.")
- * Chick-Lit Cacciatore ("Satisfies many, every single time. I can't explain how either.")
- * Harlequin Romance Salad ("Thoroughly rip bodices, pound prose until purple, and combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl.")
- * John Grisham's Legal Thriller Stew ("Boil in pot until ingredients bubble over line of believability.")
- * Comtemporary American Literary Fiction Flambé ("Served in smaller and smaller quantities as the years go by.")

Mmm...tasty.

Even really famous people endorse Warner's work:

"*Fondling Your Muse* is brilliant in the same way the most distant stars in the galaxy are brilliant. If it's a really clear night and you tilt your head to the side and squint, you sort of see it." -- Dave Eggers

It doesn't get any better than that. So go ahead - get *Fondling* today!

Fondling Your Muse Details

Date : Published September 15th 2005 by Writer's Digest Books

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Author : John Warner

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From Reader Review Fondling Your Muse for online ebook

Sarah Sammis says

Happily I can report that Fondling Your Muse was the last of my recent run of unenjoyable reads. This slim tome disguised as an exercise book for aspiring writers is actually a poor attempt at a parody of one of those how-to write books.

Apparently all one needs to do to write a parody is spend 6 years drunk in college while getting a BA and MFA. Then you too can tell really stupid jokes and get them published in a beautifully bound but otherwise pointless book. Whoopee!

Tomorrow I promise to write a real review. It will be on Guards! Guards! by Terry Pratchett which I'm sure most of you read ages ago.

Nora says

This is an amusing little book. Looking through the other reviews on here, it seems like there is a fair amount of confusion as to what kind of book this is. After flipping past the title page it should be clear to most that this book was written with tongue firmly planted in check. Good for a giggle.

Jennifer Collins says

First, some confessions: 1) I LOVE the title. I absolutely unapologetically LOVE and ADORE this title. Alone, it would have been enough for me to buy the book. 2) I used to share an office with the author, and since this book came out while I was in said office, I wanted to support the project (contrary to what jokes in the book might suggest, he did not push the book on me!). 3) I'm not a big reader of humor...in fact, I don't even watch many comedies. And, when it comes to slap-stick and/or dry humor, I generally stay away. Thus, without a doubt, I'm simply not the target audience for the book. (Well, except in that I love the title. I Really Love the title.)

In the end, I was amused. I was entertained and engaged enough to wander through the full book, and aware enough to realize that John's dry humor just isn't mine--many readers will find this laugh-out-loud funny and celebrate every page of irony and satire. Unfortunately, that's just not me. There are a Lot of one-liners in this book, and while most are funny, the piling of one on top of another ended up making it a slower read for me.

The point of all this as you try to figure out whether or not to pick it up? Well, it's a gorgeous book, and will likely make every writer guffaw repeatedly (particularly writers of fiction, admittedly), so it certainly wouldn't be a bad coffee table book or humorous gift. So, if you're looking for humor and jokes about writing and writers? Absolutely. On the other hand, if you take yourself too seriously, don't like dry humor, or are actually looking for in depth and sincere writing advice...well, you really ought to go elsewhere.

All that said, though, I'm not a humor person...and I'm still glad to have wandered my way through the book.

So, perhaps I should simply say: if you write, wander through a chapter or two, and you'll know pretty quickly whether this will be a favorite or something to pass on by.

Steve says

This book is a complete waste of time and money. It left me feeling mildly insulted, as well as financially cheated.

Pick it up and read it in the bookstore if you must (because I admit the title is alluring), but don't waste your dollars.

Gregg says

Seriously...what some people can do when they string the right words together blows me away. Warner's hilarious.

Allan Walsh says

Fondling Your Muse is a non-fiction title that provides advice to writers. It is described as a hands on guide to writing your very own New York Times best seller.

The Cover: I have a hardback copy of this book and the cover is awesome. It has a texture to it that looks like soft leather. The colour is good, trimmed with gold and the white font pops. It is a beautiful cover that drew me to the book straight away. I wouldn't say that it screams 'non-fiction writing guide' to me, more like a book of poems or a religious text, however the title sparks interest and the sub-titles tell you exactly what the book is about.

The Good Stuff: The cover is awesome. The content itself is very tongue-in-cheek funny which you will enjoy if you like that sort of thing. The book does also have writing related information, which for the complete novice may be of some use.

The Bad Stuff: I was really disappointed with this book. The quality of the cover and its bindings gave me high hopes. I was sorely let down by the comedic style of writing, which had me questioning when the author was serious and when he was just fooling around. Maybe it's me and my sense of humour, but I just didn't get all the humour. Yes, I laughed in places, but I also thought it was ridiculous in places. I don't mind a bit of humour, but I expect a certain level of sophistication from a non-fiction title, and this book just didn't cut it for me.

Overall, you will get a laugh from this book, but you have to ask yourself 'is that what I want?' Honestly, I don't usually get so snarky about books, maybe I was just having an off day, but I just felt like I wasted my time on this one. I really don't want to waste more time reading it again to find out if that was the really case. So, if you're keen, give it a go. You may love it and tell me just how wrong I am, but I'm only giving this 2 out of 5 golden bookmarks (and that's solely because I love the cover).

Nihar Suthar says

A friend of mine gave this book to me. While the text is hilarious (John Warner did an amazing job of making this funny), there isn't much useful information in the book at all. It would have been nice to see more knowledge on the writing process...but don't get me wrong, it's still definitely humorous. I guess I was just looking for more information, as the title seems to suggest there should be. Don't expect to learn much out of this, but expect to get a good laugh!

-Nihar
www.niharsuthar.com

Gloria says

I learned 2 things reading this book:

- 1) I would not want to sit by this man at a dinner party (you know-- one of those types who thinks he's much funnier than he actually is).
- 2) This book was about 150 pages too long (It's approximately 180 of actual book pages, in case you're curious).

Having said that I would give it probably 2.5 stars. The "recipes" he included for everything from Contemporary Romance Quiche to Tom Clancy Techno-Thriller Surprise did make me laugh-- worth the time of picking up the book alone.

So, I leave you with a highlight. The recipe for Ayn Rand Objectivism Cake.

Ingredients:

- * 1 cartoonishly masculine hero with a name that signifies strength (like Griffin Stone or Granite Johnson).
- * Equal amounts of:
 - compassion
 - emotion
 - cooperation
 - sacrifice
 - reasoning
 - objective reality
 - selfishness
 - laissez-faire capitalism

Preparation:

Take compassion, emotion, cooperation, and sacrifice, throw them on the ground, and stomp them into a worthless pulp. Discard in trash and don't even give a second thought. Combine remaining ingredients and bake until half-done. Serve to pseudointellectual discontented seventeen-year-old males who can't get dates. Warning: generally repulsive to anyone over twenty years old.

Jennifer Sommersby says

~Reprint from February 2007~

FONDLING YOUR MUSE

by John Warner

Writer's Digest Books

ISBN: 1582973482

ASIN: B0045EPDD6

2011 update: available on Amazon (not an e-book at this time)

If the title does intrigue you to at least pick up John Warner's bestselling tome on writing advice, then you are either: (1) sufficiently satisfied with your full-time job as a meter reader, saving your writing "hobby" for evenings in front of "Home Improvement" reruns; or (2) you are so completely and sickeningly content with not only your burgeoning writing career that you are impermeable to so-called "advice" from someone who doesn't write in your chosen genre but also you must get enough action in the bedroom to resist any book that has the word "fondling" in its title.

Before you sit down with *Fondling Your Muse*, turn off Tim the Tool-Man Taylor and move your stuffed animals off the couch so they avoid being showered with the grains of salt you will toss about wildly while tearing through the animated, hysterical diatribe. Warner, an award-winning editor of *McSweeney's Internet Tendencies* (and chum of a number of disgustingly accomplished young, impish writers) is side-splitting. Resist the temptation to read aloud passages to that disheveled, pierced teenager sitting next to you in the bus shelter. He can't hear you, anyway—Incubus is screaming from the headphones of his iPod, rendering him devoid of understanding spoken English for at least another day.

The self-effacing humorist misses no opportunity to make fun of writers, the pursuit of the elusive and most certainly idyllic "writer's life," or the dreamy chase of the advance money you will undoubtedly get for your first 120,000-word attempt at entering the Kingdom of Novelhood. Warner pulls no punches as he goads us across the punishing battlefield known as publishing.

Muse covers the importance of MFAs and killer queries, overcoming writer's block and writing hotter sex scenes. If it's hard advice you seek, pay special attention to the "Motivation Moments"—that is, of course, after you dab your tears from that last giggle fit. Writers, for reasons as personal as our choice in lacy undergarments, spend millions of dollars annually on books that will dish up that one pearl of advice that will deliver our manuscripts into the anxious and grateful hands of parched editors desperate to quench their thirst on the genius of our double-spaced, properly formatted pages. Warner recognizes this and, the bastard, has capitalized on our insecurities. There's a reason why his book (published by Writer's Digest Books, a company that has made gazillions on this premise of writerly self-inferiority) has sold so well. He doesn't have the Holy Grail enshrined in his swanky, professionally decorated home office, from which he can summon the Secrets of Success; he just happens to possess an uncanny ability to divine COMMON SENSE from the mayhem of the struggle for literary supremacy. You know what he's saying — you know it like you know your own mother's distinct Tova Borgnine-inspired scent. If you want to write a bestseller — if you want to get anything published, for that matter — you have to W-R-I-T-E. No more "Home Improvement." Get rid of those stuffed animals (they're draining your chakras and exacerbating your allergies, anyway). No more paychecks blown on writing advice books or book doctors who only take you away from what you

KNOW you should be doing.

If you're looking to *Fondling* for bona fide advice on how to get published, hang onto your milk money. If you're looking for edgy, no-holds-barred commentary on how seriously we scribbish slaves tend to take ourselves, buy it, read it, read it a second time to satisfy your itch to scribble notes in the margin and use your new set of highlighters, and then support this goofball's well-earned success by ordering copies for your writers' group comrades from Amazon. Just don't be surprised if Warner shows up on your porch on his knees, groveling to your Greatness and showering you with rose petals in gratitude for upping his Amazon rankings. (Trust me—he's watching.)

Post script: Apologies for the italics. Something happened in the cut/paste from Word into this template, and I can't find it. No random HTML tags that I can find. Whatever. Content's still good, right? ~jsy

Mel says

Your mileage may vary, of course, but for me this turned out not to be the kind of book you want to read sequentially, you know, I thought it was hilarious, but reading a lot at one sitting made it seem... less so.

L.K. Simonds says

"After reading this book, I know what the caged bird will be crapping on." Maya Angelou*

"If you want a cake, you go to a baker. If you need a table, you hire a carpenter. If you want to learn how to write, you should buy someone else's book, preferably mine." Anne Lamott*

*These people refused to give us a blurb, so we tried to imagine what they might say had they agreed to.

Okay, when I ordered this little hardback from Amazon, I must not have been wearing my readers because I thought the title was "Finding Your Muse..." Imagine my surprise when the book arrived and I read the title. Nevertheless, Mr. Warner's "Infallible Advise from a Published Author to a Writerly Aspirant" is filled with useful wisdom served tongue in cheek.

Meaghan says

Although this is nowhere near as side-splittingly wonderful (or as useful) as *How Not to Write a Novel*, it's still an amusing, chuckle-worthy parody of the genre of "writing advice" books. Middle-grade humor (by which I mean quality, not age) I guess.

Ellin says

...doesn't the title just say it all?

Quite possibly the funniest homage to writing I've ever had the good fortune to stumble across. From start (who else have you ever seen write TWO authors notes, the first proudly proclaiming that he can finally write one because he's the author of this book, the second being a musical stave with a B flat?) to finish it's delightfully silly, but at the same time it's also quite serious in it's commentary on modern day authors and what is the best way in which to write a novel. Then of course there will be a rambling quiz that reveals if you are suited to be a writer (only hermits and heavy procrastinators need apply) and the fun all starts again!

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on how to keep up with your amazon.com rankings, how to make your characters more 3 dimensional, and *Everything Stephen King Knows About Writing Successfully: Plus Some Things I Know That He Doesn't Because He Isn't That Special*.

This is one for anybody who has ever aspired to be an author. Trust me, you'll crack up all the way through.

Mark Lacy says

I honestly don't know why I bothered reading this whole thing. Even my daughter told me, before she gave it to me to read, that she couldn't get through it. Just stupid humor to illustrate his points about writing and the writing life, but even the humor was only mildly interesting. So, not helpful, and not enjoyable.

J says

Funny. Sarcastic. Smart ass-ish. At first this unconventional advice was interesting than it it. Dumbass it's smart ass advice not to be taken seriously. This was when I decided to stop reading and picked it up later. Finished yesterday after three weeks it sat on to be finished later stack. It funny and worth a peruse. That's all.
