

A Guide To Being A Literary Failure

Former pupil Tony Drury is a thriller writer. He is the author of five DCI Sarah Rudd City thrillers. In each, he draws upon his career as a London financier to expose the underworld of dark practices and shadowy characters. None, however, are able to withstand the bravery and incisive detection methods of one of the police force's bravest officers. Her juggling of career demands, husband, children and her own demons, make riveting reading.

Tony is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers. He built a London-based corporate finance house specialising in raising finance for small to medium sized enterprises.

He has travelled globally and chaired companies in Hong Kong, China and Japan.

Here he self-deprecatingly writes about his experience of becoming an established writer.

“I do believe something very magical can happen when you read a good book”

J. K Rowling

The main difference between J. K Rowling and myself is that she has sold 500 million books and I haven't.

A lady from Tring wrote to me recently about my latest DCI Sarah Rudd novel. She said, 'Dear Mr Drury. My six-year-old son can write better English than you.'

When I completed my first work of fiction, 'Megan's Game', I wrote to Jeffrey Archer. 'Dear Mr Archer', I began. 'I have read your brilliant story of twins in America, 'Sons of Fortune'. Can I ask you to read my book?' He wrote back, 'No'.

Publishing is no different from horse racing or buying shares. Until a writer becomes a best-seller (and there are few of them) nobody knows whether a book will sell. And make no mistake, publishing is like everything else in life – it's about making money.

Fifty per cent of authors do not write a second book. Ninety-five per cent of authors make less than £5,000 in royalties annually. The Holy Grail for writers is

Amazon Reviews. Every book is listed on Amazon and anyone can write a review. The process is to give a grading between one and five stars and then write comments. Amazon are very professional and monitor reviews carefully.

My latest book received a review where the writer said he gave my book three and a half stars. Amazon don't do halves and he took it back to three stars. I was incandescent with frustration.

I have just finished reading John Bercow's autobiography (former Speaker of the House of Commons), 'Unspeakable'. One reviewer had written, 'I wanted to give this book no stars but Amazon won't let me!'



Every year I take part in an event at Milton Keynes library where a group of students have to write 20,000 words in a month on a given topic. After one session a woman came up and asked me to read her draft manuscript. She was a twenty-five-year old farmer from Chesham. Of course, I agreed. It was dire. The shoot-out at the farm house was dreadful. I wrote, congratulated her, suggested she concentrate on her characters and read popular authors to gauge story lines. A year later I received a letter from her saying my letter was the turning point of her literary career and she had just won a contract with a major publisher!

In the world of fiction there is a saying: 'You can teach a story teller to write good English but you can't turn a good writer into a story teller.'

If you are thinking of writing a work of fiction, go for it. The first book is the hardest but it wins you a badge of competence and then it gets easier. I received a review that read 'I am giving Mr Drury three stars. This is what he needs to do to win four stars.' I thought that was great.

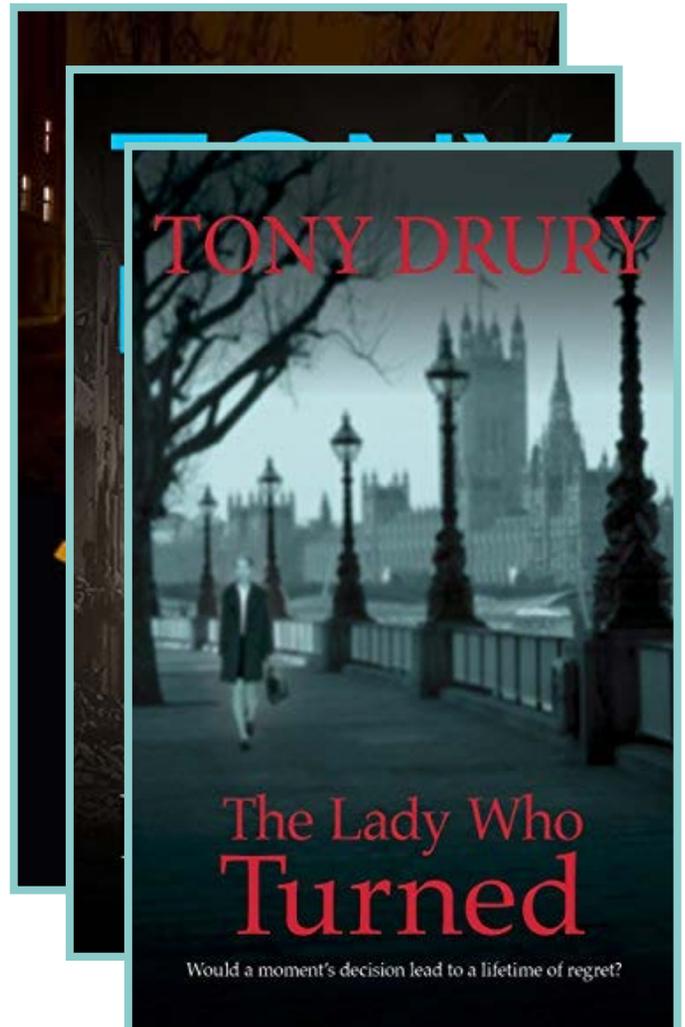
I have been given 500 words to write this article. I need just one sentence.

If you have an instinct to write a work of fiction, go for it. It's incredibly hard work, demoralising, hurtful and frustrating which you can say about most things in life. But one day you'll hold YOUR book in your hand. A moment of sheer magic.

Good luck – I wish you all well.

Tony's novels can be found on Amazon https://www.amazon.co.uk/Tony-Drury/e/B00B49AY84/ref=ntt_dp_epwbk_0

Tony's website <http://www.tonydrury.com/>



When I Was Young

We have also been sent the details of another book that some of you may be interested to read. 'When I Was Young' by Norman Wimbush describes very positively the author's life at Five Ways School in the 1890s

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/When-Was-Young-Memoir-Wimbush/dp/1912419645>

