



Fiction Jackpot Secrets Jenna Sayles

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Introduction

You may not know it, but you have just potentially made a life-changing decision by picking up this ebook.

I don't mean to sound melodramatic, but it's true.

My name is Jenna Sayles. I've been published under many different names. Most recently, my novel, [*The Adoption Conspiracy*](#), was published by Mundania Press. You can search me up on Google under the name J.E. Sayles and find it there.

I've also been published, under different pen names in several print and online magazines, as well.

I say this not to brag, but to let you know I have some experience in the publishing game.

I'm nobody exceptional because I wrote a book. Chances are you've written one, too. If not, chances are you have one in you. By that, I mean you already have ideas, or can come up with ideas, that can be developed into concepts you can put into words to share with the world.

That's where your life changes, once you are able to get your words and ideas out to the world.

You already have the desire to write a book, or you wouldn't have bothered to pick up this ebook. Perhaps you have a fictional story you've always wanted to develop into a book. Maybe you've already tried to go the traditional publishing route, but keep hitting one brick wall after another.

Fear not. Like I said, your life is about to change, if you follow the advice I will share with you in this ebook.

Now, I have to tell you, I can't do it for you. If you read this but don't take action, I can't help you at all.

But if you are willing to follow the steps I give in the following pages, your life could very well change for the better in the way of achieving an accomplishment, and very likely getting wealthier in the process, too. I'm about to show you how.

Why An Ebook Over Traditional Publishing?

The times, they are a 'changing. Perhaps you've noticed it, too, if you have ever tried to (or have) published a book before the old-fashioned way.

(If you're entirely new to this, let this be an educational discussion to enlighten you about "then" versus "now".)

It used to be easier to get a manuscript accepted and published by a major publishing house.

And when I say this, I'm talking about the big players, such as Random House, Bantam Doubleday Dell, and the like.

In the "old days," you could go down to the local library and get a copy of a book called *Writers Market*, where you can search out publishing houses and what they're looking for in a given year.

If you still want to rely on that method, you certainly can. If you do, here are a couple of tips. *Writer's Market* is published yearly, so it's never a good idea to rely on a previous year's edition. They list what they want for that current year only. And keep in mind, the information listed, such as the name of the editor to submit manuscripts to, may already be out of date by the time you are reading it, even if it is that current year's edition. Editors tend to change publishing houses frequently, so the old method of calling to find out the name of the current acquisitions editor is still a good idea.

All of that is hassle enough. But nowadays, it's getting to be even more challenging to break into print.

Now, when you pick up *Writer's Market* or go to a publisher's website, you might find yourself face to face with those dreaded words: *Agented submissions only*.

Many traditional publishers are only accepting submissions made by a literary agent. This means you have to prepare a submission package similar to one you would prepare for a publisher. But in this case, it's just to try to get an agent to take on your book in the first place, to in turn sell it to a publisher (and take a cut of his or her own profits of your sales in return).

There used to be quite a few agents who would work with new authors, and some still do. But more and more of them want someone who already has been published. Are you seeing the Catch-22 here?

Once you've beaten the odds and have received the prized letter that your manuscript has been accepted, your troubles are far from over. The editing process can be excruciating. So can the wait to see your work come to light.

I Just Want to See My Book In Print...

Maybe for the reasons above, you've been published (or want to be published), but don't want all the hassle I've just outlined. Or maybe you've "been there, done that," and know there has to be a simpler way.

Or perhaps you're entirely new at this. You fancy yourself a writer waiting to be discovered.

In any of these cases, there is a faster, easier, and in some cases, more lucrative way to see your idea in print:

Write and sell your own ebook!

There are some definite advantages to publishing your own ebook over seeking out a publisher.

Traditional Publisher	Your Own Ebook
You have to give them what they want	You only have to worry about what your readers will want
It can be hard to break in. Lots of competition and high rate of rejection	You can publish an ebook and gain instant notoriety whenever you want to. You just write, package, and sell it.
It can takes years for your book to go to the market	Can be ready in a much shorter amount of time
You only receive a percentage of the profits (10-15% on print, and up to 50% on ebooks, is standard). An agent will take a percentage on top of that.	You get to keep all of the profits you make

Have I convinced you yet? Great. Let's get down to the business of step one in the process: Translating your idea to the printed word.

How to Brainstorm Your Ebook

Get out your pen and paper or fire up Microsoft Word (or your own favorite editing software) on your computer.

If you've already got an idea, you can skip this section, or read to further develop your idea.

There are different classes of writers, so you determine which one you are.

- If you're like me, you've constantly got story ideas circulating in your head. You already have many pages of notes about stories you want to write, characters you want to breathe life into, and so on. Similarly, you might have idea after idea swirling around in your head. You have no problem coming up with them. There's just not enough time in the day to get them all down. Or you might find yourself limited only by your own ability to get the words on the page as quickly as the ideas are coming to you.

or

- Perhaps you want to write, but you just don't know what to write about. I would venture to guess that every writer has had that moment. It's classic "writer's block".

or

- You've never considered yourself a "writer". But you have a special talent and think you can teach others how to develop as well. Or you spent years in a particular trade or profession, and have some knowledge you can share with others from your experience.

or

- You're the entrepreneurial type. You don't really have anything to write about. You just heard ebooks are great to sell online because you can make a profit selling something that has virtually no overhead expense.

If you fall into that last category, what you've heard is true. But there is one catch:

You still have to write something people will want to read!

You can write all the ebooks in the world, but if they are about topics no one else cares about, they won't sell.

You might still be determined to take a risk and just write about whatever you want. Hey, go for it. I'm not going to tell you it won't work, because it just might. However, it's probably best to put some effort into checking to see if your idea will be profitable. This is true, even if it's a fictional work.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves here. Right now, we just want to develop the ideas. You can read in the next chapter how to determine how profitable they might be.

So why do I bring it up here?

Because I want to encourage you to brainstorm in this step, but don't get stuck on any one idea at this point.

Finding Ideas

If you want to write a fictional ebook, you are probably the type who already has plenty of ideas at the ready. Just in case, however, I will give you some ways to come up with fictional book ideas.

If you have had some fantastic experience in your life (either extraordinarily good or challenging), you can think of writing a memoir. Just a tip here, though. People won't pick up your memoir because they want to read about you in particular. Chances are, they won't know or even care who you are.

However, they will be interested in reading what you have gone through, if it's an experience you can relate to on some level. For instance, perhaps you endured a messy divorce, or got away from an abusive spouse and started your life over again. Perhaps you were wronged by some company and you came out on top by exposing the company's wrong-doings and getting somehow compensated.

I think you're getting the picture here. Brainstorm about a struggle you have overcome and how you overcame it, and it would likely be a good topic for a memoir.

If you are worried at this point about exposing the names or locations of others involved in your story, don't be. You can always change the details later to protect them, or even yourself, if you wish for it to be an anonymous account.

Activity

If you are reading this on your computer, start a new folder for activities I will suggest throughout this book. Begin with a new folder entitled “Brainstorming”. Open a new document in your text editor (Microsoft Word, Notepad, WordPad, etc.) and name it “What I’ve Overcome”. In it, think back and jot down struggles you have had in your life that you managed to overcome.

If you have printed this ebook and are using it as a workbook, jot some of them down in the space below:

Finding Ideas from Real Life Stories

Another way to come up with a fictional idea is to think about an exceptional real-life story you may have heard about and add your own creative slant to it.

Be careful here. You don't want to use real names if you're going to add made-up details. But, you can take the basic premise of the story and turn it into a work of fiction.

You can do the same with non-fiction. There is a whole category called Creative Non-fiction that is comprised of true-to-life stories that were retold with a bit of creative license. This is the same concept as writing fiction.

To find ideas, try some of the following sources:

- Watch the television and make note to news stories that interested you when you saw them. Especially note the ones that made you say, "Wow, that would make a great story".
- Visit message boards on the internet. What kind of ideas are other people talking about? What life stories are they telling? People love to share their own experiences, so if you start looking for others' stories, you're bound to find them.
- Think back to stories you've heard your own friends and family tell. Maybe your parents or grandparents have a great story to tell about how they emigrated from another country. They likely had adverse conditions they had to face and overcome in order to get where they wound up. That's just an example, but hopefully, my point is made. Good potential stories are everywhere, if you just think to look for them.

Activity

Start a file called “Real-life Experiences”. Jot down some real-life experiences you’ve heard about from others (word of mouth, on the news, etc.) that you could write about.

Write About What You Know...With a Twist

If you do write fiction, or have ever tried, I am sure you've heard that phrase, "Write about what you know."

There is some truth to that. After all, it gives you an easy starting point to put words on a page. However, I like to put a twist on that: **Take a real life situation you already know about, and then ask, "What if...?"**

For example, you know what it's like to attend those stressful family reunions, where everyone is so different and so many people in the family don't get along. What if...You won the lottery? What would your next family reunion be like afterward?

Following that same "what if," use another experience you know about as a starting point. You know what it's like to slave away for that boss who doesn't appreciate you and feeling like you'll never advance, despite all your hard work. Now you've just won the lottery. \$1.5 million dollars. What would you do the next day, when you walk into work? Or would you even go back?

All of these examples could easily be crafted into manuscripts that could later become ebooks. Develop a good character for those "what-if" situations. Put them into the situation and decide what happens.

Activity

What are some good “What if” situations you could put a character into?

Elements of a Good Story

Of course, there are other elements of a good fictional manuscript. I won't attempt to go into all of them here, as there are plenty of websites, fiction writer's workshops, and other resources that can help you explore them. However, here are some basic things to keep in mind:

- Plot: Your plot should be engaging and keep readers wanting to keep scrolling through the pages. Remember that *it's not just about what happens throughout the story, but how the character has changed by the end of the story as a result.*
- Narrative: Would your story sound best told in first person ("I said"), second ("You said"), or third person (He said)? Second person is almost never used. It sounds awkward. So the choice will likely be between first person and third person. That's completely up to you. One idea you can try is to write it in first person, then rewrite it in third person. Which sounds more natural for the story?
- Setting: Your setting should make sense, given the plot and characters.
- Details: If your character is a doctor, you will probably have to research some medical details to make it sound realistic. My book was set in New England. I knew nothing about that region, as I had not been there before, so I had to research some things about that area in order to throw in details that would make the setting believable.

Remember, there are plenty of places you can research how to write a good fictional novel. These are just some things to keep in mind as you research your topic. Could you build believable characters and a realistic setting around it?

Activity

Where do you want your story to take place? What characters are involved? What struggle will the character have to overcome and how will he or she change as a result?

Activity

What specific talents, skills, abilities or areas of knowledge do you have?

How to Determine if Your Ebook Will Be Successful

By now, you should have had a chance to think about what you want to write about. Now comes the research.

Don't panic. If you're an artsy writer-type, the mere word *research* may make you cringe and want to pack it in, but don't panic. This type of research isn't too painful. And it can be interesting to explore what people want to buy.

There are many ways to discover what's selling and craft your ebook to meet the demand. And believe it or not, if you do some research on the internet, people are always stating publicly (online) what they want to buy.

If you're writing fiction, you want to write a piece that will fit into a certain genre.

"But wait," you say. "You told me to write about something unique! I can't fit it into a specific category."

I would be willing to challenge that. No matter how unique it is, it can likely be made to fit into a genre or niche.

Even more "mainstream" fiction authors began by specializing in a particular niche. Stephen King, for instance, wrote horror. Danielle Steele wrote romances.

The advice to craft your work into a particular genre still holds true. Save yourself the struggle you'll face by insisting your work is too "special" to be categorized into a genre. (That's what I did, and it was years before I finally changed this costly mistake.) If you've already written something that doesn't fit into a genre, rewrite it into one.

By doing so, you'll have an easier time marketing your novel and finding a specific audience for your ebook.

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