



Powerful Premise: Writing the Irresistible

William Bernhardt

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Why do some books attract readers while others don't? What are the essential qualities of an irresistible read, a story people can't wait to start? And what's the secret to attracting a literary agent or publishing deal? The answer to all three questions is: Premise. A powerful premise is what separates ordinary novels from bestsellers. William Bernhardt explains the essential elements of breakout books, stories that reel in readers and attract serious attention. He discusses all the essential elements: originality, high stakes, believability, inescapable conflict, emotional appeal, and others. Plus, in the final chapter, Bernhardt explains how to turn your powerful premise into a winning pitch to attract agents and editors.

William Bernhardt is the bestselling author of more than thirty books, including the blockbuster Ben Kincaid novels and *Nemesis: The Final Case of Eliot Ness*, currently in production as an NBC miniseries. Bernhardt is also one of the most sought-after writing instructors in the nation. He is the only person to have received the Southern Writers Gold Medal Award, the Royden B. Davis Distinguished Author Award (U Penn) and the H. Louise Cobb Distinguished Author Award (OSU), which is given "in recognition of an outstanding body of work that has profoundly influenced the way in which we understand ourselves and American society at large."

The Red Sneaker Writing Center is dedicated to helping writers achieve their literary goals. What's a red sneaker writer? A committed writer seeking useful instruction and guidance rather than obfuscation and attitude. Red sneakers get the job done and so do red sneaker writers, by paying close attention to their art and craft, committing to hard work, and never quitting. Are you a red sneaker writer? If so, this book is for you.

Powerful Premise: Writing the Irresistible Details

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From Reader Review Powerful Premise: Writing the Irresistible for online ebook

Linda says

I've been taking a free screenwriting class through futurelearn.com and I thought this little book, Powerful Premise: Writing the Irresistible, might help. It certainly has a lot of good ideas packed into a small space, plus some helpful tips on pitching your book once it's finished.

Jennifer says

Quick, good book to remind you to keep your head in the premise game (which often looks like mental wandering). It will make your stories better. I am a big fan of Bernhardt's books in general, especially his writing courses.

Just a note though- the 9/11 reference/example is really...odd. "The worst thing to happen on American soil" (umm, slavery? Native American slaughter? etc.) followed by vaguely Islamophobic/homophobic comments...not good.

Abigail Sands says

The Red Sneaker Writer's Series is an excellent resource for writers. Easy to understand and easy application.

Kay says

Quick and to the point, Bernhardt reads his own work in an engaging manner without any pretentiousness. The individual topics covered are essential for novelists and he has no problem with telling the listener how to write genre fiction that could be a powerful read as well as possibly commercially successful.

The only reason this short book took me a week was I kept rewinding to ensure I wasn't missing an important point as I walked to work. This is definitely a book chock-full of nuggets of advice for writers.

I not only want the rest of the books in this series, but I also want them all as ebooks in order to highlight passages and have the written exercises in front of me.

This will be a reread every time I start a new novel or any other work of fiction.

Rachel Ellyn says

Good advice.

P.A. says

Gets to the necessary without all the blah blah and fluff. Very helpful, quick read.

FTC stuff; I received this book through a Goodreads, Firstreads contest.

Benjamin Thomas says

Very helpful

I love the red sneaker series. This one is packed with invaluable information to beef up any story. On to the next one!

Gail Baugniet says

Another Red Sneakers tutorial

Powerful Premise is not just about coming up with a great idea for a book but about expanding and enriching that idea to hook readers with a powerful story. There's even a segment on writing a synopsis, something I find as daunting as completing a first draft.

Meredith says

I like this series--each book is quick and to the point, and covers a specific aspect of writing fiction. However, this particular book was a little less helpful to me than the others.

I especially would have liked examples of possible one-minute pitches for famous books in the last chapter. There is one made-up example, but I would have liked to see how a real book (hopefully one I'm familiar with) converts to a brief pitch. But he mostly only gives a few obvious DOs (practice your pitch, be yourself, be friendly) and obvious DON'Ts (don't be gimmicky, don't count on memorability making up for your book's content, etc.)
