



How to Become a Famous Writer Before You're Dead: Your Words in Print and Your Name in Lights

Ariel Gore

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This may come as a shock, but brilliant writing and clever wordplay do not a published author make. True, you'll actually have to write if you want to be a writer, but ultimately literary success is about much more than putting pen to paper (or fingers to keys). Before you snap your pencil in half with frustration, please consider the advice writer, teacher, and self-made lit star Ariel Gore offers in this useful guide to realizing your literary dreams.

If you find yourself writing when you should be sleeping and scribbling notes on odd pieces of paper at every stoplight, you might as well enjoy the fruits of your labor. *How to Become a Famous Writer Before You're Dead* is an irreverent yet practical guide that combines solid writing advice with guerrilla marketing and promotion techniques guaranteed to launch you into print—and into the limelight. You'll learn how to:

- Reimagine yourself as a buzz-worthy artist and entrepreneur
- Get your work and your name out in the world where other people can read it
- Be an anthology slut and a brazen self-promoter
- Apply real-world advice and experience from lit stars like Dave Barry, Susie Bright, and Dave Eggers to your own career

Cheaper than an M.F.A. but just as informative, *How to Become a Famous Writer Before You're Dead* is your catapult to lit stardom. Just don't forget to thank Ariel Gore for her inspiring, hands-on plan in the acknowledgments page of your first novel!

How to Become a Famous Writer Before You're Dead: Your Words in Print and Your Name in Lights Details

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Michelle says

a truly inspiring, pleasurable read, even for a writer who's been at it a while. ariel gore is not only hilarious and brilliant, she's encouraging in a non-sappy, un-condescending way. plus, she's brazen as anything in her determination to get her work out there. by the end of this book, you will be too. i think this book would be helpful for artists/photogs/etc too, just like anne lamott's bird by bird is. also, i thought the dave barry interview alone was worth the price of admission.

Rui says

Though some parts sound cliché, this book is very helpful for putting future writers on track. I have read several books doing the same thing, mostly written by men, but none of them sounds so accessible and inspirational like this one. It is a must-read for anyone who harbors unrealistic expectations for this writing career or feels thwarted by the impossible mission of lit stardom. What I like most about the book is the interviews with other published writers that talk so frankly about writing. Ariel's inside knowledge and fascinating quotations (I am glad that she quoted Wei Hui, a rare quotation coming from a western author) sound humbly honest. I have really learned a lot from this book. Thank you.

Julene says

I certainly enjoyed this book, especially the interviews with cutting edge self-promoted writers. Mostly geared towards fiction or memoir writing, she talks about book proposals and how to set up tours. As much as I enjoyed this book, I kept wanting to get more out of it than I did. It's a good fast read that at some level inspires, but for me it had a level of discouragement because I can't put on a pink tutu to get readers into my readings, I just can't. She can and did. It's a different generation than I am and I don't think I have that kind of energy, which saddens me.

I was hoping for information on how to set up blog tours for poets, something many are doing now. If anyone has a clue, I'm trying to figure this out. The book talks about writing blogs and other ways of using them. I'm a bit overwhelmed by all the blogs out there, any good reference books on this? Or are there just too many for anyone to track them all? That's my guess.

Timothy says

It's sort of embarrassing to be caught reading this book, because of the title. Or I felt that way, anyhow. But I'm owning up to it here. It filled me with a kind of firey energy for both producing writing and getting it out into the world. In that sense, it was very useful. It's pragmatic and doesn't really romanticize "the writing

life." I liked that. I also liked that it discussed both how to get published and also self-publishing of various forms.

Brittanie says

Less a book about writing and more a book about self promotion, Still the best book on the craft I've ever read.

Pauline says

I have a total girl-crush on Ariel Gore in the I Want To Be A Writer Like She Is When I Grow Up sense. All of her books are amazing, and this one is one I consider a must-read for any writer working on building their platform.

Herb says

One of the members of our nascent local writers' group describes herself as a "Post-It Writer." She writes things that are a few words at a time. She hates to read.

She'd love this book.

Bloggy. Fizzy. Nothing that demands your attention for more than thirty seconds at a time. Three pages per chapter, on average.

But I'm giving it four stars *despite* its effervescence, because it's the clearest thing I've ever read regarding the fact that every writer is responsible for doing everything she can to make her own way. No waiting around to be discovered, no moping because the muse took a vacation. Just go. Just GO, already! She makes self-promotion sound plausible (and even secretly a little enjoyable) to committed introverts like me.

I've done some different kind of promotional work this weekend because I read this book, and I think she'd call that a win.

Samantha Sprole says

Gore ends her book with a brief exploration on the more problematic aspects of fame and pursuing fame. I'm fact, despite the title, the majority (if not all) of the advice in the book requires a tempered ego and a rigorous work ethic. In short, learn from your literary heroes, submit work for publication methodically, develop and execute a unique and novel marketing/publicity plan, and don't be afraid to go the self-publishing route (including getting your feet wet with the publishing cycle by producing your own zine). A useful and very readable book.

Cassandra Stinson says

I absolutely loved this book. It focused more on the publishing and marketing aspects of authorship than writing technique, covering everything from self-publishing, finding an agent, organizing a book tour, and writing a book proposal. Gore also covered some of the less glamorous aspects of being a writer, like making ends meet financially or facing rejection letters. The overall point Gore made was not to wait around waiting for a book deal to fall in your lap - if you want your story published, you have to get out into the world and make it happen.

Unwisely says

I am not sure how I stumbled on this - I had vague memories of reading *The Hip Mama Survival Guide: Advice from the Trenches on Pregnancy, Childbirth, Cool Names, Clueless Doctors, Potty Training, and Toddler Avengers* at some point in the past, probably because Ariel Gore wrote for *Bitch* or *Bust* or one of those magazines I used to get. It was before I did logging, so I only have vague memories (although I think that book was the reason I own a *Bikini Kill* album).

That said, this book - which has personal advice as well as interviews with people I mostly hadn't heard of but have now looked up - really got me motivated to actually submit some writing somewhere. Or, at least, think about doing so. I have flagged some of the exercises and will type them up to send to my writing partner before I send it back to the library. And I actually wrote an outline of something I've been fiddling with for a couple years now. So - it didn't just make me think I should write more, I actually did a couple things. And it got me thinking about promotion.

Useful and inspirational for a dabbler like me!

Carolyn says

An excellent read... not sure if I would add this to my permanent collection, but I know I can get it from the library if I need to look something up. She is very encouraging and supportive of getting your writing out there. Her approach is authentic and friendly.

Sara Habein says

What I like about this book is that while it has certain indie-hippie undertones, it doesn't make any judgements one way or another about what the 'best' way to publish is. Self-publish, find an agent, make your own zines, start a blog, go for the big publishing house deal — do whatever works for you. "Be as crazy as you are," she says.

Though I wouldn't necessarily recommend this book to people just beginning the writing process — better to get books that concentrate more on craft for that — but for anyone who has waded in a little or anyone who

feels they might be stuck in a success-rut, it can't hurt to give some of this advice a try.

(Full review can be found at [Glorified Love Letters](#))

Jennifer Fosket says

Ariel Gore has been unknowingly stalking me since we were both at Mills College over 15 years ago. When I was pregnant with my first daughter her Hipmama book, zine and website (and now defunct but once awesome discussion board on the website) hurtled me into a world where mothering, politics, creativity, activism, and intellectual musings were all inextricably combined. Now, her latest book has come out just in time to feed my novel writing dreams and fantasies. It's filled with inspiration, humor, practical advice and fascinating interviews with great writers. Thanks Ariel! I'll be looking out for your menopause book in another decade or so.

Coleen says

a beautiful and compelling kick in the pants.

Filip says

I must admit I really enjoyed this one. It was funny, informative and surprisingly comprehensive. The style in which was written makes me want to try other books by the author, even though the genre isn't really my cup of tea.

This comprehensiveness is also a bit of downside, as the book doesn't only focus on writing and publishing fiction, but thanks to it, anyone would be able to find hints and advice that can be useful for him.

The only problem I had with the book, and it is not the fault of the book itself, is that the advice presented here is clearly aimed at the US publishing markets and some information and suggestions - like about publishing zeens and organizing tours, don't necessarily correspond well to other countries.

I liked it though and I just hope it would give me the courage to try.
