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*Publisher with a **passion** for the written word and a **heart** that beats for indie authors*

Chris Hill *Author QA*

- **Why did you start writing books**

I've written fiction of one sort or another for as long as I can remember, scraps at first in old school notebooks, then proper stories and poems. Then finally I began writing fully fledged novels which I continue to do at intervals.

- **Do you write every day?**

It depends where I am in the process. Sometimes I will have quite a long break where I don't write at all, then I might spend months just scribbling ideas into notebooks or writing snatches of prose which could eventually fit in somewhere. Once I've got my teeth into something I will write every day though, initially a first draft then editing it to make it as good as it can be.

- **Do you work to a plot or do you prefer to see where the idea takes you?**

Am I a planner or a pantsner? I'm a mix of both I suppose. I set off with the best intentions of having a full plot to work with but I usually end up just getting the basics down then going by the seat of my pants. John Updike said that when you plan a book you should know where you are going to end up at least, you owe that much to the reader he said. So, I try to bear that piece of advice in mind and have an end point in sight when I start writing – it's surprising how much that helps.

- **How long does it take you to write a book?**

It varies dramatically and depends what you count as part of the process. Maybe a year for first draft and another for editing would be typical but I wrote the first draft of *A Quiet Life* quite quickly during lockdown whereas I have been pondering another idea for a book for the last ten years and never got round to it beyond a pile of notes.

- **What's the worst thing about writing a book?**

I think it can be frustrating if the book you had in your head isn't the one which ends up on the page.

- **And what's the best thing about writing a book?**

It's a nice feeling to finish something, at least to a level where you are happy to let the world see it. There's a great satisfaction in that. When I was a kid my dad built a sailing dingy in our garage which he used to go fishing. When it was done I remember him wheeling it out on a trailer giving it a slap on the hull and just standing looking at it for a while. I think the pride he had in finishing that boat is similar to the pride I have in finishing a book.



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- **Why did you choose your particular genre?**

I bounce around genres a lot, my latest book is probably a psychological thriller, my first published book was literary fiction, my second was a rom com. I have a crime novel in my bottom drawer, who knows what I will do next? Not me.

- **If you had to write in a different genre, which would you choose?**

Perhaps one which I have not tried before.

- **Which book character do you wish you had written?**

One which springs immediately to mind is Mr Biswas in V.S. NaiPaul's novel *A House for Mr Biswas*. He is a complex character who is vulnerable and alienated but has a powerful determination to achieve something, to own his own home. To have his own roots, you might say. He is not a hero as such. He is not particularly likable or easy to understand. He feels like a real person, jumping out from the page.

- **What do you think are the best and the worst things about social media?**

As a writer the best thing is the opportunity to communicate with such a wide range of people, to find your tribe. But it can also amplify the worst of human nature and allow people to air their prejudices without being responsible for what they say.

A few questions, just for fun:

- **If you could be invisible for a day, what would you do?**

I would eavesdrop. All authors are nosey. What people say and how they say it is of great importance to us. I am often found on the bus with my earphones in but the music turned off, listening to what other people are talking about.

- **If I joined you on your perfect day, what would we be doing?**

I love to wander round a city I have never visited before, somewhere exotic would be nice. There would probably be a museum involved and some sitting in a bar, but mostly we would just be wandering the streets, taking in the atmosphere.

- **What's your signature dish?**

Probably a curry of some kind – chicken dhansak maybe, I do like a lentil.

- **If you could be anyone for the day, who would you be?**

I'm going to say Shakespeare, I'd love to know more about who he was – of course we can say the best place to look for that is his plays, but I'd love to walk in his shoes for a day.



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