

The Key: How to Write Damn Good Fiction Using the Power of Myth

James N. Frey



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In his widely read guides *How to Write a Damn Good Novel* and *How to Write a Damn Good Novel II: Advanced Techniques*, popular novelist and fiction-writing coach James N. Frey showed tens of thousands of writers how--starting with rounded, living, breathing, dynamic characters--to structure a novel that sustains its tension and development and ends in a satisfying, dramatic climax.

Now, in *The Key*, Frey takes his no-nonsense, "Damn Good" approach and applies it to Joseph Campbell's insights into the universal structure of myths. Myths, says Frey, are the basis of all storytelling, and their structures and motifs are just as powerful for contemporary writers as they were for Homer. Frey begins with the qualities found in mythic heros--ancient and modern--such as the hero's special talent, his or her wound, status as an "outlaw," and so on. He then demonstrates how the hero is initiated--sent on a mission, forced to learn the new rules, tested, and suffers a symbolic death and rebirth--before he or she can return home. Using dozens of classical and contemporary novels and films as models, Frey shows how these motifs and forms work their powerful magic on the reader's imagination.

The Key is designed as a practical step-by-step guide for fiction writers and screen writers who want to shape their own ideas into a mythic story.

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