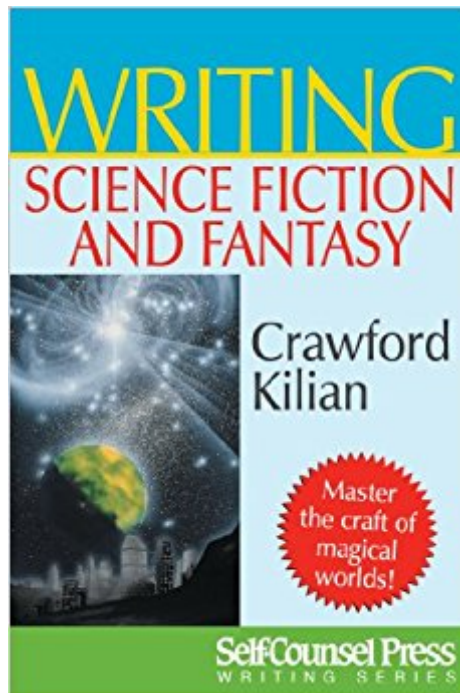




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# Writing Science Fiction & Fantasy (Writing Series)



## Synopsis

Whether you are new to the genre or looking for inspiration, this book provides the tools you need to succeed. Develop believable fantasy worlds Challenge your readers's imaginations Practical techniques you can apply today Written by a successful author of SF and fantasy novels Master the craft of magical worldsAre you struggling to get started on your science fiction or fantasy novel? Stuck at chapter two or need a fresh approach? Find new direction and inspiration with this unique guide to creating original and convincing stories. Written by a successful author of more than ten science fiction and fantasy novels, *Writing Science and Fantasy* takes an in-depth look at these two best-selling genres. Kilian delves into the origins and conventions of science fiction and fantasy and goes over the many subgenres, including nanotechnology, space opera, and sword and sorcery. He forces you to ask yourself crucial questions about your own novel, and also offers practical advice on how to prepare and market your manuscript to publishers, editors, and agents. With this book as a guide, both novice and experienced writers can learn how to make their work both a literary and financial success. Learn about: Constructing a scene Showing versus telling Avoiding clichés Developing good writing and research habits Creating plausible fantasy worlds Using symbolism and imagery effectively

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found this book negative and condescending. I bought it for an online writing class I took and I struggled through it, but really did not enjoy it and didn't get much out of it. The author lost me when he trash talked Terry Pratchett. And the chapter on how to google made me roll my eyes. There is a brief discussion on adding symbols and themes to a book, it was simplistic and parts of that chapter I flat out disagreed with.

I'm a published author who is mainly looking to branch out into the Science Fiction/Fantasy genre....This is a good book, but it felt as if the author of this book was giving a lesson on the craft of writing such as: writing sentences, dialogue and other things which I already have....I was looking for more to explore the genre, but it was merely touched on, and not explained....

This book, published by Self-Counsel Press, now comes with a CD-ROM (second edition, 2007; original publication 1998). It promises to be a one-stop shop for writing and selling speculative fiction. It does show a pretty good breadth, from the basic elements of fiction writing (such as characters, plot, dialog) to genre-specific issues (creating fictional worlds, handling magic, understanding the conventions of the various subgenres, etc.) Most of what appears here will be of some help to novice writers in the field. Kilian is especially forceful in pointing out the dangers of using cliches or producing formula fiction, which is something many new writers will need to hear (people often start writing by imitating fiction they have enjoyed). An early chapter on the history of the genre is an interesting read, and may be especially helpful for young writers to get a sense of context. The book is easy to read, and his explanations of good writing practice are clear enough. Nevertheless, I found the book rather unsatisfying. The problem, I think, is that it is just too short a book for all it tries to cover: genre conventions, the art and craft of writing fiction, and the publishing business, all in a paperback of about 200 pages. So we end up with things like 10 pages on plot, which is really just enough to let us know that plot events should come from character motivations, and to share a storyboarding approach to plotting using index cards. No time to get into the differences between plots in literary and commercial fiction, how to handle subplots, or any of the ways of analyzing plot structure (three-act plot, hero's journey), or any practical advice on how

to regain control of a drifting or dragging plot, and so on. The chapter on characters is an even more cursory 5 pages, half of which is a "character resume" form for recording your characters' details (including such puzzlers as the character's address and phone number)! There are just two short paragraphs on character motivation, one on character change - you get the picture. This is what most of the book feels like - breezily introducing concepts, but not giving much of concrete value if you are already writing and struggling with certain aspects of the craft. I also have some reservations about the way he approaches the publishing business. The very first chapter of the book is titled "Hard Facts for First-Time Novelists". You might expect this to be a sober look at the arduous process of getting your work read and into print in a highly competitive field. Strangely, though, this chapter serves only to make one point: even if everything goes perfectly, there is a time lag between writing a book and seeing it in print. He makes this point by using a rather ridiculous "best case scenario", where a writer's first novel is instantly pulled from the slush pile by a senior editor, who offers to buy it immediately, with the book becoming popular and having a good run in paperback and other markets. Toward the end of the book, we get a quick section on the importance of having an agent for book publishing, but no advice on how to find one or what to look for (another victim of the need for brevity, I presume). The CD-ROM had a few good things on it, including some of Kilian's articles and book reviews, and a checklist for editing your work, which I think should have been in the book itself. Unfortunately, the CD-ROM is also padded with a lot of stuff we hardly need: links to the .com page for every science fiction and fantasy book he could think of, and links to Wikipedia entries for famous authors. I give this book credit for trying to move out of the typewriter age; there are sections on using word processors effectively and doing research on the internet. But once again, it's pretty scant fare. If you are reading this review, you probably already know more sf/fantasy writing internet resources than are included in the CD-ROM. The best audience for this book may be young sf/fantasy fans who want to try their hand at writing, but know little or nothing about what is even involved in crafting a readable story. Those who already know the basic terminology and concepts of fiction writing and are seeking ways to improve their skills will probably want to turn to a more substantive volume or class instead.

I enjoyed the book. It was well-written, I plan to reread it whenever I get the chance. I have some other books I must read first.

I have been reading a lot of books about writing, specially fantasy and science fiction. I have found this one to be the most objective and helpful among all. Actually, it will be useful for general fiction

writing, as a whole. I strongly recommend this good work from Mr.Kilian.

I was assigned Crawford Kilian's "Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy" for a undergraduate writing course. The book was very accessible. For a reference book, it is one of the most accessible out there. The material is all very concise and easy to read. Although there is not much depth to it, it covers everything from the beginning of the writing process to the very end (publication tips, etc...). The author includes examples from his own experiences and work, and it feels less like advertisement, and more like helpful pointers. The book is not necessarily only useful for those interested in science fiction, but he does include a lot of references and allusions to other classic science fiction work. I wouldn't recommend this book to someone who is very experienced in writing science fiction, because there's nothing here that you probably haven't read before already. However, if you are even thinking about trying to become a writer (whether science fiction or not), this is definitely worth the money.

When I started researching the craft of writing SF, I bought Card's book. I have yet to read its equal. That said, this book reawakened the concepts and advice I thought I knew and used. This book offered no insights I did not know - nothing new, nothing profound. If you are even remotely versed in the topic, it won't likely reveal anything new to you, either. There probably isn't that much left that can be expressed in a book. It will remind you of what you're supposed to be doing. I sponsor a high school sci-fi club and find this book's chapters to be perfect outlines for group discussions and lessons for budding writers. Every writer should know this stuff and be reminded often. I am going to leave the book by my toilet - not as a commentary on its quality, but so I can read pieces of it periodically and unendingly. The disk included with the book I found largely worthless. No new exercises that weren't in the book, nothing extra but a few essays. Don't be afraid to buy this used without the disk.

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