

# Writing, a Romance

Author Libba Bray thinks writing a novel is a lot like falling in love. How so? She's glad you asked.

## THE BEGINNING

Look at all my pretty ideas. Aren't they pretty? That one's a good dancer, but that one has gorgeous eyes and a car. And that one has the intellect of Spock, and he gets all my jokes. So intriguing. Yes, I'll pick that one.

## THE EARLY STAGES

OMG, y'all. My book and I went out again yesterday, and you know what? My book is so, so clever! Seriously. It was only our third date, and it brought me fresh metaphors. I know, right? I wasn't expecting that at all. Plus, my book is so easy to talk to—it never feels like work. We just relate sooo well. I think this could be something special. I'm seeing my book again tomorrow. I can't wait.

## THE FIRST DRAFT

I love this book. And it loves me. I never want to be without this book. What? Were you saying something? I'm sorry I can't hear you, because my book just said the best thing ever. Wait—just listen to this sentence. I know! Isn't my book so dreamy? I love you, book. This is going to be the best book ever written.

## THE REVISION, MONTH ONE

Honey, do you still love me? Well, it's just that you didn't say it back a few times. And you've been sort of inattentive. A bit. Do that funny thing you did early on. You know, that thing that made me laugh and laugh and think that you were the cleverest book that ever lived. I was kind of hoping you'd remember. No? It's OK. Don't worry about it. Really. I love you. Do you still love me?

## THE REVISION, MONTH TWO

My book? No, things are OK. I guess. I mean, I totally love my book and everything, but . . . it's not quite as clever as I thought. Yeah, like yesterday? I came home and read page 367, and . . . it wasn't very good. In fact, it was trite and there were dirty socks on page 45 and the TV was left on again. *Battlestar Galactica* reruns. I feel kinda bad saying this about my book, but you know what? (*Whispers.*) I think it might be stupid. Don't tell.

## THE REVISION, MONTH THREE

Seriously, I cannot understand a word my book says anymore. How many more weeks of this hell do I have to put in before I can start up with some new idea, like the one

about the succubus and the backpackers. So foxy. I bet that book is perfect. Unlike a certain annoying one I'm stuck with.

## THE REVISION, ON DEADLINE

I hate you. I wish I'd never met you. YOU MAKE MY LIFE HELL!! My mother was right. I should never have gotten involved with you. What was I thinking, starting up something with this book? Do you ever even listen to what you spew all over the page?

## THE REVISION, NEAR THE END

Sometimes, when I watch you sleep, you're so perfect.

## THE REVISION, LAST DAY OF DEADLINE

(*Sobbing.*) It was so beautiful once. (*Honk, wheeze.*) A beautiful word dream. (*Sob.*) Where is my pretty word dream now? Where's my pwetty, pwetty word dream?

## THE THIRD DRAFT

(*Singing.*) It's a stupid novel, and I don't care . . . It's a stupid novel, and I don't care . . . It's a stupid novel, and I don't care.

## THE FINAL DRAFT

Thanks for meeting me. Look, I'm just gonna come out with it. It's not working. I'm sorry. It's not you, it's . . . actually, it's you. You're stupid. And I sort of hate you. But thanks for the great line on page 400. I'm gonna go ahead and keep it because, really, you did give it to me and it doesn't fit you anymore. Oh, and while you're here, you might as well try the pie.

## THE COPY EDITS

Wow. Fancy running into you. It's been ages. You look good. You lost weight? About 10,000 words? That is something. Ha! I'd forgotten how funny you are. I'm serious—that was really, really smart about Elvis being a metaphor for fear of jumpsuits. Oh . . . sure. Yeah, I've gotta go, too. Great to see you. Keep up the good work.

## THE FINISHED BOOK

That one? Yeah, we totally had a thing. But it's over now. So, tell me what you were saying about the succubus and the backpackers? OMG, that's funny! You know, you have such beautiful eyes. //

*Libba Bray writes novels for young adults, including A Great and Terrible Beauty, The Sweet Far Thing and Going Bovine.*



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