

DIVE IN: A six-month online course starting Friday September 30th 2022 2pm-4pm

What is it? Jill Dawson will work with you in a group, on Zoom, to offer techniques, inspiration, encouragement and the discipline needed to make this the year you write that novel you've long dreamed of writing. The sessions will be an injection of energy and inspiration to help you get the novel inside you onto the page and learn how to create, improve, rewrite and shape it into something really special. You will be part of an exclusive writing community, enjoying input and insider tips from the publishing world and a chance to put your questions to a top literary agent.

Where? Fridays on Zoom, 2-4pm

Who is it for? This six-month online course is suitable for writers at all levels, whether you have an idea for a novel and a desire to write it, or whether you're an experienced writer who simply wants some deadlines, prompts, cheer-leading and accountability to get you to the end.

Course outline

One, Friday 30th September 2022 2-4pm

Welcome and beginnings. Starting a novel. What research do I need? How do I begin? Where do novels come from and how to know if this one is sustainable. Using a synopsis to help you with your narrative drive. Jill will give you all her best tips for cutting through the confusion and getting started, with a plan and accountability.

Two, Friday 28th October 2022 2-4pm

Character: Techniques of characterisation: What does a protagonist need to carry a whole novel? Using dreams to access our characters inner world. What makes a character come alive? How to grow the novel and cope with all the ideas and natural chaos of the early drafting stage. How to listen to the character's voice and keep our fears at bay.

Three, Friday 25th November 2022 2-4pm.

Plot – Five searing incidents. What is my narrative arc? Jill talks about her own method of revisiting the synopsis to find your story and tuning in to

character's desires rather than using formulaic plot techniques. Two partners and ensemble pieces, how to handle those?

Four, Friday 16th December 2022 2-4pm

Finding Time to Write: Practical questions; developing a routine. What to do when you get stuck, keeping going, hitting the first major turning point – writing what you *don't* know. Dealing with breaks, family commitments, and still feeling like a novelist. How to handle time in your novel. Two time frames, flashback and backstory for characters, how to navigate this.

Five, 20th January 2023 2-4pm

Rebooting: Starting again after a break. Research for novelists. Finding a voice. What is my voice? What do I do best and how does a writer create a distinctive voice? Memories and autobiographical material, what is beneath the text. What am I afraid of revealing?

Special guest input from top literary agent!

Six, 24th February 2023 2-4pm

Checking in: what next?

Redrafting, troubleshooting & next steps. Fear and the engine of doubt.

Celebrating your progress and making a promise to yourself to finish. A chance to reflect on what you've achieved and plan your next steps.

What writers on DIVE IN 2021 said about the course

'Jill is a hugely inspiring woman who, with great skill and generosity, enables writers to better understand and situate themselves within the world of writing, to find ways to reveal the essence of communicating through the written word and ways in which to best express that essence for themselves.'

– Catriona Jarvis

'The course was a total pleasure and a genuine privilege! To get such valuable guidance and insights firsthand from Jill and people such as Shelley Weiner and the others was – continues to be – the biggest gift imaginable for a hopeful novelist, and I've shifted from hoping to write a novel to believing that I can. Honestly, every bit of every session was amazing, and perfectly balanced 'creativity' with 'practical'.

– Natalie Woodhead

'I shall miss those Friday afternoons. The breakout rooms were great for discussion with the other participants. The guest speakers were lively. It was important to temper this liveliness with realism, and the literary agent did exactly that. Being lifted up is great – the course delivered on its promise to provide support to those of us who were feeling hesitant or nervous about possibilities – but having expectations tempered is also important.'

– Mark Grant

'If you are complacent about writing, or have stopped for no reason, Jill awakens a desire to dive deeper and swim across currents of words, their meanings and discover your intention to WRITE, with joy.'

– Vayu Naidu

'I also want to say a huge thank you for the Dive In course. It has been a brilliant course – the timing of monthly meetings over 10 months, the course content, exercises and advice all resulted in a really valuable and thoroughly enjoyable experience.'

– Shaheena Warrington

'O Jill! thank you for your warmth and light – it sustains – a current through the many changes we are seeing everywhere.'

– Vayu Naidu