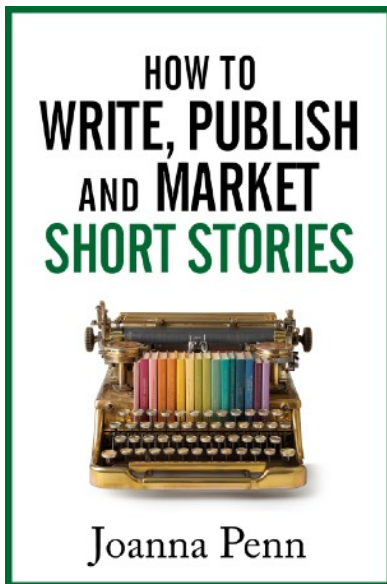




How to Write, Publish, and Market Short Stories —

Joanna Penn

Appendix 2: Questions

1.1 Why readers love short stories

- What do you love as a reader of short stories?
- Consider a short story that still remains with you. What elements particularly resonated with you and why?

1.2 Why writers love short stories

- Why do you write short stories, or want to write them?
- Are there ideas, genres, or topics you've always wanted to explore without committing to a full-length novel?
- How might short stories fit into your author business?

1.3 What is a short story?

- Are you aiming for a certain length of story or are you just writing it and seeing how it turns out?
- Do your ideas feel small enough to be contained in a short story or expansive enough that you need many more words to explore them?
- Does your potential story idea include a concrete change between the beginning and the end?

1.4 From story seeds to stories

- Where do you find your story seeds? How can you make time to tune into your curiosity and discover more of them?
- How are you saving your story seeds?
- Can you open up time to revisit your seeds and see what might take root as a story?

1.5 Tips for writing a short story

- Are you getting your words done? How can you improve your process if you're not happy with it?
- Take a story you've drafted: how much can you cut from the beginning and still have it make sense?
- Is your ending working? How can you improve it?
- How can you experiment more with your shorts to deepen your writing craft?
- How can you improve your editing process?

1.6 The author's note

- As a reader, do you love author's notes? What do you like them to include?
- For whatever story you're working on, what are the elements you could include in an author's note?
- If readers want to do further reading on the topics of your short story, do you have sources from your own research you could share?
- How could you connect with readers on a personal level through your author's note?

2.2 Self-publishing short stories

- Is self-publishing the right choice for your story?
- Ebook, audio, and/or print: what formats do you want to explore?
- Have you labelled your story clearly as a short, so the reader knows what they are getting?
- How will you price your story, and how could you use bundling or a collection later?
- Which story could you give away free to introduce readers to your work or grow your newsletter mailing list?
- Could a subscription model work well for you if you have a big enough platform or backlist?

2.3 Audio short stories and podcasting

- Would your short stories work well in audio?
- How will you handle the narration?
- How and where will you distribute the audio?
- Is there a fiction podcast that's a good fit for your story?

- Have you licensed the audio rights already or are they yours to use as you like?

2.4 Traditional markets

- What do you want to achieve with your short story?
- What kinds of magazines or anthologies do you already read or listen to? Which might be a good fit for your own stories?
- Which opportunities will be most worthwhile for your own work or career?
- How could you network within your genre and build up authentic relationships over time?

2.5 Rights and contracts

- What are the different ways that you can license a short story?
- What suits you in terms of how you want to publish?
- Have you thoroughly read and considered the rights involved in any contract you have been offered?

2.6 Anthologies

- How can you find anthologies you might like to write for?
- What kind of themes excite you?
- If you are considering an anthology opportunity, are the terms fair, and do the rights revert to you within a reasonable period?
- Which readers will this anthology put you in front of, and are they a good fit for you?
- Do you already have a story that fits, or would you be writing to the theme from scratch?
- Do you have the time and energy to write a new story, or is this an opportunity you need to let pass by?
- Does your author bio point new readers towards your wider work?

2.7 Collections

- Why do you want to produce a collection?
- What's the thread or the theme that links your stories? Could you leave some stories out and/or write some new ones to enhance the theme?
- Which stories will headline or anchor the collection, and which ones are deep cuts?
- How will you edit the collection?
- If this collection is for your super fans, what would make the physical book something they might treasure?

3.1 Short stories as part of your author marketing ecosystem

- How can you position your short stories as part of your wider author marketing ecosystem?
- Which of your existing characters or story worlds could spin off a short story?
- Where could your next story create a new doorway — a playlist, an anthology, a podcast?

3.2 Reader magnets and your email list

- Which of your stories might make the best entry point to your paid work? Or what could you write specifically for this reason?
- If you already have a lead magnet, does it match the genre and voice of the books you want readers to buy next?
- Does every story you publish end with a clear call to action?
- Are you building your email list in a sustainable way for the long term?

3.3 Ideas for marketing short stories

- How could you focus on the experience of your short story rather than its length in your marketing materials?
- How could you use free pricing as a marketing tool?
- Could any of your shorts work in audio, and would a Spotify or YouTube playlist help readers find them?
- Which marketing assets that you would make for a novel could you make for your short?
- How could you turn your marketing into an event, like a Kickstarter campaign, that enables a broader spectrum of marketing options?

4.1 How to use AI tools to help with your creative and business processes

- Where's your line in the sand around AI usage? What tasks can you happily hand over to an AI tool and which will you retain?
- How can you use AI tools more effectively in the areas you want to outsource?
- If you're submitting to any professional paying market or contest, have you checked its guidelines on AI?
- Whether you use AI tools or not, how can you double down on being human?