

But, what if...

100 Chaotic Writing Prompts

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The story prompts contained within this book are provided as creative inspiration. Readers are welcome to use these prompts to create their own stories, books, poems, scripts, artwork, games, and other original works, including works intended for commercial sale.

Introduction

The idea for this book came when I realised I hold far too many ideas and not nearly enough time to bring them all to life.

The 100 prompts inside are representative of the chaos constantly swirling around my brain. One minute, you may find a story that brings you to tears; the next, a world in which Jack's Beanstalk is a night venue.

I have deliberately avoided placing the prompts into categories, as many could fit into multiple genres, and part of the fun is wondering where different writers would take the same idea. The same prompt might become a romance, a mystery, a fantasy, a horror story, or something else entirely.

I hope you enjoy these prompts. While you are free to use them however you wish, I would love to hear about anything you create from them.

Thank you for reading. I appreciate you.

But, what if...

1 ... you are already dead, and Deja-Vu is you repeating moments from your life. Are we doomed to repeat our own mistakes for eternity and what happens when the “death” life must also come to an end?

2 ... memories were echoes and every time you thought about it, the echo got louder and louder. What would become louder, your mistakes or your happy moments?

3 ... you find that some women in your family tree have all died at the same age. As you approach the age, you begin to research to find the answer and find a letter hidden in an old album. The letter is written in your handwriting.

4 ... a goddess sits on a cloud and throws out a handful of stars as dusk falls on the world below. She smiles as she sees the magic of the people gazing up at her, but she knows that the things coming will change everything for those below her.

5a ... a man in a psychiatric hospital claims to be an angel. Nobody believes him until one staff member realises the things he says might hold more truth than they thought. Now he is warning them of an impending danger, but will anybody listen in time?

5b ... a man in a psychiatric hospital claims to be an angel. Nobody believes him until one staff member realises the things he says might hold more truth than they thought. But the staff members growing obsession with proving it may be their own undoing.

6 ... Heaven is entering rooms with happy memories in them that you get to relive on repeat. You see the people and moments you love for eternity. But one person begins remembering that they have been in these rooms before, a lot. Is this heaven or a cage?

7 ... You hear your mother calling to you from downstairs. As you begin to descend the stairs, your mother comes out of a room next to you and begs you not to go. She tells you that the person downstairs is not her.

8 ... When your dreams start feeling more vivid than before, you begin to lose the lines between reality and your dreams. Soon you realise you have no idea which is the waking world and how to tell the difference.

9 ... an author starts getting mail from her own fictional creations. She comes to realise she has the option to change someone else's life with the words she writes... now she must choose between giving them a good life and having another bestseller at any cost?

10 ... the world wakes up to realise that all the statues around them are silently turning around. One man begins to realise that they are all pointing the same way. Now the race is on to find out what they are pointing to, and why.

11 ... your shadow starts arriving at places a few seconds before you do. Now you wonder if the thing that has always been beside you is a part of you, or something else entirely.

12 ... your classmates in an old school photo start disappearing until only one is left. That person dies shortly after. You start to notice more of your photos doing the same thing. Can you warn them all before it's too late?

13 ... an estate agents starts to realise that one of the homes he is trying to sell has a different floorplan to the actual house. Where are the missing rooms, what is inside them and who is trying to cover them up?

14 ... you think your mirror is broken until you realise that it is showing what the same room will look like tomorrow. One day you see your own death in the mirror.

15 ... the moon disappears for an hour and nobody in the world can remember it happening... except you.

16 ... archaeologists find evidence that prove humans have gone extinct before.

17a ... a homeless person you talk to every day suddenly goes missing. When you start to look for his whereabouts you find that nobody else remembers him ever existing. Has the person you confided in ever been real?

17b ... a homeless person you talk to every day suddenly goes missing. When you start to look for his whereabouts you find that nobody else remembers him ever existing. You unravel a sinister cover-up that has been targeting homeless people for years.

18 ... it's the day of the Purge. But instead of murder, its service workers who are finally allowed to give as good as they get from the public.

19 ... you wake up as a child and realise your whole life has been a dream. But your childhood life was an abusive mess you couldn't wait to escape from. Now you have to live it all over again, unless you can find out how you got back here.

20 ... your childhood bullies start developing traits matching the names they called you. But what will happen to the ones who threatened harm on you?

21 ... places you dream are starting to become real. But does that mean that the horrors within them are real as well?

22 ... you fall down a rabbit hole doing family history research and start uncovering some things that were meant to stay hidden. The more obsessed you become with finding the truth about the past, the more your modern-day life starts to fall apart.

23 ... the old gods never left but turned into things we now take for granted — the wind, the sea, the thunder. When the gods tire of being ignored, the weather systems begin to shift dangerously. Is it already too late or can we learn to listen to the old voices once more?

24 ... people in your life suddenly start addressing you by a different name. After a while you begin to forget who you used to be. Are we who we believe ourselves to be? Or are we the person reflected back to us by everyone around us?

25 ... every year you have a review — of your life. What did you accomplish? Where did you fail? But who is holding the reviews, what are their aims and what happens when you are no longer a suitable candidate for the role?

26 ... an old photo of your parents makes you question everything you have ever been told.

27 ... you can gain a superpower, but the effect is unknown until you take it. Would you take the risk?

28 ... she is living her dream life, until one day she finds a book in her husband's belongings. It is a scrapbook chronicling her life in minute detail and realises a lot of the info are from way before she even met him. Who is this man and has her whole life been a lie?

29 ... a scientist realises that time is an invisible wall... and that they can climb over it.

30 ... a young writer begins meeting with elderly people to collect their life stories before they are lost forever. What will she hear? What lessons can she learn?

31 ... "My mother told me that monsters weren't real. When I crawled into her bed at night, neck damp with sweat from another nightmare, she would whisper that monsters were just imagination. Things put into books and movies to scare us. They couldn't hurt me. She never prepared me for what happens when monsters were real. When they didn't live under your bed, but at your dinner table. When they were men."

32 ... you realise your reflection isn't you.

33 ... a bad entity offers you a paintbrush and pot of red paint. They tell you that you may paint anything you desire, and it will become real. You come to learn that the paint is blood, that must be taken from others to paint your desires. Would you continue to paint? What if it was not a random person who lost their blood, but a loved one?

34 ... rain begins to make people forget.

35 ... you are given the option of going back in time and reliving your life. You could redo the things you regret but at what cost?

36 ... there are moments in everyone's lives where you wonder what life would be like if you chose the other option. One person gets the chance to see.

37 ... two childhood friends promise to meet beneath the same tree on their eightieth birthday, no matter what happens in between. What will happen in each life, and will they both make it to their date? Merge the two stories or write the first half of the book from one friend's POV and the second from the other.

38 ... a woman goes through her memory box. Write each chapter as one of the memories leading up to her current situation.

39 ... Red Riding Hood always believed the wolf was a beast from the woods. Years later, she discovers a terrible secret. The wolf was never a wolf at all. She was Red's twin sister, abandoned at birth and left to fend for herself in the forest. Now the truth behind Granny's inheritance, the attack, and her family's past begins to unravel. Was the wolf a villain — or simply another victim?

40 ... someone is planning on leaving the town she grew up in. But on the day that they are due to leave, their car breaks down, freak occurrences cause roads to close, and the buses stop running due to a sudden snowstorm. What is keeping them here and why?

41 ... a girl sees a woman staring at her on the bus. The woman staring at her looks exactly like her mother, but much younger. When the girl arrives home, she jokes to her mother that she must have time travelled because she saw a younger version of her on the bus. Her mother doesn't laugh.

42 ... a school time capsule is dug up and contains a photo of you — but in a different time and standing in a place you have never been. You must trace who put the photo into the capsule to find the truth.

43 ... eggs begin hatching different animals.

44 ... a cartographer realises maps he has made his whole life are wrong. Has he spent a lifetime making mistakes or has everything around him changed?

45 ... it's daylight savings time but you witness something happening at 2am. As the clocks turn back, so does everyone else's memory. Only you remember what happened. And in one hour, it will happen again.

46 ... someone sits on their bed and listens to their family from the other rooms. Suddenly the house falls silent. Not quietness, but absence. It's as if this room is suddenly all that exists.

47 ... a man's life is told through the interactions he had with others. He stands at the end of his garden every day and speaks to all the people who pass by, offering stories, wisdom and hope. At the end he isn't at his gate one day, and everyone is left to wonder or assume, but he is remembered by those he interacted with.

48 ... a remote village wakes up to find that a second moon is hanging in the sky. As each day passes the moons move closer together. What will happen when they finally collide?

49 ... a woman realises she is the main character in a romance novel. Men are professing their love at 2am, the co-worker who doesn't like her is suddenly helping her out and her childhood boyfriend has suddenly returned to town and randomly become a baker? Can she navigate the romantic cliches when she just wants to be left alone.

50 ... people are going missing. But when they are all found, safe and alive, they have no idea about their previous lives. Police discover the people are being taken to protect them from abusive lives that they were trapped in. They have been given a fresh start in their new place. Are the police the rescuers, or the people who took them all to begin with?

51 ... people begin receiving apology letters from their future selves. Can they change the future to fix the mistake or is it already set in motion?

52 ... doors in a house lead somewhere different after midnight.

53 ... Mary and Anne are as close as sisters could be. But as they age, Mary realises that Anne may not be the person she thinks she is. While Mary untangles the reality of their relationship, she must learn how to distance herself from the one person she thought would always be by her side. How do you grieve the loss of someone who isn't dead?

54 ... a man takes a wrong turn and discovers a street that does not appear on any map. The residents know his name before he introduces himself.

55 ... Tuesday goes missing. Just gone. Poof, no Tuesday.

56 ... one day all the clocks stop. The next day they start again, but they are counting something other than time.

57 ... visitors on a tour of a manor house find themselves dreaming of the original tenants' lives. As they all return to the house to find answers, they discover that they are all connected to each other — and the people they are dreaming of — in some way.

58 ... Maggie is content with her husband, until her old crush adds her on social media. During late night messages, her crush frustratingly admits he has always wondered about what it would have been like to have been with her, in every way. Should Maggie risk everything she has built for the chance of fulfilling her younger self's dream or are some dreams better left in the past?

59 ... the world is backwards. People are dug up from their graves on their death date and then age in reverse.

60 ... a girl makes a birthday wish to be more attractive. Suddenly men are falling at her feet — and fighting each other to the death for the privilege.

61 ... 'Jack's Beanstalk' is a strip club.

62 ... a woman spends her life transcribing and compiling historical diaries. One day she realises that she has nothing to leave behind upon her own death and starts living in way that ensures she leaves an interesting heritage for future historians.

63 ... an NPC gains consciousness and free will. Will he become the new hero or the villain of the game? Or does him breaking out of his coding risk them all?

64 ... a streamer notices someone in his chat knows more about him than they should. But when he tries to find out who they are, the answer is more disturbing than he thought.

65 ... "Will you be okay?" they asked me. I didn't know how to answer. How could anyone be okay after that? It was all gone. And when they asked me what had happened, what could I say. Nobody would believe me..."

66 ... April was a modern detective. It was amazing what details you could get from someone's social media. Even if you thought it was all private. Likes on even one public photo can link to someone with a public friends list. That friends list links to 200 more people you know. Suddenly your world is hers. April knew how to follow the links. And she knew how to find anyone.

67 ... An author with too many ideas writes a book of story prompts. Years later, a reader discovers that one of the prompts perfectly describes a real event that has not happened yet. Then they find another. And another. Was the author predicting the future, or did somebody use the book as a blueprint?

68 ... the sea starts returning things that it has taken. Ships, treasures, lives.

69 ... a lonely woman sits in her house and gazes out of the kitchen window. She begins giving names and personalities to all the birds she sees visit her garden. She begins inventing lives that they lead when they fly away again.

70 ... the bees have died out. But instead of plants dying unfertilised, they begin to mutate and evolve to survive. Soon, the plants are picking off humans.

71 ... the smell of freshly cut grass meets Rachel's nose and she realises that spring has finally arrived. The weather is warm enough to let the windows sit open and her neighbours are doing their first mow of the year. Maybe now she can move on from what happened this winter. The season had changed, maybe she could to.

72 ... Jill is tired. Tired of carrying the bucket. Tired of cleaning up Jack's mistakes. Tired of being the one who follows behind. As they climb the hill one final time, Jill begins to wonder whether life might be easier without him. A fall from that height would be tragic. It would look like an accident. Wouldn't it?

73 ... "I used to play this game. This Time Last Year. I would think about what you and I would have been doing. But now, it's May. And the memories from last year will stop including you. Another part of you slips away. I wish I could put all my memories in a box, so I never forget them. Your voice, your smell, the way you put your head on my shoulder when you laughed at somebody's joke."

74 ... remember Polly Pocket playsets? A girl gets sucked into one.

75 ... a zoo worker notices that some of the animals have begun disappearing.

76 ... it's 2001 and Bebe wants nothing more than to be big in fashion. When she gets an offer to live her dream life in London, she packs up and moves without a second thought. But will it be everything she thought it would be?

77 ... an ancient war has been foretold. But when the time comes, the clash is averted by someone that was not destined to be there. Now the ruler of the underworld wants the souls that were due.

78 ... a gardener begins growing their own food and realises they have somehow imbued them with magical properties.

79 ... books can hold the memories of people who previously owned them. A girl who works in a second-hand bookstore begins sorting through a donated box and is suddenly struck with an overwhelming feeling of hate and rage. Who owned this book and what did they do with their rage?

80 ... residents in a retirement home start sharing memories of a place that doesn't exist. Whilst many write it off, one staff member begins trying to link their stories together.

81 ... astronomers discover a new constellation has appeared in the sky.

82 ... a queue begins to form in the middle of town. Nobody can remember why they joined it or what the queue is for. All they know is that nobody wants to leave it.

83 ... a teenager discovers her late grandmother's diary. The final entries are dated next year.

84 ... a clockmaker realises that all his clocks have begun counting backwards. Are they now counting down to an event and can he discover what it is?

85 ... a woman returns from her holiday with hundreds of photos. In the back of every single one, the same stranger appears.

86 ... a lighthouse keeper begins receiving SOS messages from ships that sunk years ago.

87 ... an author begins printing copies of their book that all have different endings in them. An avid reader begins collecting them all to find the link between the endings and what they might mean.

88 ... a woman asks her gods for guidance. That night she dreams of one word — muntjac. Soon, she forgets about the dream until months later muntjacs begin crossing her path.

89 ... when their teacher dies, a student begins compiling a list of stories from other students to gift to the teacher's family to prove how much of an impact they made. Each chapter can be a different student's recollection of their teacher.

90 ... every witness describes the same missing person in a completely different way.

91 ... a woman keeps receiving postcards from places she has never seen. They are signed in her own name and handwriting.

92 ... during restoration work in an old church, workers discover a list of names. The final name belongs to somebody who is still alive.

93 ... every river has a guardian but one has gone missing.

94 ... the wind starts carrying conversations but are they from the past, present or future?

95 ... a pop star that has spent years harbouring parasocial relationships with her fans, meets her future husband and realises that she no longer wants to be in the public eye. But will the fanbase she has developed allow her to live a private life?

96 ... birds all begin migrating to one remote island in Iceland. Scientists realise that even if the birds know they cannot make the journey or survive the environment, they are ignoring their survival instincts and going there anyway. What is drawing them there?

97 ... a therapist jokes that she will give her client an alibi if the client murders their cheating spouse. That night the therapist sees a familiar face on the news.

98 ... Henry VIII time travels.

99 ... “everyone talks about pawns in such dismissive tones. Pawns are weak. Easy to sacrifice, trade and use. But did you know that when a pawn makes it all the way across the board, it can be promoted? To a rook, to a bishop. A queen. That’s why you must keep an eye on the pawns. That’s why you lose. You took your eye off the pawn.”

100 ... Karma is real, and it is *pissed*.