

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



1

00:00:03,500--> 00:00:04,908

Hello!

2

00:00:04,932--> 00:00:06,348

Welcome, everyone,

3

00:00:06,372--> 00:00:08,268

to today's event,

4

00:00:08,292--> 00:00:13,000

How I write – in conversation
with Vaseem Khan.

5

00:00:13,000--> 00:00:14,748

My name is Abir Mukherjee

6

00:00:14,772--> 00:00:20,000

and I'm the author of historical
and modern-day crime thrillers.

7

00:00:20,000--> 00:00:22,825

Most recently, a
book called Hunted,

8

00:00:22,849--> 00:00:25,188

which won the Theakstons

Crime Novel of the Year,

9

00:00:25,212--> 00:00:29,000

and the British Book Awards

Crime & Thriller Novel of the Year.

10

00:00:29,000--> 00:00:31,868

This is part of our #SoAatHome

11

00:00:31,892--> 00:00:35,000

Autumn/Winter 2025 programme.

12

00:00:35,000--> 00:00:39,508

The #SoAatHome

events are for all,

13

00:00:39,532--> 00:00:41,125

but if you can afford,

14

00:00:41,149--> 00:00:43,068

please do consider donating

15

00:00:43,092--> 00:00:47,000

to the Society of

Authors Access Fund

16

00:00:47,000--> 00:00:48,868

which provides grants to authors

17

00:00:48,892--> 00:00:53,708

so that travel, subsistence,

childcare costs, and access needs

18

00:00:53,732--> 00:00:56,000

aren't barriers to authors

19

00:00:56,000--> 00:00:59,908

taking part in events,

residencies, and retreats.

20

00:00:59,932--> 00:01:01,988

You know, whatever

you can afford.

21

00:01:02,012--> 00:01:04,908

The suggested minimum
donation is £5, but

22

00:01:04,932--> 00:01:10,000

whatever it is, thank
you for your support.

23

00:01:10,000--> 00:01:13,188

Now, you can help the
Society of Authors Access Fund

24

00:01:13,212--> 00:01:14,588

by making a purchase

25

00:01:14,612--> 00:01:18,108

on our virtual bookstore
on Bookshop.org,

26

00:01:18,132--> 00:01:20,508

where you can
find books by writers

27

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan

Thursday 16 October 2025



00:01:20,532--> 00:01:24,000

taking part in the

#SoAatHome programme.

28

00:01:24,000--> 00:01:25,708

Um...

29

00:01:25,732--> 00:01:27,868

Let's talk about this session.

30

00:01:27,892--> 00:01:29,908

This... You should be
seeing a link right now.

31

00:01:29,932--> 00:01:33,268

This session will
last about 45 minutes,

32

00:01:33,292--> 00:01:37,468

including a 10-minute
Q&A at the end.

33

00:01:37,492--> 00:01:40,628

Captions are auto-generated.

34

00:01:40,652--> 00:01:45,000

You can turn them off for the
session by clicking on the CC option

35

00:01:45,000--> 00:01:47,508

at the bottom of the screen.

36

00:01:47,532--> 00:01:50,028

The recording of this event

37

00:01:50,052--> 00:01:53,000

will be available on the
SoA's website for members

38

00:01:53,000--> 00:01:57,000

which can be accessed by
logging into the members area

39

00:01:57,000--> 00:01:59,628

and going to the resources page.

40

00:01:59,652--> 00:02:01,028

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



And for non-members,

41

00:02:01,052--> 00:02:06,000

the recording will be available
via the SoA's Vimeo channel

42

00:02:06,000--> 00:02:08,348

which you should
see some links to.

43

00:02:08,372--> 00:02:10,388

If you've got any questions,

44

00:02:10,412--> 00:02:14,000

please do post
them in the Q&A box.

45

00:02:14,000--> 00:02:16,788

You can post them
anonymously if you prefer,

46

00:02:16,812--> 00:02:19,108

but do post your
general comments

47

00:02:19,132--> 00:02:21,428

as well in the chat box.

48

00:02:21,452--> 00:02:24,428

Right, I think that

is all the homework,

49

00:02:24,452--> 00:02:26,388

uh, the housekeeping

out of the way.

50

00:02:26,412--> 00:02:29,708

I suppose it is now

time to introduce you

51

00:02:29,732--> 00:02:31,548

to today's guest,

52

00:02:31,572--> 00:02:33,058

Vaseem Khan.

53

00:02:33,082--> 00:02:35,308

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Thursday 16 October 2025



Vaseem, are you there?

54

00:02:35,332--> 00:02:38,000

-I am there. I am
there, my friend.

55

00:02:38,000--> 00:02:40,068

-Good to hear your voice.

56

00:02:40,092--> 00:02:41,845

Now, tell me, Vaseem,

57

00:02:41,869--> 00:02:44,000

shall I introduce you?
Would you like that?

58

00:02:44,000--> 00:02:46,118

-Um, yeah, why not?
Because you've just...

59

00:02:46,142--> 00:02:48,068

You've done that very,
very nice introduction

60

00:02:48,092--> 00:02:50,000

in your shipping

forecast voice, so...

61

00:02:50,000--> 00:02:52,628

Thank you, thank you. Dogger,

Bight, and all of that, yes,

62

00:02:52,652--> 00:02:54,108

um, but that's another story.

63

00:02:54,132--> 00:02:56,851

Let me tell our audience

a wee bit about you.

64

00:02:56,875--> 00:02:58,000

Now, Vaseem Khan

65

00:02:58,000--> 00:03:02,268

is, most recently, the

author of Quantum Menace.

66

00:03:02,292--> 00:03:03,988

The Quantum of Menace, rather,

67

00:03:04,012--> 00:03:07,000

which is the first

in a new series

68

00:03:07,000--> 00:03:10,508

featuring Q from the

James Bond universe.

69

00:03:10,532--> 00:03:13,000

And that is out this

month, isn't that right, Vas?

70

00:03:13,000--> 00:03:15,588

-It's out next week,

on October the 23rd.

71

00:03:15,612--> 00:03:17,068

-And I have to say,

72

00:03:17,092--> 00:03:20,108

as much as it pains

me to say it, it is brilliant!

73

00:03:20,132--> 00:03:22,548

You've done a
cracking job on that one.

74

00:03:22,572--> 00:03:24,828

But you are also known for

75

00:03:24,852--> 00:03:27,838

two popular crime
fiction series set in India.

76

00:03:27,862--> 00:03:31,188

The Baby Ganesh
Detective Agency novels

77

00:03:31,212--> 00:03:33,000

and, of course, the wonderful

78

00:03:33,000--> 00:03:35,308

Malabar House novels.

79

00:03:35,332--> 00:03:36,428

Um...

80

00:03:36,452--> 00:03:40,000

You were born in
London, is that right?

81

00:03:40,000--> 00:03:41,000

-I am indeed.

82

00:03:41,000--> 00:03:43,068

-But you spent a decade

83

00:03:43,092--> 00:03:45,788

working in India as a
management consultant,

84

00:03:45,812--> 00:03:49,000

which inspired your writing?

85

00:03:49,000--> 00:03:51,108

-Yeah, I got the
chance to go, um,

86

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:03:51,132--> 00:03:54,868

go to India when I
was, what, 23 now?

87

00:03:54,892--> 00:03:56,331

Back in 1997.

88

00:03:56,355--> 00:03:58,000

-Oh my gosh.

89

00:03:58,000--> 00:04:00,668

-That was a time when India
was making that transition

90

00:04:00,692--> 00:04:03,428

from what we think of as a
sort of pre-industrial economy

91

00:04:03,452--> 00:04:06,000

to the near global
superpower of today.

92

00:04:06,000--> 00:04:08,200

But you've spent... you've

spent time out there as well?

93

00:04:08,224--> 00:04:10,188

-I have, I have. I spent, um,

94

00:04:10,212--> 00:04:12,468

best part of a decade

from about 2000,

95

00:04:12,492--> 00:04:15,548

out there doing...

International M&As,

96

00:04:15,572--> 00:04:16,988

so mergers and acquisitions,

97

00:04:17,012--> 00:04:19,588

and it's odd, isn't it? Because

we were both out there

98

00:04:19,612--> 00:04:21,388

for the best part of 10 years

99

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:04:21,412--> 00:04:25,488

in the same city, on and
off, and we never met.

100

00:04:25,512--> 00:04:27,948

-No, I did my best to avoid you.

101

00:04:27,972--> 00:04:31,588

-Well, you did a good job and it was
a shame you didn't carry on. [laughs]

102

00:04:31,612--> 00:04:33,748

Um, because then
we moved to London

103

00:04:33,772--> 00:04:35,428

and we didn't meet,

104

00:04:35,452--> 00:04:39,238

and then we were both published in
the same year and that's how we met.

105

00:04:39,262--> 00:04:42,000

Anyway, enough of that, let me

tell you a wee bit more about you.

106

00:04:42,000--> 00:04:45,788

Um, you have won numerous
awards for your work,

107

00:04:45,812--> 00:04:49,000

including the American
Shamus Award.

108

00:04:49,000--> 00:04:51,885

What was that for?

What's the Shamus Award?

109

00:04:51,909--> 00:04:53,548

Tell us a bit about that.

110

00:04:53,572--> 00:04:55,148

Oh, God, that's a long time ago.

111

00:04:55,172--> 00:04:56,828

I think it was for a paperback

112

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:04:56,852--> 00:05:01,668

for amateur sleuth, for an
amateur sleuth detective story.

113

00:05:01,692--> 00:05:04,228

Uh, it was for my first series.

114

00:05:04,252--> 00:05:06,688

I'm old now. You're
asking me to dig back.

115

00:05:06,712--> 00:05:09,032

-Right, but you've won many
awards since then, most notably

116

00:05:09,056--> 00:05:11,668

the CWA Historical Dagger

117

00:05:11,692--> 00:05:14,000

for Midnight at Malabar House.

118

00:05:14,000--> 00:05:16,368

-Mm-hmm, yeah, that was a
good one. You've got one of those?

119

00:05:16,392--> 00:05:18,548

-That was a good one, that's
a good one, was it? Okay.

120

00:05:18,572--> 00:05:20,268

-You've got two of those!

121

00:05:20,292--> 00:05:22,628

-And earlier this year,
because, you know,

122

00:05:22,652--> 00:05:25,108

you're becoming quite,
you know, ubiquitous.

123

00:05:25,132--> 00:05:28,000

You know, we're here
to talk about your writing,

124

00:05:28,000--> 00:05:30,028

um, but you have...

125

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:05:30,052--> 00:05:32,388

You know, it's not just
historical fiction now

126

00:05:32,412--> 00:05:34,148

and it's not just this
Quantum of Menace.

127

00:05:34,172--> 00:05:36,531

You have dipped your
toe into the world of

128

00:05:36,555--> 00:05:38,428

psychological thrillers.

129

00:05:38,452--> 00:05:42,428

The Girl in Cell A, set
in small-town America,

130

00:05:42,452--> 00:05:44,628

that was published
this year as well, and...

131

00:05:44,652--> 00:05:47,548

to rapturous acclaim.

132

00:05:47,572--> 00:05:50,428

-Yeah, we've both... we've
both dipped not just our toes,

133

00:05:50,452--> 00:05:53,508

but our entire
feet, legs, torso,

134

00:05:53,532--> 00:05:55,000

into...

135

00:05:55,000--> 00:05:56,000

-Up to a certain point.

136

00:05:56,000--> 00:05:57,308

-Into different subgenres.

137

00:05:57,332--> 00:06:00,588

The subject of this whole, um...

138

00:06:00,612--> 00:06:03,411

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Thursday 16 October 2025



40-odd minutes is
how we write, right?

139

00:06:03,435--> 00:06:07,028

So... I think one of the
things that we might talk about

140

00:06:07,052--> 00:06:09,468

is how we got into
writing in the first place,

141

00:06:09,492--> 00:06:11,148

because we've had
very different journeys.

142

00:06:11,172--> 00:06:12,288

Just to showcase to people

143

00:06:12,312--> 00:06:14,100

that there's more than
one way to skin a cat.

144

00:06:14,124--> 00:06:16,724

-Oh, so you want to ask the

questions, is that what you're saying?

145

00:06:16,748--> 00:06:18,518

Okay, then, I think

let's start there, then.

146

00:06:18,542--> 00:06:20,068

How did you become a writer?

147

00:06:20,092--> 00:06:22,623

Tell us, how did you

become a published writer?

148

00:06:22,647--> 00:06:24,208

-Well, I did it the

old-fashioned way.

149

00:06:24,232--> 00:06:28,000

I did it the old-fashioned way,

wrote my first novel, age 17.

150

00:06:28,000--> 00:06:30,451

I was reading Terry

Pratchett's Discworld series,

151

00:06:30,475--> 00:06:32,948

which I thought was
fabulous and easy to write,

152

00:06:32,972--> 00:06:35,000

so I wrote a comic fantasy.

153

00:06:35,000--> 00:06:37,108

The book was, of course,
rubbish, got rejected by...

154

00:06:37,132--> 00:06:39,148

Roundly by a bunch of agents.

155

00:06:39,172--> 00:06:42,108

And so I had to, with
my tail between my legs,

156

00:06:42,132--> 00:06:43,828

go off and study
accounts at LSE,

157

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:06:43,852--> 00:06:45,000

very much like your

158

00:06:45,000--> 00:06:47,405

good self, although you hadn't
written anything at the time.

159

00:06:47,429--> 00:06:50,228

-I hadn't written anything
and I studied economics,

160

00:06:50,252--> 00:06:52,000

because I'm not as sad as you.

161

00:06:52,000--> 00:06:53,268

[Vaseem laughs]

162

00:06:53,292--> 00:06:55,348

-Anyway, I became a
management consultant

163

00:06:55,372--> 00:06:56,748

rather than an
accountant after it,

164

00:06:56,772--> 00:07:00,000

and that's what took me
out to India to work as a...

165

00:07:00,000--> 00:07:01,508

as a management consultant.

166

00:07:01,532--> 00:07:04,000

A decade later, came back.

167

00:07:04,000--> 00:07:05,960

It's that old adage, write...
write what you know,

168

00:07:05,984--> 00:07:07,548

so I wrote about modern India

169

00:07:07,572--> 00:07:10,308

and I created that, as you
say, the Baby Ganesh Agencies.

170

00:07:10,332--> 00:07:12,908

-Hang on, hang on, hang on,
you say write what you know.

171

00:07:12,932--> 00:07:15,828

These are books about a
guy who inherits an elephant

172

00:07:15,852--> 00:07:18,988

and the elephant
follows him around

173

00:07:19,012--> 00:07:20,228

Bombay.

174

00:07:20,252--> 00:07:21,388

Uh...

175

00:07:21,412--> 00:07:24,000

How does anyone know that?

176

00:07:24,000--> 00:07:25,188

-Well, it was this...

177

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:07:25,212--> 00:07:27,648

where I was living in Bombay,
or Mumbai as it's now known--

178

00:07:27,672--> 00:07:28,900

-What, in the zoo?

179

00:07:28,924--> 00:07:30,908

-Nope, there was a... there was a...

180

00:07:30,932--> 00:07:33,628

There was an elephant
at the bottom of our road.

181

00:07:33,652--> 00:07:35,068

It was an old circus elephant.

182

00:07:35,092--> 00:07:36,425

It had retired from the circus,

183

00:07:36,449--> 00:07:38,000

or been booted
out, I should say,

184

00:07:38,000--> 00:07:39,988

because they're not very
well looked after there

185

00:07:40,012--> 00:07:41,828

and it was taken around

186

00:07:41,852--> 00:07:44,000

the area by a beggar fellow.

187

00:07:44,000--> 00:07:47,148

And, uh, so I sort of got
the inspiration from there.

188

00:07:47,172--> 00:07:50,108

I guess, I have to say it's a
baby elephant in my books,

189

00:07:50,132--> 00:07:52,308

and it's... It's just a
symbol, it's just a device.

190

00:07:52,332--> 00:07:55,000

It doesn't talk or fly or
sing or do any of that.

191

00:07:55,000--> 00:07:58,000

It's the... it's the lead detective
who's the sort of serious chap.

192

00:07:58,000--> 00:08:00,748

But it's more... it's
more my observations of

193

00:08:00,772--> 00:08:03,268

contemporary India...
Because you know this,

194

00:08:03,292--> 00:08:06,188

sometimes in Western
fiction, we mythologize India

195

00:08:06,212--> 00:08:09,548

and turn her into a land of
Swamis and snake charmers

196

00:08:09,572--> 00:08:12,000

and people dancing
in the streets.

197

00:08:12,000--> 00:08:14,100

It doesn't really happen...
happen as much as people--

198

00:08:14,124--> 00:08:17,000

-No, it doesn't, but we've
tried to milk that, haven't we?

199

00:08:17,000--> 00:08:18,400

-You can't dance for a start, so...

200

00:08:18,424--> 00:08:20,708

-Well, that's true, that
is true, I can't dance.

201

00:08:20,732--> 00:08:23,388

-And you can't sing, so
we are, we are scunnered.

202

00:08:23,412--> 00:08:26,000

Um, should I tell you

how I was published?

203

00:08:26,000--> 00:08:27,000

-Yes, go on.

204

00:08:27,000--> 00:08:28,828

-Sorry, because before
you were published--

205

00:08:28,852--> 00:08:30,988

-Make everyone
sick with this tale.

206

00:08:31,012--> 00:08:34,000

-How many words did you
write before you were published?

207

00:08:34,000--> 00:08:37,468

-I wrote, what, 7
novels over 20 years

208

00:08:37,492--> 00:08:39,288

and a whole bunch
of half-finished novels,

209

00:08:39,312--> 00:08:41,300

so we're close to a million
words, I would reckon.

210

00:08:41,324--> 00:08:44,908

-A million bad words first,
that's... that's impressive.

211

00:08:44,932--> 00:08:47,548

Um, no, I was
very lucky. I, um...

212

00:08:47,572--> 00:08:48,788

I started very differently.

213

00:08:48,812--> 00:08:52,000

I, as you say, sort of
went and did economics,

214

00:08:52,000--> 00:08:54,828

got a job in the city,

215

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:08:54,852--> 00:08:58,000

did Mergers and

Acquisitions, travelled the world,

216

00:08:58,000--> 00:08:59,508

began to hate it, um...

217

00:08:59,532--> 00:09:02,068

Just used to think there

must be more to life

218

00:09:02,092--> 00:09:03,788

than making rich people richer.

219

00:09:03,812--> 00:09:06,268

I started writing

at the age of 40.

220

00:09:06,292--> 00:09:08,508

I got very lucky, um,

221

00:09:08,532--> 00:09:10,348

I saw a competition

in The Telegraph.

222

00:09:10,372--> 00:09:12,000

They were only looking for

223

00:09:12,000--> 00:09:13,868

5,000 words of a novel.

224

00:09:13,892--> 00:09:18,000

And I'd had this idea to send
a British detective to India.

225

00:09:18,000--> 00:09:20,668

Uh, and so I'd written
10,000 words of this

226

00:09:20,692--> 00:09:23,000

and they were awful,
and I put them in a drawer.

227

00:09:23,000--> 00:09:24,668

But when I saw the competition,

228

00:09:24,692--> 00:09:26,748

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Thursday 16 October 2025



I tidied up the first 5,000,

229

00:09:26,772--> 00:09:28,548

sent it away, and...

230

00:09:28,572--> 00:09:32,468

three months later, I was lucky
enough to have won that competition.

231

00:09:32,492--> 00:09:33,492

Um...

232

00:09:33,516--> 00:09:34,948

which just came out the blue.

233

00:09:34,972--> 00:09:38,108

And so I had a book deal,
but I didn't have a book.

234

00:09:38,132--> 00:09:40,588

I had 10,000 rotten words.

235

00:09:40,612--> 00:09:42,268

And I think that's sort of...

236

00:09:42,292--> 00:09:45,000

that actually does typify

237

00:09:45,000--> 00:09:47,668

the... the careers of you and I.

238

00:09:47,692--> 00:09:49,828

You're very

disciplined as a writer.

239

00:09:49,852--> 00:09:51,000

I think this is a good point

240

00:09:51,000--> 00:09:54,588

to talk about your writing

style and how you write.

241

00:09:54,612--> 00:09:56,308

Tell us a bit about that.

242

00:09:56,332--> 00:09:59,000

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



-All right, we'll do... we'll

both do that, but I must say,

243

00:09:59,000--> 00:10:01,628

you said you were

published at age 40

244

00:10:01,652--> 00:10:04,308

and now, 32 years

later, you do not look a...

245

00:10:04,332--> 00:10:06,000

you do not look a day over 50.

246

00:10:06,000--> 00:10:07,868

-Ah, well, let's

point out two things.

247

00:10:07,892--> 00:10:10,000

One, I am younger than you.

248

00:10:10,000--> 00:10:12,000

-Guys, alternate facts.

249

00:10:12,000--> 00:10:15,948

-And two, um, you are
obviously... what are you doing?

250

00:10:15,972--> 00:10:18,628

Are you smearing Vaseline
on the lens or something?

251

00:10:18,652--> 00:10:21,000

Because I know you're 107.

252

00:10:21,000--> 00:10:24,000

-How come you still have
young skin? What's going on?

253

00:10:24,000--> 00:10:27,000

-It's the blood of new writers.

254

00:10:27,000--> 00:10:30,148

Uh, I was... I was wondering what
happened to all the talented new writers.

255

00:10:30,172--> 00:10:31,772

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



-So that's what we're
drinking every day.

256

00:10:31,796--> 00:10:32,996

Um... Alright, so our process.

257

00:10:33,020--> 00:10:34,020

So...

258

00:10:34,044--> 00:10:35,528

-Yeah, because
you're quite organized.

259

00:10:35,552--> 00:10:37,788

Tell us about how you come to...

260

00:10:37,812--> 00:10:39,628

-So, um, I'm... quite
organized, and I plan.

261

00:10:39,652--> 00:10:42,468

A lot of writers, so
anybody tuning in today,

262

00:10:42,492--> 00:10:44,100

is probably very
familiar with the whole

263

00:10:44,124--> 00:10:48,028

plotting versus doing things
by the seat of your pants.

264

00:10:48,052--> 00:10:50,348

And some people,
um, love that phrase

265

00:10:50,372--> 00:10:53,000

somewhere in the middle,
plant... is it planting? Planting?

266

00:10:53,000--> 00:10:57,071

-I think that's something else that you
really shouldn't be Googling, my friend.

267

00:10:57,095--> 00:10:58,748

But anyway, carry on.

268

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:10:58,772--> 00:11:00,948

-So I plot for a few months.

269

00:11:00,972--> 00:11:03,508

And I do a lot of research,

270

00:11:03,532--> 00:11:05,948

and as you know, we
fall down rabbit holes

271

00:11:05,972--> 00:11:08,000

when we're doing
research and it takes us to

272

00:11:08,000--> 00:11:09,588

wonderful places,

273

00:11:09,612--> 00:11:13,000

98% of which never end
up anywhere near the book.

274

00:11:13,000--> 00:11:15,231

But it's very essential
for our mental health

275

00:11:15,255--> 00:11:17,000

to be doing all of that nonsense

276

00:11:17,000--> 00:11:20,068

because it prevents us from having
to actually sit down and do the work.

277

00:11:20,092--> 00:11:22,828

But then once I get
started with a detailed plan...

278

00:11:22,852--> 00:11:24,988

And it's all on
Spreadsheet, so I'm not a...

279

00:11:25,012--> 00:11:27,000

sticking post-its
on a wall kind of..

280

00:11:27,000--> 00:11:30,000

-God, you really are sad,
aren't you, on a spreadsheet?

281

00:11:30,000--> 00:11:32,838

Sorry, carry on, I didn't say
that out loud, did I? Carry on.

282

00:11:32,862--> 00:11:34,828

-You did, unfortunately.

283

00:11:34,852--> 00:11:38,348

-But then again, we do have to have
a look at your faces while we've tried.

284

00:11:38,372--> 00:11:39,668

I told them to black it out.

285

00:11:39,692--> 00:11:41,748

I told them to black that
part of the screen out.

286

00:11:41,772--> 00:11:44,000

-Please, please, please
be professional, carry on.

287

00:11:44,000--> 00:11:46,000

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



Tell us about your writing.

288

00:11:46,000--> 00:11:49,988

-Um, so 3 months, I would say, 2 to
3 months planning on a spreadsheet.

289

00:11:50,012--> 00:11:51,348

I write every single scene out,

290

00:11:51,372--> 00:11:53,000

maybe 60 scenes in a book.

291

00:11:53,000--> 00:11:55,308

And I know exactly
what's going on

292

00:11:55,332--> 00:11:57,028

in the entire book,

293

00:11:57,052--> 00:11:59,628

get the timeline right,
get the alternate suspects,

294

00:11:59,652--> 00:12:01,000

put in the red herrings

295

00:12:01,000--> 00:12:02,308

et cetera, et cetera.

296

00:12:02,332--> 00:12:04,868

And then I start writing,
and maybe write...

297

00:12:04,892--> 00:12:07,148

a thousand words a day,
very early in the morning.

298

00:12:07,172--> 00:12:10,000

Get up early, um, do 2-3 hours.

299

00:12:10,000--> 00:12:12,708

-And what do you do once you
have written those thousand words

300

00:12:12,732--> 00:12:14,508

by 8 o'clock in the morning?

301

00:12:14,800--> 00:12:16,588

Shall I tell... shall I

tell them what you do?

302

00:12:18,000--> 00:12:20,748

Vaseem Khan sends me and
several other authors

303

00:12:20,772--> 00:12:22,428

a WhatsApp message saying,

304

00:12:22,452--> 00:12:24,948

"it's 8 o'clock, I've

finished a thousand words,

305

00:12:24,972--> 00:12:26,508

what are you guys doing?"

306

00:12:26,532--> 00:12:28,188

And obviously, you know,

307

00:12:28,212--> 00:12:31,148

I'm still trying to find my trousers

at that time in the morning.

308

00:12:31,172--> 00:12:32,700

So, um, yes, so carry...

309

00:12:32,724--> 00:12:34,568

They're on your... they're
usually on your head.

310

00:12:34,592--> 00:12:37,148

-You genuinely make
me feel very bad.

311

00:12:37,172--> 00:12:40,000

-I am encouraging
you, I'm inspiring you.

312

00:12:40,000--> 00:12:41,000

[laughter]

313

00:12:41,000--> 00:12:42,468

-Well, go on, tell us your...

314

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:12:42,492--> 00:12:45,148

So that goes on for
about 3 or 4 months,

315

00:12:45,172--> 00:12:47,332

a thousand words a day,
and then you have a first draft

316

00:12:47,356--> 00:12:49,868

of 80 to 90 thousand words.

317

00:12:49,892--> 00:12:51,228

And I edit as I go

318

00:12:51,252--> 00:12:54,000

because I hate
getting structural edits

319

00:12:54,000--> 00:12:55,748

afterwards from my editor,

320

00:12:55,772--> 00:12:58,108

so I normally agreed a...

321

00:12:58,132--> 00:13:00,348

a synopsis with my editor

322

00:13:00,372--> 00:13:02,000

and then I'll write to that.

323

00:13:02,000--> 00:13:05,000

But then things change, as you
know, even with a detailed plan.

324

00:13:05,000--> 00:13:07,788

You know, things will change
during the course of writing,

325

00:13:07,812--> 00:13:11,068

so there's enough
fluidity there to be able to...

326

00:13:11,092--> 00:13:12,988

to move things
around if you wish to.

327

00:13:13,012--> 00:13:15,428

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



But once it's all done, I'll
leave it for a couple of months,

328

00:13:15,452--> 00:13:17,000

then I'll come back to it,

329

00:13:17,000--> 00:13:19,428

edit it again, I'll do that a
couple of times, and then

330

00:13:19,452--> 00:13:21,468

the draft that
goes in, hopefully,

331

00:13:21,492--> 00:13:26,000

won't, uh, come back to me with
massive great big red marks all over it.

332

00:13:26,000--> 00:13:28,000

Now, what's your...
what's your method?

333

00:13:28,000--> 00:13:29,788

-As you, as you... [laughs]

334

00:13:29,812--> 00:13:32,428

As you know and most people
have probably guessed by now,

335

00:13:32,452--> 00:13:36,948

my writing regime is
slightly different to that.

336

00:13:36,972--> 00:13:38,668

It involves...

337

00:13:38,692--> 00:13:40,748

I mean, I think it starts
in the same place.

338

00:13:40,772--> 00:13:42,588

It starts with an idea, right?

339

00:13:42,612--> 00:13:46,000

Whatever that idea is, a
lot of the time, my ideas

340

00:13:46,000--> 00:13:47,948

come from a position of anger.

341

00:13:47,972--> 00:13:50,388

Uh, if I'm writing... if I want
to write about something,

342

00:13:50,412--> 00:13:52,668

I'm generally
quite angry about it.

343

00:13:52,692--> 00:13:54,748

Um, but sometimes it can come,

344

00:13:54,772--> 00:13:57,828

you know, just from... a chat.

345

00:13:57,852--> 00:14:00,028

So, you know, the book
that I'm writing right now

346

00:14:00,052--> 00:14:02,188

started off as a chat

347

00:14:02,212--> 00:14:05,000

with some friends

of mine from Mumbai

348

00:14:05,000--> 00:14:07,945

about what happened

during lockdown there

349

00:14:07,969--> 00:14:09,548

and how the ultra-rich

350

00:14:09,572--> 00:14:12,748

would send their servants

to do their COVID tests.

351

00:14:12,772--> 00:14:14,308

And I thought this

was really bizarre,

352

00:14:14,332--> 00:14:17,468

and I thought, that was,

like, the germ of an idea,

353

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:14:17,492--> 00:14:21,108

uh, which, over the
course of 4 years,

354

00:14:21,132--> 00:14:22,388

turned into a book.

355

00:14:22,412--> 00:14:23,788

And for the first three...

356

00:14:23,812--> 00:14:26,628

Well, the first two and a half
years of that, nothing happened.

357

00:14:26,652--> 00:14:29,548

And then, in the
following 6 months,

358

00:14:29,572--> 00:14:32,908

that turned into a...
more of a general idea

359

00:14:32,932--> 00:14:37,000

of what I wanted to write about.

I wanted to write about the rich

360

00:14:37,000--> 00:14:39,708

in Mumbai, I wanted to
write about the interaction

361

00:14:39,732--> 00:14:41,668

between the rich and the poor.

362

00:14:41,692--> 00:14:44,828

And also, while all
this was going on,

363

00:14:44,852--> 00:14:47,000

you know, the Me Too movement

364

00:14:47,000--> 00:14:49,468

was bubbling away,
and I thought, well,

365

00:14:49,492--> 00:14:52,108

let's see... I mean, because
that happened in India as well

366

00:14:52,132--> 00:14:53,776

and I thought, well,

let's see what I can

367

00:14:53,800--> 00:14:55,428

weave in from that.

368

00:14:55,452--> 00:14:57,548

So all of this is

by way of saying

369

00:14:57,572--> 00:15:00,000

nothing happened for 3 years.

370

00:15:00,000--> 00:15:01,628

Um, and then...

371

00:15:01,652--> 00:15:03,808

I mean, during that time,

I'd be writing other things.

372

00:15:03,832--> 00:15:07,000

Obviously, uh, I was

finishing another book,

373

00:15:07,000--> 00:15:09,348

getting ready to write

another Wyndham.

374

00:15:09,372--> 00:15:14,000

Um, and so, until

September last year,

375

00:15:14,000--> 00:15:17,000

I wasn't in a position

to write anything on this.

376

00:15:17,000--> 00:15:18,708

And I think...

377

00:15:18,732--> 00:15:21,388

In September last year,

378

00:15:21,412--> 00:15:24,148

what normally happens

to me is I have this idea

379

00:15:24,172--> 00:15:26,398

or this inspiration, and
nothing will happen,

380

00:15:26,422--> 00:15:28,000

and then I will get this

381

00:15:28,000--> 00:15:30,091

burst of enthusiasm to write.

382

00:15:30,115--> 00:15:34,948

And I'll write 10,000 to
15,000 words of this idea,

383

00:15:34,972--> 00:15:37,348

not really sure
where it's gonna go.

384

00:15:37,372--> 00:15:39,348

And then I'll stop again.

385

00:15:39,372--> 00:15:44,000

And that's because my

enthusiasm at that point has waned.

386

00:15:44,000--> 00:15:47,228

So I have, like, the first

15,000 words of a book,

387

00:15:47,252--> 00:15:49,148

generally without any plot.

388

00:15:49,172--> 00:15:51,948

If books didn't have

plots, I'd be a lot happier.

389

00:15:51,972--> 00:15:53,000

Um...

390

00:15:53,000--> 00:15:55,468

And then, it took me

a couple of months

391

00:15:55,492--> 00:15:57,848

to work out what was actually

going to happen in this book.

392

00:15:57,872--> 00:15:59,828

And like you, I write

393

00:15:59,852--> 00:16:01,268

a wee bit about it.

394

00:16:01,292--> 00:16:05,468

I wrote a skeleton. I write, sort of, two
pages of what I think is gonna happen.

395

00:16:05,492--> 00:16:07,068

And then...

396

00:16:07,092--> 00:16:09,268

in January, I think I said...

397

00:16:09,292--> 00:16:14,000

No, no, it was April. April was
when I got back to this book.

398

00:16:14,000--> 00:16:18,108

And, like you, I aim for
a thousand words a day.

399

00:16:18,132--> 00:16:20,428

Unlike you, I don't manage it,

400

00:16:20,452--> 00:16:24,000

so I will probably go 3

days where I'll hit my target

401

00:16:24,000--> 00:16:27,508

and then 4 days where I'll do

about 200 words or something,

402

00:16:27,532--> 00:16:30,268

because I don't know

what, life, or just...

403

00:16:30,292--> 00:16:32,508

being an idiot, or whatever.

404

00:16:32,532--> 00:16:34,000

-Tricky.

405

00:16:34,000--> 00:16:36,548

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



It's, it's... whatever it
is, but I won't manage it.

406

00:16:36,572--> 00:16:38,228

And then...

407

00:16:38,252--> 00:16:40,718

It sort of comes
in fits and starts.

408

00:16:40,742--> 00:16:44,628

There'll be other times when
I can write 2,000, 2,500 a day

409

00:16:44,652--> 00:16:46,308

just because it's flowing.

410

00:16:46,332--> 00:16:47,628

Um...

411

00:16:47,652--> 00:16:50,188

And so, by the end of August...

412

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:16:50,212--> 00:16:54,000

So that was, what, April, May,
June, July, August... 5 months

413

00:16:54,000--> 00:16:56,468

it took me to write
the rest of that book,

414

00:16:56,492--> 00:16:58,588

and my books are generally
about 100,000 words.

415

00:16:58,612--> 00:17:01,000

I've no idea why, I can't
write a book shorter

416

00:17:01,000--> 00:17:03,988

or longer than
roughly 100,000 words.

417

00:17:04,012--> 00:17:07,000

Um, so that first
draft was done.

418

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:17:07,000--> 00:17:10,508

Unlike you, I can't go back
and edit while I'm writing.

419

00:17:10,532--> 00:17:12,708

I would love to
be able to do that.

420

00:17:12,732--> 00:17:13,948

I can't, it would just...

421

00:17:13,972--> 00:17:16,000

terrify me if I read it back

422

00:17:16,000--> 00:17:18,268

and realize how crap it was.

423

00:17:18,292--> 00:17:19,948

So by... by August,

424

00:17:19,972--> 00:17:22,000

I had, you know, 100,000

425

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:17:22,000--> 00:17:24,308

words of a final

first draft down.

426

00:17:24,332--> 00:17:27,000

Um, and then I

spend about a month

427

00:17:27,000--> 00:17:28,228

trying to fix it.

428

00:17:28,252--> 00:17:30,188

Uh, trying to make

it into a shape

429

00:17:30,212--> 00:17:32,000

that I can throw at my editors.

430

00:17:32,000--> 00:17:33,748

Uh, and then they fix it again.

431

00:17:33,772--> 00:17:36,000

So, that's how I write,

which is a terrible...

432

00:17:36,000--> 00:17:38,948

-Writer's block, do you
ever get writer's block?

433

00:17:38,972--> 00:17:41,628

I read a lovely piece about
the kind of crazy things

434

00:17:41,652--> 00:17:44,000

that writers have
done to get past

435

00:17:44,000--> 00:17:47,028

writer's block. Did you know that
Dan Brown hangs upside down

436

00:17:47,052--> 00:17:48,100

in gravity boots?

437

00:17:48,124--> 00:17:52,000

-It doesn't surprise me that
that's what Dan Brown would do.

438

00:17:52,000--> 00:17:53,828

I've never had writer's block.

439

00:17:53,852--> 00:17:55,388

Have you had writer's block?

440

00:17:55,412--> 00:17:57,828

-Uh, only in the
sense that, um...

441

00:17:57,852--> 00:18:00,000

sometimes that initial idea,

442

00:18:00,000--> 00:18:01,588

you know, there's too many ideas

443

00:18:01,612--> 00:18:03,000

and you really don't
know which one

444

00:18:03,000--> 00:18:06,028

is the one that would be best
for what you want to do next.

445

00:18:06,052--> 00:18:09,000

-Yeah. Well, that's writers glut,
rather than writer's block, my friend.

446

00:18:09,000--> 00:18:11,688

-Not necessarily, because, you
know, they could all be silly ideas

447

00:18:11,712--> 00:18:13,588

and you don't know
which one is the...

448

00:18:13,612--> 00:18:16,668

And because you think that these
are the ones you should be focusing on,

449

00:18:16,692--> 00:18:18,200

you're not considering
something...

450

00:18:18,224--> 00:18:19,428

-Oh, I remember your...

451

00:18:19,452--> 00:18:21,805

Do you mind telling the
audience about your idea,

452

00:18:21,829--> 00:18:24,000

your Scottish idea?

453

00:18:24,000--> 00:18:26,388

-I'm not sure anybody
needs to hear that.

454

00:18:26,412--> 00:18:28,708

I mean, to be fair,
to be fair, when you...

455

00:18:28,732--> 00:18:31,068

-If you want to hear
Vaseem's Scottish idea,

456

00:18:31,092--> 00:18:32,668

please leave a
message in the chat

457

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:18:32,692--> 00:18:35,548

and we'll see how many
people want to hear that idea.

458

00:18:35,572--> 00:18:37,468

It was brilliant, I must say.

459

00:18:37,492--> 00:18:39,548

-Um... Anyway, let's... let's...

460

00:18:39,572--> 00:18:41,148

I'm gonna ask you
some more questions.

461

00:18:41,172--> 00:18:43,228

Let's talk about the
environment you're writing.

462

00:18:43,252--> 00:18:45,108

Where do you write?
Show us your office.

463

00:18:45,132--> 00:18:47,000

-Oh, God, people

want to hear this idea.

464

00:18:47,000--> 00:18:48,288

-Yeah, well...

465

00:18:48,312--> 00:18:50,708

Come on, show us your office
first, we'll come back to that.

466

00:18:50,732--> 00:18:52,200

-My office, I'm
sitting in my office.

467

00:18:52,224--> 00:18:53,548

-Uh-huh. Is this
where you write?

468

00:18:53,572--> 00:18:56,265

This is where I write. I'm
at my desk, and these are...

469

00:18:56,289--> 00:18:58,188

This is my bookshelf
behind me, and...

470

00:18:58,212--> 00:19:00,000

Even your books are
in there somewhere.

471

00:19:00,000--> 00:19:02,018

-Well, I can just see
yours for some reason.

472

00:19:02,042--> 00:19:03,268

I can't see anyone else's.

473

00:19:03,292--> 00:19:05,268

Um, what was I gonna say?

474

00:19:05,292--> 00:19:07,468

I was gonna say, so, so
you, what, what would you do?

475

00:19:07,492--> 00:19:09,788

You would come into your
office at 7 in the morning,

476

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:19:09,812--> 00:19:11,000

because you're just a swot.

477

00:19:11,000--> 00:19:15,228

-No, no, to be honest, to be honest,
like most writers these days, I, um...

478

00:19:15,252--> 00:19:16,668

I spend...

479

00:19:16,692--> 00:19:19,000

I wake up, I'm in bed.

480

00:19:19,000--> 00:19:20,388

My wife hasn't woken up,

481

00:19:20,412--> 00:19:22,028

so I'm very quiet,

482

00:19:22,052--> 00:19:24,188

and I'll just do an
hour or two's writing

483

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:19:24,212--> 00:19:26,468

before she wakes up
and starts thinking of tasks.

484

00:19:26,492--> 00:19:30,000

Um, and then after that, I will
come into this office to do another...

485

00:19:30,000--> 00:19:31,468

So you are writing in bed?

486

00:19:31,492--> 00:19:32,748

I write in bed, and...

487

00:19:32,772--> 00:19:33,772

-There we are.

488

00:19:33,796--> 00:19:35,708

-But then I'll come
to the office for the

489

00:19:35,732--> 00:19:38,268

last couple of hours,
uh, to make my...

490

00:19:38,292--> 00:19:40,000

to make myself

feel professional

491

00:19:40,000--> 00:19:44,000

rather slopping around

in pyjamas, in bed, writing.

492

00:19:44,000--> 00:19:45,668

Um, and then I will just

493

00:19:45,692--> 00:19:48,000

fiddle about, you

know, fiddle about...

494

00:19:48,000--> 00:19:49,268

I beg your pardon?

495

00:19:49,292--> 00:19:52,268

-Might be breakfast, might be other

bits and pieces, loads of admin to do.

496

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:19:52,292--> 00:19:55,388

-So, there's a lot of fiddling
about, by the sounds of things.

497

00:19:55,412--> 00:19:56,548

Um...

498

00:19:56,572--> 00:19:59,252

That's really interesting, because
I always thought you would, like,

499

00:19:59,276--> 00:20:03,000

get up, put on your suit and
tie, go into your office at 7am

500

00:20:03,000--> 00:20:06,388

and start typing like
the robot you are.

501

00:20:06,412--> 00:20:10,308

But it's really interesting and
encouraging to hear that you write in bed,

502

00:20:10,332--> 00:20:13,000

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



because I write
sitting on my bed.

503

00:20:13,000--> 00:20:15,548

I edit at my desk.

504

00:20:15,572--> 00:20:18,468

But, you know,
for ideas to flow,

505

00:20:18,492--> 00:20:20,908

it just seems my arse has
to be on something soft,

506

00:20:20,932--> 00:20:23,000

otherwise it doesn't
seem to work.

507

00:20:23,000--> 00:20:26,000

-On something soft? I'm
surprised it's not on your head.

508

00:20:26,000--> 00:20:27,948

-I have no idea what that means.

509

00:20:27,972--> 00:20:30,148

Um, but let us carry on.

510

00:20:30,172--> 00:20:32,668

So, you write in bed,

511

00:20:32,692--> 00:20:35,228

but you come into
your office to fiddle,

512

00:20:35,252--> 00:20:37,000

as far as I can tell.

513

00:20:37,000--> 00:20:38,876

Um, what do you
have around you when...

514

00:20:38,900--> 00:20:40,868

-Well, I have two... I have
two big screens, right?

515

00:20:40,892--> 00:20:42,068

So you need to have...

516

00:20:42,092--> 00:20:47,000

So I'll often have some
sort of Netflix or Amazon

517

00:20:47,000--> 00:20:49,788

when I'm doing admin,
going on in the other screen.

518

00:20:49,812--> 00:20:51,611

But normally, I need
absolute silence.

519

00:20:51,635--> 00:20:53,868

So we have... I need
absolute silence to write.

520

00:20:53,892--> 00:20:55,228

Now, we have friends who

521

00:20:55,252--> 00:20:57,588

play rock and roll music!

522

00:20:57,612--> 00:20:59,548

-Well, I wouldn't
call it rock and roll,

523

00:20:59,572--> 00:21:02,428

it's soundtracks to
Batman, because he's weird.

524

00:21:02,452--> 00:21:05,068

Um, I'm not going to tell you
which of our friends does this,

525

00:21:05,092--> 00:21:09,000

ladies and gentlemen, but he
pretends his writing room is a bat cave.

526

00:21:09,000--> 00:21:12,268

Uh, he even has a
Batman toilet, doesn't he?

527

00:21:12,292--> 00:21:16,400

-Yeah, he's got a bathroom
with Batman posters and whatnot.

528

00:21:16,424--> 00:21:18,000

Yes, the grown man.

He was a grown man.

529

00:21:18,000--> 00:21:20,224

-Yeah, he's quite... he's

quite interesting that way.

530

00:21:20,248--> 00:21:22,588

You can all guess

who that might be.

531

00:21:22,612--> 00:21:25,428

So, where was I? I was gonna...

532

00:21:25,452--> 00:21:27,588

I was asking you

about... oh... oh, yeah, but...

533

00:21:27,612--> 00:21:29,876

So you have got Netflix on

534

00:21:29,900--> 00:21:30,900

on a screen?

535

00:21:30,924--> 00:21:34,228

-Only for admin. You know, like, when you're
trying to work out travel to an event

536

00:21:34,252--> 00:21:36,228

or you're doodling,
or something.

537

00:21:36,252--> 00:21:38,628

You can't... I can't have
that on when I'm actually

538

00:21:38,652--> 00:21:39,800

writing writing.

539

00:21:39,824--> 00:21:41,068

-Okay... Okay.

540

00:21:41,092--> 00:21:43,948

So what do you need in order
to write, then?

541

00:21:44,500--> 00:21:48,308

-Well, uh, I've got my lovely
laptop, my trusty laptop.

542

00:21:48,332--> 00:21:51,068

Um, and my bottle of...

543

00:21:51,092--> 00:21:53,500

Gotta stay hydrated, so...

544

00:21:53,524--> 00:21:54,556

-Vodka?

545

00:21:54,580--> 00:21:58,000

-Yeah. Shh... Don't tell anyone.

546

00:21:58,000--> 00:21:59,468

So, that's it, really.

547

00:21:59,492--> 00:22:01,288

I've got a lovely
painting on the wall here.

548

00:22:01,312--> 00:22:02,832

Do you want to see
my painting, people?

549

00:22:02,856--> 00:22:04,300

-Yeah, go on, show
us your painting.

550

00:22:04,324--> 00:22:05,788

-Lovely painting
there on the wall.

551

00:22:05,812--> 00:22:08,388

That's nice, that's nice
and headache-inducing.

552

00:22:08,412--> 00:22:11,000

I see why it's behind you.

553

00:22:11,000--> 00:22:13,268

I was gonna ask something else.

554

00:22:13,292--> 00:22:15,548

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



So, is it just the
mornings that you write?

555

00:22:15,572--> 00:22:17,588

Is it just that session from

556

00:22:17,612--> 00:22:18,948

7 till 10.

557

00:22:18,972--> 00:22:20,388

-I can't write in the evenings.

558

00:22:20,412--> 00:22:21,708

My brain is fried by then,

559

00:22:21,732--> 00:22:24,108

and all summer, you know I
play cricket on the weekends.

560

00:22:24,132--> 00:22:25,708

No way I'm doing any...

561

00:22:25,732--> 00:22:28,000

any writing after that.

562

00:22:28,000--> 00:22:31,000

-So, anything after

lunchtime at all?

563

00:22:31,000--> 00:22:33,228

-Yeah, sometimes. You

know, some days you get...

564

00:22:33,252--> 00:22:35,668

get carried away, and

it's not a thousand words,

565

00:22:35,692--> 00:22:38,128

you can get a couple of thousand,

maybe three thousand on a...

566

00:22:38,152--> 00:22:39,668

really good day.

567

00:22:39,692--> 00:22:42,068

I don't... I find it amazing

568

00:22:42,092--> 00:22:44,268

when writers tell me
that they've managed to

569

00:22:44,292--> 00:22:47,000

write an entire draft of a book

570

00:22:47,000--> 00:22:48,948

in the space of a month, or...

571

00:22:48,972--> 00:22:52,308

or a month and a half, and they're
doing 4,000 or 5,000 words a day.

572

00:22:52,332--> 00:22:54,000

I find that astonishing.

573

00:22:54,000--> 00:22:57,000

-Yeah, I think... I think
that's a different skill.

574

00:22:57,000--> 00:22:58,000

-Absolute geniuses.

575

00:22:58,000--> 00:23:01,000

It's not something that

I could do either, I think.

576

00:23:01,000--> 00:23:03,868

I think it's a different type

of novel you're writing,

577

00:23:03,892--> 00:23:07,068

if you're writing, you know,

those sorts of volumes

578

00:23:07,092--> 00:23:09,068

day in, day out. Um...

579

00:23:09,092--> 00:23:11,108

And there's a place for them.

580

00:23:11,132--> 00:23:17,000

They tend to be novels that

are high-octane, plot-driven.

581

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:23:17,000--> 00:23:18,588

And that's great,
because you know what?

582

00:23:18,612--> 00:23:20,748

We need them. I wish
I could write like that.

583

00:23:20,772--> 00:23:23,000

I just can't.

584

00:23:23,000--> 00:23:26,948

So that, you know, it is interesting
that people write in different ways

585

00:23:26,972--> 00:23:31,000

and it is interesting that your
time of day for writing is early on.

586

00:23:31,000--> 00:23:32,948

Um, I must say, I'm...

587

00:23:32,972--> 00:23:35,268

I would say pretty

much the same, but not...

588

00:23:35,292--> 00:23:39,000

Certainly not at 7 o'clock,
but from 9 o'clock till 12 o'clock

589

00:23:39,000--> 00:23:41,000

are probably the
hours when I'm most...

590

00:23:41,000--> 00:23:44,000

-You write in that
little dungeon of yours?

591

00:23:44,000--> 00:23:45,708

-No, no, no, no,
no, no, I don't.

592

00:23:45,732--> 00:23:49,628

That's just where I keep the
slaves who do do the writing.

593

00:23:49,652--> 00:23:53,000

No, I write sitting on my

bed, like you do, but um...

594

00:23:53,000--> 00:23:55,988

And you've got a very fancy
chair we've just discovered, which...

595

00:23:56,012--> 00:24:01,308

"apparently" your neighbour
died and bequeathed to you,

596

00:24:01,332--> 00:24:02,332

although I...

597

00:24:02,356--> 00:24:05,308

-Well, yes, I mean, this... the
chair I've got is, like, 100 years old.

598

00:24:05,332--> 00:24:08,000

It's a swivel chair,
but it's made of wood.

599

00:24:08,000--> 00:24:10,428

So it's like a
Victorian swivel chair,

600

00:24:10,452--> 00:24:12,000

which belonged to

601

00:24:12,000--> 00:24:14,668

our neighbour, who

sadly passed away,

602

00:24:14,692--> 00:24:19,000

and then Aunty Rachel from

next door gave me his chair.

603

00:24:19,000--> 00:24:21,708

And I love it, like, it just

does everything, look at this.

604

00:24:21,732--> 00:24:24,588

Anyway, um, I'm gonna ask

you a few more questions.

605

00:24:24,612--> 00:24:27,868

There's a lot of humour in

your... in some of your work.

606

00:24:27,892--> 00:24:29,238

Um...

607

00:24:29,262--> 00:24:31,708

What's the place of
humour in your work?

608

00:24:31,732--> 00:24:35,000

-Yeah, well, it's not
just me. Both of us use

609

00:24:35,000--> 00:24:37,000

dry humour, satire,
observational humour.

610

00:24:37,000--> 00:24:38,988

-Yeah, mine's funny, though.

611

00:24:39,012--> 00:24:41,000

[laughs] Yeah, well,
your face certainly is.

612

00:24:41,000--> 00:24:42,108

[laughter]

613

00:24:42,132--> 00:24:44,188

-Look, I... I... I...

614

00:24:44,212--> 00:24:47,108

I would say I learnt at the
knee of Sir Terry Pratchett

615

00:24:47,132--> 00:24:49,000

with his Discworld
novels, right?

616

00:24:49,000--> 00:24:51,868

Never got to meet him,
that's the only thing that I...

617

00:24:51,892--> 00:24:54,988

over the last 11 years, I've had
an amazing time in the industry.

618

00:24:55,012--> 00:24:58,000

You know, ups and downs,
but more ups than downs,

619

00:24:58,000--> 00:24:59,908

and met some of
my writing heroes,

620

00:24:59,932--> 00:25:02,908

but Terry Pratchett unfortunately
passed away before I...

621

00:25:02,932--> 00:25:05,000

I could get to meet him.

622

00:25:05,000--> 00:25:07,108

And he used satire, and he

623

00:25:07,132--> 00:25:10,000

had this amazingly acerbic eye

624

00:25:10,000--> 00:25:12,308

for society and human foibles.

625

00:25:12,332--> 00:25:13,908

And that's always

stayed with me.

626

00:25:13,932--> 00:25:16,148

And another favourite
writer of mine,

627

00:25:16,172--> 00:25:18,000

um, Salman Rushdie

628

00:25:18,000--> 00:25:20,748

who is equally good at satire.

629

00:25:20,772--> 00:25:24,068

And look, and he particularly
focuses on politics and...

630

00:25:24,092--> 00:25:29,000

And he... his *Midnight's Children*
remains one of my favourite...

631

00:25:29,000--> 00:25:30,108

favourite novels.

632

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:25:30,132--> 00:25:32,868

So, um, when I started
writing crime fiction,

633

00:25:32,892--> 00:25:36,188

it was just natural for me to
also include a dry note of humour.

634

00:25:36,212--> 00:25:38,000

And I guess that's
gone all the way from

635

00:25:38,000--> 00:25:39,948

The Baby Ganesh novels, to...

636

00:25:39,972--> 00:25:42,000

the Malabar House novels,

637

00:25:42,000--> 00:25:43,708

and now to Quantum of Menace,

638

00:25:43,732--> 00:25:46,000

the first Q novels, but
what you will notice

639

00:25:46,000--> 00:25:47,308

with those book

640

00:25:47,332--> 00:25:50,000

is that all of the

protagonists themselves

641

00:25:50,000--> 00:25:51,548

are very serious people.

642

00:25:51,572--> 00:25:54,308

It's just that they

have a dry outlook

643

00:25:54,332--> 00:25:58,588

on... on life and the people around

them and the human condition.

644

00:25:58,612--> 00:26:01,188

in particular, and you

see that especially with

645

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:26:01,212--> 00:26:05,000

the Q novel, which you've
just finished, uh... looking at.

646

00:26:05,000--> 00:26:06,908

-Well, why don't you...
talking about the Q novel,

647

00:26:06,932--> 00:26:09,628

why don't you give us a bit
of a reading from the Q novel

648

00:26:09,652--> 00:26:12,068

and then I'm gonna ask
one or two more questions,

649

00:26:12,092--> 00:26:14,000

then I'm gonna open it up

650

00:26:14,000--> 00:26:16,000

to our audience.

651

00:26:16,000--> 00:26:17,668

-Uh, I don't know if... do I...

652

00:26:17,692--> 00:26:19,468

My copy's downstairs,

653

00:26:19,492--> 00:26:20,492

the hardback's downstairs.

654

00:26:20,516--> 00:26:22,228

-You don't... There's

one... I can see it!

655

00:26:22,252--> 00:26:23,500

I can see it, it's right there!

656

00:26:23,524--> 00:26:25,588

-That's the proof.

Okay, well I'll...

657

00:26:25,612--> 00:26:26,765

Well, I'll have to find it.

658

00:26:26,789--> 00:26:28,628

Well, I'll tell you what,

I won't read from it

659

00:26:28,652--> 00:26:30,948

but what I will do is give
people the outline for the book

660

00:26:30,972--> 00:26:32,000

and what it's all about.

661

00:26:32,000--> 00:26:35,388

And how it came to be,
because that's part of the...

662

00:26:35,412--> 00:26:39,348

of the processes

663

00:26:39,372--> 00:26:41,508

in an industry which are
sort of opaque to people.

664

00:26:41,532--> 00:26:43,000

How do you get to write

665

00:26:43,000--> 00:26:46,588

one of Ian Fleming's characters.

666

00:26:46,612--> 00:26:48,468

And the answer is,

667

00:26:48,492--> 00:26:49,628

in my particular case,

668

00:26:49,652--> 00:26:52,000

this came about

because the Ian Fleming

669

00:26:52,000--> 00:26:54,108

publishing arm had been reading

670

00:26:54,132--> 00:26:58,228

The Malabar House novels,

and they wanted something...

671

00:26:58,252--> 00:27:00,788

uh, which was not a spy novel,

672

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:27:00,812--> 00:27:03,348

and they wanted something
in a similar kind of tone,

673

00:27:03,372--> 00:27:05,000

and so they approached me

674

00:27:05,000--> 00:27:08,388

with the, uh, with
the collaboration of

675

00:27:08,412--> 00:27:11,000

Ian Fleming's
family, the estate.

676

00:27:11,000--> 00:27:12,708

And they asked me if...

677

00:27:12,732--> 00:27:14,268

Well, they invited
me for a meeting

678

00:27:14,292--> 00:27:17,785

and I thought it was just you know,

getting to know you a bit more chat.

679

00:27:17,809--> 00:27:20,500

They've got these, uh,
offices in Central London.

680

00:27:20,524--> 00:27:22,028

And then halfway
through the meeting,

681

00:27:22,052--> 00:27:25,000

they said, well, we've got
this lovely idea, would you like

682

00:27:25,000--> 00:27:26,548

uh, to write Q.

683

00:27:26,572--> 00:27:31,028

And, they said, well,
all we know about it is

684

00:27:31,052--> 00:27:33,428

that we don't want a spy
novel. We want to lean into that

685

00:27:33,452--> 00:27:35,000

sort of market of people who are

686

00:27:35,000--> 00:27:37,348

reading traditional mysteries.

687

00:27:37,372--> 00:27:39,588

Uh, and I said, well,

that sounds amazing,

688

00:27:39,612--> 00:27:42,028

but let me think about

it, because, you know,

689

00:27:42,052--> 00:27:44,708

slightly nervous, because...

690

00:27:44,732--> 00:27:47,028

it's an iconic character

and if you make a mess of it,

691

00:27:47,052--> 00:27:49,288

you'll have Bond fans turning
up at your house chucking

692

00:27:49,312--> 00:27:50,868

rocks through your window.

693

00:27:50,892--> 00:27:53,988

But after I had a thought
of... think... thought of...

694

00:27:54,012--> 00:27:57,000

think about it, I went back and I
said, that's great, I'd love to do it.

695

00:27:57,000--> 00:27:58,708

Here are my ideas.

696

00:27:58,732--> 00:28:00,228

And the idea we
finally went with

697

00:28:00,252--> 00:28:02,268

was Quantum of Menace, which...

698

00:28:02,292--> 00:28:05,748

sees Q booted out of

MI6 at the age of 50.

699

00:28:05,772--> 00:28:08,000

He's got no wife, no

children, so he sort of...

700

00:28:08,000--> 00:28:11,348

a man adrift after three

decades of working at MI6.

701

00:28:11,372--> 00:28:14,308

Serious scientist takes himself

very seriously and his role,

702

00:28:14,332--> 00:28:16,000

but now he's got...

he's got no role.

703

00:28:16,000--> 00:28:20,000

And so he decides to go

back to his small home town

704

00:28:20,000--> 00:28:21,828

a couple of hours

outside of London,

705

00:28:21,852--> 00:28:23,000

called Wickstone-on-Water,

706

00:28:23,000--> 00:28:25,548

where his childhood

friend, Peter Napier,

707

00:28:25,572--> 00:28:28,000

a quantum computer scientist

708

00:28:28,000--> 00:28:31,788

has, uh, died under

mysterious circumstances

709

00:28:31,812--> 00:28:34,000

and Q doesn't believe

those circumstances.

710

00:28:34,000--> 00:28:37,000

And so he decides to
give himself a mission

711

00:28:37,000--> 00:28:39,000

because he's no longer
got anything else to do.

712

00:28:39,000--> 00:28:42,108

Uh, and he decides to
reinvestigate this death

713

00:28:42,132--> 00:28:43,628

and as he does so

714

00:28:43,652--> 00:28:47,228

in this sort of small...
small village town setting,

715

00:28:47,252--> 00:28:49,508

he has to also come to grips

716

00:28:49,532--> 00:28:52,000

with a very messy
past that he left behind

717

00:28:52,000--> 00:28:54,000

three decades earlier.

718

00:28:54,000--> 00:28:56,948

-And the book is
phenomenal, I have to say that.

719

00:28:56,972--> 00:28:58,948

Not just because
you told me to say it,

720

00:28:58,972--> 00:29:01,000

it truly is phenomenal.

721

00:29:01,000--> 00:29:04,576

Um, it's your best work to date.

722

00:29:04,600--> 00:29:06,828

It's nice for you to say
it's the first time I've...

723

00:29:06,852--> 00:29:08,988

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



It's the first time

I've had, um...

724

00:29:09,012--> 00:29:11,668

a thriller of the month

725

00:29:11,692--> 00:29:13,668

with The Times and

the Sunday Times, and...

726

00:29:13,692--> 00:29:16,468

-And it's... it's deserved.

It's very well deserved.

727

00:29:16,492--> 00:29:19,028

Um, there are some

questions coming through.

728

00:29:19,052--> 00:29:21,788

Uh, the first one

is from Heather Fitt,

729

00:29:21,812--> 00:29:26,228

who seems to have taken

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Thursday 16 October 2025



over the CWA's Zoom account.

730

00:29:26,252--> 00:29:29,268

Uh, she's saying,

"interested to hear your views

731

00:29:29,292--> 00:29:31,668

on Richard Osman's

recent comments

732

00:29:31,692--> 00:29:35,000

about authors not

needing social media."

733

00:29:35,000--> 00:29:37,108

What do you think

of that, Mr. Khan?

734

00:29:37,132--> 00:29:38,771

I mean, I know you're quite old,

735

00:29:38,795--> 00:29:40,948

you don't really understand

social media, do you?

736

00:29:40,972--> 00:29:42,000

But, um...

737

00:29:42,000--> 00:29:45,148

-Well, I mean, Mick

Herron famously

738

00:29:45,172--> 00:29:47,748

doesn't do anything

on social media

739

00:29:47,772--> 00:29:49,268

and it hasn't hurt

his career at all.

740

00:29:49,292--> 00:29:51,548

I think it's a personal

choice, very much.

741

00:29:51,572--> 00:29:53,628

Uh, and also a function of...

742

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:29:53,652--> 00:29:58,148

Do you really... do you feel that
you've got enough of a platform

743

00:29:58,172--> 00:29:59,268

and an audience already

744

00:29:59,292--> 00:30:01,000

that you don't
need social media?

745

00:30:01,000--> 00:30:02,508

Some writers do.

746

00:30:02,532--> 00:30:04,708

Others... who are in the trenches

747

00:30:04,732--> 00:30:07,708

or who are, sort of,
still making their way,

748

00:30:07,732--> 00:30:09,508

or who are just very comfortable

749

00:30:09,532--> 00:30:11,548

with talking to people
on social media,

750

00:30:11,572--> 00:30:15,000

both of us are quite comfortable
being on social media.

751

00:30:15,000--> 00:30:17,000

-Do you enjoy it?

752

00:30:17,000--> 00:30:19,228

-Um, it can be
hard work at times,

753

00:30:19,252--> 00:30:20,708

but I enjoy the interaction

754

00:30:20,732--> 00:30:22,100

and I enjoy the
fun element of it.

755

00:30:22,124--> 00:30:23,628

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



You know, you get to say...

756

00:30:23,652--> 00:30:25,468

You get to put out things that...

757

00:30:25,492--> 00:30:27,548

not just about your

books, you know.

758

00:30:27,572--> 00:30:29,348

Obviously, when a

book is being published,

759

00:30:29,372--> 00:30:30,488

as I'm doing at the moment,

760

00:30:30,512--> 00:30:32,708

nearly every post is related

to Quantum of Menace

761

00:30:32,732--> 00:30:34,200

and please pre-order

and all of that.

762

00:30:34,224--> 00:30:36,359

But then occasionally
you get to put fun stuff,

763

00:30:36,383--> 00:30:39,000

like when I've had a
bad score at cricket

764

00:30:39,000--> 00:30:40,000

and I put something out...

765

00:30:40,000--> 00:30:42,948

-Those are my favourite
tweets from you, actually.

766

00:30:42,972--> 00:30:44,988

-Then I have a good
weekend, and then I have...

767

00:30:45,012--> 00:30:46,468

then I put something
different out.

768

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:30:46,492--> 00:30:49,108

-Don't lie, don't lie, it's
always "I'm out for two runs."

769

00:30:49,132--> 00:30:51,068

Um, Donna Morfett says,

770

00:30:51,092--> 00:30:53,028

Helen Fields posted
a whole thread on X

771

00:30:53,052--> 00:30:55,668

saying authors need a
social media presence.

772

00:30:55,692--> 00:30:57,988

Um, I think that's
probably true.

773

00:30:58,012--> 00:31:00,988

I don't particularly enjoy
it, to be honest with you.

774

00:31:01,012--> 00:31:03,748

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Thursday 16 October 2025



I'm enjoying it less
these days, uh, since

775

00:31:03,772--> 00:31:09,000

X became a sort of
cesspit of intolerance.

776

00:31:09,000--> 00:31:10,748

-My view is just avoid the...

777

00:31:10,772--> 00:31:12,188

avoid the politics entirely.

778

00:31:12,212--> 00:31:13,228

Don't get involved.

779

00:31:13,252--> 00:31:16,000

-Oh, I know, but still, I just don't
like the idea of giving money.

780

00:31:16,000--> 00:31:18,920

-It's not for everybody. Some people
want to get involved and fair enough,

781

00:31:18,944--> 00:31:22,000

fair play to them, but I've
always stayed away from any...

782

00:31:22,000--> 00:31:23,988

-No, it's more about
putting more money...

783

00:31:24,012--> 00:31:25,468

-You can't have
sensible discussions

784

00:31:25,492--> 00:31:27,308

at the moment
over certain topics

785

00:31:27,332--> 00:31:29,868

and therefore there's no point
getting... wading into that debate.

786

00:31:29,892--> 00:31:31,868

And we should just
say that Donna has...

787

00:31:31,892--> 00:31:33,148

Am I reading this right?

788

00:31:33,172--> 00:31:35,268

You've broken down in
your car somewhere, Donna.

789

00:31:35,292--> 00:31:36,511

Well, I do hope you get...

790

00:31:36,535--> 00:31:38,000

-Where's that? Did I miss that?

791

00:31:38,000--> 00:31:39,300

-...moving somewhere.

792

00:31:39,324--> 00:31:40,988

-Oh, Donna, I hope
you're all right.

793

00:31:41,012--> 00:31:42,868

Yeah, don't drive
while listening to Vas,

794

00:31:42,892--> 00:31:44,000

that is very dangerous.

795

00:31:44,000--> 00:31:46,876

-She can't drive, that's the
whole point, her car's broken down.

796

00:31:46,900--> 00:31:47,900

-Well, just as well.

797

00:31:47,924--> 00:31:51,000

Um, a question from
our good friend Simon.

798

00:31:51,000--> 00:31:52,348

"Great session.

799

00:31:52,372--> 00:31:55,908

Were there any strong
not-allowed restrictions

800

00:31:55,932--> 00:31:58,000

when writing the Q novel?"

801

00:31:58,000--> 00:31:59,668

-The only restriction...

802

00:31:59,692--> 00:32:02,628

So Q doesn't appear in
the books very much at all.

803

00:32:02,652--> 00:32:05,988

You know, and he starts life as
Major Boothroyd in the fifth one, I think,

804

00:32:06,012--> 00:32:07,588

or the sixth one, Dr. No.

805

00:32:07,612--> 00:32:10,108

Uh, but it's a very small
interaction, and then

806

00:32:10,132--> 00:32:11,508

largely what we've...

807

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:32:11,532--> 00:32:14,508

know of him is absorbed
through the, sort of, 5-minute bits

808

00:32:14,532--> 00:32:18,000

that he has in the film. So I was
given license to just create my own...

809

00:32:18,000--> 00:32:20,388

own Q, and it's neither
Llewellyn nor Wishaw.

810

00:32:20,412--> 00:32:23,000

He's sort of 50 years old,
he's somewhere in the middle.

811

00:32:23,000--> 00:32:25,000

And the only thing
they said to me was that

812

00:32:25,000--> 00:32:27,108

you can...

813

00:32:27,132--> 00:32:29,188

you can even have James

Bond in there, which just...

814

00:32:29,212--> 00:32:31,548

so James Bond does make

a meaningful appearance

815

00:32:31,572--> 00:32:33,000

toward the second

half of the book.

816

00:32:33,000--> 00:32:34,028

But what I cannot do

817

00:32:34,052--> 00:32:38,308

is use anything that

only appeared in the films.

818

00:32:38,332--> 00:32:40,200

-Ooh, that's interesting.

819

00:32:40,224--> 00:32:41,588

-Yeah, so I can't...

820

00:32:41,612--> 00:32:44,108

I can't really bang on about
the Aston Martins too much,

821

00:32:44,132--> 00:32:46,000

because they were
more of a film thing.

822

00:32:46,000--> 00:32:48,428

Bond's original car
was a Bentley, I think.

823

00:32:48,452--> 00:32:51,348

And Q, I had to give
Q a car, so I gave him

824

00:32:51,372--> 00:32:55,000

a sports... a British-made
sports car called a Caterham

825

00:32:55,000--> 00:32:57,148

which also comes in kit
form that you can build,

826

00:32:57,172--> 00:32:58,508

so I thought that
would be really

827

00:32:58,532--> 00:33:00,000

good for Q.

828

00:33:00,000--> 00:33:01,628

-And you said you've, um,

829

00:33:01,652--> 00:33:03,348

you were invited
to the factory, right?

830

00:33:03,372--> 00:33:05,576

The Caterham factory and
you're going to take me, right?

831

00:33:05,600--> 00:33:07,428

-Yes, we're gonna
go for a little drive,

832

00:33:07,452--> 00:33:08,988

because they said
you could invite...

833

00:33:09,012--> 00:33:11,348
your friends as well, so...

834

00:33:11,372--> 00:33:13,800
I know we're stretching the
definition of friend here, but...

835

00:33:13,824--> 00:33:16,388
-Well, I mean, I'm the closest
thing to a friend as you've got,

836

00:33:16,412--> 00:33:18,428
so, uh, I can understand that.

837

00:33:18,452--> 00:33:20,148
Um, Simon, great question.

838

00:33:20,172--> 00:33:21,548
We are thinking about you, mate.

839

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:33:21,572--> 00:33:23,000

Hope you're... hope you're well.

840

00:33:23,000--> 00:33:26,468

Um, got a question here
from Maryam Farooqi,

841

00:33:26,492--> 00:33:31,308

who is saying, "what or who was
the inspiration for Persis Wadia?

842

00:33:31,332--> 00:33:32,788

She's amazing.

843

00:33:32,812--> 00:33:36,000

Uh, did she develop
on a spreadsheet?"

844

00:33:36,000--> 00:33:39,428

-No, Persis is actually, um...

845

00:33:39,452--> 00:33:42,868

She's a... she's a mix of
various female pioneers

846

00:33:42,892--> 00:33:44,788

that I found in my research,

847

00:33:44,812--> 00:33:46,028

because 1950 India...

848

00:33:46,052--> 00:33:48,228

So the Malabar House novels,

for those who don't know,

849

00:33:48,252--> 00:33:49,800

are set in 1950

850

00:33:49,824--> 00:33:52,348

in Bombay, the city of

Bombay, as it was then known,

851

00:33:52,372--> 00:33:54,231

just after Indian independence.

852

00:33:54,255--> 00:33:56,000

Very turbulent period, and then

853

00:33:56,000--> 00:34:00,388

I introduced this, uh, India's
first female police detective

854

00:34:00,412--> 00:34:03,308

Persis Wadia,
Inspector Persis Wadia,

855

00:34:03,332--> 00:34:05,428

and she's working with an
English forensic scientist

856

00:34:05,452--> 00:34:07,188

over from Scotland Yard

857

00:34:07,212--> 00:34:10,188

and solving murders and whatnot,
but it's about the period, and...

858

00:34:10,212--> 00:34:12,908

that period is very
patriarchal in India.

859

00:34:12,932--> 00:34:16,268

Um, police force,
incredibly misogynistic.

860

00:34:16,292--> 00:34:17,828

And so Persis, you know,

861

00:34:17,852--> 00:34:21,000

has got that fight as well as
trying to solve all these murders.

862

00:34:21,000--> 00:34:25,000

And there were a couple of
fabulous pioneers from that era

863

00:34:25,000--> 00:34:27,700

that I thought, you know, I
could use as a reference point.

864

00:34:27,724--> 00:34:31,000

There was one amazing lady
who was India's first female pilot.

865

00:34:31,000--> 00:34:32,748

And she...

866

00:34:32,772--> 00:34:34,348

She married into
a family of pilots

867

00:34:34,372--> 00:34:37,000

and her father-in-law saw she
was interested, so he trained her.

868

00:34:37,000--> 00:34:39,028

And then he took
her to an airfield.

869

00:34:39,052--> 00:34:40,748

And the story
goes, he said to her,

870

00:34:40,772--> 00:34:43,000

"If you can take this
plane... this little gypsy moth

871

00:34:43,000--> 00:34:44,988

up and bring it down
without crashing,

872

00:34:45,012--> 00:34:46,776

I'll give you a
pilot's license."

873

00:34:46,800--> 00:34:49,428

I don't know if it's true, but
there's an amazing picture of her.

874

00:34:49,452--> 00:34:51,000

Her name is Sarla Thukral.

875

00:34:51,000--> 00:34:53,650

There's an amazing picture on
Google of her next to this gypsy moth

876

00:34:53,674--> 00:34:55,000

in a saree

877

00:34:55,000--> 00:34:57,400

and a big ol'-style aviator cap.

878

00:34:57,424--> 00:34:59,788

-It's still how you get a
driving license in India as well.

879

00:34:59,812--> 00:35:01,500

It's a similar sort
of principle, isn't it?

880

00:35:01,524--> 00:35:03,468

-Yeah, so... so it's
pioneers like that.

881

00:35:03,492--> 00:35:06,000

Pioneers like that
that inspired her.

882

00:35:06,000--> 00:35:08,628

-Um, Donna says,

883

00:35:08,652--> 00:35:13,000

"both of your careers couldn't have
been any further from what you write,

884

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:35:13,000--> 00:35:15,708

but did any experiences
in your previous careers

885

00:35:15,732--> 00:35:18,000

make their way into your novels?

886

00:35:18,000--> 00:35:19,788

Or does it just mean
that you're better

887

00:35:19,812--> 00:35:21,800

at the business side
of being an author?"

888

00:35:21,824--> 00:35:24,200

-Well, you're al-- you're always
having a pop accountancy.

889

00:35:24,224--> 00:35:27,388

-I am. Every single book I've
written has a go at accountants

890

00:35:27,412--> 00:35:30,000

and I actually had an American
lady write to me saying,

891

00:35:30,000--> 00:35:32,788

"why are you so
mean to accountants?

892

00:35:32,812--> 00:35:35,000

Has an accountant wronged you?"

893

00:35:35,000--> 00:35:38,268

And I said, no, I
just used to be one

894

00:35:38,292--> 00:35:41,000

and I have lots of friends
who are accountants,

895

00:35:41,000--> 00:35:43,948

and it's just my way of
showing love for them.

896

00:35:43,972--> 00:35:45,268

And she quite liked that.

897

00:35:45,292--> 00:35:47,428

Um, so yeah, every
book I've written

898

00:35:47,452--> 00:35:50,428

has at least one joke at
the expense of accountants,

899

00:35:50,452--> 00:35:52,028

but only because I love them.

900

00:35:52,052--> 00:35:55,108

-Well you... well, you haven't... you
haven't actually given us the pitch

901

00:35:55,132--> 00:35:58,588

for, um... your Sam
Windham and Banerjee series,

902

00:35:58,612--> 00:36:00,862

which is, you know, amazing,
and has won loads of awards.

903

00:36:00,886--> 00:36:02,168

Come on, give
us the quick pitch.

904

00:36:02,192--> 00:36:04,088

-Yeah, it's basically about
two accountants who...

905

00:36:04,112--> 00:36:05,748

No, it's not about
accountants at all.

906

00:36:05,772--> 00:36:06,908

It's about, um...

907

00:36:06,932--> 00:36:10,588

a British detective who goes to
India after the First World War,

908

00:36:10,612--> 00:36:13,000

teams up with an Indian sergeant

909

00:36:13,000--> 00:36:14,548

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



in Kolkata

910

00:36:14,572--> 00:36:18,148

and they essentially

solve crimes,

911

00:36:18,172--> 00:36:21,188

but really I'm looking at the history
of colonialism while killing people,

912

00:36:21,212--> 00:36:23,948

which I think is the best
way to explore history.

913

00:36:23,972--> 00:36:25,000

Um...

914

00:36:25,000--> 00:36:27,788

Tell us... tell us, come
on, about your experiences.

915

00:36:27,812--> 00:36:29,651

Any previous career experiences

916

00:36:29,675--> 00:36:33,108

going into your books, other
than the fact that you lived in a zoo,

917

00:36:33,132--> 00:36:35,000

uh, which you've
already told us about.

918

00:36:35,000--> 00:36:36,108

[Vaseem laughs]

919

00:36:36,132--> 00:36:37,828

-I didn't live...
Well, look, um...

920

00:36:37,852--> 00:36:40,000

For Quantum of Menace,

921

00:36:40,000--> 00:36:44,000

I think you could honestly say
that the inspiration for that plot

922

00:36:44,000--> 00:36:48,000

which is the death of a
quantum computer scientist,

923

00:36:48,000--> 00:36:49,388

and, of course, it's...

924

00:36:49,412--> 00:36:51,748

it's not a technical
manual, the book,

925

00:36:51,772--> 00:36:53,000

it's a murder mystery.

926

00:36:53,000--> 00:36:56,828

Uh, but I do sort of
explain very briefly

927

00:36:56,852--> 00:36:58,948

what quantum computing
is, which is the next

928

00:36:58,972--> 00:37:02,000

advance in computing
technology, which will

929

00:37:02,000--> 00:37:04,148

once again, change
the world entirely.

930

00:37:04,172--> 00:37:06,000

And when it's married up to AI,

931

00:37:06,000--> 00:37:08,628

um, it might be... it might
be the end of the world.

932

00:37:08,652--> 00:37:09,948

No, I don't really believe that,

933

00:37:09,972--> 00:37:12,268

because I'm quite a technophile,
I quite love technology,

934

00:37:12,292--> 00:37:13,868

but I do understand
there are dangers

935

00:37:13,892--> 00:37:16,000

around emerging in future tech

936

00:37:16,000--> 00:37:19,000

that we need to, sort

of, be cognizant of.

937

00:37:19,000--> 00:37:20,788

-Are you just caveating that

938

00:37:20,812--> 00:37:22,988

because you know that

when the machines take over,

939

00:37:23,012--> 00:37:25,000

you're hoping that

they won't kill you

940

00:37:25,000--> 00:37:27,500

and they'll let you live. Is

that why you're giving us that?

941

00:37:27,524--> 00:37:28,948

-They won't... they won't kill me.

942

00:37:28,972--> 00:37:30,476

Everyone likes me,
even the machines.

943

00:37:30,500--> 00:37:31,976

-Yes, especially machines.

944

00:37:32,000--> 00:37:34,108

-So, to answer your question,

945

00:37:34,132--> 00:37:37,908

for the last two decades, I have
worked at University College London

946

00:37:37,932--> 00:37:39,468

managing projects

947

00:37:39,492--> 00:37:41,788

in their Department of
Security and Crime Science,

948

00:37:41,812--> 00:37:43,268

and one of the
centres I help manage

949

00:37:43,292--> 00:37:46,000

is called the Centre
for Future Crime

950

00:37:46,000--> 00:37:48,548

where we're looking at
exactly these kind of issues,

951

00:37:48,572--> 00:37:52,708

how criminal and bad actors
might use emerging technology,

952

00:37:52,732--> 00:37:55,000

and it was one of my
colleagues talking about

953

00:37:55,000--> 00:37:57,868

the nefarious uses
that quantum computing

954

00:37:57,892--> 00:38:00,108

might be put to that
gave me the kernel

955

00:38:00,132--> 00:38:02,000

of the idea that went
into Quantum of Menace.

956

00:38:02,000--> 00:38:04,788

-Well, here's a
question for you, um...

957

00:38:04,812--> 00:38:08,000

How long do you
intend to keep writing?

958

00:38:08,000--> 00:38:11,576

That's a personal question,
rather than anything else, because...

959

00:38:11,600--> 00:38:14,988

-Well, I'm only 28,
so could be a good...

960

00:38:15,012--> 00:38:16,976

[laughter]

961

00:38:17,000--> 00:38:20,588

-Yes, 28, 82, it's the
same thing. Carry on.

962

00:38:20,612--> 00:38:22,588

-But nobody retires, right,

963

00:38:22,612--> 00:38:23,948

as a writer. I mean...

964

00:38:23,972--> 00:38:25,348

-Well, Lee Child has.

965

00:38:25,372--> 00:38:28,468

-Well, has he really because
his brother's taken over?

966

00:38:28,492--> 00:38:30,508

But, you know, Lee's
still on the festival circuit.

967

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:38:30,532--> 00:38:32,000

He's still doing events.

968

00:38:32,000--> 00:38:35,748

So, he's sort of retired, but
not really retired as well, so...

969

00:38:35,772--> 00:38:38,088

Yeah, they're both still having
an amazing amount of fun.

970

00:38:38,112--> 00:38:39,508

Of course, it's
slightly different.

971

00:38:39,532--> 00:38:40,868

I mean, when you've

972

00:38:40,892--> 00:38:42,800

been as successful as Lee Child,

973

00:38:42,824--> 00:38:44,188

it's more optional.

974

00:38:44,212--> 00:38:47,348

-I know another very
successful author

975

00:38:47,372--> 00:38:50,388

who claims they're
gonna retire at 67.

976

00:38:50,412--> 00:38:51,412

-Ohhh...

977

00:38:51,436--> 00:38:53,200

-I'm not gonna say
who, but yeah, so...

978

00:38:53,224--> 00:38:56,000

So what about you?
Are you gonna retire?

979

00:38:56,000--> 00:38:58,125

-So you weren't talking about
yourself there, because...

980

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:38:58,149--> 00:39:00,300

-No. I said very
successful, didn't I?

981

00:39:00,324--> 00:39:02,200

-Well, you also said
67 and that's next year.

982

00:39:02,224--> 00:39:04,548

-Ahh, yeah, that's
past for us, right?

983

00:39:04,572--> 00:39:06,828

Okay, so you're not going
to answer that question.

984

00:39:06,852--> 00:39:09,152

Let me give you a different
one. This one is from Heather.

985

00:39:09,176--> 00:39:10,828

Again, I'm assuming
it's Heather, unless

986

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:39:10,852--> 00:39:14,668

the CWA have wrested
the account back off her.

987

00:39:14,692--> 00:39:19,000

What are your favourite
procrastination activities?

988

00:39:19,000--> 00:39:20,468

Don't say it.

989

00:39:20,492--> 00:39:21,492

-What?

990

00:39:21,516--> 00:39:23,800

-Whatever it is you were
going to say, don't say it.

991

00:39:23,824--> 00:39:26,008

-What? Spending 10
hours playing cricket.

992

00:39:26,032--> 00:39:27,108

-Yes...

993

00:39:27,132--> 00:39:29,900

-...in the summer when I should
really be writing for those 10 hours.

994

00:39:29,924--> 00:39:30,976

-10 hours?

995

00:39:31,000--> 00:39:34,148

You're out after the second ball.
What do you do? What do you do?

996

00:39:34,172--> 00:39:36,708

-Well, that's even worse, because
then I'm depressed for 2 days

997

00:39:36,732--> 00:39:38,000

and I really can't write.

998

00:39:38,000--> 00:39:39,948

But what do you do,
then, to avoid writing?

999

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:39:39,972--> 00:39:43,308

-Oh, I do every... I will
watch anything on TV.

1000

00:39:43,332--> 00:39:46,000

I have watched
Crown Green Bowls.

1001

00:39:46,000--> 00:39:48,428

I have watched... I
don't even play golf.

1002

00:39:48,452--> 00:39:50,468

I've watched,
like, a day of golf.

1003

00:39:50,492--> 00:39:52,788

I once watched the
Parliament channel

1004

00:39:52,812--> 00:39:54,868

to avoid doing any work.

1005

00:39:54,892--> 00:39:57,148

Um, so, yeah, I mean...

1006

00:39:57,172--> 00:40:02,148

I think procrastination

activities are essentially...

1007

00:40:02,172--> 00:40:04,228

-Part of the process, right?

1008

00:40:04,252--> 00:40:07,138

-Well, it is, it is part of the process.

It's your brain's way of saying,

1009

00:40:07,162--> 00:40:09,508

don't write crap, right? Just...

1010

00:40:09,532--> 00:40:12,000

Don't write stuff

just for the sake of it.

1011

00:40:12,000--> 00:40:13,708

Take this time,

1012

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:40:13,732--> 00:40:16,188

understand Crown Green Bowling,

1013

00:40:16,212--> 00:40:18,028

and then get

back to the writing.

1014

00:40:18,052--> 00:40:20,300

I think that's... that's what

procrastination is for me.

1015

00:40:20,324--> 00:40:23,000

I still don't understand

what Crown Green...

1016

00:40:23,000--> 00:40:24,468

-Oh, come around, it's brilliant.

1017

00:40:24,492--> 00:40:25,588

-Is that the...

1018

00:40:25,612--> 00:40:28,500

the black ball they

roll across a lawn?

1019

00:40:28,524--> 00:40:32,228

-It is, it is. There's a lot of
rolling black balls on lawns.

1020

00:40:32,252--> 00:40:33,268

Um...

1021

00:40:33,292--> 00:40:34,668

Julie asks,

1022

00:40:34,692--> 00:40:38,068

"gutted I can't see Vaseem
at the Yeovil Literary Festival

1023

00:40:38,092--> 00:40:39,708

on Saturday the 25th

1024

00:40:39,732--> 00:40:42,308

Because I'll be at the
Yeovil Town match.

1025

00:40:42,332--> 00:40:45,548

Really think he should
change the timing for me."

1026

00:40:45,572--> 00:40:46,808

Well, Julie, let me tell you,

1027

00:40:46,832--> 00:40:48,828

he'll probably go on for so long

1028

00:40:48,852--> 00:40:52,000

he'll still be on stage

after Yeovil win, okay?

1029

00:40:52,000--> 00:40:53,668

Even if it goes to penalties.

1030

00:40:53,692--> 00:40:56,268

-Well, I hope not, because you're
the one chairing that session,

1031

00:40:56,292--> 00:40:58,400

so it's your job to
keep us on track.

1032

00:40:58,424--> 00:40:59,868

-What time are
you on, by the way?

1033

00:40:59,892--> 00:41:02,108

Because I know
I'm on at 6, right?

1034

00:41:02,132--> 00:41:03,548

So when are you on?

1035

00:41:03,572--> 00:41:05,000

-Must be before that, I think.

1036

00:41:05,024--> 00:41:07,028

-Oh, Julie says you're on at 4.

1037

00:41:07,052--> 00:41:09,028

Julie hasn't said she's
going to come and see me,

1038

00:41:09,052--> 00:41:10,500

she's just coming

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



to see you at 4.

1039

00:41:10,524--> 00:41:12,268

I like that. Thanks, Julie.

1040

00:41:12,292--> 00:41:13,292

Um...

1041

00:41:13,316--> 00:41:15,668

We are running short of time.

1042

00:41:15,692--> 00:41:18,708

If you've got a few more
questions, please do send them in.

1043

00:41:18,732--> 00:41:22,000

I'm gonna ask you one or
two questions while we wait.

1044

00:41:22,000--> 00:41:25,000

What are you working on now?

1045

00:41:25,000--> 00:41:27,668

-So, the second Q novel,

1046

00:41:27,692--> 00:41:29,268

the first draft is done,

1047

00:41:29,292--> 00:41:32,000

so I'm looking

forward to edits to that.

1048

00:41:32,000--> 00:41:33,828

It's called The Man with

the Golden Compass.

1049

00:41:33,852--> 00:41:36,108

And in fact, you

can find... if you buy...

1050

00:41:36,132--> 00:41:39,000

if you do buy the hardback,

and I will urge you to

1051

00:41:39,000--> 00:41:40,228

get a copy of the hardback,

1052

00:41:40,252--> 00:41:42,000

you will find the opening

1053

00:41:42,000--> 00:41:44,428

couple of chapters

at the back of that.

1054

00:41:44,452--> 00:41:47,508

It's about a tech

millionaire who is murdered

1055

00:41:47,532--> 00:41:50,000

in his stately home

in this small town that

1056

00:41:50,000--> 00:41:51,028

Q has moved to,

1057

00:41:51,052--> 00:41:54,000

and the police hire Q

as a civilian contractor.

1058

00:41:54,000--> 00:41:57,000

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



And on this Tech

Millionaire, they find a round

1059

00:41:57,000--> 00:41:59,588

discoated in gold

with runes on it.

1060

00:41:59,612--> 00:42:03,000

So, he's the man with

the golden compass.

1061

00:42:03,000--> 00:42:04,948

-Oh, I like what

you've done there.

1062

00:42:04,972--> 00:42:07,398

I like, I like... I see

there's a techie theme

1063

00:42:07,422--> 00:42:09,908

in the first two novels,

and I think that's, um...

1064

00:42:09,932--> 00:42:12,028

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



Um, that, I think
that's really good.

1065

00:42:12,052--> 00:42:13,868

Julie's just written to say,

1066

00:42:13,892--> 00:42:17,000

if there's no extra time,
she will be coming to see us.

1067

00:42:17,000--> 00:42:21,000

And thank you, Donna, for
coming to see me on the 23rd.

1068

00:42:21,000--> 00:42:22,828

Oh, great, some more
questions are coming in

1069

00:42:22,852--> 00:42:26,000

for Vaseem, this is from Venika.

1070

00:42:26,000--> 00:42:28,948

"What kept you going when
your early books were rejected?"

1071

00:42:28,972--> 00:42:31,000

That's a very good question.

1072

00:42:31,000--> 00:42:33,628

-I think, uh, people

ask this all the time

1073

00:42:33,652--> 00:42:36,000

and I think that

if you, like me,

1074

00:42:36,000--> 00:42:38,308

your childhood dream

was to be a writer

1075

00:42:38,332--> 00:42:41,548

and it meant that

much to you, then...

1076

00:42:41,572--> 00:42:43,468

you don't, you know,

you dust yourself off

1077

00:42:43,492--> 00:42:45,431

and you get back
on the horse, and...

1078

00:42:45,455--> 00:42:47,868

Because you're continually
inspired by new ideas,

1079

00:42:47,892--> 00:42:51,000

so you put the last one to bed and
you say, okay, that didn't work out.

1080

00:42:51,000--> 00:42:53,988

Well, I've got this lovely new idea,
this lovely shiny new thing, and...

1081

00:42:54,012--> 00:42:56,388

running around my brain,
and I'm just gonna go with that.

1082

00:42:56,412--> 00:42:58,508

And I think that's the best
thing I can possibly say.

1083

00:42:58,532--> 00:43:00,628

If you... if you
don't feel that way,

1084

00:43:00,652--> 00:43:03,428

then you're probably
not cut out to be a...

1085

00:43:03,452--> 00:43:06,000

a writer over the long term.

1086

00:43:06,000--> 00:43:08,428

-Susan... I think that's
really good advice, Venika.

1087

00:43:08,452--> 00:43:10,188

I would agree with that.

1088

00:43:10,212--> 00:43:13,000

I think you just have to keep
writing, right? You keep writing.

1089

00:43:13,000--> 00:43:17,000

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Thursday 16 October 2025



Um, you're keeping your routine,
and, you know, things change.

1090

00:43:17,000--> 00:43:20,776

Susan asks, is there another
Malabar House novel on its way?

1091

00:43:20,800--> 00:43:22,548

-Ooh, I'm glad you
asked me that, Susan,

1092

00:43:22,572--> 00:43:25,988

because I've just now been
looking at the paperback cover for it.

1093

00:43:26,012--> 00:43:28,000

So The Edge of Darkness

1094

00:43:28,000--> 00:43:29,948

is the sixth Malabar
House novel.

1095

00:43:29,972--> 00:43:31,188

I really love this one

1096

00:43:31,212--> 00:43:34,000

because it's a locked
room, closed-circle mystery.

1097

00:43:34,000--> 00:43:38,988

Uh, but it's set in the northeastern
jungles of India in 1951.

1098

00:43:39,012--> 00:43:41,548

Persis has been
banished to these jungles,

1099

00:43:41,572--> 00:43:43,028

and they're called
the Naga Hills,

1100

00:43:43,052--> 00:43:46,668

and there's a political
insurgency going on there

1101

00:43:46,692--> 00:43:48,508

between the government
and the local tribes,

1102

00:43:48,532--> 00:43:50,000

who are known for headhunting.

1103

00:43:50,000--> 00:43:52,000

And what happens at
the beginning of the book,

1104

00:43:52,000--> 00:43:56,000

Persis has been put into this
old, crumbling Victorian hotel

1105

00:43:56,000--> 00:43:59,148

and the local politician
in charge of the area

1106

00:43:59,172--> 00:44:01,908

is found murdered in his
locked room at the hotel

1107

00:44:01,932--> 00:44:03,408

with his head missing.

1108

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Thursday 16 October 2025



00:44:03,432--> 00:44:06,268

-Hang on, hang on. So you've
written a locked room mystery

1109

00:44:06,292--> 00:44:08,000

in the Northeast of India

1110

00:44:08,000--> 00:44:09,828

like I did 5 years ago?

1111

00:44:09,852--> 00:44:11,548

That's what I'm hearing.

1112

00:44:11,572--> 00:44:13,000

-Learn from the best.

1113

00:44:13,000--> 00:44:15,548

-We'll move on, we'll
move on from that.

1114

00:44:15,572--> 00:44:18,468

Um, last question from Heather.

1115

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:44:18,492--> 00:44:20,408

If you were to write in
genre that wasn't crime,

1116

00:44:20,432--> 00:44:21,508

what would you choose?

1117

00:44:22,500--> 00:44:26,028

Oh, wow, um, I'd love
to write a romantasy.

1118

00:44:26,052--> 00:44:27,976

In fact, we had
an idea, didn't we?

1119

00:44:28,000--> 00:44:29,000

What was it called?

1120

00:44:29,000--> 00:44:30,621

Uh, you did that? It's my idea.

1121

00:44:30,645--> 00:44:33,525

Accountancy and... Yeah. Well, we
were going to write it together, right?

1122

00:44:33,549--> 00:44:35,400

We're gonna have one
of those conjoined names.

1123

00:44:35,424--> 00:44:38,508

-Yes, well, love between the
spreadsheets we're gonna write.

1124

00:44:38,532--> 00:44:41,068

Romantasy is essentially
romance and accountancy,

1125

00:44:41,092--> 00:44:43,000

so it will work really well.

1126

00:44:43,000--> 00:44:44,908

Um...

1127

00:44:44,932--> 00:44:47,788

I'm gonna ask you
one final question.

1128

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:44:47,812--> 00:44:48,812

Give...

1129

00:44:48,836--> 00:44:51,988

If you could give our
listeners one piece of advice...

1130

00:44:52,012--> 00:44:54,028

what would it be?

1131

00:44:54,600--> 00:44:57,668

-Well, you and I both know
that the number one reason,

1132

00:44:57,692--> 00:44:59,708

if you're intending
to get published,

1133

00:44:59,732--> 00:45:02,976

uh, the number one reason
that agents reject books

1134

00:45:03,000--> 00:45:06,588

is because the

quality of the writing

1135

00:45:06,612--> 00:45:08,708

is not at a

publishable standard,

1136

00:45:08,732--> 00:45:11,000

so they can't really

put it forward to anyone,

1137

00:45:11,000--> 00:45:12,708

no matter how good

the hook might be.

1138

00:45:12,732--> 00:45:16,228

Uh, so I would say you've

really got to work on your...

1139

00:45:16,252--> 00:45:18,188

on the craft of writing,

so you get it to the

1140

00:45:18,212--> 00:45:20,508

standard appropriate

for the kind of genre

1141

00:45:20,532--> 00:45:22,000

that you're trying to write in.

1142

00:45:22,000--> 00:45:25,000

-So there you have it. If

you want to write, uh, improve

1143

00:45:25,000--> 00:45:27,788

your writing or

become a celebrity.

1144

00:45:27,812--> 00:45:29,228

Either of those approaches

1145

00:45:29,252--> 00:45:31,508

will get you to

where you want to be.

1146

00:45:31,532--> 00:45:32,588

Um...

1147

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



00:45:32,612--> 00:45:34,788

I can't believe we're out
of time, it's just flown by,

1148

00:45:34,812--> 00:45:36,388

and we should make
it longer next time.

1149

00:45:36,412--> 00:45:37,588

Um...

1150

00:45:37,612--> 00:45:41,000

I suppose I'd like to
say a big thank you

1151

00:45:41,000--> 00:45:43,148

to Vaseem Khan for today's event

1152

00:45:43,172--> 00:45:45,628

and thank you
all for joining us.

1153

00:45:45,652--> 00:45:47,548

Thank you to Lilly Brend-Fish,

1154

00:45:47,572--> 00:45:49,548

who's moderated today's event

1155

00:45:49,572--> 00:45:51,628

most excellently.

1156

00:45:51,652--> 00:45:55,476

Um, if you've enjoyed this
event and aren't yet a member,

1157

00:45:55,500--> 00:46:00,708

please consider joining with
the special #SoAatHome offer

1158

00:46:00,732--> 00:46:02,676

and get 20% off

1159

00:46:02,700--> 00:46:04,268

for the first year
of membership,

1160

00:46:04,292--> 00:46:08,588

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Thursday 16 October 2025



use code SOAATHOME20.

1161

00:46:08,612--> 00:46:10,931

And I think Lilly's
gonna post that.

1162

00:46:10,955--> 00:46:12,428

Yes, you have!

1163

00:46:12,452--> 00:46:13,868

The recording of this event

1164

00:46:13,892--> 00:46:16,348

will be available on the
SoA's Vimeo channel,

1165

00:46:16,372--> 00:46:20,668

together with recordings
of previous events.

1166

00:46:20,692--> 00:46:23,348

Um, a wee bit more
housekeeping...

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



1167

00:46:23,372--> 00:46:25,508

The next #SoAatHome event

1168

00:46:25,532--> 00:46:28,548

takes place tomorrow

at 11am

1169

00:46:28,572--> 00:46:30,748

with a Feel Good Friday,

1170

00:46:30,772--> 00:46:33,948

Finding picture

book inspiration.

1171

00:46:33,972--> 00:46:35,548

For more details,

1172

00:46:35,572--> 00:46:39,068

head to the Society

of Authors.org website

1173

00:46:39,092--> 00:46:41,308

or check out the

events programme.

1174

00:46:41,332--> 00:46:42,548

Um...

1175

00:46:42,572--> 00:46:46,268

All of our conversation

events are free,

1176

00:46:46,292--> 00:46:47,628

but if you can afford to do so,

1177

00:46:47,652--> 00:46:50,000

please do consider donating.

1178

00:46:50,000--> 00:46:52,628

And you can help Access...

1179

00:46:52,652--> 00:46:56,000

You can help the Access

Fund by making a purchase

1180

00:46:56,000--> 00:47:00,028

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Thursday 16 October 2025



on the virtual bookstore

at Bookshop.org,

1181

00:47:00,052--> 00:47:02,000

uh, which Lilly's just posted.

1182

00:47:02,000--> 00:47:05,058

And finally, another

big thank you.

1183

00:47:05,082--> 00:47:07,000

There's a lot of thank

you's going out to Vaseem.

1184

00:47:07,000--> 00:47:09,000

Uh, and all of you

who've joined us today.

1185

00:47:09,000--> 00:47:10,868

-And to you. And to you.

1186

00:47:10,892--> 00:47:13,068

-Let's continue this event on...

#SoAatHome | How I write – in conversation with Vaseem Khan
Thursday 16 October 2025



1187

00:47:13,092--> 00:47:15,108

this conversation

on social media,

1188

00:47:15,132--> 00:47:20,388

with the festival

hashtag #SoAatHome.

1189

00:47:20,412--> 00:47:21,948

Thank you, Lilly.

1190

00:47:21,972--> 00:47:23,628

And thank you all.

1191

00:47:23,652--> 00:47:25,428

-And thank you, my good friend.