

## One Journey Ends, Another Begins

On the eve of the publication of his first novel Steve P Vincent traces his path to publication.

I am a writer.

I never felt right saying that before. I'd written – tinkered to the point where my documents folder was a morgue of half-born ideas – but I wasn't a writer. They finished things. They maybe even got published. I'd start something, get frustrated, then start something else. I'd say how much I'd love to write a novel, but never get on with it.

Luckily, I had a likeminded friend. We set off on a cold winter Sunday a few years back to begin our first writing course, a novel intensive offered by Writers Victoria and taught by PD Martin, crime writing guru and all round champion. My aim was modest. I wanted to finish the draft to prove I could do it.

Over the next eight months I punched out a draft, workshopped it, learnt a bit about writing and the industry and, most of all, had a great time with fantastic and diverse people. I doubled down the year after and completed another course – an intense workshopping of the entire manuscript. Not long after, it was finished.

At that point, I decided to set my little boat sailing, prepared for it to sink. Writers get bombarded so much with the negative – the industry is tough, you can't make money, new authors don't stand a chance – that anticipation of failure is a protection mechanism we use to defend our ego and the work we've lovingly crafted.

Except, well, rejection didn't happen. I got an offer to publish from Momentum, an imprint of Pan Macmillan Australia.

My book, 'The Foundation', is a conspiracy thriller about an American think tank with a dark side and even darker plans – control of the world's largest media organisation and the United States of America. It kicks off with half of Shanghai being levelled, war between China and the United States and doesn't really slow down from there.

To get an offer on my first manuscript from the first publisher I sent it to felt surreal. Though I'm on a steep learning curve, I can't speak highly enough of the crew at Momentum. It's a pleasure to work with a group of people so passionate about the book and patient enough to answer a whole lot of my questions.

But there's also a few things I would have loved to have known a few years back that I feel obliged to share. This might be my only chance, after all!

1. Want to be a writer? Write! A hundred perfect words per week won't cut it. Set aside regular writing time and smash out a draft.
2. Set realistic goals and stick to them. Assess your progress honestly. As you hit goals, make new ones.
3. Join a class or writing group. They'll keep you motivated, offer constructive suggestions and make calming sounds when you want to bin the lot.
4. Revise, revise, revise. Enlist friends, polish it to death, then revise it once more. But also know when it is time to let go.
5. Plunge in. Done all of the above? Send it off. What have you got to lose?

I am a writer. I feel I can say that now. Not because I got the deal, but because

I finished the book. The fact that it will be in the hands of readers in a few months is an honour greater than I could have ever hoped for. I feel like I've already won. Whatever happens from now on is a bonus.

In the meantime, I'm beginning a new journey – doing all I can to make 'The Foundation' a success and preparing to write the sequel.

I'd love to hear your thoughts or have you along for the journey. 📖

Steve P Vincent is a writer. His first book, 'The Foundation' will be published by Momentum Books in September 2014 and will be available from all good ebook retailers. You can join him on his journey on Twitter (@stevepvincent) or on his shiny new website (stevepvincent.com), where he'll be inviting readers "behind the curtain" on the publishing process.

