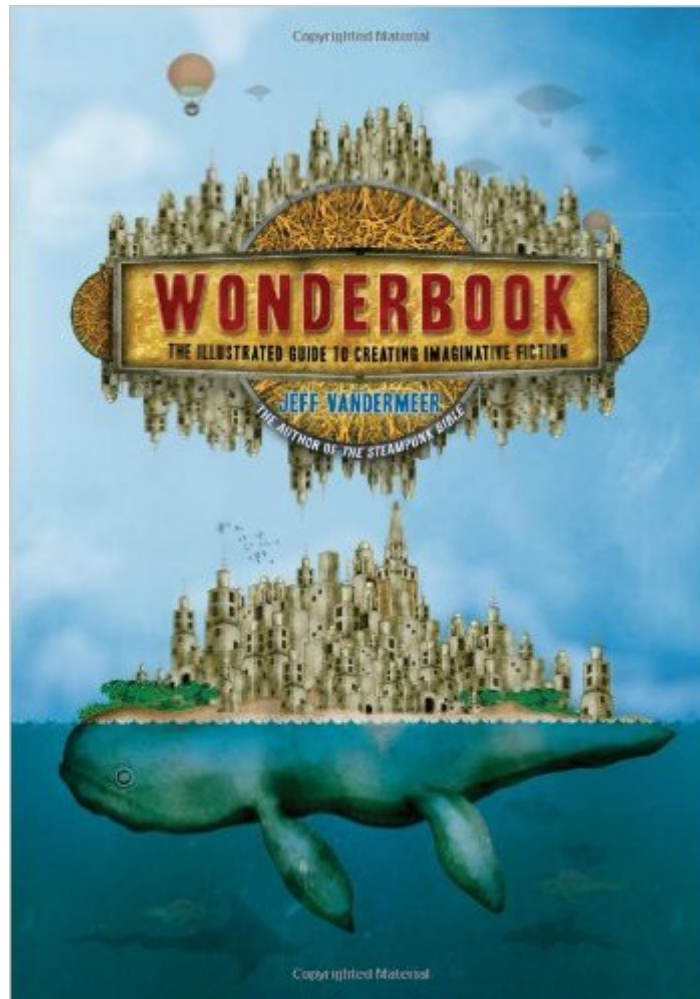


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Wonderbook: The Illustrated Guide To Creating Imaginative Fiction



Synopsis

This all-new definitive guide to writing imaginative fiction takes a completely novel approach and fully exploits the visual nature of fantasy through original drawings, maps, renderings, and exercises to create a spectacularly beautiful and inspiring object. Employing an accessible, example-rich approach, *Wonderbook* energizes and motivates while also providing practical, nuts-and-bolts information needed to improve as a writer. Aimed at aspiring and intermediate-level writers, *Wonderbook* includes helpful sidebars and essays from some of the biggest names in fantasy today, such as George R. R. Martin, Lev Grossman, Neil Gaiman, Michael Moorcock, Catherynne M. Valente, and Karen Joy Fowler, to name a few. Praise for *Wonderbook*:

- "Jammed with storytelling wisdom."
- "Fast Company's Co.Create blog: This is the kind of book you leave sitting out for all to see . . . and the kind of book you will find yourself picking up again and again."
- "Kirkus Reviews online: If you're looking for a handy guide to not just crafting imaginative fiction like sci-fi, fantasy, and horror, but to writing in general, be sure to pick up a copy of Steampunk Bible author Jeff Vandermeer's lovingly compiled *Wonderbook*."
- "Flavorwire: Jeff Vandermeer and Jeremy Zerfoss have created a kaleidoscopically rich and beautiful book about fiction writing."
- "Star Tribune: Because it is so layered and filled with text, tips, and links to online extras, this book can be read again and again by both those who want to learn the craft of writing and those interested in the process of others."
- "Library Journal

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book at the recommendation of an English professor at a local community college, who I happened to bump into at Barnes & Noble. Yes, I paid list price for this book, and it's paying off more than I ever expected. I'm not sure what is more valuable, the ideas that Jeff shares himself, or the other authors he brings in to offer thoughts on a specific aspect of writing. It doesn't matter at this point; I'm getting more ideas about my own book and I haven't even finished chapter 2. If the number of PostIt notes one writes as the result of inspiration from a book is a valuable metric to anyone, I think this book has more PostIt's per page than anything I've ever read. I stopped putting them in the book because it was a distraction of its own. If there is any complaint I would lodge, it is that the glossy pages reflect a lot of light if one is sitting at a desk to read the book. Maybe I need a different desk lamp, so the problem isn't the book. But I'm spending several hours a day, moving at a glacial pace because I get so many ideas. If you think you are an idea person, and you want to write fiction, then get this book to help you organize your ideas. If you don't think you are an idea person, get this book and see if it doesn't help you unlock the part of you that your peers made you hide under a mattress when you were young.

This is the most useful book about writing that I have ever bought. Don't be fooled by the whimsical cover; much like attempting to describe with gorgeous precision the inner workings of a fantastic setting for a novel, what is going on on the inside is much deeper and more complex than you might think. I've read a lot of books on writing at this point in my life, but most of them haven't addressed the questions that linger with me while I'm sitting down to write. So many choices that a writer can make seem to 'depend' on one thing or another that it's difficult to set out examples with hard and fast rules (or, if it isn't, a thousand other books already exist which contain those few inviolate rules, and therefore those aren't the questions that stick with me). It's a difficult beast to wrangle, especially in useful specifics. On top of that, I think that many of the processes involved in describing those choices or the results of those choices from a reader's perspective are abstract, more a question of what is sensed than something easily articulated. *Wonderbook* comes the closest of any instructive book I own to digging down into the nitty-gritty of those many abstract questions. It exhaustively discusses the particulars of a written work's moving parts, and does this from many different angles whenever possible. If a novel is a deck of cards, *Wonderbook* seems to spread the deck all around the floor into the thinnest layer, so that you can see everything clearly, shuffling things around to have a look at the particulars in as much detail as you'd like. For me, the 'wonder' is that doing this so acutely and with such precision did not make the book any less a joy to read. It is stunningly gorgeous to look at, but the art is not superfluous to the learning. It's often very funny.

Jeff VanderMeer is a master at expressing clearly the nebulous feelings and impulses that come along with both reading and writing stories, and thoroughly examining their place and scope, and relation to everything else. Wonderbook is a comprehensive, intuitive look at the craft of writing. It's gorgeous to look at. (I don't actually watch Dr. Who (please don't kill me), but that catchphrase about the Tardis does come to mind. "It's bigger on the inside." So I think it goes with Wonderbook.)

I purchased this book after reading an interview with Vandermeer on one of my favorite blogs (Terribleminds). I am totally blown away by this book. It is a visually stunning collection of some of the most imaginative art I've ever seen but to have that in a book about writing....it's nirvana! Many of the ideas are presented through visual art rather than all words which is a total stimulating match made in Muse-heaven. You owe it to yourself to have this in your library. Everytime I open it, I find something I didn't see the first time. You will not regret taking a chance on this.

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