

Chapter by Chapter (how to write a novel)

My workshops are usually short-story slanted but, for those of you who are emerging novelists, here's a fun way to get inspiration and to perhaps overcome some blockages.

Being something of a Netflix tart, this works for me ...

- Pick an episode of one of your favourite Netflix shows. Remote in one hand, pen in the other, you are going to try to map how it was put together, jotting down a few words for each point.
- Opening scene
 - How does it capture your attention?
 - What is the action?
 - Look at any close-ups and describe them
 - How does the language (or lack of words) impact?
- What main 'thing' happens in the first ten minutes?
 - If there is no main 'thing', how is the story moving forward?
 - Are you captivated by the look or sound or a particular character?
 - Is the scenery captivating?
- How do the characters evolve towards the middle of the episode?
- What is the action-pivot point?
- How does the episode end (cliff-hanger? something unresolved? different altogether?)?
- Once you've finished watching the episode, use your notes to write a description of each of the scenes, including
 - Sounds
 - Sights
 - Feelings evoked

The purpose of this exercise is to write a chapter. In this case, you will have taken an episode of a series and put it on the page like the chapter of a book. Now that you can see how that is done, try applying it to your Work in Progress.

Best of Luck.