

NaNoWriMo – The Story So Far



The Nano Beans group reserves tables for regular write-ins at Edinburgh's numerous coffee shops...

"So, how's nana-rama going?" my sister now asks me on a daily basis.

She is not referring to my latest musical project where I encourage a group of grandmothers to backcomb their hair and sing the hits of the 80s, but to my misguided attempts to write 50, 000 words of a novel by the end of November.

Truthfully, I've lost momentum. I was doing fine until Wednesday – [NaNoWriMo](#)'s statistics page cheerfully told me that if I carried on at this rate, I'd be finished five days ahead of schedule. This was the point at which I attended a rock karaoke, and it all went downhill. Why write 17,000 words when you can hone your Morrissey impersonation in front of a roomful of strangers?

There are other factors that have stopped me writing. Over the past week I have been worried about my heroine (I want her to defy the romance genre by having backbone, and challenge the broken Britain stereotype by being a smart, likeable ned; but it might be better for the story to defer to type and write her as more of a sexy doormat). I have added several new characters, who I now have to do something with. I have veered wildly from the genre I was supposed to be emulating, none of it makes much sense, and I am concerned that it's dull to read.

Theoretically, none of this should actually be a problem. After all, nobody ever has to see the thing. It's all between

me and my laptop. As soon as I've hit 50k and validated my word count, I can hit delete and never think about it again.

There's just one small problem with this. I have been posting every chapter on my blog, in full view of the general public. Oh, and this is the week Guardian Edinburgh has chosen to launch their [literary blogosphere](#). Which has a link to my blog. Sorry, Edinburgh.

Fortunately help is at hand, in the form of the regular pep talks sent out to participants by NaNo HQ. This week, we all got an email from American author [John Green](#), who said,

"At this point, you've probably realized that it's nearly impossible to write a good book in a month. I've been at this a while and have yet to write a book in less than three years."

This may sound defeatist to the outside ear, but it embodies the NaNo spirit quite well. This project is not about producing something perfect. The point is to force people to jump the seemingly insurmountable first hurdle of book writing – the blank page. NaNo takes the saying that everyone has a novel in them, and challenges people to stop making excuses and do it. It says go on; it's only thirty days of your life. What's the worst that can happen? OK, maybe you end up with 90% unusable nonsense. But nobody else ever has to know that.

Unless you've posted it on the internet.