

# 12 Books In 12 Months – Book One



"Can I really do it? Sure. Sleep is for the weak."

This year, I will mostly be writing 12 books in 12 months.

If I say it with enough confidence people tend to believe me, stopping merely to ask, "but when will you find the time?"

"It only takes me about an hour to write a thousand words," I tell them cheerfully, "so all I need to do is spend a couple of hours on it a day. I can get most of it done on my commute to work!"

Last November, when I joined in with [National Novel Writing Month](#), this statement was completely true. At that point I had a daily commute that lasted an hour each way, so I sat on the bus of a morning and diligently tapped out a tale of romance, subterfuge and libraries on my trusty iPhone. I even reached the 50, 000 word target two days early.

January 2011 is proving slightly different, for a variety of not particularly interesting reasons. The main one is that I haven't had any work from my temp agency; the upshot being that I've been free to work on book one all day and every day. Naturally this has resulted in more procrastination than a student with exams looming, yet I still can't beat my flat mate at [Bejeweled Blitz](#). I think she cheats.

It's bad enough that circumstance and social networking are conspiring to ensure I never get into a writing routine, but there's also the problem that book one is different to

anything I have attempted to write before.

✘ The concept is simply “[Caligula’s Blog](#)” – the online diary of an ancient tyrannical Roman Emperor who was supposed to have made his horse a general and been madly in love with his sister. It ought to be straightforward enough – all I need to do is research what things happened to him and when, then write about it from his point of view.

Unfortunately there are lots of gaps in the sources, and revisionist histories are full of statements like, “this thing *probably* happened in the latter part of AD 39, but it might actually have been in the first part of AD 40,” or my favourite recurring buzz kill, “this is a mad thing Caligula did... except he probably never did it at all.”

It turns out all the surviving records (which are scarce to start off with) were written by people who hated Caligula’s guts. Surprisingly enough, they weren’t inclined to give their audience a balanced overview.

So, book one has proved harder than expected, and nothing short of a miracle will be needed for me to reach the 50k word target by Monday 31st. Still, I’m optimistic my first draft has the seeds of an interesting historical novel. Roll on Tuesday, when I can leap into book two – a murder mystery set in a small Scottish theatre.

To find out more about the project or to submit ideas for characters, plots, settings or puns, please visit the [12 Books in 12 Months blog](#). You can also follow me on [Twitter](#) or ‘like’ us on [Facebook](#).