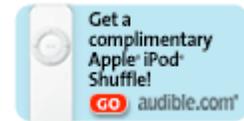


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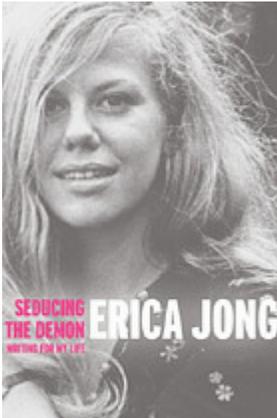
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## Review



### SEDUCING THE DEMON: Writing for My Life

**Erica Jong**

Tarcher/Penguin

Memoir

ISBN: 1585424447

"What we all live for, hope for, would die for is what Henry Miller calls 'the dictation.' That's when the words take off on a frolic of their own, when you don't seem to be writing or thinking, but rather taking down some divine dictation. When Miller said 'a writer shouldn't think much,' he meant that we are better off tapping into the dictation than thinking about it." In this sprawling how-to guide turned memoir, longtime feminist and ball-busting novelist and poet Erica Jong attempts to describe the meaning behind her journey as a writer in pursuit of said "dictation" for the last three decades. Peppered with juicy remembrances of times past and written in Jong's signature bawdry style, SEDUCING THE DEMON offers an up-close-and-personal look into the life and words of a legendary literary demoness.

[Click here to find more Erica Jong on Audible.com.](#)

#### Books by Erica Jong

[SEDUCING THE DEMON: Writing for My Life](#)

[SAPPHO'S LEAP](#)

According to Jong, SEDUCING THE DEMON was originally intended to be an instructional guide of sorts, complete with suggestions and tips on how best to hone the craft of writing. Prior to publication, she scrapped the overly preachy manuscript and decided to write a glaringly candid memoir of her years as a writer instead. The end result is a mixed bag --- part confessional autobiography, part education manual. In some instances, she focuses on her wild sex life and the power instilled in her when writing about sex (it was Jong who coined the phrase "zipless f---" in her bestselling novel FEAR OF FLYING). In other sections, she writes about the prevalence of alcoholism and drug addiction in the field. Then, she darts back to her life as a sex-craving wife and mother, and then moves on to the privileges and pitfalls of fame. Some readers may feel frustrated by this seeming lack of focus, while others may find her stream-of-consciousness and lack of form refreshing. Whatever the verdict, it is clear that Jong has lived a life worth writing about.

In addition to penning 19 books of poetry, fiction and memoir, Jong has been married four times (she is still married to her fourth husband, Ken) and is the proud mother of novelist Molly Jong-Fast and grandmother of Max. She has hobnobbed with the likes of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes and calls Henry Miller a friend and an inspiration. She has slept with countless men and unabashedly so (one of them being Martha Stewart's former husband), and has battled the bottle like many of her predecessors and come out on top.

Her travels and corresponding writing enclaves have been extensive and far-flung, from a cramped fourth floor walk-up in Heidelberg, Germany (where she wrote FEAR OF FLYING at the ripe old age of 23), to a water-logged flat in Venice, to her current home in Connecticut. She dabbled as a painter as a young girl, enjoyed a short stint as an actress in the lurid play *The Vagina Monologues*, and attempted to translate FEAR OF FLYING for the screen when working with director-turned-cocaine addict Julia Phillips (the project was never green-lighted).

In the midst of all of this bedlam and glamour, Jong has always found time to write. "It's a way of imposing order on chaos," and for a woman who thrives on adventure and bucking the system in her own special way, recording her experiences and sharing them with the world is essential. "There is in writing --- or any creative work --- a kind of f--- you impulse. Part of the energy comes from sheer rebelliousness. *I'll show you!* a writer says. *I am not who you think I am...*No one really asks for a new book, but you need to write it. And your need will eventually infect your reader...Your job is to always be ready."

And ready she always is. A no-holds-barred memoir from one of America's most outspoken women, SEDUCING THE DEMON will both titillate and satisfy.

--- Reviewed by Alexis Burling

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