

Profiles: Matt Allwright

I think the thing about crime fiction is that there are certain things you understand about the novel and the way its going to happen. Someone will die - on the whole, there will be someone who will find out who did it, and there will be someone or a number of people who actually did it. So once you've got that framework, its fascinating to see how many twists and turns they can take you down before you reach the inevitable conclusion.

It scares me rigid to think, can I do what they do? Can I create that many twists and turns? Do I have the complexity of thought to get that much out of what is in actuality, three things happening? I actually think I can't. I don't think I have that complexity of thought. That's the thing that scares me most about this - is the plot. I don't think I can do plot. I think I can make characters up, and I think I can paint pictures, but making the plot work is almost mathematical. I don't think I'd be any good at that.

Everything I've written creatively, I've hated. Whenever I've seen what I've written on a piece of paper and read it afterwards, I've always thought it was pretentious rubbish. And so this is an opportunity to find out if it really is and whether there is a simple way to fix that. Or whether you just have to get used as a writer to self-editing and criticising yourself as you're writing it and that's part of the process. And actually, what I needed was just to stick to it and get better.

I haven't shown any creative writing to anybody since they marked me for it. You know, so we're talking about the age of 17. Anything else that I've written has stayed very much within the walls of my office.

I want to find out whether I was right to not bother writing because in disgust at my lack of ability or whether, actually, I should have persevered and stuck to it, because there's something very enjoyable, terrifically enjoyable about writing. But there is a difference between just indulging yourself and doing it and actually doing something that you're happy with at the end of the day. And I want to know if I can produce that.