

Thoughts.

John Burnham Schwartz is an accomplished novelist and screenwriter. He has worked as a screenwriter on projects for Sony Pictures and Lionsgate. He is the author of *Reservation Road* (which later became a movie), *Claire Marvel*, *Bicycle Days* and *The Commoner*. He is the recipient of the Lyndhurst Prize for fiction and he has also appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New Yorker*, *Vogue*, and *The Boston Globe*. His writing has been translated in 20 languages. I reached out to ask if he had advice he would mind sharing about the publishing industry.

John Burnham Schwartz in his own words:

1. Always remember that you'll only get one truly fresh read from anyone — so work on things longer than you think you need to, get them as good as they can be, before sending them out for any publishing person to read.
2. Agents are the gate-keepers; it's virtually impossible to get published without having one. That said, there are many agents and they all have different taste.
3. I would not recommend giving up one's "day job" in advance of getting published, or even necessarily right afterward. I know plenty of writers who worked better knowing that they had limited time and a constant salary, than they did with total freedom — which of course is not really freedom at all, but a lot of pressure.
4. Try to understand how a story — what you're working on, say -- might sound, in brief, to someone who is not you — to a reader, in other words, or a publishing person. We writers tend to lose ourselves in our own interests and forget that publishing depends upon other people believing that still more people will want to go out and by the book that we are working on, day after day, in the solitude of our rooms.