

Dan Chaon Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, People, Kind, Years, Kids, Character, Trying, Book, Long,
World, Sleep, Stories, Dream, Reading, Identity, Moving, Dark, Fiction, Plot*

There is your car and the open road, the fabled lure of random adventure. You stand at the verge, and you could become anything.

~Dan Chaon

A conclusion is simply the place where you got tired of thinking.

~Dan Chaon

I knew I wanted to play around with genre-esque imagery, and the identity theft stuff came in the middle, when I was figuring out how the characters were connected to those images.

~Dan Chaon

The happiest I have ever been is in the life that I led with my wife and kids.

~Dan Chaon

I think we're always in some ways writing to the teachers who gave us early love.

~Dan Chaon

Maybe love, like suffering, is relative.

~Dan Chaon

Identity issues are hardwired into the way I think about character - it's almost as if I can't get away from them even if I want to.

~Dan Chaon

I've never been able to sleep very much, even when I was a kid. I used to hate being forced to lay in bed in the darkness, and just shifting in bed and staring at the shadows.

~Dan Chaon

I like to sleep about four or five really solid hours at night, and then sometimes take a nap in the afternoon or early evening after dinner. I

love naps.

~Dan Chaon

I always worry that knowing too much about a novel or a story early on in writing will close it down - it feels fatalistic in some way.

~Dan Chaon

The danger in writing about a world you don't know very well is that you can get lost in it, and sometimes I'll end up with a hundred pages I don't know what to do with.

~Dan Chaon

The feeling of being an outsider, and the identity theme, are hardwired into me. If there's anything really autobiographical in my fiction, it's that feeling. I always feel that way.

~Dan Chaon

My main reader was my wife Sheila, and I haven't written a lot since she died.

~Dan Chaon

For me, the process of writing a novel happens mostly in your head before you actually start writing.

~Dan Chaon

The kind of person I find myself interested in is a cross between being very emotionally complex and very immature. That's what I felt I was like when I was younger.

~Dan Chaon

Writing about women's sexuality is very scary for me because I'm always afraid I'll get it wrong.

~Dan Chaon

I was worried that, as a college teacher, if I wrote too much about intergenerational sex my students would be creeped out.

~Dan Chaon

One of the things I rarely do is write about sex.

~Dan Chaon

Plot was always secondary in my mind.

~Dan Chaon

I usually have more than one thing I'm working on at once - I've been working on three different novels. When I get stuck on one, I hop back and forth.

~Dan Chaon

I've had a lot of different lives. I was adopted, I grew up in Nebraska, and then I went to Northwestern... Then I had this really extraordinary, different life than my parents.

~Dan Chaon

I tend to like order in almost every other aspect of my life, but for me, the process of writing is really chaotic and decadent and indulgent.

~Dan Chaon

In some ways all of my fiction is like a conversation I'm having with the writers I read when I was first falling in love with books.

~Dan Chaon

I still think about the writers I loved when I was a kid.

~Dan Chaon

Maybe it's because I grew up during the MTV generation, but to me a perfect song is one I can imagine a music video to, a song that can take you into a dream.

~Dan Chaon

I know a lot of people don't listen to music when they're writing because it distracts them, but for me it's almost a way to get into the self-hypnotic state that I need to be in to write.

~Dan Chaon

The thing that made me turn more towards writing was realizing how hard it was going to be to get a singular vision on film and how much more control I would have if I were writing novels.

~Dan Chaon

I don't think anybody deals well with tragedy or grief, but maybe my characters are particularly bad at it. Which is why I love them.

~Dan Chaon

I love to write when I feel like everybody else is asleep and when I feel like the world is kind of empty in some ways. I find, oddly enough, that I write about loneliness and isolation a lot.

~Dan Chaon

You can recognize in your own reading habits what writers are doing that works and what doesn't. I'm becoming much more aware of that after reading a decade of student stories.

~Dan Chaon

Plot and scene are still the hardest things for me, though I think they're the building blocks of what makes a story work.

~Dan Chaon

I would say that all short stories have mystery naturally built into them.

~Dan Chaon

A novel requires a certain kind of world-building and also a certain kind

of closure, ultimately. Whereas with a short story you have this sense that there are hinges that the reader doesn't see.

~Dan Chaon

Imaginative empathy is one of the great gifts that humans have, and it means that we can live more than one life. We can picture what it would be like from another perspective.

~Dan Chaon

So this was what it felt like to lose yourself. Again. To let go of your future and let it rise up and up until finally you couldn't see it anymore, and you knew that you had to start over.

~Dan Chaon

At a certain point, you must be able to slip loose. At a certain point, you found that you had been set free. You could be anyone, he thought. You could be anyone.

~Dan Chaon

In the end, there probably isn't much difference between being in love and acting like you're in love.

~Dan Chaon

There's a lot of effort expended once you begin to completely trash your life. Sometimes, writing feels like this to me.

~Dan Chaon

It had occurred to him that if the undead don't realize that they are dead, he might easily be one of them himself.

~Dan Chaon

If no one knows you, then you are no one.

~Dan Chaon

There are so many people we could become, and we leave such a trail of bodies through our teens and twenties that it's hard to tell which one is us. How many versions do we abandon over the years?

~Dan Chaon

Fiction is fun because you get to steal an identity and try to make it authentic.

~Dan Chaon

Writing a short story is a little like walking into a dark room, finding a light and turning it on. The light is the end of the story.

~Dan Chaon

It is not like a premonition of death. It is as if she died a long time ago, and she just now remembered it.

~Dan Chaon

You can go on like this for a very long time, and no one will notice. You keep thinking you're going to hit some sort of bottom, but I'm here to tell you: There is no bottom.

~Dan Chaon

Even when our death is imminent, we carry the image of ourselves moving forward, alive, into the future.

~Dan Chaon

I wanted to write a horror story. But in some ways, I have always thought of myself as a kind of ghost-story/horror writer, though most of the time the supernatural never actually appears on stage.

~Dan Chaon

You can't count on notoriety lasting very long, and there's no way to predict whether anyone will care about your books or you in three years, let alone ten or twenty.

~Dan Chaon

Our sense of self is a kind of construct. It is in some ways like a novel, and it's like a fabric of fictions that we patch together from memory.

~Dan Chaon

I have long admired Caroline Leavitt's probing insight into people, her wit and compassion, her ability to find humor in dark situations, and conversely, her tenderness towards characters.

~Dan Chaon

You can't tell people how to feel when they read your work. You can only hope to connect.

~Dan Chaon

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