

Everyday I Write the Book

(Elvis Costello)

Yeah, don't tell me you don't know what love
is
When you're old enough to know better
When you find strange hands in your sweater
When your dreamboat turns out to be a
footnote
I'm a man with a mission in two or three
editions

And I'm giving you a longing look
Everyday, everyday, everyday, everyday,
everyday
Everyday I write the book

Chapter one we didn't really get along
Chapter two I think I fell in love with you
You said you'd stand by me in the middle of
chapter three
But you were up to your old tricks in
Chapters four, five and six

And I'm giving you a longing look
Everyday, everyday, everyday, everyday,
everyday
Everyday I write the book

The way you walk, the way you talk and try
to kiss me
And laugh in four or five paragraphs
All your compliments and your cutting
remarks
Are captured here in my quotation marks

I'm giving you a longing look
Everyday, everyday, everyday, everyday,
everyday
Everyday I write the book
Everyday I write the book

Don't tell me you don't know the difference
Between a lover and a fighter
With my pen and my electric typewriter
Even in a perfect world where everyone was
equal
I'd still own the film rights and be working
on the sequel

I'm giving you a longing look
Everyday, everyday, everyday, everyday,
everyday
Everyday I write the book

Everyday, everyday, everyday
Everyday I write the book
Everyday, everyday, everyday
Everyday I write the book, yeah

Everyday, everyday, everyday
Everyday I write the book
Everyday, everyday
Everyday I write the book

Everyday, everyday
Everyday I write the book
Everyday, everyday
Everyday I write the book

"Everyday I Write the Book" is a song written by Elvis Costello, from *Punch the Clock*, an album released in 1983 by Elvis Costello and the Attractions. It peaked at 28 on the UK Singles Chart and was their first hit single in the US (33 on the Billboard Top 40).

The lyrics draw various parallels between romance and the process of writing a book. The narrator identifies himself as "a man with a mission in two or three editions" and tells his lover "your compliments and your cutting remarks are captured here in my quotation marks." He also compares the stages of their relationship with chapters in a book, saying:

Chapter One we didn't really get along
Chapter Two I think I fell in love with you
You said you'd stand by me in the middle of Chapter Three
But you were up to your old tricks in Chapters Four, Five and Six

In an interview from November 1998, Costello said "Everyday I Write the Book" was "a song I wrote in ten minutes almost as a challenge to myself. I thought, maybe I could write just a simple, almost formula song and make it mean something. I was quite happy with it and I tried to do it in a kind of lovers-rock type arrangement and I wasn't happy with it and then ended up putting this other kind of rhythm to the song, which was written originally as a kind of Merseybeat knock off...I invested less emotionally in it than any other songs from that time yet it's the one that everyone warmed to."

The music video for "Everyday I Write the Book" (directed by Don Letts) has been called a "classic MTV hit" and features footage of Elvis Costello and the Attractions performing in a studio with female backup singers Claudia Fontaine and Caron Wheeler dressed in African clothing and kente cloth headwraps. Footage of Costello and his bandmates performing is mingled with footage showing celebrity lookalikes of Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales, Charles incongruously doing household chores and Diana watching television in a middle class domicile. Clips of the silent adventure film being watched by Diana are also included in the montage.

When Prince Charles appears wielding a rapier and wearing a swashbuckler costume like that of the actors in the silent film, Princess Diana rolls her eyes and returns her attention to the television. Further attempts by Prince Charles to impress his spouse—including presenting her with a red rose and jumping through a flaming hoop—are similarly rebuffed as she is more interested in the romances depicted on her television. Costello later commented that he had "no idea" of the reason for the interspersed royalty scenes, which were, he says, the director's idea. At one point, the singer drops two stone tablets similar to those in the classic film *The Ten Commandments* and they are smashed.