

START TO FINISH:

ADDING MUSCLE: HOW DO I PUT IT TOGETHER?

Article by: Whitney Rines

So if you've hung in there so far, you read that the first process of the story is to plan it out in the boring technical stuff. Creating the voice, finding out what that voice wants to say, and overcoming the fear of saying it. We talked about using that voice, figuring what and how we write our story. What we want to put in it and who our audience is. So now that we've covered the basic overview of the setup, we get to do the fun part of getting our story started and put on paper. In this article, we're going to be talking about organizing, adding the catch, visit the three parts of any story, and talk a little bit about the monster in the closet. Let's get started.

Organize your story: From thoughts to Words

Yeah, more planning...except this time you're actually getting started. This is an important and very flexible part of getting that story you've had rattling around in your head for a while, or even just random thoughts for the story you've been thinking about writing for a while but didn't know how to start. I've been in both of these positions before. It's like pre-story writer's block. So let's break it down: organizing your story isn't supposed to be a painful and arduous experience...in fact it can be quite enjoyable when you get started. You take those notes of character, setting, theme and build a world around it. You've got what you want going on in the story so now, you get to figure out how you want it to fit together. This is where things get fun and flexible for your story. You can start with an outline, bullet points, or even just scribble down what you're working on in your head. The point is to get your ideas out on paper and then from there you can start filling it out and make your story take form.

Drama: Filling out the story with a little Trouble

Drama...the dramatic uptake of the story. The heart and soul of the story. What event is driving the story and causing the commotion we mentioned earlier in the article? This is very important as a very big deciding factor on how much pull your story has in interest of your audience. I know that sounds scary but, the secret is TROUBLE.

Adding Muscle: How Do I Put It Together

Highlights:

- Organize your thoughts
- All about the drama
- The monster in the closet
- Beginning to End and the Middle

Next Article:

*Now for the Skin: What do I do
after all this?*

Everybody loves trouble, it's no secret...we all want to watch the two trains on the same tracks and see what happens. There are very few books, or any media for that matter that don't have some sort of trouble going on. From Transformers to K-PAX, there is some sort of conflict or problem that encompasses the story. That's where everything comes together...or falls apart as the case may be. Just as well, drama not only gets our story started...it presents the ideas for what directions we can take it. This drama is not only what draws the reader in, but when you throw in the characters into that mix (I told you that characters are important), they really push the story along in that dramatic fashion you need. Just as before with making any fiction realistic enough for the reader to be able to connect, you want to temper your use of drama within the story. Yes, there are non-stop action and adventures in stories, but the reader needs a break from this intensity from time to time. Those little creeping and subtle parts where nothing seems to be directly happening are equally important...plus it helps to build up to the climax. These slower parts, give you an opportunity to use your characters to fill in gaps in the story, and give the reader a better view of what is going on in the story without giving everything away. You get to bring out "The Monster in The Closet."

The Monster in the Closet: Fearing the unknown

This is a very important part for your story, no matter what genre you decide to write. Nothing is more engrossing than the "Monster in the Closet". By that I mean, how you lead your audience into something that is unexpected. Avoiding the jump scare in other words. Building up the climax to your story, and leaving out enough identifying information to keep that "fear of the unknown" but, putting in the drama and build up in such a way that they want to continue is key to this. Remember that everyone has a "Monster in the Closet", it can be anything and this will help you keep the story even through those parts of "nothings' going on". Example: If you've ever watched a suspenseful film such as "Seven", there are significant parts where nothing but talking is going on, however the scenario surrounding that talking keeps the story interesting and you as the audience, want to see what's going on because it becomes a puzzle. Using your characters here is very useful, you can decide who knows what information and who knows more or less, if anybody does. Your characters' knowledge and their actions will definitely drive this part, especially when there is an event they know various amounts of information about and is said in the science community...more research is needed.

Beginning to End: Where does it fit?

Now comes the easy and hard part. What is the direction you want your story to be read in? You can start anywhere you want, but bear in mind that each way has its own complications. Beginning to End and visa versa you still need to figure out what happens in the middle and really, that's something that will happen regardless of how you

choose. Some opportunities and challenges here besides the middle is finding the perfect way to start the story and then how to get it into words.

Beginning to End- You're about to take your reader on a journey and you have to figure out how and where to start it...as well as present it in such a way that your reader wants to get in your story vehicle in the first place. The opportunity is that you get to tell a story in the traditional sense and build up momentum to the climax and end, keeping your reader captivated because they want to know what happens. The challenge is knowing how to get there.

End to Beginning- same, same. You get opportunities and challenges here as well. This way may be more of a challenge because you get to see what the ending is at the beginning and remainder is seeing how everything ended up at that point. When you have to think your story in reverse, it can be a great deal more difficult to get across the point. You still have to set up the ending in a way that grips your reader for a fantastic voyage of sorts, but instead of building them towards climax, you're giving it to them from the start. It can make the story less interesting to a reader, unless you can create an ending that is so amazing they want to know how things got there or, one where they need to know the full story and more so, they want it.

Either way presents its own challenges and opportunities and there are so many more ways to do both: B-E or E-B, I only listed a few general ideas for time. The real pickle is the Middle. It's always going to be in the middle, because it's basically what happens between point A and Z. While location isn't very difficult to determine here, what you put here is. Your story is going to have some slow parts and eye-popping parts no doubts about it, but your greatest challenge is to figure out the balance between both and the organization that best carves your path from A to Z. The middle is the backbone of any story, and like a backbone you want to have a strong one. The first and last parts introduce and usher you out of a story, but the middle is the party that you get to attend while you're in between both. Knowing this, it's really up to you what kind of party you want to throw and, there are so many ways to play with, you'll either find or create a way that you like/love/gotta have.

*The next article is all about the fine-tuning and revision of our stories. Taking them from the first draft and all the way to exposing it to the light of day and test-driving it with the readers for the feedback. Look forward to it, the hairy stuff is coming up in: **Now For The Skin: What do I do after all this?***

Love to see you there,

Whitney Rines