

MANAGING YOUR CHARACTERS OVER THE COURSE OF A SERIES

SPACE COAST WRITERS GUILD
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PRESENTED THROUGH
INSPIRE WRITERS CENTER



-Welcome!

-Introductions

-Brief Instructor Background

REMEMBER

- ONE THIRD RULE OF SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS
- 1. IT'S EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT: "I CAN USE THIS INFORMATION NOW."
- 2. IT'S CLOSE TO WHAT YOU WANT: "I SEE HOW THIS CAN BE USED."
- 3. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EXPECTED: "I MAY FIND THIS USEFUL LATER."

PURPOSE OF THIS SEMINAR:

1. TO HELP THOSE WRITERS:

- WRITING A SERIES
- CONSIDERING EXPANDING A NOVEL TO A SERIES

2. TO LEARN WAYS OF MANAGING CHARACTERS

- FOR CONSISTENCY
- FOR CONTINUITY

3. IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THEIR WRITING

GOALS FOR SEMINAR

- The Importance of Characters**
- Examine What Defines A Character**
- Series Characters versus Standalone Characters**
- What to Do with Your Characters**
- What to Avoid Doing with Your Characters**
- Questions**

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARACTERS

TO THE AUTHOR?

- YOUR CHARACTERS HAVE AN EFFECT ON YOUR WRITING GOALS
- GOOD CHARACTERS PROPEL THE STORY FORWARD
- AFFECT REVIEWS, WORD OF MOUTH, REFERRALS, SALES
- GOOD CHARACTERS PREVENT WRITERS BLOCK?

TO THE STORY?

- YOUR READERS FORM A RELATIONSHIP TO YOUR CHARACTERS
- READERS RELATE TO YOUR STORY THROUGH YOUR CHARACTERS
- CHARACTERS = THE SUCCESS OF YOUR STORY TO READERS.

CHARACTER MANAGEMENT & WRITERS BLOCK

1. GOOD CHARACTER MANAGEMENT MAY REDUCE WRITERS BLOCK, AS FOLLOWS:
2. KNOW YOUR CHARACTERS LIKE YOU KNOW REAL PEOPLE
3. KNOW THEIR PLACE IN THE STORY AND THE WORLD YOU HAVE CREATED
4. KNOW WHAT MATTERS TO YOUR CHARACTERS
5. CHARACTERS ESTABLISH DIRECTION FOR A STORY, IF YOU KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THEM
6. BY MANAGING YOUR CHARACTERS, YOU MAY DECREASE WRITERS BLOCK

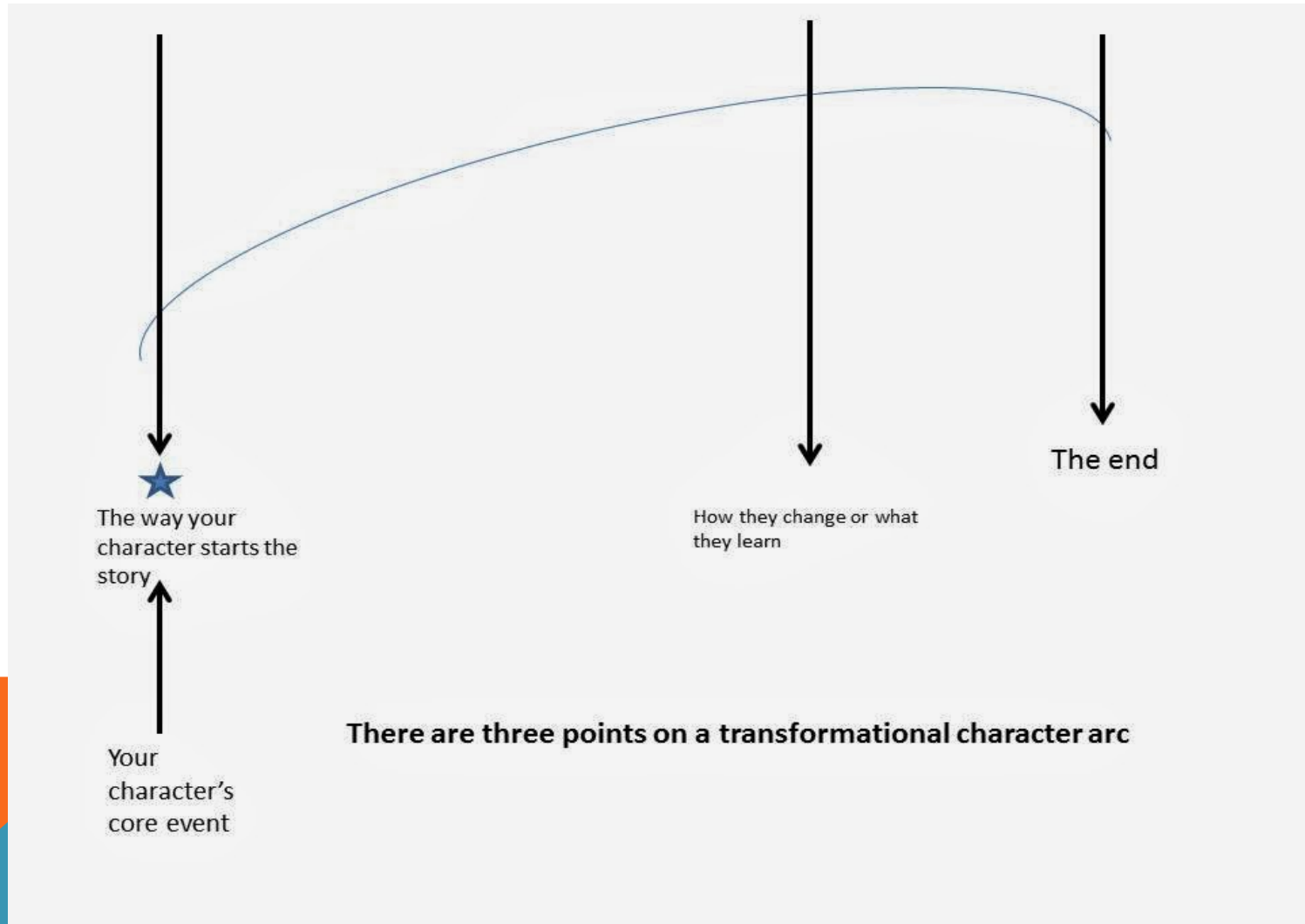
FOR A GREAT STORY, YOU NEED:

1. Characters Who Drive The Story Line (Plot)
2. A Plot line that moves the Story to Completion
3. Location or Setting
4. Time Period
5. Cohesiveness/Planning/Management
(Pantser/Plotter)

FOR OUR PURPOSES, YOUR STORY NEEDS:

1. Characters Who Drive The Story Line (Plot)
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BASICS: CHARACTER ARC



Typical Plot/Story Arcs Character Types

1. Rags to Riches [a complete rise]
2. Riches to Rags [a fall]
3. Icarus [rise then fall]
4. Cinderella [fall then rise]

~~Who~~ is a Character?

What is a Character?

A CHARACTER IS A STORY ELEMENT THAT:

- is Integral to the Plot / Story Arc**
- Propels the Plot or Story Forward**
- Undergoes Transformational Change (Interest)**
- Possesses Identifiable Qualities (Unique)**
- Evokes Feeling or Emotion (Good or Bad)**
- Distinct from other Characters**

CHARACTER PRESENCE

-Recurring in the Series or Stand-alone

-Active or Reactive

-Static or Dynamic

-Complete or Incomplete Personal Story Arc

SERIES CHARACTERS VS. STANDALONE

ON-GOING SERIES

MULTIPLE APPEARANCES

- TIME TO DEVELOP
- CONTINUES/ ON-GOING
- REMAIN CONSISTENT
- MORE DETAIL NEEDED
- INCOMPLETE ARC

STAND ALONE

ONE TIME APPEARANCE

- DEVELOP FASTER
- NO NEED TO CONTINUE
- EASIER TO MANAGE
- LESS DETAIL IS OKAY
- COMPLETES ARC

CHARACTERS IN A SERIES QUESTIONS

? ? ?

BREAK TIME : 10 MINUTES

“The Mind’s capacity to absorb exists in direct proportion to
the Body’s ability to endure.”
~Unknown



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CHARACTER PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

-Height

-Weight

-Hair Color/ Hair?

-Human/ Other


-Injuries/ Unique Qualities/Identifying Marks

-Race

CHARACTER PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTES

- Optimist/Pessimist/Dangerous Mix
- Introvert/Extrovert/Mix
- Social/Anti-social/Menace
- Stable /Unstable/Whacked
- Satisfied/Unsatisfied/Never Satisfied
- Happy/Sad/Inconsolable

MAIN CHARACTER SIGNIFICANCE

1. Who is the story really about?
 2. Who carries the story forward?
 3. Who helps the Main Character?
 4. Who interferes with the Main Character?
 5. Who will the Main Character meet? (Preview)
 6. Who must the Main Character avoid? (Preview)
- 

CHARACTER STUDY

~ ADAPTED FROM WRITERS DIGEST

1. How old ? (And how old mentally?)
2. Have a happy childhood? Why/why not?
3. Past/ present relationships? The affect of these?
4. What do they care about?
5. What are they obsessed with?
6. What is their biggest fear?
7. What is the best thing that ever happened to them? The worst?
8. Most embarrassing thing that ever happened?
9. What is their biggest secret?

WHAT TO DO: KEEP YOUR CHARACTERS CONSISTENT

- DID A SMOKER STOP SMOKING? TRYING TO QUIT
- CHANGE OF HAIR, CLOTHES, SPEECH?
- WAS YOUR CHARACTER INJURED? DON'T IGNORE THAT OR ACT AS IF IT NEVER HAPPENED?
- WAS YOUR CHARACTER THROWN OFF COURSE MENTALLY? NO INSTANT RECOVERY.
- NO INSTANT SKILLS WITH DRIVING, WEAPONS, ETC.

WHAT NOT TO DO WITH YOUR CHARACTERS

1. DON'T LET THE WRONG CHARACTERS RULE
2. DON'T GIVE CHARACTERS UNREAL ABILITIES
3. DON'T PAINT CHARACTERS INTO A CORNER
4. DON'T CHANGE CHARACTERS TOO MUCH
5. DON'T MAKE CHARACTERS UNRELATABLE

(one more...) VERY IMPORTANT!

6. DON'T KILL THEM

(TOO SOON)

**MAKE A DEATH BELIEVABLE, OR LEAVE AN OPENING
IF A CHARACTER DIES, IT IS HARD TO BRING THEM BACK
IF THEY HAD SKILLS YOU NEED, YOU HAVE TO RECREATE
THEM IN ANOTHER CHARACTER - DIFFICULT**

REMEMBER

As the Author :

- 1. You are in Charge of the Characters (your creation)**
- 2. You are Responsible for the Characters Success & Popularity**
- 3. “You must manage them, or they will wreck the jeep.”**

CHARACTERS IN A SERIES QUESTIONS

? ? ?

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Thank you!

