

Screenwriting
Media 22/Media 123

Week 3 Select Slides

Building Your Story

"VOICES IN YOUR MIND MIGHT SAY,
'YOUR STORY IS NO GOOD. WRITING
IS TOO HARD. YOU SUCK.' HERE'S
HOW YOU FIGHT THEM: WRITE THE
NEXT SENTENCE."

SCOTT MEYERS

Theme is...

- The **main idea** of your story.
- **Universal truth** about the human condition.
- A **viewpoint** about life and how people behave.
- The element that brings **meaning** and resonance to your story.

Express your theme as a DECLARATIVE SENTENCE

PLOT

- It's what happens in the story
- It asks the central question
- It's presents the hero with the "Cs":
challenges, conflicts, complications and choices
- It's how theme is unveiled
- It's how character is revealed

Story

Act I Act II Act III

Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene
Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene
Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene Scene

Three Act Structure

- Act I: Set Up: Who, What, When, Why?
 - Intros the normal world
 - Presents the “Inciting Incident”
 - Ends by posing central question

Three Act Structure

- Act II (a & b): Confrontation: **Rising Stakes**
 - Challenges
 - Conflicts
 - Complications
 - Choices

Three Act Structure

- Act III: Resolution: **New Reality**
 - Final battle between Protagonist and Antagonist
 - Protagonist learns the vital lesson
 - Resolution of the central question
 - New normal

Plot vs. Plot Points

The **plot is a chain** of connected events that comprises the narrative.

Plot point

A **plot point** is a link in that chain that directly impacts what happens next in a story.

- **Moves** the story in a different direction
- **Impacts** character development
- **Forces** character to make a choice
- **Reveals** something important

This...

This happened,
so this happened,
but then this happened,
therefore this happened.

Not This:

This happened,
and *then* this happened,
and *then* this happened,
And *so did* this.

Plot versus Story

- Plot is what the hero says he/she wants
- Plot is what happens in the external world
- Plot is conscious -- “seen”

Plot versus Story

- Story is what the hero needs
- Story is the internal journey of the character
- Story is unconscious -- “unseen”