

# The Shape of Character Arcs \_ Golden May June 2024

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

plot, character, arc, belief, writing, flawed, consequences, character arc, story, point, talk, nora, learn, choices, book, libby, workbook, power, michael, good

## SPEAKERS

Emily, Rachel May

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 00:00

Some a little difficulties, you know getting going, we are probably going to go over our time limit today. Hopefully we won't go too much over. But you know, just a heads up, we're starting a little late. So I do expect this to go over. And if you have to pop off, that's totally okay, we fully understand we are going to be sending out our links per usual with the recording. So welcome, everyone to our class. This is the shape of character arcs. We are excited to teach this class it is wonderful. While I get us going here, I'm gonna let my dog out, you can probably see it in the back, he is chatting to me. But this is going to be a wonderful class, we have an interactive kind of question and answer presentation style, Emily and I if this is your first class with both Emily and I were very, you know, chat heavy kind of teachers. So we love engaging with you. We love seeing your questions. We have lots of resources to share with you today. So we're going to be giving you all of that. And we're hoping by the end of this class, you're going to have every tool that you need to take your character through their arc of change and understand how to link that to your plot. That is why we are here. So there's going to be a really great class, please feel free to interact with us. In the chat, we're so excited to see everybody. We do have everybody's cameras and audio off on purpose, so that we can keep our presentation streamlined. But if at any point you did want to pop on, you can always request to like turn off your or turn on your mic and ask us a question. So we'll, we'll be inviting you to do that during the question portion at the end. But let's go ahead and get started.

 Emily 01:43

Okay, I'm about to send this email and I'll keep

 01:48

going then while you're doing that. Sounds good. Awesome. So welcome. Welcome. We are golden May. I am Rachel May. This is Emily golden. Hi, hi, from Maine, we are both in the taller, water in Colorado. We're in the Denver area. And Emily is in Denver. So water both in kind of

we're in Colorado, I'm in the Denver area. And Emily is in Durango. So we're both in kind of Western Western states here. But we know we have participants from all over the world. So we're so excited. Australia. That's so awesome. So we're so excited to talk to everybody. We are professional book coaches. We are editors, we are both writers ourselves. And we are hosts of the tenacious writing lifetime membership program. We're also the host of the story magic podcast. So this is the first time that you're meeting us. We are so glad to meet you too. We're so glad to get to know you. And these are some other areas that you can find us. Wow, before we jump into our presentation, we're gonna go really fast since I know we're running late, but we are the hosts of this program tenacious writing and tenacious writing is our one stop one stop shop of basically our writing program here. So we we have tenacious riding members in our program with us if any TW members are here, give us give us a wave. But we hoped masterclasses like this for our TW community. And this one that we're hosting today, we decided to make public for all of you lovely friends. So give you a little sneak peek. We do craft classes exactly like this workshops that go super in depth into specific topics. We are a community of amazing writers that care about leveling up our skills, encouraging each other on this wild journey of the writing life. And we we also focus heavily on increasing our mindset strengthening our reading mindset because we firmly believe that without writing mindset, we can't bring our full selves to full selves to the page. And that means we're not telling the stories that are really branded on our hearts. So our program combines craft community and mindset into everything that you're going to need throughout your writing journey. And here's a little sneak peek of all the different programs that we have all the different things like I said, we have workshops, we have a whole library of resources, we have 40 plus different master classes like this. But Casey just like you said, less well less tech problems when we're not expecting like 2000 people.

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Emily 04:24

Ah, yeah, Denise is the best.



04:27

It is the best. So exciting. So if you wanted to learn more about it, please head on over to [tenaciouswriting.com](https://www.tenaciouswriting.com) to check it out. And just know that what you're gonna see here today is a little a little snapshot, what kind of work we do in that program. So, this is why we're here.


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Emily 04:49


Yes, um, I do not have my slide notes up. So let me know if it's my slide or from taking your slides. I think I'm starting right. Okay, cool. So All right, deep breaths, whew. Technical difficulties happen, we're moving forward. So we're gonna talk about character arcs today. Very, very excited. This is one of our favorite things to talk about, because we love to teach, teach about stories that have character change in them, because we firmly believe that you can learn from characters that readers learn from living through the experiences that our characters go through, and the change that they go through. And that that's a very powerful experience for others to be able to give their readers. So let's dive in.





04:53


 05:30  
Hey, so


 Emily 05:31  
we're going to talk about the shape of how people change, we're going to talk about how plot and character arcs influence one another, we're going to break down some positive character arcs, and with some examples, and then we're going to talk about negative and static arcs as well. And then we're going to finish up with some plotter versus pants or tips for folks who want to think about how to use this tool with the different processes since we all come out writing in different ways. And then we'll do any q&a at the end.

 06:01  
Excellent. So like Emily just said, we're going to do our presentation, and then we'll have time for questions. However, like I said earlier, we're very engaged presenters. So if you have a question that you want to throw in the chat, as we are talking, please feel free to do that. We do have a class workbook, which I'm about to share with you. So this workbook is something that you get to make a copy that you get to download. It's for it's a Google Doc. So it's going to ask you if you have a Google account, but make a copy for you. It is personal for you. And it is there for you to follow along with our slides today and to take notes fill out. Of course, of course, KC Access Denied

 Emily 06:52  
mercury and retrograde or something today,

 06:53  
I guess. Funny. No, no, I don't know. I double checked all the permissions before like yesterday, I, you know, so I'm, we'll take a look. Okay. Is anyone able to access it? If not, I will fix it when we go to our next slide. Okay, well, don't do that head to the next slide, we

 Emily 07:12  
will switch off Rachel will fix the tech. Okay. Excellent.

 07:15  
Wonderful. At this point, I'm just like, cool, cool, whatever. But anyway, the recording, everyone's gonna have the recording, if you are watching this in the recording, you will get access to the workbook do and by then we'll have it. And then for tenacious, writing members, like you guys all know, it's going to be in the right better library.

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Emily 07:37

Yeah, I'm gonna put slides all of the slides for today and the workbook, I'll do a PDF version of the workbook on the page where you guys can watch the recording. So if you aren't able to get it today, or you don't have a Google account, you will be able to get it in that form, after class. So it's, it's a lot of the same content that's in the slides. So you can just sit back and relax, and we'll send it to you after.



08:00

Cool. Cool, um, give that Doc another try. For me. I just put the link back in the chat. And please, someone tell me that it works. Next slide. Yes, thanks, Casey. So from your workbook, it was waiting for me to get to the slide, this specific slide where it does Graviola. Anyway, there it is. Excellent. All righty. There it is. Let's get started.

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Emily 08:29

Alright, this is me, this is me. Let's define some stuff. So next slide. Just to level set, because I think craft is only as useful as you know, all of us speaking the same language about what we're trying to achieve and what we're talking about. And so to start off, we're going to define a couple of things. And the first two things are plot and character arc. So plot is, when we talk about plot, we're talking about the main events, the story, the things that are happening. And we're talking, when we're talking about a character arc, we're talking about the internal change that a character goes through in a story or that they have the potential to go through, right, so whether that's positive or negative, or if they're not changing at all, that is what we're talking about when we talk about a character arc is a change in beliefs. So they're going from seeing the world in one way to seeing the world in a different way, specifically. So let's talk a little bit more about those beliefs. So why do we use character arcs? This is a I feel like it's important to start here, because oftentimes we'll get a question will do I have to have a character arc, right? Does my character have to change? Do I need to do this? Do I have to put this in my story? No, you don't. Rachel and I are firm believers that there are there are no rules. Writing craft is really just a set of expectations about what your readers are looking for what they might be looking for. And the more that you can understand that the more you can make informed decisions about what you want to do with your story whether you want to meet those experts. patient's or subvert them or who you're talking to what audiences you're writing for, and all of that. So why use a character arc? Well, because it's powerful, it's really emotional. Right? When we're reading, we are caught when we're reading fiction, we are putting ourselves in the main character's shoes, right? We're experiencing their journey, as we read through the book, and which means that we're feeling as they're feeling, we're succeeding as they're succeeding, we're failing as they're failing, right? We're feeling their journey, because we're in their head, we're in their body. And so when they experience the consequences of the decisions that they've made, based on the beliefs that they have, we experience those consequences as well, when when they are learning on the pages of the story, we are also learning. And so that's why books are so powerful. And that's why Rachel and I really love teaching about character arcs is because we change based on the books that we read, when we live through the experiences of others, in fictional worlds on the page, whether they're in the real world or not, we learn something about how other people see the world, and how the consequences of our actions

might play out. And so you can use character arcs to move and change your readers. And they're a very powerful tool that said, they're a tool, they're not a rule. And so just kind of, that's what we're doing today is we're teaching you how to use this tool, and then you can choose to do with it as you will. This is still me. Okay, so the question of the heart of a character arc is, is a character going to overcome their demons write their flawed beliefs and prevail in the story? Or are they going to succumb to those flawed beliefs, those inner demons and fail in their external goals? And you can already start to see how the internal change of character arcs is tied to plot events, right? Are they going to prevail in their plot goals? Are they going to fail in their plot goals? And so this is, this is what we're going to explore today is how does that what does this look like on the page of the story.



12:04

So when we're talking about like character arc, and we reference back to those definitions, we are taking our character through a change from one thing to another, if a character arcs, if a character arc is about a change, they have to start in one place, and they have to end in another place. And where they start is by believing something flawed, or having this flawed worldview. And where they end is by believing something healthy or changing into a more positive view of the world. And the specifics of that can look, however you want this is the beauty of writing a story is that each of our different characters, start knowing one thing, and and knowing another thing, and that depends on what you're writing. But we all have this dichotomy of flawed to heal. So the terminology that we use at Golden Ma is internal obstacle, which is that flawed belief, changing to the story point belief, which is the healed belief. So story point is a term that Lisa, Kron uses in the book story genius, if you've read that book before. But it also could be, you know, sometimes it's called the truth. Sometimes it's called the healed view. And then on the flip side, internal obstacle is sometimes called the misbelief. The lie. So you'll see these different terms used. But in essence, it's the same thing. You start out with flaws, and you end changing away from those faults to something more healed. Now, there are different types of arcs, which we're going to get into, meaning whether the character like successfully changes or fails to change, but still the possibility of whether or not they change. That is still the heart. So we're still playing with that. That question that we just shared of, are they Dennis change and prevail? Or are they going to fail and succumb to whatever they're fighting against. So when we're using terminology, like internal obstacle, we're talking about that flaw we're talking about where they begin. And when we use the term story point, we're talking about the lesson that they learned, the thing that they heal into the new belief that they adopt by the end. And this class is going to show you how to do this with your plot, where we will tie the change of going from one to the other into the plot. Because it can be tricky. This is where it gets tough to actually execute. So to go into these terms a little bit deeper. At the beginning of the story, our characters open with a specific flawed belief, worldview perspective. It's usually something problematic it's something that's harming them, harming their dreams harm. In the world around them, this is the thing that needs to change. So in one example, that belief could be, you're only worthy of love, if you're perfect. That would be a flawed worldview. Because we, we know we, you know, we all we all don't want that to be true, that we're worthy of love regardless, like that would be the the converse the story point, the lesson that we learn. So by the end of the story in a positive arc, your character leaves behind the internal obstacle and adopts the story point lesson, that new healed belief that new outlook. And this is the message that you as the author want to share with your readers. The The reason that it's called a story point is because this is like, the big deal. This is the takeaway, this is like the thing that you're, you're trying to tell your readers. And we, we tell them that through demonstrating the change that our characters go through, by the end, if our

characters end up adopting the belief, you know, your imperfections are worthy of love, you can be loved no matter what, then we're able to demonstrate that point, without necessarily like, you know, beating a reader over the head with it. So it's a very, if you've never, if this is brand new to you, if you've never heard of these things before. It is a great place to start reading the book *Story Genius*, by Lisa Cron, we also have tons of different resources on the internal obstacle, and the story point on our blog, in our podcast, tons of free resources about this. So again, if this is your first time ever hearing these terms, very good to get it get an idea of what these are so that you can translate that into your characters. What are their blood beliefs? And what is the story point lesson that you eventually want them to take away? The question that we're asking in this class, is how do we get them from A to Z? How does a person change? And how does our plot force our characters to change or present them with the opportunity to change? How do we do?

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Emily 17:11

Well, and then just, you're gonna see at the bottom of the slides, there are some little notes that if you are in tenacious writing, and we might have some tenacious writing folks in class today, that they're pointing you to some extra resources you can go to to expand on some of these ideas. There are also a few that are for everyone, and podcasts and blog posts and whatnot. So I'm going to put the link to the slides in with the recording. And so you'll be able to access those physical links, and they're also in your workbook. So tenacious writing members will have links to other masterclasses and courses and things to follow. And then the rest of you will have some links to some other free stuff that you can explore. All right, so how do people change, we don't change how we see the world because we're taught to if anyone has ever tried to make you change your mind, if I just convincing argument, you probably know what we're talking about. That usually makes us dig our heels in, right, the thing that really makes us change the way that we view the world is when we experience the consequences of our flawed actions. So when we make a mistake, and that hurts us, it hurts people we love or it pushes us further away from our goals. That is when we can start to see the error of our ways and start to see that the world works in a way that's different than we previously believed. So this is where plot comes in. Because plot right is the consequences plot is the consequences of your character's actions. And so you can use that to prove to them that the world doesn't work in the way that they think that it actually works in a different way. And we're going to show you how that works. So basically, a positive character arc is character is flawed, they have some kind of belief about the world that is holding them back that's damaging. It's unhealthy. They make a mistake, because of that belief. And then they learn from it and they grow. And they learned that story point. This is like cliffnotes version of what a character arc is. So how does this work in a story? How do you actually plot with this in mind? Um, plot and character arcs are inextricable, they influence one another. And so this is what that looks like. I think it's the next slide.

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19:37

Yeah. So this is a cycle. We created this. We were so proud when we made this graphics. But this is a cycle because your plot creates problems for your characters, your characters, face those problems and make choices. Your characters choices have consequences and those consequences We can plot events. And it's a cycle. So this is how they're so tied together, where plot and character go hand in hand. Because the more that your character makes

choices that create consequences, which influence plot events, the more that you're able to give those plot events Wait, and then turn right back around and show them that like they have made bad decision. So it goes round and around. Because we're just, we're just going to keep following this cycle of conflict consequence, plot events, character choice. And at different points in your story, we hit like high emotional beats and low emotional beats. But this cycle still remains the same. So if you're looking at this, and you're like, I see this, but I don't quite see like how it goes into plot yet, how do I plot this, we're going to cover all of that. But there is this trajectory that these two things are linked, and they are linked through choice, consequence. And then back to plot. This is also a great time for us to like, briefly talk about plotter versus cancer. Emily and I this your first time meeting us are two completely different kinds of writers,

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Emily 21:20

I cannot be more different.



21:24

Different, I find myself more on the pantsers scale span pantsers side of this spectrum, while Emily finds herself more on the plotter side of the spectrum. And so I want you to know that we approach this differently. We the the theory. Same for both of us, we understand how this cycle works. But the way that we approach it in our plotting slash drafting is entirely different. And we're gonna we're gonna speak to that kind of throughout the presentation. But the important thing that I want to impart to you right here is that this, this theory applies no matter what the theory of this cycle is going to be the same. But what you get to do is decide where you put your focus, depending on how the process works best for your brain. So for me, I tend to lean very heavily into my characters and the choices that my characters make, which create consequences. And then I'm able to like continue to draw those forward, where on the flip side, Emily tends to lean into, you know, planning the plot events ahead of time, and then being able to see how those plot events create conflict. So the two of us wait, this, this cycle at like different sides, because that ends up working differently or better for our unique writing brains. So if you're looking at this, and you're like, Well, I have no idea how to plot. That's okay. We're gonna teach you how to lean into character choices. But you're looking at this and you're like, I can't wait to plot everything out in my story. Excellent. You're in the right place, too. And yeah, Nicole said, I'm definitely both. Yes, I think so many people, it also depends on maybe what part of the story you're at. It can vary. That's why we like to call this a spectrum, not just like a label, you are one or the other. But if you can, if you can understand, and we're going to help you do this, if you can understand how these things, two things are tied how the cycle works. It doesn't really matter where you fall on the scale, it matters that you're able to use the tool in the most effective way for your process. So knowing that, we're not trying to tell you there's one right way to do this, we're going to show you how to use this tool. Okay, so let's talk about plot. What is an arc? You've talked about, it's going from one thing to another thing, how do we fill in this space? It happens with this. We have a lot of different ways to show you this. We have a graphic, you have this narrative. But basically your character believes something flawed, that's their internal obstacle, then shit hits the fan, things go crazy, the story starts. That's a plot problem. Then, because they have flawed beliefs, they make flawed choices, which later come back to bite them. And that results in a big failure that pushes them to unlearn the belief and exchange for a healthier belief and that's when they adopt or don't, the



story point. And that allows them to finally succeed with plot success. So you can see how there's kind of like a push pull between these two things. We have the internal we have what's led by the character. We have then consequences coming back and biting them in the butt. And then we have like, the more Moments where they can adopt their change. And then we see their success come from that. So here's how it looks when we when we kind of mark this out. In a graphic, we have our arc here of change, where we start the story. Can you see my mouse moving? Huh? Cool, cool, we see we have the character believes something flawed. Usually that takes them through Act One, when plot, we have a problem that happens, then beginning of Act Two character has a bad plan, they put a place a plan in place that is flawed. It's not going to get them what they want. But they don't know that. So they go through act two, and they're not making great choices, it's not really working out all the way, then we see a big failure happen at the end of thought to that kind of like, opens their eyes, and shows them they need to change. So at the beginning of Act Three, they get an opportunity, are they going to change or are they not, and then a positive arc, they will shed their flawed belief, adopt the hail gleif, they go into Act Three, knowing the new thing, knowing the lesson. And now they're able to succeed and get what they want. We're planning this out with like a three act structure. But most structures are going to apply in this very same way, just with maybe slightly different terminology. So if you're like, Oh, I use a four act structure, cool, you just split Act Two and half the same. Everything else remains the same. If you use like a five act structure, it's basically the same like this is kind of the high level of story structure is start with flawed, there's plot things go wrong, change or not succeed, is how it breaks down. So we're we'll go into slightly different different arcs. That positive that would be a positive are kind of the most common.

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Emily 27:01

So real briefly, because we're going to spend a lot of time today talking about the positive arc, and then telling you how to map that to other arcs. But just real briefly, yes, there are other arcs. Those are the, we have the positive arc where your character changes for the better with positive results with the negative arc where your character change fails to change for the better with negative results. And then there's the static arc, which technically there, there are positive and negative static arcs. But basically, the idea of a static arc is that your character changes very little, because they already know the story point or they're refusing to learn it. They're just like living in internal obstacle land. But the world around them is going through an arc. So the idea of a static arc is that the person who is at the center of the story is changing the world around them, for better or for worse because of what they believe. And so we'll we're going to talk more about negative and static arcs later on, but we're gonna stay with positive right now. Yes, also called a flat arc, static flat, same thing, static. Okay, so let's break it out.

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28:16

All right, so each of those different points, we are going to break down together. If you follow along in your workbook, you're gonna see some question prompts. We'll talk through them as we go through our slides. But I want you to know that like right now, you don't need to have answers for the things that we are asking you. If you have things to fill in. Excellent. If you are in the middle of drafting, and you can like fill in some blanks great. If you're trying to figure this out as you go, feel free to like absorb and come back to the workshop or the workbook later. That's why we have the workbook is because this we're gonna drop a lot of knowledge on you. And it might take some time to settle in. And you can use the workbook in perpetuity, so you



can come back to it. Keep thinking, answering questions as we go. So the very first thing that we talked about was that internal obstacle, we need to know what the flaw is. What is our character's problem? How do they start? The internal obstacle is a belief that they have held for quite a while, and it is deeply ingrained in them. Yes, Louise, the flawed belief is intact before the story starts. It usually happens like throughout childhood, but not necessarily. The point is that it is like got its claws in our character. It is how they see the world. It has led them to view the world through their flawed lens, so it's negatively shaped their current life and here is the tricky part is that they don't know that the character is likely not walking around thinking like, oh, I have such a flawed worldview. Oh no, it's ruined my life. Like they're just operating businesses usual. But it's our job as the storyteller to like, show how that flaw has impacted their living situation, their relationships, their career, their their work that are played their home, everything. The point is that it influences their way of thought it influences their decision making and influences their goals and how they plan to achieve their goals. So it's pervasive. There are some question prompts in your workbook to help you think about this. I like to develop these to like the internal obstacle flaw, at the same time that I'm thinking about the story point, because they are they should be contrasting to one another. And the reason why is because if you're going to take a flawed belief and teach them a heal belief, instead, they should be opposed, you know, are they? Are they directly contrasting? Sometimes a lot of the times, yes, sometimes you might bring some more nuance to it, that they do need to be opposed to one another. Like that example we showed earlier, where it was, you're only worthy of love, if you're perfect, versus the story point of, you're worthy of love with imperfections or your imperfections don't make you less worthy of love. Like those two things go hand in hand. So as you're thinking about your character, think about what is that flawed belief that they hold? That is in contrast to that story point that's in opposition to that story, point message. And then you can be asking, how has that belief influenced their life? If they believed that they are only worthy of love? If they are perfect? How do they move through life? Believing that? How do they show up to work? How do they show up to play? How do they interact with friends and family? So it's take whatever that belief is, and then expound on it and think about like, Okay, if they are carrying around this flow, and it's got its claws in them, how are they living? What's their life, like? And that's how we start to show the character moving through and like, a way that we understand because a lot of us can relate to these other flaws, even if we don't have them ourselves. And make them believable, at the same time, make them relatable, understandable. So start with that internal obstacle, belief. Also know that if you are a, if you are a pantsner, you might be figuring this out as you go. We are not in a place of perfection. Okay, friends, you don't need to strive to have everything perfect. Revisions exist for a reason. It takes time to get really comfortable with these things. But just think about like, Okay, I know, my character needs to have some sort of belief, what could that look like? And then continue to refine it, the more that you progress through drafting, or when you come back to revise later.

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### Emily 33:15

Alright, so you have a flawed person, right? They're living their life and the book opens and then shithead spin. This is where the big problem of your story happens. This is your inciting incident, your premise your you know, it's the thing that happens in your book, it's the Hunger Games, right? Like, it's the whole purpose of your story. And the this is the plot problem that happens to your character. So it's not something that's their fault. It just comes out of nowhere. And it's Maxim, right, but it's not really coming out of nowhere, because it can't just the anything to make a cohesive story where your character arc and your plot are tied together. It needs to be something that directly challenges your character's internal obstacle belief. And by that we mean it is a plot problem that provides them with an opportunity to make a choice

between acting in accordance with their internal obstacle, belief, or acting in accordance with the story point. And of course, they're not going to do that because they're flawed, right, we've already established a slot in a specific way. And then you provide them with a choice to go down one path in which they act in accordance with that or a better path. And because they don't choose that better path, there are consequences. And that's where the rest of the part of its of your story come from. Next slide. So we're gonna do a quick little exercise. Um, you want to talk about Miranda, I think you're supposed to.

 34:56

We have we have you but I got this. So Miranda, is a character who believes beauty makes you worthy of love. That is Miranda's internal obstacle, beauty makes you worthy of love. We want Miranda to learn that our actions make us worthy of love. That would be this story's story point. And remember you as the author get to make these up to whatever you care about. That is what your story point can be. In this example, our starting point is our action make us worthy of love. If Miranda starts, and I want you guys to message in the chat, so if Miranda starts this book, with the belief that beauty makes you worthy of love, what prop plot problem could smack her in the face, and make her confront that belief? What would be like a really, really big challenge for Miranda? That might make her run up against this flop? It literally could be anything. So if you haven't had an idea, put it, put it in the chat. And we're just like workshop and farming ideas. Okay, pregnancy. Oh, God, you see a really good one. Yeah. Maria. The accident that hurts her face. It that was ours. Some sort of accident that hurts her face. Losing a beauty contest. She could fall in love with a blind guy that might not see her beauty. Like visually. Yeah, an accident or allergic reaction. Meaning someone not impressed with her beauty. Oh, we might have another injury. These are amazing. Exactly. Tell her she's been ugly. Yeah. Scott amazing.

 Emily 36:44

Where was that? Oh, we're good. Thinking like like, Remus Lupin. But Maria.

 36:54

She's dumped. Her boyfriend leaves her for someone that might be less or less

 Emily 36:59

beautiful. Oh, that's

 37:01

yay. Wow, these are amazing. So you got Okay, so, see how the all of these ideas? Yeah, but up against Miranda's belief. It's not just like, oh, Miranda, you know gets fired. They would be like, well made me Miranda get fired because of insert a reason tied to her beauty. Or, you know what? We're working within that sphere. These are wonderful. So when we're thinking about

problem, mine the internal obstacle like work from pay, what is something that could make our characters like, force them to confront their beliefs are what can make them like really, really struggle within the sphere of their flaws? Yeah. Now the point then becomes that they don't react in the way that they should. And that's how we get on the rest, which we're going to talk about in a second. Wonderful, so we have a number so good. Let's do this again. Yeah, do this again. Alright, so

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Emily 38:05

now we're gonna violet This is me, right?



38:11

Yeah, you do this one? Yeah. Violet,

E

Emily 38:13

so violently that you're only free if you have all the power right. So she's got some messed up childhood that has made her believe that she's only free if she sees his power. And she needs to learn that true freedom is found in releasing power. So what plot problems could confront violet?



38:37

Know I'm in the chat



38:53

maybe it was being dethroned. She loses her power. She loses everything. She's becomes a boss, but everyone starts to hate her. Wow. She's a prisoner. There's a coup.

E

Emily 39:06

That's a good one.



39:07

Going to prison. Attempts to take power. Forced to work in a menial job. Oh, yeah. That's great. weighed down by the burden of responsibility. Her power makes her become miserable. Allow. Get dressed job dead. Yeah. Oh, addiction. Maybe she experiences addiction, gets demoted. experiences a trauma that makes her give up control. Paralysis paralyzed. She's a powerful vampire but loses her immortality. You guys are amazing. Because a



Emily 39:43

simple humans love that. I



39:45

love that. Nicole. You can tell me we really like she cares. Someone she cares about rejects her for boxiness interesting. Yes. Okay. So wonderful. These are all amazing. See how we We are confronting violets ideas of both freedom and power. We're making her question what those things mean to her. And we're, then we're going to, she's going to have to react. So after that is how we get into like the plot. But we don't just like throw violet, this random problem, we throw violet a problem, that's going to trigger her, that's gonna like, really mess her up. That's really going to affect her because of her belief.



Emily 40:35

I love her father won't give her the family farm unless she starts from the bottom. And second. So good. Cool. So workbook crops. So for for this piece of right, this shit, it's the fan plot problem piece of the arc, you want to consider what plot problems are going to confront your character's internal obstacle belief. So the other way that you can think about this, if you're coming at this from a place of like, I have this cool plot idea, right? But I don't know, like you're coming from the plot down, that that makes sense, rather than the character up, you can start to think about okay, what, what types of internal obstacles? Could this problem? Trigger in people, right? Like, what types of issues with this problem for somebody to face and might force what kind of changes might it force them to go through and you can work backwards from whatever premise idea you have, or whatever plot problem you really want to work with? In order to figure out what you want the characters arc to be about? So like The Hunger Games, right? If you came to your story with like, oh, I want this kids fight to the death, right? Then you're like, Okay, well, what, what? What could that force, what change can enforce a child to go through? And you can come up with some really depressing things, right, but you might end up with Katniss, who thinks that survival is the only reasonable goal, she goes into the Hunger Games determined to win to get back to her family, right? And then then you start to come up with a story out of a plot problem. So you can come at this from both ways, but we want to make sure that they're tied, and they're prevent providing that choice moment that Richard can talk about next. Exactly.



42:23

So to loop us back to our arc here, we have talked about these two things. Okay. So we're in Act One, where we have the flawed belief, we've just made them confront it in some way we've just challenged them, then we have this little space where they're like, I don't know what to do about this, oh, no, then we get to there, we're gonna do the wrong thing. Here, they're not going to go about this the right way. So we come to the bad plan, the flawed choice. So at first, they're going to be a little shell shocked, right? We've just put a big enough problem in their face. They are they have no idea what to do. Or perhaps they have a lot of things to do. And they're not sure what path to choose. But they have a period of time where they're like, I don't

know what is going to happen. But they've got to do something, they have to make a choice. So we can use this opportunity for them to enact a flawed plan. Usually, we're going to give them the right path and the non path. And because of their flaws, they choose the wrong path. They think it's right. Okay. They think it's right, because they have that really internalized flawed belief that we know or we're about to learn, and they're about to learn. It's not the right. So they go down this flawed plan. I'm the as they make this plan. And as they continue to make these flood choices. consequences happen. This is where we're going to show them that they're doing the wrong thing. If they had enacted the good thing, they would succeed at getting what they want. But they didn't. They're going to choose the flawed plan. They're going to start making decisions, we're going to go back to that cycle. Remember, where they're going to make a flawed decision, that decision is going to have consequences. That's going to lead us to a plot event. And we're going to cycle through our circle. If you're in TW, we break this all down in our class called how to craft a page turner, which talks intensely about character goals, and about character plans. So

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Emily 44:45

it's a great next step after this.

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44:49

Yes. So this takes us through most of Act Two. This is where we ask them. Alright. How are you going to react to the plot? problem, what is the flawed thing that you're going to do, and how this is where you can tie this fraud plan into whatever their goals are. This class isn't about goals, if you want to learn more about goals, we have so many resources and tenacious writing. But that flawed plan is what leads them through the rest of act to where they're trying to achieve what they want. They're trying to get what they want. So let's take violet, for example, let's pretend that with violets case, she lost her power, maybe. Okay, so we've taken it away from her in some way. Well, a pretty, pretty like, common goal for her or a reasonable goal for her would be to try to get her her power back. So her plan might be to get her power back in the wrong way. Then she goes down this path of trying to get her power back in the wrong way. And it's not working. And the consequences are piling up and up and up. And that leads us to our next our next

E

Emily 46:00

pets. So this is our next massive plot event. And this one is a failure, because it is your character's fault. So this is where all of their bad decisions, but some of the assets is the mistake that they are going to be encouraged to learn from, right, it's the big mistake, we've made a lot of mistakes along the path to get here. But this is like the snowball mistake. This is the one that's been building, since they made that bad choice at the yeah, we're definitely gonna go over our time a because the because we started late, but be because Rachel and I just love to talk about this stuff. And we usually go over so. So if you, if you have to pop up, we will send you the recording. Um, so as your character moves through this middle of your story, you want them to continue to implement their flawed and misguided plans in various ways, and start to collect consequences, right that are they might see them immediately, but not recognize that they are the consequences of their own actions, they might find excuses for why

they're failing. The consequences might be spiraling in the background, and we don't see them coming, but they need to be snowballing. And then around 70, this is debatable, don't get this number like locked in your brain, but 75 ish 80% through your novel, everything comes crashing down. And those consequences come back to bite them in a huge way, in a plot way. Right externally, something massive happens they fail so dismally at their plan to get their goal because of how they've been going about it, that they can't see a way forward unless they change. So as you're thinking through this piece of the arc, you want to think about what's a big enough failure to make them open their eyes, right? We hate admitting we're wrong. We hate it. Humans hate it, we want to be right. So it has to be something really big, they have to lose something very important to them. Something that is right, if you're, we're talking about Miranda, she wants love. Right? That's she thinks beauty is how she's going to get love and love is very human. And we talk a lot about this in the how to craft a page turner class with the goals and stuff because that human goal, that inner goal, that deep human desire, that's the thing they have to lose at this point in the story, because that is going to make you know Miranda See, she lost love because she was so obsessed with beauty. And that is like, like losing that thing that she most deeply wanted. That's what's going to make her start to open her eyes. And so you want it to be like Think Big Think really big about what they can lose. That is so deeply important to that maybe something that he didn't even realize they wanted, right? until it's gone. And then they realize it's gone because of something that they did. So, yeah, so this is where right we have that big plot problem at the beginning. That's not their fault, but because of how they react to it. They have a big plot failure here. That is their fault. Yes.



49:06

And when we say like a big flop failure, where they lose almost everything, like Emily said, and I don't want you to miss this, it is important to them. Because depending on what kind of story you're writing, this might trip you up. I know it has for me before where like if you're writing fantasy, you know, the stakes of the world might or the world might be at stake, you know, like life or death might be at stake. If you're writing mystery. It might be like whether or not you get to catch a killer. If you're writing romance, it could be losing love. Like it depends on what it is that you're writing that determines this. But the important part is that it's what is important to that character. You're writing a romance. I don't know that I would make them like have a life or death like moment, unless it's specifically relevant up to like that characters.



Emily 50:02

Because like they almost lose their love because of their mistakes or because of their



50:07

mistakes. Yeah. But if you're, you know, if you're writing fantasy, you know, it might be that their kingdom crumbles. But I might not write that in different books. So just keep that in mind. It's what is the what is everything to that character is what is most important to that character in a way that can show them that they've been wrong this whole time? Once they have seen that they have been wrong, that it's been their fault, we're able to give them the opportunity to learn from their mistake, they finally get a chance, are they going to change or not? This is the point where we say, You believe this one thing, are you going to believe this other thing and

study and change your mind? Are you going to learn or you're going to take the lesson and adopt it and internalize it instead? This is the point where they get to change their ways. This would be where you get to work in the story point fully. In story structure, a lot of times it's called like the dark night of the soul or the most the the moment after the black moment, it's like the healing moment coming out of it. Sometimes there's like a third a secondary character that can like smack him upside the head and be like, you should have known this. We told you the whole time.

R

Rachel May 51:28

But this is the this is the point where what's going on in the plot, they're able to say I can change my views, and I can look at this differently. And I can become a different person.

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51:41

So let's work in that healed belief. What is the heal belief that they adopt? circle back to that story point lesson that takeaway, what is that lesson? How did their plot failure? Teach them the lesson? Specifically? How do they get from their lowest of the low to? I need to think differently? And then in the plot? How is that going to show up in like their, you know, the moment where they open their eyes? What does that look like? Like on the port or on the page? Sometimes I didn't add this because it's not always accurate. But it was really helpful for me of thinking about like, who else is with them in this moment that they can like talk this out to, because that person is usually really integral to helping them see the light. That was helpful for me to like, get a grasp on the details of this scene, not necessarily the belief itself. Okay.

E

Emily 52:46


All right. So then they have a plot success. So this is positive arc, right, we're thinking about a character who does successfully change, the best way to show that they have changed is through their actions, right, a character. And there are stories that are shaped this way negative arc stories where a character thinks that they have changed. They say it right, they think it but then they're not actually able to take the actions, they don't really believe it. But in a positive arc we want, we need them to be able to show us that they really truly have changed by taking actions that prove it. And so at the end, this is an act three really, of your story that ending that ending an act where your character and acts a different plan of action. So at the beginning, the plot problem happened, they made the wrong choice about what plan they were going to use. Here, they're making the right choice about what plan they're going to enact. And because it is a good, you know, quote, unquote, good plan, it's the plan that is led by their healed story point belief, then you give them success. That's how you prove that it is the right good belief, the lesson of the story is that it has positive consequences, they take different kinds of actions, they put in place a different kind of plan, because they have a different worldview. And that leads to different results, they succeed. And so that's how you show the lesson of your story without like, preaching it. Because by showing the consequences of their their changed actions.

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54:24



So we can ask ourselves, you know, what is this new? These new plan, the new actions that they take, because they have learned in the story point. I just want to get started talking about this slide, but that's fine.

 Emily 54:40

bounce back and forth.

 54:41

How how do they finally succeed with the right plan in mind? It's very helpful to like kind of draw a line in the sand for them where they realize if they had continued behaving the way that they were, they would not have achieved this And if you were gonna go over some examples, we have plenty of examples to talk about. But the next time you're reading a book and you're noticing this characters change, there is usually a moment in these last couple climax scenes where they're like, I could not have done this, had I not become this person had not adopted this belief. And it just reinforces that point that like their actions are different now. And they believe different things. And because of that, they have positive consequences, they have been able to succeed.

 Emily 55:34

Okay, so quick reminder, we have they believe they start out believing something flawed. A plot problem happens to them. That plot problem provides them with an opportunity and they miss the mark. They enact a bad plan because of their flawed beliefs. And then because of that, the impact the consequences of their actions spiral into a big plot failure that happens because of their bad plans. They learn from that. They shed their flawed belief, they learn the healed story point belief instead. And then by acting in accordance with their new healed belief, they are able to succeed in their plot goals. Blue is your character arc, the pink is your plot. And so you can see, right one is that it's that circle that we're talking about before. character makes choices causes plot problems, all of that. So let's do some examples.

 56:33

All right, so first example we have is an example of a positive arc. And we're looking at Norris Stevens from booklovers. If you have read booklovers, let us know. This is a great book. It's a romance between Nora and another character. But Nora who has the main character, her true arc of change happens in relation to her sister, Libby. So this arc of change is less about her romantic interest and more about her sister, where Nora begins this book, believing that you can only keep your loved one safe and happy if you are in fully or fully in control. She is used to taking care of her sister she's used to being kind of the the responsible one, the one in charge, the one that like make sure that they stay on top of all of their all of their things. But as they have grown into adults, they've kind of drifted apart recently. Libby is a parent. Nora is kind of like a career woman. She works in publishing. And they have really drifted apart. But Nora's Sister Libby suggests that they take a trip. Libby is pregnant. She wants to go on this vacation to get out of town. And she loops Nora into going with her. And this indicates to Nora that

something is wrong. Because this is out of Libby's normal behavior. Ladies pregnant, she's got a family, what is she doing wanting to just like, go on this Random Trip. So Nora decides, like, Yes, I will go on this vacation so that I can figure out what's wrong with Libby. And I can fix it. What she means by that is fix Libby or fix, like, fix the situation for Libby. So she does not necessarily want to like, she doesn't approach this as I'm going to ask Libby, what's wrong. She's thinking, I'm going to go on this trip and fix all these problems, because that will make her happy. And then I can be in control and then everybody is safe. Yeah. So it's flat. It starts off off the bat a lot. She goes through act two, where there's this kind of push and pull between Norian Libby as they go through these veins, this vacation, different different things that they want to do like, going to get a bookstore going to get flannel shirts, I can't remember everything but they like have a vacation list of things that they're going to do. Meanwhile, there's tension and stress through the sisters. But everything kind of comes crashing down when Libby collapses Libby's iron has been low. And she didn't tell Nora because she's tired of being parented and controlled this whole time and act to Nora has been trying to fix Libby, fix everything that's been tense between them. Figure out what's wrong and fix it rather than just communicating and asking. And that led to this failure because Libby is able to tell Nora, like, I'm tired of you controlling everything. And I didn't tell you about this problem, because you're so controlling. But that point, Nora gets to learn that some things can't be controlled, only endured alongside loved ones. She sees this she's able to see the error of her ways the error in her relationship. with Libby and she comes to find out that Libby has been planning to move away from Nora and wanted to go on this trip to revisit their relationship to like, get back on back on good terms. When she learns that rather than try to like, fix Libby so that Libby doesn't move away in the first place, Nora is able to sit with her in the pain and discomfort of sisters moving away from each other. Rather than just simply trying to fix it. We have a lovely resolution where both characters are happy, they're feeling fulfilled and satisfied in this relationship. And Nora is a lot less controlling and worried about Libby and herself. So it is a great, great example of a positive arc. Anything else to add on this?

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Emily 1:00:55

Thanks, so. So then, for all my Game of Thrones lovers out there, this is Jon Snow in the first season or first book, depending both of them have the same arc. So Jon Snow is the bastard son of a nobleman. And he starts out the book story, believing that a person gains honor by gaining power and glory. And as a bastard, he really wants to prove himself honorable. And so he thinks that to do that, he has to prove himself a hero basically. So he joins the legendary knights watch force, which protects the realm. And that all happens before the big plot problem, the big pop problem for him that confronts him and provides them with the choices when he gets there. He realizes that the Knights was just a joke. It's not a legendary force. It's just like a bunch of untrained farmers who are wielding swords very inexperienced, Lee inexperienced. But anyway, he's basically like, this is a joke i and he's signed his life away to be here. And so he's like, how the heck am I supposed to be a hero and prove myself honorable here. And so he ends up choosing to help train the unskilled boys with the goal of becoming heroes. He's like, Well, if I'm stuck here, I might as well prove myself a hero by helping all the other boys become heroes too, because he has training. So the His problem is not necessarily that he chooses to help train the boys, but the reasoning behind it, right, he chooses to do it so he can prove himself a hero. And that hero complex, like his obsession with proving himself a hero causes a lot of problems throughout AP two, because he looks down on the other boys, he refuses to do things that are asked of him by his superiors, he's basically just an arrogant little asshole. And so ultimately, his obsession with become with being a hero, loses him, the Lord commanders respect, it's actually kind of a small plot moment, right? Like, he just learns that

his commander doesn't respect him and has been holding information from him and doesn't trust him. But that's huge for John, because what he wants his honor, and so to learn that this man that he holds on a pedestal as a hero, thinks that he's an arrogant little brat, is massive for him. So that failure is huge on the page, and it makes him realize that there is no room for honor in the game for power, which is the story point of the Game of Thrones. Um, and so he basically he learns that being a hero doesn't mean that you're honorable. And that you can find honor in not being heroic. And so that allows him once he learns that it allows him in Act Three, when he learns that his brother has written south to avenge their father's murder, he has a chance to go prove himself a hero, he can abandon his vows to a nice watch, and he can go prove himself and not you know, the hero that he wanted. But that would be a loss of his honor, because he pledged himself to this force. And so he is able to give up that opportunity to be hero in order to prove and finally gain the honor that he's been seeking the whole time.



1:04:23

Now, remember, we said there were different types of arcs. So that was, those were examples of positive arcs, we've been talking generally about positive arcs. There's also the negative arc where the character fails to change for the better with negative results. And then like we said, we have a static or a flat arc, where the change is more about the world around this character than truly within themselves. So let's take a look at some examples of negative arcs. Those are still can be very powerful stories.



Emily 1:04:55

So in a negative arc, your character experiences a negative in terminal transformation. And what that means is that they reject the opportunity to change. And that's very important. This doesn't mean that they're just like, be bopping along being flawed. It means that they have this opportunity, they're on the precipice of realizing that they messed up, and they're not able to, they're not able to do it, they're not able to choose the story point path, they're not able to move in that direction. They stay stuck in their ways. But it's not, it's a flat arc unless they are really presented with this opportunity to change. And so that means they have to make a lot of mistakes. And those mistakes have to come back to bite them. And they have to feel really bad. But then it's at that moment, right before act three starts where they're like, I can't do it, or like I said it earlier, there's a moment later in Act Three, where they think they've changed, but they're not able to take the action to prove it. And so the way that you prove a negative arc, the way that you prove that they have made the wrong choice is by giving their decisions, negative consequences. And so instead of Act Three being different in the sense of that, like, all of a sudden, they achieved their plot goals, they need to lose the thing that they wanted most. Now, I think it's important to note that like, this doesn't mean that they can't, like be the villain standing on top of the Birding world, right, they can achieve their external plot goals in a negative arc, but they have to lose the thing that they most deeply wanted, right? Whether that's love or respect, or fulfillment, or whatever, right? The thing that they actually want, they can't get it, because if they get it, then you're saying as the author that their beliefs are right, right, if they're standing up the, you know, the burning, the world is burning, and they have their lover at their side. Right? Your right stuff. Right. Um, and maybe you want to do that totally fine. Um, that sounds freaking awesome. Looking at you, Carly. Um, but that is you want to make that decision with intention. Right? You want to look at what are you saying by the consequences that you're giving their actions? Yeah, I love my villain stories. Nothing wrong. So

yeah, so let's look at how this is on the map, right. And the only difference is this ending part. They still believe something flawed, they still have a plan problem, they still have an opportunity to make a good plan, and they don't do it, right. They enact a bad plan, and then that comes back to bite them. None of that is different. What's different is the ending. They don't learn from their mistakes, they fail to adopt a heal belief. And because of that, they fail to achieve their goals, and they lose something very deeply important to them. Even if they don't want to admit it, yes.



1:08:02

So we have a couple examples of this. Let's talk about the godfather. So I am going through this example, using the movie as the guide. I know there are some differences to the book. But let's break down Michael Corleone in the movie version of The Godfather. So Michael is the youngest son of the Corleone, Mafia crime family. All of Michael's brothers and his sister, his family is involved in the criminal side of the family. Michael is not when we start this story. Michael has been kind of excluded from the family on purpose. His father has been trying to keep him outside of the family. And because Michael is described as the best of them. So he's a war veteran. He's decorated, he went to college like he has been separate. But we open the story where Michael and his family they all believe this, that there's nothing more important than family. And we get a little introduction to the crime family to the Corleone. Then, Vito Corleone in The Godfather, Michael's father is almost assassinated. And Michael kind of comes to his defense. He protects his father. And after that moment, he chooses to step into the criminality of the family. He chooses to participate in the family's violence by killing the man who tried to assassinate his father, because he believes there's nothing more important than family because he's tired of being excluded because he is the innocent one. It makes the most sense that no one would suspect that he tries to assassinate the guy who tried to kill his father. So he willingly chooses to participate in his family's violence and to become a full member of the Corleone family. So he does end up killing that man and he's forced to go on the run. There are lots of consequences to him, assassinating that man. Meanwhile, his father is recuperating. After being assassinated. Michael experiences a lot of personal tragedies and it kind of drives him further and further into the family, where he has to continue to participate in the in this violence. His brother is spoiled. This movie came out in the 70s. Sorry, that his brother is murdered. His father gets really sick again, like there's a lot his wife gets murdered. There's a lot that goes wrong. Then Michael comes back from kind of being sent away after the assassination. And he starts to take control over the family and work very closely with his father. And his father dies, the old Godfather dies, Michael takes his place. And at his funeral, Michael uncovers who betrayed the family that led to this very first assassination attempt. He was warned who it could be his father told him who it could be. And he uncovers who it is. He has this choice to let it go. By now it's been years. By now the family has kind of lost a lot of their power, other criminal families have taken their place. Michael has the opportunity to let bygones be bygones, and move on, and try to legitimize the family and bring them outside of the realm of criminality. But he does not, he chooses not to do that. He has the opportunity to live for himself in where he could step away from the family entirely. Or he could legitimize the family entirely and not worry about its criminal past. But what he chooses to do instead is double down and make this elaborate plan to execute all of the family's enemies, which he does, in which he is actually successful in doing so in one fell swoop, he wipes all the other criminal families out and he takes full control as Don Corleone as the godfather. And it looks like plot success. It looks like he did it. He is the godfather. The reason this becomes a negative arc or the reason that this is a negative arc for Michael is because I mentioned earlier his wife died, he remarried. he remarried his college sweetheart, who he had told basically the whole

story, he is not involved in the family business. And he is not a bad man. After all of this happens, his wife confronts him and asks him, did he murder those people? And he lies to her face, and says no. And she obviously does not believe him. And he alienates his wife and firmly turns his back on the man who used to be in our moment. In the book, I believe she does actually leave him in the movie, it kind of left ambiguous, but it's very clear that she doesn't trust them. And like everything has been ruined between them. So in that case, plot wise, he got what he wanted. But internally, you see his negative transformation. You see the cautionary tale, you see how power has corrupted him, you see how he has firmly implanted himself in the in the crime world. And he is no longer the upstanding man that he was way over here at the beginning when he was like a decorated war vet and the family favorite. So it is such a great example of like someone who starts out really good and go way down versus like he started out kind of flawed and still stays kind of flawed. Like Michael at the beginning isn't good. And Michael at the end is a bad now. And that shows his his negative transformation. Despite the fact that he kind of won. His wife was able to prove that he didn't win. Okay, so our second example here is Anakin Skywalker from Star Wars. This is the plot of Revenge of the Sith, which is the third movie, episode three. I do want to add, like a caveat that this movie is not super well plotted. So we're working with what we have. And the kids arc in this movie, like regardless of how he kind of has no goal throughout the whole book, or the whole movie is a kid's arc and this movie is firmly tied to Padme who is Anna Ken's wife, so he's he starts this movie believing that acquiring power will keep your loved ones safe. When he learns that his wife Padma is pregnant, he starts having visions of her dying in childbirth. And this kind of sets him on the path of needing to acquire more power. In order to save her, he feels these visions are premonitions, where she's going to die. So he sets down on this path to acquire more power. And that ends up leading him to the sick, which is the bad side of the Force. And you can as a Jedi the good side of the Force. However, he hears that the stuff have the ability to save those they love from death. And so he becomes interested in those abilities. And that sets him on this trajectory of trying to acquire more power. And eventually, he pledges himself to the sub, and ends up triggering the entire downfall of the Jedi. Now there's a lot that happens because of Anakin, where the Jedi are basically eliminated. However, Anakin true, all is lost moment is when he's so blinded by his quest for power that he believes pad may have betrayed him, and he attacks her and he is the one who makes her own sake. He attacks pad May, he has in that moment an opportunity to change his mind to go save her to step back. But he doubles down on this belief that he needs ultimate power. He fails to learn that power does not save a corrupts. He has been at this moment, truly and fully corrupted. So he gets into this fight with his master Obi Wan, Obi Wan ended up defeating Anakin, he is ultimately burned alive, he becomes Darth Vader as we know him. Meanwhile, Padam a dies because of his actions. And we are left at the end of this movie, knowing that Anakin has been fully corrected in his quest for power.

E

Emily 1:17:11

And he's lost all the love he was trying to produce safe.



1:17:15

Yes, he lost pad, may he lost the Jedi, he lost Obi Wan. He's lost everything. And that's what proves to us that there have been actual negative really bad consequences the entire galaxy is isn't up people. And now there is a tyrant ruling the galaxy because of lots and lots of negative

consequences because of his actions. Okay, all righty. We have we only have a couple more slides. Thank you so much for wrapping up. Friends, we're wrapping up, and we'll start to ask our questions or been some good questions in the chat.

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Emily 1:17:52

All right, so static flat arcs, we're gonna briefly talk about these. But they are, they're different. They're the same, but they're different, right? Because your character is not the one that's changing is the world around them that's changing. So if you were to look at that arc, you're looking at the world believes something right, something happens in the world, the character is trying to get the world around them, the people around them to make certain decisions. And they won't do that. And that ends up in some kind of failure, the world does or doesn't change. And so the world in that sense is often represented by a character that stands next to them. A character who has a positive or negative arc that they are trying to, to push along their, their story arc. And so oftentimes, you'll see a static arc as like a mentor character, but you can also see it as the main character of a story. If anyone has read once upon a broken heart by Stephanie Garber. Evangelin has a very flat arc, she is hope. She's just like the embodiment of hope. And she is the main character of the story and her love interest. Jax has lost all hope. And so her whole static arc is trying to get Jax to have hope again, and to act in different ways and to stop being the villain. And he in that first book, fails to do that. And so Evangelin fails in her quest to change him. And so there's all these world negative consequences, but they're not because of her there because of Jack's. And so, that is, these arcs are different to the point where we want to send you to some other resources. So if you are, if you haven't listened to the story magic podcast yet with Emily and Rachel, we have a podcast. It's amazing. And we have Louis George sat on from the novel smithy, which Lewis is another incredible book coach, and he is also the author of a lot of writing craft books, and he has several on character arcs. And so we had the list come talk to us about static and flat arcs on the podcast and it was fantastic. And it was like a little prelude to a class that he taught for are tenacious writing community on static arcs as well. So we have lots of resources on static arcs, whether you're in tenacious writing or not. And if you want to join tenacious writing, you will have instant access to the recordings of that and all of our other master classes. So static arcs are really fun, they're definitely different. But I think that they're super powerful because you get to see somebody like really trying to change the world around them. And, you know, rooting for them to succeed and a bit of a different way.

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Yes. And the example that Louis breaks down in our podcast episode is baby Houseman from Dirty Dancing, which was a really fun conversation. So we go more depth into, into that example, 10 out of 10 recommend. Okay, so as we as we start to wrap up here, let's talk about the plotter and Pantsers spectrum, a little bit more. So if we remember our cycle here are prod events create conflict, which create character choices, which create consequences that lead us back in and to plot events. There are a lot of different ways for our, our different habits or different brains to navigate within the cycle. Everything that we've taught you is adaptable to whatever your process is, the theory remains the same. But here are some like tips and tricks you might think about. If you, wherever you find yourself on this scale, I saw a couple of people mentioned their planters. Excellent, I love that I find myself there too. So take these tips, apply them however you want. And just know that this is a tool for you to use, in whatever way



makes more sense to you. Now I am, I find myself typically more on the pantsier side. So when I approach this activity, when I approach like drafting, writing my story planning and plotting it, I usually think a lot less about the events that are happening. And I tend to think more about the characters that are present in my book. So I usually prioritize knowledge of those character flaws. Because if my characters are going to make flawed choices, I want to know what those choices are, so that I can lean really heavily into the consequences of those choices. So in that case, I tend to sit on the bottom of that cycle, where I prioritize those character choices and the complaint, the consequences, let them influence how my characters react, let the events that happen, come as they come. But I usually put less emphasis on plot events. And I put more emphasis on a character's broad reactions to those events. So all of that I'm coming up with, I'm letting my you know, my story reveal itself as I go. That I'm navigating within this cycle, I'm really remembering that like, I need to have characters making decisions, I need to have consequences for those decisions. And whatever those consequences, cause, like I'm gonna follow that trail, and continue to make sure my characters react to them. Now, if you're a plotter, like Emily, yeah, so if you're

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Emily 1:23:11

a plotter, like me, I tend to look at the whole story kind of from a high level first, and start to look at, you know, these are the pieces of the story that I want. And here's how they work together. Right? I'm, I'm puzzling it together. And so what i The mistake that I see plotters make the most is that they come up with an outline of like, this happens, then this happens, and this happens, and this happens. But they're not thinking about how those things are happening because of the choices that their characters are making. And so my biggest advice is to look at what are the big plot events in your story? And are they testing your character's internal obstacle? And are they happening because of choices that your character is making? Are they are big, you know, failures at the midpoint and the all is lost? And the you know, all the beats all the failure beats? Are they happening because of decisions that your character has made? Because if they're not, you want to back up and figure out okay, how can I make this the last domino right in the choices that my character has made, so that I'm really setting them up to learn from these failures. And then the last thing that I would say is, I always suggest if you're if you're a big plotter, like me to look at the forest before you go into the trees, a lot of potter's want to be like, Oh, I'm gonna put this tree here and this tree here in this tree there, right? And that's fine. And there's nothing wrong with that. But it is important to zoom out and look at, right, you can use this graph that we have the graphic of the ark, to start to put together what I call the tent poles of your story, right and make sure that these big moments in your story are tied together. That the bad plan your character makes at the beginning of Act Two is setting them up for their plot failure at the end of app two, and then start to zoom in. So if you're in tenacious writing, I would recommend doing the shape of character arcs. Stuff First, then going to what we call pivot plans. We have a podcast about pivot plans as well. But and lots of classes about it. So then go to the pivot plans and then go down to the Save the cat beats and you'll you'll have a chain that really works together. And the how to craft a page turner masterclass is a really good one to look at the next kind of level of this plotting process.



1:25:27

Wonderful. Okay, so, any questions? I am a huge fan of David S. Pumpkins, and that's why this slide exists.



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Emily 1:25:39

Should we do a QA video for this?



1:25:44

Yeah, we can time where overtime. I would like to address the questions that have been asked about sign character. So far. Friends, earlier, we had some questions about how to handle sign characters arcs in relation to the main characters are, if you have multiple characters do both go through the change? What is the plot? Like? The plot has impact on both? And the high level answers that question? Yes, yes. If you're having character go through an arc of change, this can apply to all of them. And just kind of depends on how big and how small is it going to happen? And how how much focus you're going to be putting on their individual arcs. So for example, a side character might have a very small arc where you where you peel, you like zoom in a lot, you peel it back, it's not as in depth, but they still are, you know, having choices that impact or that create consequences that then affect the plot. We have a podcast and a masterclass if your intonation is writing on the purpose of secondary characters. What I really think is important when you're approaching of side characters arc is to understand what purpose they have in the story in relation to your main characters arc. So are they helping the main character learn the story point? Do they need to learn it themselves? Depending on what purpose you give them, their arc may look a little bit different. But all of these same things can still be happening to them. And yes, the park should have impact for both. That's also why I think it's really important to lean heavily into a character's flaws and their reactions to plot events. Because one plot event might have different meaning for two different characters, yet still push them along an arc of change. So some of this also has to do with who what are that secondary characters flaws? Or how are they navigating throughout the story? What's the lesson they're trying to learn? If they don't know it? Yeah, already. But yes, the plot should impact all of your characters. And you can give them their own reactions to presidents give them their own choices, which create more consequences, which impact relationship dynamics, because of one character is making a choice because of a plot event that is in conflict with another character's choice. For that same plot event, you're just going to continue to create conflict, and those characters will push each other down this path. Yeah. What else did you have to add there?

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Emily 1:28:28

I think you covered it. Yeah, I mean, secondary characters definitely can and should have arcs that are intentional. And even if they're static, sometimes secondary characters are static, but you want to make sure they're representing something whether they're representing the internal obstacle, the bad decisions that they make, or the story point through the good ones that they make. You want to make sure that you're intentional about how they're interacting with the, the core layers of your story, which are your main characters arc, and your main parliaments. Awesome.



1:29:01



Awesome. Any other



Emily 1:29:05

any other burning questions?



1:29:07

Yeah. Any other any other burning? Questions? I don't think I missed any. I guess if you feel like I missed your question, and I'm not addressing it right now. Again. Oh, Nicholas, how would you balance a character arc over the course of a trilogy? This is such an excellent question. Okay, high level, we have a we have a whole class. We have a whole class about planning a series to perfection in tenacious



Emily 1:29:33

writing. Yeah. It's



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like a two hour class and it kind of it goes really in depth into it. But there are a few ways you can approach it. Number one, that I'll say characters can have different types of ARCs depending on what book they're at. It's very common for a character to perhaps have a positive arc in book one, maybe a negative arc in Book Two, and back to a positive arc in Book Three in they can change their arc style. So the first question is, you know, do you have an idea of the type of arc that you want them to have, depending on book. Now, once you know that you can kind of plot out or think about, you don't need to plot it, like where they start and where they end at the beginning and end of each book. I think of each book as its own arc. So I would not consider this as like one arc across all three. Yes, it it, cohesively will look that way. But it's pieces. Book one has an arc, but two has an arc. Book Three has an arc. So then you can think about what book one's flaw and what's book one story point. What's book twos flaw? What's book two story points, and kind of break it down further into these, the very same thing that we just talked about? Just apply it to three books at once? The only difference is that your ko hit, you're considering the cohesiveness across three. And you're also considering whether or not you have a whole series point like a trilogy point, what's the big picture message that you're trying to say? And how can you break that down into smaller



Emily 1:31:14

pieces? Yeah, it's like little stepping stone lessons that they have to learn in order to prepare them for the big lesson, they're going to learn at the end, they in that two hour courses for tenacious writing members, it is called Planning Planning series to perfection, perfection. I we talk about the different story, the different arcs that Harry has inherited Potter, which I think is a good example, because Harry has he's got a couple positive arcs. And then book four, he's

actually static, book five, he has a negative arc. And then you go back to positive arcs. So it kind of is a mixture of arcs to keep things interesting, because you know, it would be boring if he was just succeeding at every single book. So yeah, that's an example of that, and we talk about how his lessons build on one another to prepare him for that what happens in the final book? Um, so Phyllis asks, I'm writing a memoir. So I already know, the plot, but what you're teaching me can choose which scenes to include in which order? Yes, absolutely. And my question is, what kinds of scenes should be included in Act Three after I've had a change in belief, so that would be in a fiction story, it's hard because it memoir is a little tricky, just because right you're working with with material that is, you know, that's real life in real life. It's not fiction. It's not as easy to place into buckets. But if you're trying to show that you've had a change in belief, and that that has impacted your life in a positive way, I would look at scenes and moments to show where you have had a plan of action and made choices based on that news, or a point belief that have had that end up having positive consequences. Those are the types of things that I would include in that act. Great question. And then yes, Peggy, we can talk about tenacious writing. Let's go to the Yeah. So to wrap up, we teach classes like this all the time, we have over 40 classes like this, in races writing. We also have events all of the time, we have a Slack channel, we have a community, we have feedback groups, critique partnerships, it is the best place to be to build your best, most sustainable writing life. We are all about individuality, the uniqueness of your process, helping you figure out how craft is going to work for your brain, helping you work through your inner demons, your perfectionist voices and impostor syndromes and all the things that show up to keep us from the page, we are actively working through rewriting those together. And the community is a one price one time fee of \$2,000. And it we have payment plans available. But once you have paid that you are in forever. And so the reason that we set it up that way is because we know that writer, right life happens sometimes where you're reading a lot, sometimes we're not writing so much. Sometimes we just want to learn sometimes we just want to write like we go back and forth, we always need different things. And so we wanted it to be available for you to just take what you need to not feel like you have to rush to have everything at your fingertips that you it's a lot. There's a lot in there and you get to choose what you need at this point in your writing life. And we have a little tour video. And that's on the landing page that Rachel just put in the chat. It's tenacious writing.com For those of you who are listening, it's amazing. If you have any questions about it, please feel free to email us at info at Golden my editing.com We would be happy to talk to you about it. We know it's a you know it's a commitment to do that. It's a commitment of money and also of your time right you're committing to In a community, we want to make sure that it's the right fit for you. So if you have any questions at all about it, please don't hesitate to reach out. Dennis anything?



1:35:09

No, I think that's, that's awesome. Cool. Cool. Oh, one last question. Any suggestions if you have to reverse engineer this process after Writing Your Novel, Peggy, you're speaking my language, this is what I do. I am also a pantsler. So when you you write the book you've passed through it. When you get to the end, you can act you can like try to map your current plot events, to exactly what we've talked about today, I typically like to do a reverse outline, which is basically just out outlining your book after you've already written it so that you can see it in all of its pieces. This is a great place to start doing that, where you can plug in, you know, what you have already written into this shaped graph? And if that can help you see, you know, is your problem really challenging that internal explicitly? Have they enacted a plan, a flawed plan that's led them through act two? What's that big failure moment? Does it need to be bigger? Is it showing them the change? So just ask all these same questions. But do it when

your doctor is done. And then that can give you a path into revision? A path into like, what changes you need to make? I hope that answers your question. But that works really well for me.

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Emily 1:36:36

Hi, Billy, thank you all so much for your patience, too. And I know I'm thinking everyone on the recording who's listening to the recording who couldn't be here, we're so sorry. We missed you. And we hope that you have enjoyed it. And thank you, everyone, for your patience. We, yeah, we really appreciate it. And there's gonna be resources, slides are coming. All these links are live, you can you can go look at all this stuff and keep following up and learning more. And then there's another slide in here of resources for folks who are in tenacious writing, with direct links to the next classes that we would recommend you check out based on whatever your curiosity leads you to want to learn next. Thank you so much. We hope to see you around.



1:37:23

We will we will see you around. We love having you here. We love having you part of our community. So have a great rest of your Tuesday, slash Wednesday. If you're in Australia. I know some of you.

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Emily 1:37:34

Thank you. Awesome. Thank you. Okay, I'm gonna end the Zoom now. Hi, hi, everyone.