

Taking A Journey Together: Story Arcs and Your Reader

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You can enhance the emotional journey your readers make when you learn the structure readers expect from you. The basics of story arc center around timing, sequence, and resolution.

Timing: When things happen according to the conventions of your genre.

Sequence: The logic of your characters actions. Think *because of this decision, the next thing happened*. Everything you make your characters do should reflect the logical conclusion of choices they have made in previous scenes.

Resolution: Not just the end of the story, but the way the story ends. When wrapping up the action, think of the emotional impact on your reader, and resolve the issues in a way that is appropriate for your genre.

Make sure you understand and appreciate the conventions of your genre, but don't be bound by them. Create your own style, not only with your concepts and characters, but in your plot twists.

Remember that story arc describes movement. Your readers want to be immersed in the characters' lives, to experience their highs and lows, to be swept along to your magnificent ending. You want to include ups and downs in each chapter, but keep in mind the overall direction of your arc to reach the conclusion you want.

There are many fine references for writers. My two favorites, which treat story arc and a whole lot more, are:

Story Genius: How To Use Brain Science To Go Beyond Outlining And Write A Riveting Novel by Lisa Cron (Ten Speed Press, 2016)

Blockbuster Plots by Martha Alderson (Illusion Press, 2004)