

The Art of Story Telling

- Overview
 - Resources
 - writing groups
 - readings
 - get notes
 - pitch stories
 - reiterate movie synopses for movies you just saw
- Carl Iglesias : Crafting a compelling story for emotional impact
 - Resources
 - Book: The 101 Habits of of Highly Successful Screenwriters
 - Book: Writing for emotional impact (this is a great book, what the pros use)
 - Mag: Creative Screenwriting
 - Expo: Screenwriting expo in LA
 - Overview of today's lecture
 - What storytelling is all about
 - What makes a story work for audiences
 - the audiences 5 emotional needs
 - the 3 types of storytelling emotions
 - character emotions vs audience emotions
 - the storyteller's double task
 - crafting a great story
 - a quick note about scenes for shorts
 - painting with pixels
 - The storyteller's eternal question
 - what makes a story work for audiences?
 - Identify with characters
 - curious about the ending
 - What works for Pixar?
 - Conflict and resolution
 - A journey
 - Connects with your dreams
 - Suspends belief
 - Transformation in character
 - Character who has a goal, has a journey
 - It's all about emotions
 - Examples
 - curiosity
 - suspense
 - comedy
 - anticipation "what will happen next?"
 - Hollywood trades in human emotions
 - It's in the "EMOTIONAL DELIVERY" business
 - Pay attention to the "reviewer blurbs", studios pick sound bytes to print in poster
 - emotional tour de force
 - mesmerizing
 - Harry Potter had paragraph in 2-page ad: emotional thing was in blue, promising emotion.
 - You as storytellers want to generate the same thing
 - F. Scott Fitzgerald:
 - "Screenplays are carefully written and ordered in such a way that the audience has no choice but to feel exactly what the writers want them to feel"
 - "I'm in the emotion-delivery business and my job is to evoke emotions in an audience"
 - Stories are "emotion machines"
 - The storyteller's double-task
 - Create concept, setting, characters, plot, dialogue (basic story)
 - Create emotional response
 - Audiences 5 emotional needs
 - 1 The need for new information
 - 2 The need to bond
 - 3 The need for conflict resolution
 - 4 The need for completion (closure)
 - 5 The need for ENTERTAINMENT (emotional impact)
 - The 3 types of emotions

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- Voyeuristic
- Vicarious (bonding with character)
- Visceral (The experience of visceral emotions = Entertainment)
- Character emotion vs Audience Emotions
 - Ex: Jaws (naked woman swimming, what is she feeling? Pleasure in character. Audience is feeling tension when they hear the dum-dum sound.)
 - Ex: Comedy slipping on banana peel (char: pain, aud: laughter)
- Crafting a great story : simple universal formula
 - Someone wants something badly, and is having difficulty getting it
 - Want several obstacles
 - In a short film, it can sometimes be a single obstacle
 - Conflict. Dramatic Action
 - Goal - Obstacle - Unwillingness to compromise
 - Example:
 - guy wants to go on a trip, sets alarm to catch plane
 - alarm doesn't go off
 - If he says "forget it", there's no story
 - He has to still want to go there
 - Runs to his car
 - Car doesn't start
 - misses plane
 - has to take boat
- The key to all successful stories
 - TENSION!
 - all other emotions fit into this
 - curiosity/mystery
 - anticipation/hope
 - suspense/worry
 - surprise/excitement
- Curiosity
 - Our need to answer questions
 - Every story is a mystery
 - The power of questions
 - Set up one central question...
 - And one for every beat of your story
 - Ex: For the birds, Academy Award winning short. On wire: why are we here, what is it all about?
- Anticipation
 - The most important emotion of your arsenal
 - Several emotions grow out of it
 - Fear and suspense = anticipation of danger
 - Worry = anticipation of loss
 - hope = anticipation of pleasant event
 - Dread = anticipation of unpleasant event
 - Anticipation must be fulfilled!
 - Ex: waiting for phone call that never happened
 - In story, it HAS to be fulfilled otherwise there's frustration
- Anticipation techniques
 - Plans
 - ex: "we'll kill you at noon"
 - Problem-solution
 - For every cause there's an effect
 - Set up a problem, and anticipate potential solution
 - ex: big bird on wire, let's peck
 - Forward movement
 - ex: man and woman, man goes to apt and they talk about weather (boring)
 - but let's see if earlier we knew they're married, and he knew she had an affair, and puts gun in his back pocket, and now he comes over and they talk about weather (tension)
 - Control the balance between frustration and reward
 - frustration is easy (late for apt, forgot my remote for my lecture, don't find cab, but if you get a cab that's the reward)
 - lost your key (frustration)
 - bellhop gives key (reward)
 - In horror films, woman runs away from monster
 - falls down F
 - gets up R
 - gets to car R

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- gets in R
- car doesn't start F
- eventually starts R
- Misunderstanding & Deception
 - someone is dressed as a woman but is a man
 - Three's company
 - Deception: the red herring
 - If you have a sequence of events that follow a pattern, and throw in an extra item that follows the
 - "false clue" -- leads the audience to one conclusion but isn't the real clue so it's the wrong conclusion
 - prison escapees would bring red herrings to throw off the hound dogs
- Audience superior position
 - You have knowledge the characters don't
 - ex: you know the husband has the gun but wife doesn't
 - ex: the show 24
 - ex: hitchcock showed 2 people talking in restaurant for 15 minutes, suddenly bomb goes off that was under their table but they didn't know
 - another scenario (have camera pan down to see bomb)
 - 15 minutes of boredom + 1 second of shock is not as powerful as 15 minutes of tension
 - tootsie: man is really woman, when is someone going to find out?
- Suspense
 - should be everywhere in script
 - the tension of the stretched wire in for the birds
 - creates uncertainty
 - concerns probabilities
 - higher probability something will happen, higher suspense
 - ex: diffusing bomb, says it'll explode in 2008. suspense? No! Why? High probability it'll be done!
 - Reader must care about the outcome
 - The Formula
 - Caring about character + likelihood of thread + uncertainty of outcome = SUSPENSE
- Ten suspense techniques (don't use ALL at same time)
 - 1 create opposition
 - 2 force character to make difficult moral choice
 - ex: sophie's choice
 - 3 contrast character with environment (fish out of water technique)
 - ex: beverly hills cop
 - ex: for the birds
 - ex: odd couple
 - 4 The trap or crucible
 - closed environment
 - common in horror films
 - ex: apollo 13
 - ex: lifeboat
 - ex: snakes on plane
 - ex: die hard on building, phone booth, train
 - ex: cube (sci fi movie)
 - 5 raise the stakes
 - stakes can be belonging to group (hierarchy of needs, from least important to most [survival, water, air, food])
 - ex: Love, won't get girl of your dreams
 - ex: tanning on beach, will burn, but go into water and might drown = life
 - 6 increase jeopardy
 - ex: when bird flips upside down, will he fall?
 - 7 set up deadlines or time limit
 - ex: plane running out of fuel
 - ex: someone falling from building
 - ex: someone diffusing bomb
 - 8 Increase desperation
 - ex: missing alarm to plane, the more things you miss, the more desperate
 - 9 Increase unpredictability of situation or character
 - ex: reservoir dogs guy played by michael madson, you have no idea what he'll do (he cuts off ear)
 - 10 Don't forget tension release!
 - ex: can't fall asleep, finally fall asleep
 - ex: raiders of lost ark guy approaches with lots of knives (tension), he just shoots him (tension release causes laughter)
- Surprise
 - Unexpected anticipation
 - everyone loves surprises

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- ex: sixth sense
- set-up is not as crucial as pay-off
 - ex: bruce willis' character who doesn't throw fight, ends up in shop of horrors is payoff
- Surprise techniques
 - coincidence
 - beware of "deus ex machina" (gods in the machine)
 - used to have story which was ended by having gods descend from above and ends the story
 - major problem shouldn't be solved by someone else
 - ex: jurassic park when kids are running, and trex solves problem. He wanted kids to solve the problem
 - ex: war of the worlds
 - shock
 - ex: horses head in godfather
 - reversals
 - ex: complete 180 degree turn in story
 - ex: poor person becomes rich
 - ex: sixth sense
 - ex: usual suspects
 - set-up and pay-off
 - misdirection
 - the lifeline
 - object or skill that's setup in beginning of story that will solve the problem in the end
 - ex: aliens forklift kills aliens
 - ex: could be skill that he uses that you've known about
 - discoveries and revelations
 - character discovers something or something is revealed
 - ex: usual suspects
 - you can pepper the story with small discoveries and revelations
 - Secrets
 - Secret plan
 - ex: TV series mission impossible
- One more dramatic strategy
 - Poetic Justice (i.e., fate or karma)
 - ex: for the birds
 - ex: bad guy gets his due
 - ex: loser beat up becomes top guy in end
 - A note about scenes for shorts
 - a scene is a mini-story with a beginning, middle and end
 - Must have conflict, or the promise of conflict
 - ex: couple talking with guy and gun [promise of conflict]
 - Someone wants something badly and is having difficulty getting it
 - Should be constructed in terms of its effects on the audience
- "You're a painter on the computer screen, and emotions are the colors of your palette"
- A famous screenwriter said: "You want to give the audience what they want, just not in the way they want/expect it"
- Rob Tobin
 - There's a worry that "story" hasn't kept up with the technical aspects
 - Resources
 - Book: "Hot to Write High Structure, High Concept Movies"
 - Book: "Screenwriting 101" coming Sp07
 - DVDs available
 - Screenwriting is most like Architecture!
 - they combine aesthetics and structure
 - every element in a building has to be in correct relationship to each other, supporting each other
 - You can have a ceiling in LA, a floor in Chicago, etc Unless they support each other, they don't add up to anything
 - "But I'm an artist, I want to create beauty and meaning, not boring stilted structure"
 - "There IS no beauty or meaning without structure (in houses or movies)
 - Structure is like a glass, holding the fine wine (that's your story)
 - There are always exceptions to structure
 - If you're going to be brilliant and break the rules, you should at least know what the rules were that you were breaking! (Picasso did)
 - You'll know what the effect will be
 - Otherwise, it'll be an accident
 - This is a model that has been followed by the majority of produced screenplays
 - ex: Donnie Darko
 - ex: Memento
 - The seven elements

The Art of Story Telling

- Hero
 - story is told from hero's POV
 - guides you through the story
 - Doesn't have to be nice, but better be interesting
 - Characters arc (usually)
 - Begin at A (ex: cheap character) and end at B (discovers the value of generosity)
 - ex: forrest gump (hero called steadfast character, doesn't win by changing, wins by remaining same. Jenny is the one who goes through the transformation and eventually comes back and learns to trust.)
 - No character arc (tragedy)
 - ex: leaving lost vegas. Cage has the opportunity for change and hope, ignores it
 - It's always the hero's story (not the story of the backdrop)
 - ex: boxing (rocky) rocky
 - ex: car racing (cars) lightning
 - ex: big business (aviator) howard hughes
 - ex: love affair (little mermaid) ariel
 - ex: ice age (ice age) manfred
- Ally
 - Help hero to goal, or overcome his/her flaw
 - first act is hero's act
 - second act is ally's act (usually spends most time onscreen in second act with hero)
 - third act is opponent's act
 - must have a believable qualifications to help hero
 - positive role model: someone who's been there, a wise advisor
 - negative role model : someone even worse off than hero - the logical extreme
- Lifechanging event
 - Usually occurs at the end of the first act
 - Instigated by the opponent (defines antagonistic relationship)
 - Should never be by chance
 - Forces hero to choose between his flaw and opportunity
 - Flaw is sometimes not a flaw (but could be a defense technique they developed in life)
 - Ex: forrest gump's Jenny may have withdrawn as a kid, but is a flaw as an adult
 - Hero cannot have opportunity until flaw overcome
 - Must choose between suit of armor and life
- Hero's flaw
 - Flaw must be believable (Rocky couldn't have grown up in Bel Air)
 - The flaw must match
 - the enabling circumstances
 - lifechanging event
 - background and the character of the hero
 - The flaw must be rooted in a past event
 - Must prevent hero from responding to the Lifechanging event
- Jeopardy
 - Must be significant enough for audience to care unless a broad comedy
 - Must increase throughout second act. If world ends too soon (page 30), you have nowhere to go!
- Opponent
 - Must be fully drawn unless in "cartoon" = superman, exaggerated character
 - Must be match for hero, not just physically but emotionally and PHILOSOPHICALLY
 - POV must be at least as strong and viable as hero's
 - Third act is opponent's act and is primarily a philosophically battle
 - What matters is who wins philosophically -- any other victory is an empty one
 - In Romantic Comedies (rom coms), opponent and ally often same person
- Enabling Circumstances
 - Hero has flaw that he/she wants to maintain as a defense against hurt -- a suit of armor
 - Finds or creates for him or herself
 - Must be shown as hero's "home"
- Objective and Subjective Storylines
 - Objective:
 - physical backdrop and challenge
 - ex: does rocky learn to box better
 - physical problems and hurdles
 - Often and objective ally and subjective ally
 - ex: trainer is training objective to beat, adrian is training to be fearless, know he's safe
 - Subjective
 - emotional backdrop and challenge
 - the level on which hero has to overcome his own personal flaw

The Art of Story Telling

- ex: metro (eddie murphy) cop didn't have to overcome anything to catch bad guy, they had more film to shoot, so they let bad guy go and caught him again
- flaw always exists on subjective level
- subjective level is most important in acts 1 & 2
- hero cannot be victorious on objective level until he has been victorious on subjective level
- Loglines
 - One or two sentence capture of story
 - Pitching loglines
 - Meant only to sell the script
 - Does not need all elements
 - Titanic, ET, Brokeback
 - Diagnostic loglines
 - meant to diagnose structure integrity of script
 - need all elements in proper relationship to each other
 - diagnostic paragraph
 - goes something like this
 - HERO
 - with a FLAW
 - living in ENABLING CIRCUMSTANCES
 - experiences a LIFECHANGING EVENT instigated by the OPPONENT that forces him to choose between flaw and opp
 - with the help of a qualified ALLY overcomes his FLAW and great JEOPARDY to confront the opponent in the final act
 - ex: Titanic fails because it doesn't have second act
 - Examples of obj and subj storylines
 - antz
 - sub: will z find inner strength to
 - obj: will z beat the general and be leader
 - incredibles
 - subj: will bob regain courage he once had
 - obj: can incredibles rescue bob?
 - lion king
 - subj: can simba overcome guilt
 - obj: can he defeat scar
 - shrek:
 - subj: can shrek overcome antisocial
 - obj: can he get fiona
 - what shrek wants (to return to swamp)
 - brokeback
 - sub: can ennis overcome fear
 - obj: can they be together
 - tragedy! never happens
 - millino dollar baby
 - sub: can frankie redeem himself as father figure?
 - obj: can maggie win?
 - The hook
 - Adds intrinsic conflict and/or comedy
 - ex: rain man (math genius is boring, but what if he's exploited by his brother)
 - ex: math genius works as a janitor at MIT
 - ex: math genius is schizophrenic and doesn't know what's real and what isn't
 - ultimate hook: two young people fall in love on the maiden voyage of a ship
 - the search for love
 - subject storyline is always (almost) search for love
 - ex: million dollar baby, frankie is trying to get love from maggie
 - ex: rocky is struggling for love from his father
 - Story begins when hero's struggle for love emerges on objective level
 - ex: frankie taking maggie under his wing
- Credible Dialogue and Characters
 - No mysterious 'ear' for dialogue needed
 - it's not how it's said as much as what is said and whether it's consistent with other elements of the story and of the character
- performs several functions
 - imparts information
 - ex: french maids starting scene by dusting and explaining life
 - sets mood or tone
 - instigates action
 - moves story forward
 - creates conflict or drama

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- entertains (CRITICAL)
- bad dialogue results from
 - inconsistent syntax
 - anachronisms
 - geographical inconsistencies
 - cultural inconsistencies
 - inconsistencies based on the age of the speaker OR the age of the speaker OR listener
- With every scene and speech
 - reveal character
 - reveal information
 - advance story
 - entertain
 - BUT NEVER AT THE COST OF CONSISTENCY BETWEEN CHARACTERS, ACTIONS AND EVENTS
- If authors needs conflict with character, always be true to character
- Consistent with
 - political climate and current events
 - ex: cell phones changed everything
- author intrusion
- examples of GREAT dialogue
 - You make me want to be a better man
 - Charlie Allnut: A man takes a drop too much once in a while, it's only human nature.
Rose Sayer: Nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put in this world to rise above
 - color purple: I think it pisses God off when you walk by the color purple in a field and don't notice it.
- Peter Mellencamp
 - Meta-comments
 - Think of social implications, the meta-message
 - I encourage you to break the rules, but you need to understand the ramifications of breaking too many rules
 - Basics of story structure (the most important part of [hollywood] movies)
 - Difference between drama (novel) and narrative (movie/stage)
 - Narrative TELLS US SOMETHING you can be taken inside the head of the people, be told what they're feeling
 - Drama SHOWS US SOMETHING (includes movies and animated movies) -- all you get is what the people are doing/thinking
 - Any story is essentially about us, we anthropomorphize
 - Drama is "A SERIES OF EVENTS ... WITH TWISTS ... DEVELOPMENTS ... AND CHANGES"
 - The second act is where you need the complication, and is often where stories fall down
 - The central question is "what is the thing in the movie that needs to be solved?"
 - an EVENT is anything that changes the situation
 - ex: hero who dines with father can be a great scene but might not be event
 - Dramatic Action
 - The main character wants something
 - but obstacles prevent him from getting the thing
 - so he has to keep trying
 - and there is something at stake (something to be lost if he fails)
 - Story Structure : The Most Crucial Aspects of Storytelling
 - The three act structure
 - Comes from the theatre
 - Beginning, middle, end
 - Setup, development, resolution
 - Any dramatic story arguably has three sections
 - ACT I
 - Opening, sets tone, foreshadows the plot
 - Tells us genre
 - Setup: the initiation of the story
 - What makes this day different than any other day?
 - We'll see "initiating event"
 - Character exposition
 - What are their goals and aspirations?
 - ACT II
 - Things develop...
 - become more complicated...
 - and more tense...
 - In a movie, this lasts the longest
 - ex: Toy Story 2 has the best Act II (things keep happening)
 - ACT III
 - Climax & Resolution
 - Conflict

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- What the characters want
- must be active, not passive
- resolved through action
- One unifying conflict throughout
- Theme
 - Arguably, what makes it art
 - The thing that makes you think
- Climax and Resolution
 - Satisfying
 - Sufficient size
 - Payoff the story as a whole
 - Resolve the conflict
 - and the story threads
- Mythology : The Origin of Storytelling
 - Pedagogical aspect of mythology
 - It's how humans learn social behavior, as opposed to facts
 - Hugh Hefner: "I've learned everything I know about love from the movies"
 - Joseph Campbell's "The Hero's Journey" paradigm
 - He looked at mythology all over the world and found common themes, the way nobody had done before
 - Opening (Act I)
 - hero is in ordinary world
 - things are fairly static
 - ex: prince in his kingdom
 - There's some sort of community problem
 - ex: sphynx eating people
 - ex: plague, or nature out of balance
 - Call to adventure
 - "Come on this adventure"
 - Hero often says "no, I'm comfortable"
 - ex: Star Wars has Luke go after many calls
 - Leaves or is cast into the WILDERNESS (Act II)
 - He's on a quest, he might know or not know
 - problems to overcome
 - mentores and helpers
 - the ultimate test
 - the darkest hour
 - the hero learns some sort of wisdom
 - He finds a "boon", something to take back from wilderness
 - The return (Act III)
 - He comes back from wilderness
 - (usually quickly, maybe chased)
 - He brings back the boon
 - and cures his society's ills
 - Archetypal Characteristics
 - Hero
 - Mentor / Ally
 - Threshold guardian
 - Character who is guarding some sort of gate hero needs to get through, someone to be conquered.
 - Or convert to an ally
 - Or subvert
 - ex: assistant to mafia don
 - Herald
 - Someone with information in some aspect or another
 - Shapeshifter
 - Somebody who is hard to define, who takes on different aspects
 - ex: lover who later wants to do hero harm
 - Shadow
 - Dark side
 - Often usually the villain, the antagonist
 - Represents that which we don't like about ourselves
 - Trickster
 - Often the comic relief
 - motives are obscured
 - Bards
 - They told stories

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- Discussion of "The Lion King" : Is it really mythological?
 - Deliberately written that way
 - Also written by committee
 - Opening (Act I)
 - What's being taught to "divine right of kings"
 - Stay in your caste, stay where you're born
 - Starts with Simba displayed to crowd
 - Get char development
 - Has a little adventure with girlfriend
 - Scar is introduced, schemes to get rid of king, does this
 - Father is killed in rescuing king
 - Scar tells baby it was his fault and he runs off
 - Wilderness (Act II)
 - What's supposed to happen is he has challenges and learns something
 - He meets two animals, and sings "hakuna matata" = no worries
 - He gets older, and has learned ... nothing!
 - Baboon finds him, simba talks to his dead father, is TOLD (doesn't learn) he has responsibility
 - He should have LEARNED responsibility and have had obstacles to overcome
 - He's told "you must do what your class tells you to do", divine right of kings, take the throne
 - He races back
 - What is the boon? That he has responsibility
 - To be a king! (Act III)
 - How does he cure the society's ills? through violence, and 'kills him'
- Campbell: "The hero with a thousand faces"
 - "the problem of mankind today is opposite of that that earlier. the community today is the planet, not the tribe."
 - Stories are what create the social order, not politicians
- Timeless notions which are NOT timeless
 - The king will save us
 - great men, superheros are things that will save us
 - we're powerless
 - The myth of redemptive violence
 - Violence is the way to solve and will make us better
 - Good & Evil
 - Prior to Zoroaster, they were like yin & yang
 - Good and evil were balanced and caused the tension that always existed
 - At the beginning of time, they were one and split
 - At the end of time they reunite into a beautiful thing
 - Zoroaster created a mythology in which evil and good are fundamental principles that exist in a timeless way
 - You can now demonize things (muslims, jews, blacks) who is not like me, and I don't have to take responsibility for that group of people
 - Romantic Love
 - Our notion today were created by troubadors in S of France in 12th century (noblemen)
 - Many of the men were off at the crusades
 - Courtly love
 - Something pure, not related to sexuality
 - Image of lady in tower with white bonnet
 - Knight on horse below proclaiming love from afar
 - She needs him to convince her that she loves her for her soul not just for her body, which is too base
 - He has to prove it by doing deeds to show it he loves her
 - What is our idea of romantic love today?
 - "I'm looking for my knight in shining armor to carry me away to his castle"
 - Our idea of the ideal of romantic love
- Star Trek : The Next Generation
 - One aspect of ancient mythology was Bards who would tell stories using stock characters
 - In a TV show, you have different adventures, the same thing
 - Almost every single character was a misfit, and makes them an outcast
 - Worf is the only klingon on starfleet
 - Data is the only android
 - Troi is empathic
 - Was delighted that it was THE most popular show for young males of some age group
 - The first Star Trek was the old fashioned version
 - Kirk was king, all powerful
 - Picard was a new kind of leader, would ask for advice
- "Sacred Pleasure" by Riane Eisler

The Art of Story Telling

- Development over 5,000 years about how human culture became to be dominated by violence and pain rather than peace and pleasure
- She talks about stories, and their value
- The Future of Visual Storytelling
- James P. Mercurio
 - Meta:
 - music, poems also has beats
 - put all your care into each piece of dialogue, and then into each scene, and then into each act, at all levels
 - Killer Endings
 - He'll often time sequences to figure out how long it takes until they answer questions
 - In the 60s, it was 8-9min; now it's 3-4min
 - He thought "sixth sense" was slow, but the ending transformed the experience
 - If you play golf and ace the 18th hole, it was a great day
 - "Obligatory Scene"
 - The scene you have to show the audience
 - "Exciting Incident"
 - The scene that gets things out of whack, the early
 - Definitions
 - Goal
 - Something physical / external to pursue
 - Need
 - The psychological growth necessary for the character
 - ex: American Beauty -- need: get in touch with the youth, goal: touch that youth (ha ha)
 - Dilemma
 - A choice between two equally good or two equally bad options
 - ex: Sophie's choice (which of your children to die, the ultimate dilemma)
 - The dilemma has to fit with the character
 - What would you put against love?
 - Honor, love of country
 - ex: romeo and juliet love vs family pressure
 - ex: brokeback (love vs society's level)
 - Crisis - climax - resolution
 - Crisis - decision to be made
 - Climax - moment of decision, decision, choice or change
 - Resolution - the result, aftermath
 - There might be 10 small versions of this throughout the film until the final resolution
 - Definition of Story
 - Smallest unit of action in a drama is called a "beat"
 - Lots of beats is a scene, which has a climax
 - You have to get out once you have the climax
 - why did the chicken cross the road?
 - to get to the other side of the road (kill end)
 - You're not getting out of here until you kiss me tonight (kill end)
 - Lots of scenes is a sequence
 - Lots of sequences is an act
 - Who would want to watch an obstacle course movie for 2 hours
 - not many, except for raiders of the lost ark (haha)
 - but in officer and gentleman, there's a course but there's an issue of helping a friend vs completing the course, etc
 - What is first, structure or character? [the eternal question, ala objects first?]
 - they work the same!
 - 5 paradigms for endings
 - Dilemma
 - ex: godfather as michael. I don't want this world, but my family needs me
 - ex: million dollar baby. coach has hurt daughter and boxers in the past. someone comes in who's the age of his daughter. oh, yeah, and at the end, to save her is to kill her.
 - Projection
 - Go inside their mind, take them all the way, give them the ultimate challenge
 - What's the last thing in the world this character would like to do?
 - ex: jaws (maybe guy's afraid of the water, how can I mess with him? put him out in the water with no gun with a water monster)
 - Antagonist
 - How to find your ending
 - the antagonist embodies the inner conflict of THIS protagonist
 - prays on weakness of THAT character
 - Character Arc
 - Irreversible change in character that is driven by the story

The Art of Story Telling

- character is reborn, like a pheonix
- character was half, becomes whole
- character was flawed, sees the light
- Theme
 - Actions drive the theme to speak the message
 - ex: casablanca, what's against love (love of country, cause, duty)
 - theme is "there's a higher love" -- he chooses both
 - How do you support the theme? An alley oop!
 - ex: godfather he wrote a scene where michael and don corleone, and warns him that whoever comes to him with a deal, he's the traitor
 - That theme allows the ending to be seen in a different way
 - ex: good will hunting when he says "someday I hope you're not here when I come to pick you up for work" sets it up. If he explicitly were to say that, it would not have the effect. It's the subtlety!
 - ex: the winning catch of the world series doesn't have to have flourish. When he catches it the story speaks for itself.
 - The KILLER ENDING is perfect when you set it up so well that you don't have to do something special at the end for the payoff
- The killer ending is the unification of the goal and the need into one concise action
 - ex: to fight evil, you have to become evil
- Summary
 - You can create stories that are fun rollercoater rides, or that have meaning and are deep
 - If you can, be like Rick from Casablanca, and do BOTH!