

that darned inciting incident that we throw in their path will probably achieve that quite nicely... and the seed of change will be sown.

2. The Significance of the problem

Once we've acknowledged that a problem exists, be it within ourselves or out in our world, we need to realise the gravity, the magnitude of the problem. Our initial reaction will be to say 'oh sure, there's a problem, but it's not very serious' (do I need to mention global warming again?). Sprinkle some plot complications and your character is probably going to start appreciating that not addressing this problem has consequences, serious consequences. Sometimes for themselves, sometimes for those they care about, sometimes for the entire universe. Now they realise they can't sit on their haunches or hands, because there's definitely an issue, and it's definitely serious.

3. The Solvability of the problem



Okay, so we're moving along and our character has a problem, and they don't only know it, they know it's a biggy. But denial doesn't give up without a decent struggle, it's going to cling to conscious ignorance because facing this could be painful. It might mean sacrifice. It might mean our hearts or lives or loved ones on the line. Denial, clever and protective defence mechanism that it is, will tell your protagonist that sure, this is a serious problem, but there's nothing we can do about it. It's not solvable. There's no answer, no solution. But we're clever authors, and a solution will present itself. The seed will germinate. And change will be born.

4. Bringing it back to self.

So, your character has acknowledged the existence of the problem, they've grasped its magnitude, and they've realised the problem can be fixed. The next thing they'll do is ask themselves 'can I do something about it?' If they're stubborn, if you really want to make your protagonist (and reader) work for it, their initial reaction will be 'hell no'. What could be more hopeless than a problem, a problem with big consequences, and a solution that seems impossible... sounding like the 'all is lost moment'?

But they'll realise. They'll figure it out. That yes, they can do something about it. And darn it, they're going to do it right now! And bam, you've got your final act, that scene where Luke Skywalker takes down the Deathstar in a dramatic, glorious explosion. Where Frodo throws the ring into Mount Doom. Where Harry finally takes down Voldemort.

Sigh. I love the crossroads of psychology and writing. How the sub-conscious becomes conscious. How life and literature intersect. As a writer we have the privilege of exploring these sometimes universal human tendencies in worlds of our

own creating, with characters that practically live and breathe like we do. And in my books (pun intended!), that's why we write, and why we read.

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