

Is The Theme Running Throughout The Story? by Nick Vernon

Creative Writing Tips -

It's no use coming up with a theme and not using it. Short stories are about a character or characters and about one situation or happening in those characters lives.



By concentrating on that one thing, our stories are focused. You will need to focus to maintain a level of intensity and sticking to the theme enables us to do that.

Let me give you an example...

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### Scenario One

Let's say your story is about a young man (main character) who is being harassed (one situation) by the school bully (secondary character.) Let's place the setting in grade school.

Now if we focus on that single happening and in our story say....

- What started the bullying
- What the main character felt, confronted with this problem

- What the main character did to overcome this problem
- If the main character won or lost against the bully...

Then we'll be focusing only on that incident which is what our story is about.

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Scenario Two

Now if we took that situation further and in our story said that this character grew up and was bullied in high school and then later by a colleague...

That will be listing three incidences, which will weaken our story because we are not focusing.

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Remember a short story is short.

We don't have too much leeway to develop too many things so we have to be selective with what we choose to concentrate on. Short stories work best when they span over a short period of time.

Like in scenario one, this incident might span over a couple of days or a week, where in the second scenario, it spans over a number of years. The shorter the time span the more intense the story.

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Your theme should begin at the beginning, run through the middle and conclude in the end. So let's put a theme to the first scenario...

Strength Comes From Within And In The End Prevails.

How can I have this theme running throughout my story?

Initially I will portray my main character as a weak individual. But I will excuse his weakness, by saying perhaps that...

'He comes from a closely knit, loving family and initially doesn't know how to deal with such a conflict.'

As my story progresses, I will gradually show his inner strength and I will do this through incidences, which will show his maturity, like...

- He helps out by caring for his younger siblings and contributes with the housework.

And

- I can show him cutting the neighbours lawns or delivering newspapers before school to show that he contributes economically too.

If I do this, my ending (when he wins against the bully) will be believable because I have developed his inner strength. My theme would have run its course.

Is your theme running throughout the story?

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers funny stories. Visit: <http://www.we-recommend.com/>
