

HOW TO SHAPE YOUR STORY FOR THE SCREEN

“Hollywood is the most influential mission field on earth.”

Jim & Karen Covell, authors of *How to Talk About Jesus Without Freaking Out*

Interesting notes for authors o make your story more “film friendly.”

- Properly-formatted, one page of script = about one minute on screen
- AVERAGE scene is 2 minutes (= 2 pages). Can be shorter/longer - 4 minute/page max.
- Feature-length movies on TV are around 90 minutes (2 hours with commercials). Hour commercial TV show is about 44 minutes.
- Therefore, your feature screenplay should be 90 – 110 pages.

Studios do not make films. Production companies make films. Studios distribute films.

At any given time there are many production companies on the studio’s grounds making films.

The SHAPE OF STORY: 3-Act Structure

We EXPECT a certain “shape” in stories:

- An opening that tells us what world we’re in and what’s going on.
- A build up of suspense.
- A climax.
- A satisfying ending.

3-Act Structure:

- Act 1 (BEGINNING)
- First Half of Act 2 (MIDDLE)
- Second Half of Act 2
- Act 3 (END)

So Act 2 gets _____ as much _____ as Acts 1 and 3.

What is IN each Act?

- Act 1

- First Half of Act 2

- Midpoint Reversal

- Second Half of Act 2

- Act 3

One Way to Develop Your Story in the 3-Act Structure

From *Save the Cat* book. Supplies:

- 2' x 3' corkboard
- 40 + 3 x 5 inch index cards. Approx one card per scene.
- Divide the corkboard lengthways into four equal parts by drawing three lines across the 3-foot width:

Act 1
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> First half Act 2 MidPoint </div>
Second half Act 2
Act 3

So Act 2 gets twice as much corkboard, index cards and screen time as Acts 1 and 3.

“The ‘shape of story’ is imprinted on our souls and we are dissatisfied with stories shaped any other way.” ~ Dianne

The Shape of the Gospel Story

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2, NASB).

➤ Act 1: **Once upon a time...** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Ordinary World: Genesis 1-2

The Story Problem and Inciting Incident: Genesis 3: **The Villain’s Plot**

Results in: **The Divine** _____.

➤ First Half of Act 2: **The Hero’s Quest**

Old Testament. The _____ up. The Plan for Messiah to come.

➤ Midpoint Reversal: Messiah comes!

The Hero comes in disguise to win back the heart of His beloved.

Or Midpoint could be *The Hero* _____ *on a* _____.

➤ Second Half of Act 2:

The church age - now Christians following Christ.

➤ Act 3: **The Final Conflict.**

And Finally...

This helps you “Shape Your Story for the Screen.”

- Use this method to organize your _____, too.
- Write your stories now as _____ and _____!