

Can Your Theme Be Proved In Your Story?

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By Nick Vernon

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Creative Writing Tips -

Your theme has to be something you can prove in your story – It doesn't have to be a universal truth. This means that your theme doesn't have to be something that happens in real life all the time (providing our logic can accept it, in order for us to believe it).

Whatever story you choose to write, be it a contemporary or a story which requires elements of fantasy such as in horror, science fiction etc... the events of that story have to appear logical.

What is not logical and consequently not believable is...

A character that has no knowledge of computers and overnight becomes a computer whiz

A car that goes over a cliff, bursts into flames and the character manages to escape unscratched

Etc

These are not believable because they can't and don't happen in real life and our logic doesn't accept them.

Your theme will be believed when you prove it (providing of course you can.) Let's see how you can do that.

We'll start with a theme...

"Hard work leads to success."

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Our story is about a character whose goal is to reach a managerial position within the company that he works. For the reader to see how the character will reach his goal I will show him... Working hard
Working long hours Using his initiative Being responsible

And all those qualities, in the end, will secure him the promotion he has been aiming for.

So my theme here will be proved that 'Hard work leads to success' because my character succeeds in the end.

>From the examples I have given so far, you may have noticed that my stories end on a happy note. Yours don't have to. The ending will depend on the story you are writing and how you, the writer, prefers to end it.

I could have done the reverse with this theme. I could have said,

"Hard work doesn't lead to success."

My story will be the same but in the end I will have the character missing out on the promotion. Both themes will be proved because I have proved them in my story.

Any theme can work in a story providing you can prove it.

Have you proved your theme?

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories. Visit

Does Your Story Have A Theme?

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Creative Writing Tips -

It should.

A theme is a one-line explanation of your story.. Every story should have one because our stories are about something.

When I say should, I mean that this isn't always the case. Especially so for beginner writers, who may not know, that the theme carries the story. Or even those who've been writing for years may not be aware of the importance of a theme.

And a theme is important.

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A theme is what will keep you on track as you write the story.

What happens if you write without a theme in mind? Two things...

1. You stray from the subject

or

2. You write more than one story.

Let me give you an example of a story written with a theme in mind...

The theme to a story I once wrote was, 'Vanity Leads To Destruction.'

Very briefly, this story is about a female character that believed herself to be so beautiful, in the end she lost everything.

Writing this theme on a post-it note and sticking it on my computer, I was always reminded that my story had to revolve around this theme. Having a theme helped me stick to the story I had intended on writing and not stray from it - not even a little. It also helped me to focus only on what was essential to my story.

So according to my theme, 'Vanity Leads To Destruction'... Every action my character performed was to show her vanity Her goals sprung from her vanity What motivated her was her vanity Her words (dialogue) showed her vanity How she handled situations showed her vanity The interaction with other characters showed her vanity The conflict was a result of her vanity The highest peak in my story, the climax, showed an intense moment of whether her goal would be met (whether her vanity would work for, or against her) And the ending? The ending showed how she was led to destruction

because of her vanity

By following my theme, everything in my story was precise.

If I showed my character not being vain in any instance, then I would've strayed from my theme.

Does your story have a theme?

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If you didn't consciously write with a theme in mind, then your story won't have one. Chances are, your story isn't focused. But then again there is the other possibility... At times we fluke things.

Perhaps without consciously knowing, a theme is running through your story.

Check your story to see if this is the case. If it is, are you sticking to the theme?

## Can Your Theme Be Proved In Your Story?

If you find that some parts of your story are straying from the theme, those parts will need to be changed to accommodate the theme.

Now the other possibility...

You don't have a theme and none is running through your story. That's okay. We can still save it. Read through your story and see what it's about. Then come up with the most appropriate theme to it – A theme that makes sense yet won't mean too much work to change the story.

Rewrite those parts that don't accommodate the theme.

It is easier if we come up with a theme while we are at the plotting stage. It saves all that rewriting but not to worry... You won't make the same error again in your next story!

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