

Does Your Story Have A Theme?

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**Does Your Story Have A Theme?**

**By Nick Vernon**

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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.

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.'

## Does Your Story Have A Theme?

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?

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!

## Does Your Story Have A 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

### **Is The Theme Reinforced In The Ending?**

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Creative Writing Tips -

By now you should have an idea that your theme has to reach its conclusion just as your story does. But our theme has to do more than reach its conclusion - it has to be reinforced in the end and by doing this, it will strengthen all that we have said in our story.

So if we took a theme...

`Persist and in the end you will succeed'

And I showed my character working hard to achieve his goals, persisting, even if at times those goals seemed unreachable, then I would've showed that all his hard work did pay off in the end. By having him succeed, it would reinforce the theme that had been running throughout the story.

Let me further illustrate this point by giving you a more detailed example.

The theme is...

`Persistence pays off'

The story is about a writer, who has been writing short stories for years, but has not succeeded in getting published yet.

In your story you will show his persistence with... How he makes time to write, even when his day is already full by his full time job and other responsibilities How his every thought is consumed by his writing Showing him sending story after story to publishers How he doesn't let the fact that his family believe he's wasting his time, distract him from his purpose

Simultaneously I will place him in win and lose situations – Losing when his stories are rejected – Winning when he receives encouraging notes from publishers.

And in those instances where he is winning, I will show gradually that resistance is starting to pay off, till I reach the end of my story where I will have one of his stories accepted for publication and thus bring my theme of `Persistence pays off' to its conclusion.

By showing the reader how persistence is paying off, I would have reinforced the theme in my ending.

Is your theme reinforced in the end of your story?

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