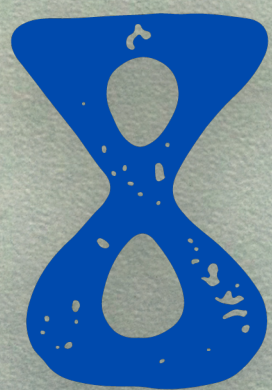


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Shorts



Story Drivers

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What drives your story?

Characters - focus on the growth or defeat of your characters

Plot - focus on the circumstances your characters are in

Emotion - focus on what you want the reader to feel while reading/takeaway

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Character-Driven (Setting less important)

External challenges are critical in character growth, but they are not what pushes the story forward. The story moves forward because the MC(s) learn how to overcome their weaknesses. Often told from first-person POV or third-person limited. They typically include a lot of thought, internal dilemmas, and soul-searching. Think: romances, family dynamics, and teen growth.

Character-Driven Examples

A rookie football player gains the confidence and skills to become the quarterback.

A young witch learns how to use her powers to become a powerful sorceress.

Character Drivers (internal)

Memories - good or bad

Morals - religious or social

Goals - selfish or altruistic

Family/Friends - responsibility, maintaining a
relationship

Desires/Wants/Needs - incl. Romance

Likes/Dislikes

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Plot-Driven (Setting very important)

The focus is on how the characters defeat whatever external challenge has been set before them: Defeat the dragon. Rescue the maiden. Save the world. Pass the test. Survive the winter. Often told from third-person omniscient or third-person-limited POV, with or without internal thoughts.

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Plot-Driven Example

A ragtag group of warriors journey to defeat an arch-villain using their pre-set skills (more often) or the brand-new skills they learn on the way (less often). They learn and grow as well as have setbacks, but in general, the focus is on the external problems.

Plot Drivers (external)

Change in situation (income, location...)

A new project/adventure/journey

A call to action/challenge

Courier mission (like Lord of the Rings)

Turf War/Battles

Saving something (person, old building...)

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Emotion-Driven (Thoughts > Action)

A lot of soul-searching and sharing of feelings.

Sadness, fear, anger, joy, or excitement. End on a sad note or in a joyful celebration, championing prayer, love, friendship, or community.

Circumstances are often out of the MC's control, nothing they can "do" to change fate. About accepting the hand you've been dealt or relying on an external power to solve the "problem."

Emotion-Driven Example

A wife is waiting outside her husband's hospital room, talking with the doctor, hoping to get good results but fearing the worst.

Emotional Drivers

Missing someone or something

Sickness (esp. extreme or terminal)

Love (romance or friendship/family)

Revenge/Hatred

Overlap with Character Drivers

Only One Driver per Car

Most stories are driven by multiple things.

However, one driver is Primary:

usually Character or Plot.

LOTR is plot-driven: get the ring to Mordor.

Pride and Prejudice is character-driven:

becoming a better person

(Darcy: humble and Lizzy: understanding)