

How to Build an Action Plot

LTUE, Feb-2015, Larry Correia & John D. Brown

Mech Runners

- Team, illegal arms dealers, mech suits
 - Crime bosses and organization
 - Warlord exploiting resource on planet
 - Harsh world, monsters
 - Orbitals, but workers live on surface
 - Moral justification: everyone should be able to protect themselves
- 5 man band
- Leader
 - Lancer
 - Nerd
 - Girl
 - Muscle
- MC is not leader

Technique 1: Calculate Number of Events

2 Keys

- You are NOT building a plot
- Tents and castles are not the same

Technique 2: MC MOTHR CAR

Technique 3: The 3 Parts

Technique 4: What's Cool?

Technique 5: Specific MOTHR Patterns

Technique 6: Play Both Sides

Technique 7: Make it Hard!

- Conflict
- Throw MC for a loop
- The seemingly killing blow (ability or desire)

MC MOTHR CAR

- Main character we can get behind
- Gets entangled with a MOTHR
 - A **mystery, opportunity, threat, hardship, or relationship**
 - A huge obstacle, underdog
- Sets a **concrete goal**
- Takes **action** (struggle)
- **Resolution**

The 3 Parts

Trouble

- Create anticipation
- Main character we can get behind (interesting and sympathetic)
- MOTHR
- Why character can't or won't walk away (moral, physical, occupation)
- Concrete goal
- Surprise in some of particularities.

Struggle

- Reasons to worry and fear: actions unexpectedly thwarted, troubles increase (setback-recover pattern), antagonist in the game
- Reasons to hope: plans, some actions succeed
- Surprise in some of particularities of motives, decisions, actions, and results.
- Locked into final attempt (an insight & decision, some piece of information or a tool, an external pressure)

Resolution

- Preparation, approach, climax
- Clear yes or no
- Aftermath: understand what this means for character's life going forward
- Surprise in some of particularities of resolution.

More: *Writing and Selling Your Novel* (Bickham), *Techniques of the Selling Writer* (Swain), *Plot & Structure* (Bell), *On Writing* at johndbrown.com