



Story Time Episode 10: Building Excitement Through Obstacles

PILAR: Hey, everyone. Welcome back. Last time, you learned about the importance of details and added them to the first part of your scripts. Today, you'll be learning more about obstacles and how they build something called the "Climax."

Young Storytellers' friend, Franklin Leonard, gets to read some of the most popular movie scripts each year as a part of his job, so he knows all about what makes an exciting story. Let's hear about what he has to say about obstacles.

FRANKLIN: Hi, young storytellers. My name is Franklin. I created something called, "The Black List," which is a company in Hollywood that tries to find the best screenplays that haven't been made yet.

One of the things that I love most about my job is that I get to read amazing screenplays. And my favorite part about scripts is obstacles and the obstacles that the characters have to overcome. And what I mean by that is, is that we all have obstacles, right? I have obstacles. I'm sure you do, too -- at school, at home. There are going to be things that you have to overcome to get what you want or what you need. And what you want to see in a movie is characters with obstacles try to figure out how to overcome them.

Try to do that in your own scripts. Find some obstacles for your characters. Come up with clever ways for them to overcome



them. And then when you're done with the script, apply some of that thinking to your own obstacles in your own life. You might find it be helpful. But at a minimum, you're going to have a great script and I look forward to reading it. Best of luck and enjoy.

PILAR: I couldn't agree more. Today, you'll need your script and whatever you've been using to write it down. Now, let's join Vira, Curtis and Tamara in the Imaginarium.

VIRA: Hey, everyone. Welcome back to the Imaginarium. I've got a wild idea for what we should do today.

"Hello. [Echoes] Hello. Hello."

TAMARA: Don't get me wrong. I love a beautiful view but what brings us all the way out here?

VIRA: These mountains are the perfect visual to show how to shape obstacles in your story.

CURTIS: Yeah. Now that you've introduced your setting, characters and goals, it's time to see them deal with a few obstacles. The first obstacle should be a challenge but the least dramatic.

VIRA: And the next one should get a little bit bigger to help the story start to feel more exciting.

CURTIS: The last one should be the biggest and most challenging obstacle, something they really struggle with. It's the last obstacle that leads to something called the "Climax." This is the most exciting part of any story. The last obstacle should be so big that the audience will be on the edge of their seat wondering if the protagonist will actually get their goal.



VIRA: Honestly, sometimes, they don't. Sometimes, the obstacle is so big in the climax that the character ends up not getting their goal. And other times, the character is able to overcome against all odds to get what they want.

CURTIS: Either choice is exciting to watch. And true to life, sometimes, we get what we want and sometimes, we don't. The most important part is what we learn and gain along the way.

TAMARA: That makes sense. A goal I completed is winning a dance contest with my friends. But a goal I didn't complete is finishing a marathon.

VIRA: Oh I totally relate.

TAMARA: I get this but I have a hard time coming up with harder creative obstacles.

CURTIS: Oh we have the perfect game to help practice. It's called the "Obstacle game."

VIRA: Let's give Curtis a simple goal.

TAMARA: Well let's have him cross a bridge.

VIRA: Great.

[Curtis crosses the bridge].

VIRA: Yeah, he did cross the bridge but it wasn't very exciting. You should put something in his way to make it interesting. Let's give him an obstacle, something challenging but not huge.

TAMARA: Hey, well, what if that goat jumps in his way?

[A goat jumps in Curtis' way. He goes under the bridge to cross to the other side].



VIRA: See? A little more interesting. Now let's make things more challenging with a second obstacle.

TAMARA: What if there's an alligator in the water under the bridge?

[A goat jumps in Curtis' way. He goes under the bridge to cross the river but stops because there was an alligator].

This is getting interesting. So now we have to give him one final obstacle.

VIRA: Yeah. Make it a big one. Remember, this will lead to the climax -- the most exciting part.

[Curtis swings self under the bridge then crawls to cross to the other side].

TAMARA: What if there's a bridge show under there?

VIRA: That'll be tough.

TAMARA: Wow. That was pretty dramatic.

VIRA: Yeah. Great job coming up with more and more exciting obstacles.

TAMARA: Yeah. I just need to make sure they get bigger and tougher each time. It's so fun thinking ways to deal with them.

CURTIS: So pause the video, take whatever time you need to write a page or so where your character deals with three obstacles you wrote about in your outline. Make sure each obstacle is bigger and bigger and leads to an exciting climax.

VIRA: And have fun.



[Pause]

TAMARA: Now back to Pilar for the wrap up.

PILAR: To wrap it up, today, you learned how obstacles build to an exciting climactic moment near the end of your story. Try sharing the climax in your story with someone over the phone. Have fun reading it out loud in your best dramatic movie trailer voice to highlight the drama in your script.

Join us next time when we'll be helping you write the last part of your story -- the resolution. See you then. Bye.

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