

#SelfPubCon25



**WRITING
FOR THE
STREAMING
GENERATION**

Creating Cinematic Stories that Go Deeper

PART ONE - KNOW OUR RIVAL

Critically examine the similarity and differences in reading and the visual medium.

PART TWO - INNOVATE FROM OUR RIVAL

With that knowledge, discuss you 10 practical ways you can innovate on your writing to Balance, Borrow, and Breakthrough the advantages of visual story telling.

WHO AM I?

I'm the author of 11 novels and over 100 short stories.

I'm a writing coach and editor who has worked one-on-one with over 300 authors.

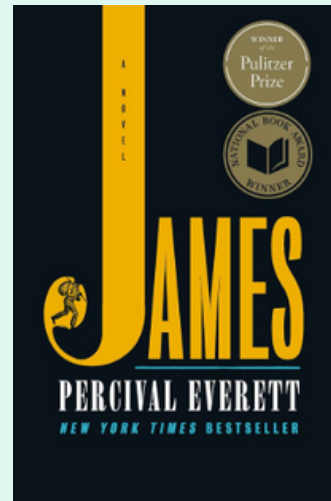
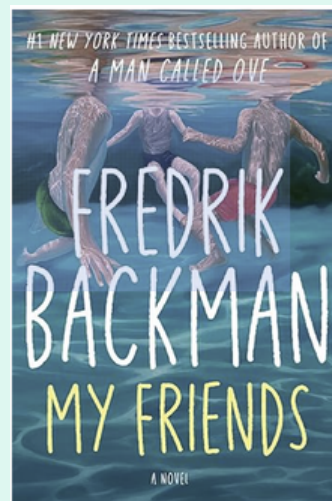
I'm the host of The Dialogue Doctor Podcast (coming up on our 300th episode).

For my day job, I lead a creative team who builds simulations that train people in difficult conversations.

And, when it comes to visual media...
I've written three features and I've been studying screenplays for the last three years.



VISUAL MEDIA IS ON TOP



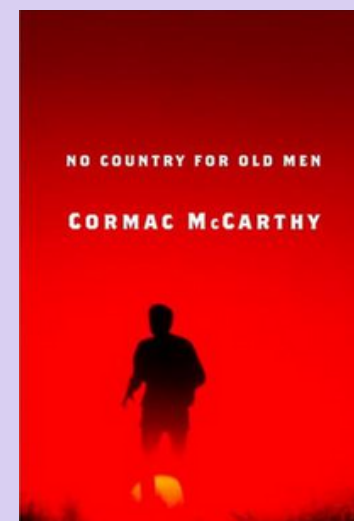
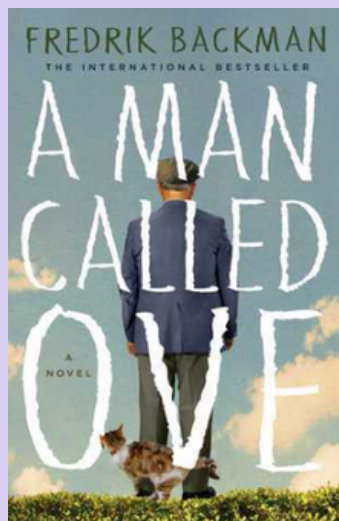
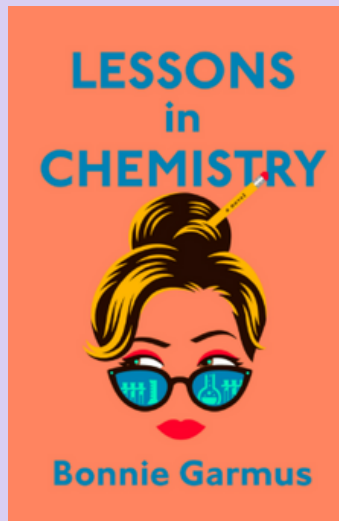
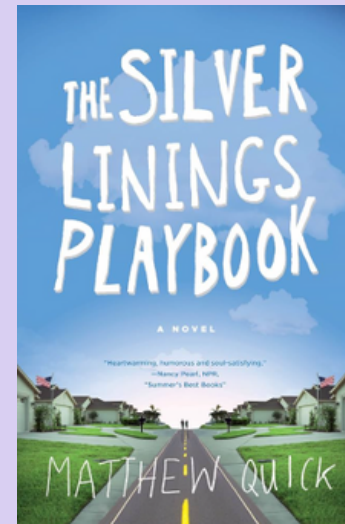
VS



KNOW OUR RIVAL

PART ONE

COMPARISONS



WHAT'S THE SAME?

WE HAVE THE SAME TASK

We are taking story consumers on an **emotional journey**.

Our emotional journeys are created by our **characters' growth arcs**.

The start of our journeys offer a central **question that must be answered** by the end.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

MOVIES/SERIES

A Team of Interpretation

An Immersive Experience

Limited Screen Time Forces Efficiency

Sterilized for the General Public

Limited in Cast and Location by Budget

Dialogue Centric

NOVELS

Direct Line to Consumer's Imagination

An Internal Experience

The Freedom to Indulge

Deeper in Themes

Limited Only by the Author's Ability

Should be Dialogue Centric

THE ADJACENT POSSIBLE

A set of opportunities and possibilities that are just one step away from the current state of a system.

Progress arises from building upon existing ideas and capabilities rather than from entirely novel breakthroughs.

Innovation moves in steps not leaps.

**HOW WILL YOU INNOVATE
ON YOUR WRITING?**

INNOVATE FROM OUR RIVAL

PART TWO

10 WAYS TO INNOVATE

Balance Their Advantages

- #1 - Be Strategic with Emotions
- #2 - Be Strategic with Descriptions
- #3 - Be Strategic with Your Cast

Borrow Their Advantages

- #4 - Keep Scenes Efficient
- #5 - Feature the Dialogue
- #6 - Protect the Energy of Your Dialogue
- #7 - Drive the Story with a Ticking Clock

Breakthrough Their Advantages

- #8 - Go Deep with Themes
- #9 - Get Inside Your Characters
- #10 - Have Fun with Your Cast and Side Quests

10 WAYS TO INNOVATE

Balance Their Advantages

- #1 - Be Strategic with Emotions
- #2 - Be Strategic with Descriptions
- #3 - Be Strategic with Your Cast

WE ARE
HERE

Borrow Their Advantages

- #4 - Keep Scenes Efficient
- #5 - Feature the Dialogue
- #6 - Protect the Energy of Your Dialogue
- #7 - Drive the Story with a Ticking Clock

Breakthrough Their Advantages

- #8 - Go Deep with Themes
- #9 - Get Inside Your Characters
- #10 - Have Fun with Your Cast and Side Quests

BALANCE VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#1 - BE STRATEGIC WITH EMOTIONS

The Emotional Journey of the reader = your characters' growth arcs, not your plot beats.

Plot beats are the destinations you travel to, but the experience of the trip is the character's emotional shifts.

Character Growth Arcs are the choices the characters make in pursuit of their wants, their perceived needs, and their true needs.

Emotional shifts are created as a character struggles to change or demonstrate change.

Plan and edit for the character's emotional journey.



BALANCE VISUAL ADVANTAGES

+ PLANNING/EDITING TIP

**Changed
Character at
the End of the
Story**

**Character at
the Start of
the Story**

**Emotional
Shift**

**Emotional
Shift**

**Emotional
Shift**

**Emotional
Shift**

**Emotional
Shift**

BALANCE VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#2 - BE STRATEGIC WITH DESCRIPTIONS

Visual media utilizes active and passive images and sounds to enhance emotional shifts.

The temptation is to try and match the amount of information they are giving, but this competes with the reader's imagination.

Trust your reader. Give them only what they need to FEEL the story.

BALANCE VISUAL ADVANTAGES

UNDERSTANDING YOUR POWER

Writer —————→ **Reader**
The Reader's Imagination

Writer —→ **The Director** —→ **The Actors** —→ **Cinematographer** —→ **Sound Supervisor** —→ **Editor** —→ **Viewer**

BALANCE VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#3 - BE STRATEGIC WITH CAST

Visual media creates energy with Big Cast conversations
(3 to 6 characters at a time).

Like Hot Potato or Musical Chairs, it's more exciting when
more people are playing.

We can do this too, but only if we are open to using
dialogue tags.

10 WAYS TO INNOVATE

Balance Their Advantages

- #1 - Be Strategic with Emotions
- #2 - Be Strategic with Descriptions
- #3 - Be Strategic with Your Cast

Borrow Their Advantages

- #4 - Keep Scenes Efficient
- #5 - Feature the Dialogue
- #6 - Protect the Energy of Your Dialogue
- #7 - Drive the Story with a Ticking Clock

WE ARE
HERE

Breakthrough Their Advantages

- #8 - Go Deep with Themes
- #9 - Get Inside Your Characters
- #10 - Have Fun with Your Cast and Side Quests

BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#4 - KEEP SCENES EFFICIENT

In a screenplay, each page is equivalent to 1 minutes of screen time, and every minute of screen is money in the production budget.

This forces writers to be incredibly efficient with the content of their scenes.

They have to know what is emotionally important about that step on the journey and get to that thing as quickly as possible, without damaging the story consumer's emotional experience.

BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

QUICK EDITING TIPS FOR EFFICIENT SCENES

Start Later than You Think You Should

Cut your scene setting warm up.

Delete your dialogue build up.

Start the scene as close to the inciting incident as you can.

End Before It Feels Over

Don't think about content cliff hangers. Think about emotional cliff hangers.

It's okay to leave unsettled.



BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#5 - FEATURE THE DIALOGUE

Screenplays are dialogue centric. This puts the character interactions at the center of the story, making the characters and their voice, their synergy, and their growth central.

How to Practice

Step 1 - Dialogue Only

Step 2 - Add Body Language and Tags

Step 3 - Add Reflections and Prose Between Segments



BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

Step 1 - Dialogue Only

A - I thought I'd make you pancakes this morning.

B - Thanks? So, what happened?

A - I'm not sure. Evidently, I'm not good at pancakes.

B - Maybe we could go out. Donuts?

A - I don't know. I just... I wanted to do something special for you.

B - You don't need to do anything. Just seeing you every morning is special.

BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

Step 2 - Add Body Language and Tags

Amy sighed as Buck walked into the room. “I thought I’d make you pancakes this morning,” she said.

“Thanks?” Buck laughed. “So, what happened?”

“I’m not sure.” She looked around at the mess she’d made. “Evidently, I’m not good at pancakes.”

Buck used his thumb to wipe pancake batter off her cheek. “Maybe we could go out. Donuts?”

“I don’t know.” Amy scrunched her lips together and looked down. “I just... I wanted to do something special for you.”

Buck leaned down to meet her eye line. “You don’t need to do anything. Just seeing you every morning is special.”



BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

Step 3 - Add Reflections and Prose Between Segments

Buck entered his formerly immaculate kitchen and stood in awe at the destruction of his beloved work space. Milk, flour, eggs, pans, and soiled utensils littered the counter and sink; and in the middle of it all, stood Amy. Her pajamas, face, and hair appeared to have more ingredients in them than the bowl in front of her.

Amy sighed as Buck walked toward her. “I thought I’d make you pancakes this morning,” she said.

“Thanks?” Buck laughed. “So, what happened?”

“I’m not sure.” She looked around at the mess she’d made. “Evidently, I’m not good at pancakes.”

Buck used his thumb to wipe pancake batter off her cheek. “Maybe we could go out. Donuts?”

“I don’t know.” Amy scrunched her lips together and looked down. “I just... I wanted to do something special for you.”

Looking at the woman he loved and the kitchen she’d destroyed, a surge of unexplainable happiness rushed from his heart to his fingers and back again.

Buck leaned down to meet her eye line. “You don’t need to do anything. Just seeing you every morning is special.”



BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#6 - PROTECT THE ENERGY OF YOUR DIALOGUE

Exchanges (the give and take) between characters creates energy.

Prose (descriptions, summaries, reflections) slow cause the reader to slow down and think.

A segment is a group of exchange focused on a single topic or emotional tone.

Don't interrupt your segments.



BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

TIP FOR PROTECTING THE ENERGY

The biggest interrupters of energy are inner thoughts and character reflections.

When practicing your dialogue centric first draft, between steps 2 and 3, draw lines between your segments.

If you are writing in 1st Person or 3rd Close, there should be an inner thought or reflection at each line, but not between them.

BORROW VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#7 - DRIVE THE STORY WITH A TICKING CLOCK

A “Ticking Clock” is something that is going to happen at the end of the story - a big game or a dance competition or the prom.

Putting a Ticking Clock in your story creates a false sense of urgency in the emotional journey because time is counting down to a moment we all know is coming.

The story consumer wants the characters to choose to grow (overcome their flaws) before time runs out on the story.



10 WAYS TO INNOVATE

Balance Their Advantages

- #1 - Be Strategic with Emotions
- #2 - Be Strategic with Descriptions
- #3 - Be Strategic with Your Cast

Borrow Their Advantages

- #4 - Keep Scenes Efficient
- #5 - Feature the Dialogue
- #6 - Protect the Energy of Your Dialogue
- #7 - Drive the Story with a Ticking Clock

Breakthrough Their Advantages

- #8 - Go Deep with Themes
- #9 - Get Inside Your Characters
- #10 - Have Fun with Your Cast and Side Quests

WE ARE
HERE

BREACKTHROUGH VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#8 - GO DEEP WITH THEMES

Remember, a **Character Growth Arc** is the culmination of the choices a character makes in pursuit of their wants, their perceived needs, and their true needs.

Themes are created by the similarities between Vehicle Characters wants, perceived needs, and true needs.

To go deep into a theme by aligning your Vehicle Character Growth Arcs. If you don't, your reader will.

BREACKTHROUGH VISUAL ADVANTAGES

THE STORY HYPOTHESIS BY JP RINDFLEISCH IX

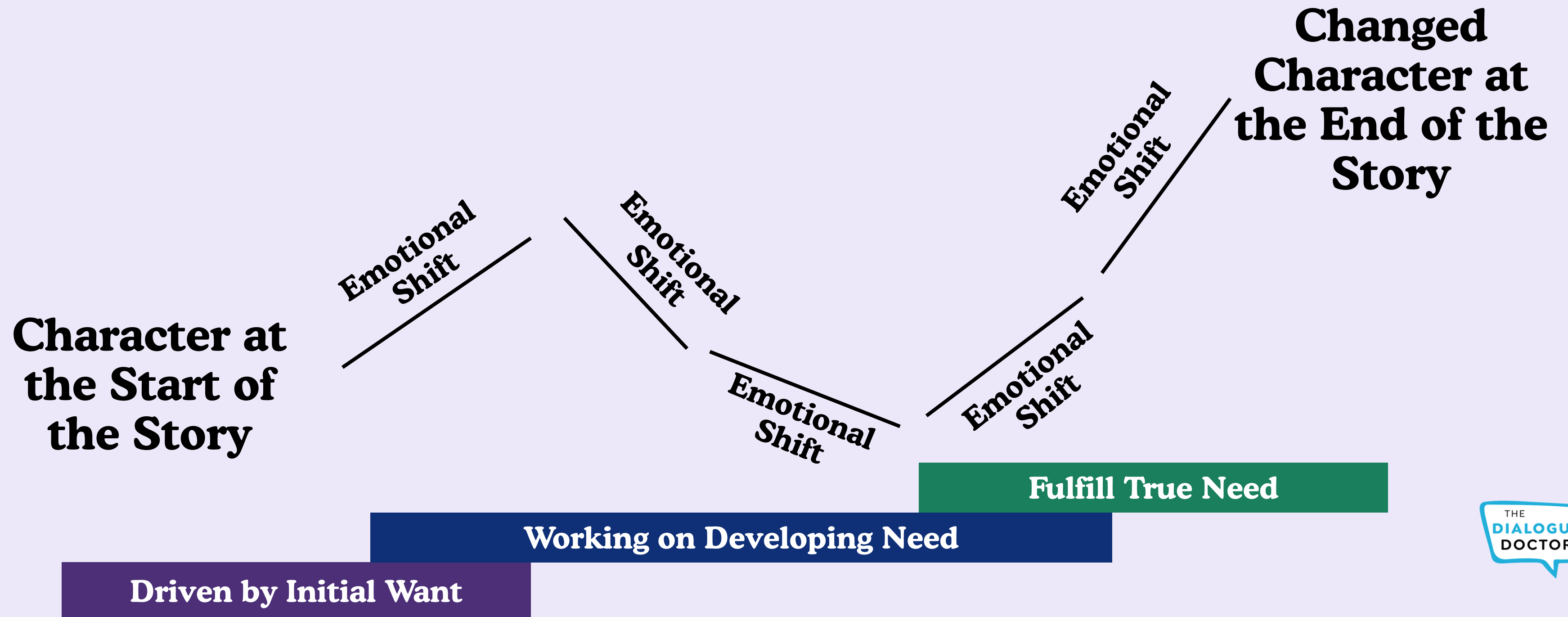
Initial Want: What does your vehicle initially want more than anything?

Developing Need: What's the catalyst pushing your vehicle to develop or change?

True Need: What's the wake-up call that shows your vehicle what they truly need?

BREACKTHROUGH VISUAL ADVANTAGES

THE STORY HYPOTHESIS BY JP RINDFLEISCH IX



BREACKTHROUGH VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#9 - GET INSIDE YOUR CHARACTERS

A major advantage we have over visual media is ***perspective***.

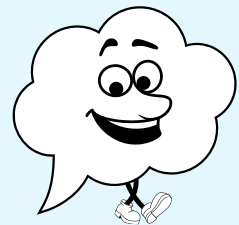
We can give readers deep insight to the characters' wants, needs, and choices.

When done well, this can create a deep connection between the reader and our characters.

Know who your “vehicle characters” are and make sure they have strong growth arcs and clear character voices.

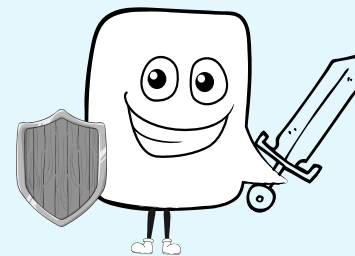
BREACKTHROUGH VISUAL ADVANTAGES

STOP THINKING ABOUT PROTAGONISTS



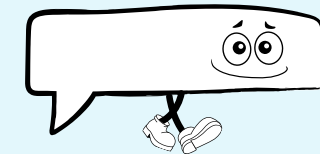
3RD PARTY VEHICLE

A character who sits above the story.
Usually acts as a narrator.
Growth arc may have already happened.



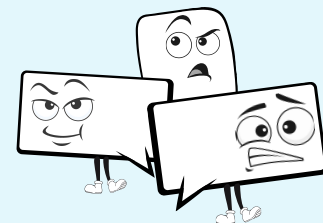
LEAD VEHICLE

The standard main character.
Lots of scenes.
Growth arc drives the story.



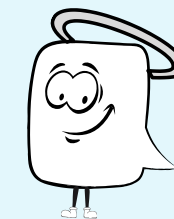
SUPPORTING VEHICLE

A side character who gets perspective.
Only a few scenes in their perspective.
Growth arc is smaller.



CHORUS VEHICLE

Multiple characters who act as a single entity.
Characters are interchangeable in a scene.
Characters share a growth arc.



SYMBOLIC VEHICLE

An unchanging character who represents a worldview.
The world responds to them.
Growth arc is stagnate.

BREACKTHROUGH VISUAL ADVANTAGES

#10 - HAVE FUN WITH YOUR CASTS AND SIDE QUESTS

If you can write compelling growth arcs, clear Vehicle perspectives, and build themes, then you have freedom to explore.

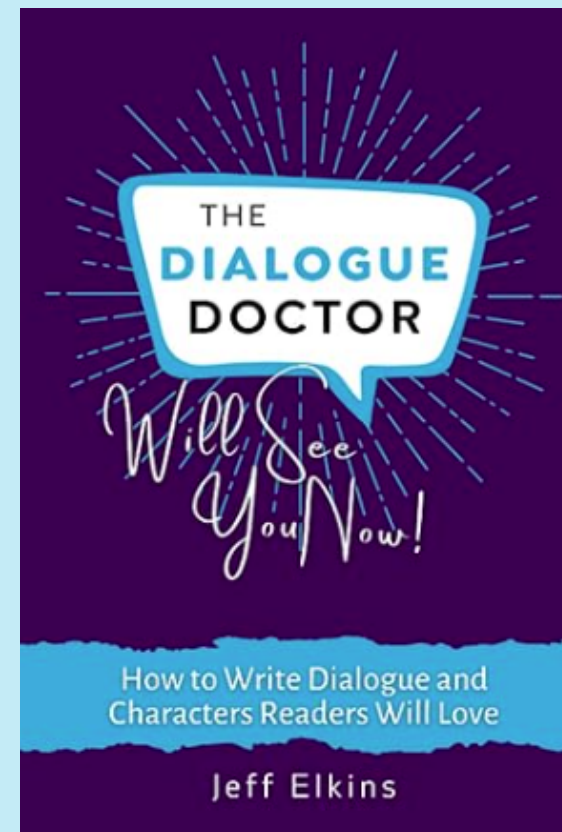
Add side characters and side quests to your heart's delight, as long as they empower the emotional journey of the reader.

The only limit is your imagination and how well you can transmit it into the reader's imagination.

WHERE TO FIND MORE



DialogueDoctor.com



**2 Books That
Go Deeper**

