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# Creative Writing 1

with Johnny Worthen

Week 5 – ... happily ever after?  
Climaxes and Endings



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## Today's Plan

- Lots of workshop
- Look at climaxes
- Examine endings



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## Discussion of Reading



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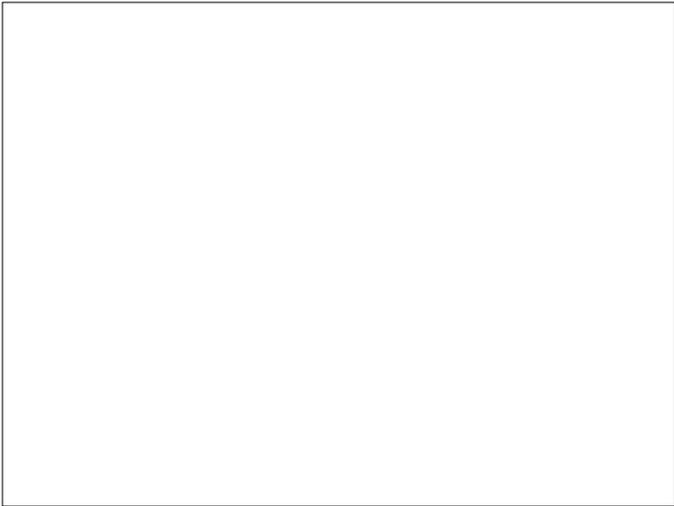
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# Keeping Promises

- The ending should be an “inevitable surprise.”
  - Everything leading up to it
- Doesn't have to be a happy ending
  - But must be “true”



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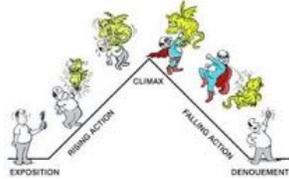
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# Climax

- After the lowest point
- The climax
  - When the problems have to be confronted
    - And are.



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# Keeping the Audience

- **The Promises**

- *The first sentence sells the second sentence*
- *The first chapter sells the second chapter*

- **Author Career**

- *The first chapter sells the book*
- *The last chapter sells the next book*

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# Endings

- **Beat**

- A moment of completion
- A bow on it

- **Cliffhanger**

- A moment of suspense
- A flashing question mark

- Pros and Cons to both
- Endings can be both...




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# Beat

He went hurriedly along the corridor to his own compartment. He had, he knew, a further supply of cigarettes in one of his valises.

He got it down and snapped back the lock.

Then he sat back on his heels and stared.

*Neatly folded on the top of the case was a thin scarlet silk kimono, embroidered with dragons.*

"So," he murmured. "It is like that. A defiance. Very well, I take it up."

— *Murder on the Orient Express*  
Agatha Christie

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# Beat

The ride back to Perry’s cabin in the cold dark rain sucked as badly as you think it could. My headlight wasn’t great, my driving subpar, but the mud was thick and splatterful. I wondered why they even put fenders on the thing. Oh, wait they hadn’t. The back wheels shot muck up my back, the front ones crap into my to my face and neck. They needed to make a helmet with wipers. I flipped up the visor so I could see to make it home. The wallow creek was sounding pretty good when I finally pulled into view of the cabin.

It appeared in a flash of lighting. There were no lights on. No Cadillac.

I dismounted and slogged—literally slogged into the house. The lights came on when I flicked the switch and stayed on long enough for me to peel myself naked in the living room. Then they flashed twice and went off with a loud clunk from the generator outside.

“Screw it,” I said and felt my way into my room.

By lightning flash I crawled into my sleeping bag on the half-filled air mattress. By thunderclap I fell asleep in Big Horn County mud.

— *The Hermit of Big Horn County*  
Johnny Worthen

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# Cliffhanger

Rue.

How long has she been there? The whole probably. Still and unobserved as the action unfolded beneath her. Perhaps she headed up her tree shortly before I did, hearing the pack was so close.

For a while we hold each other’s gaze. Then, without even rustling a leaf, her little hand slides into the open and points to something above my head.

— *The Hunger Games*  
Suzanne Collins

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# Cliffhanger

The woman is beautiful and terrible. She stands towering above him, her dreadful eyes fixed on him.

He’s paralyzed.

She scoops him up in a bowl of gore and draws him to her bare chest.

He smells rot and blood, decay and ashes. Death.

She engulfs him in her many arms—a suffocating embrace, sticky and cold.

He makes to speak—to cry, to scream, but he has no breath to make it. Grasping his throat, gasping for air, Michael collapses lifeless to the ground.

— *What Immortal Hand*  
Johnny Worthen

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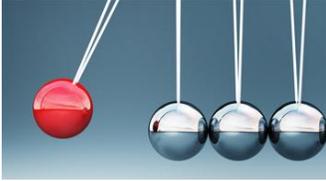
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# Denouement

- The new normal
- Last chance to wrap up loose ends
- Aim momentum to carry on the story beyond the end




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# Homework for Week 6

- **Write:**
  - Write 300 word **SCENE**
  - Complete arc: *Beginning, Middle, and End*
    - Suggest a clear **Denouement**
- **Read:**
  - *"The Ledge"* by Lawrence Sargent Hall
  - *Discussion of story at 6:00, regular class as usual 6:30*

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