

(Library ebook) Crafting the Character ARC

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Jennie Jarvis

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Crafting the Character Arc



A Practical Guide to Character
Creation and Development

Jennie Jarvis

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Jennie Jarvis : Crafting the Character ARC before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crafting the Character ARC:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A rating...By Smitten with ReadingMy Review:As a obsessive reader, a lot of my writing is instinctual. I've never taken fiction or creative writing courses and definitely don't have any formal training to do what I do on a daily basis...at all. That's fine, until the book isn't working. The nice thing about those instincts is that I can usually tell when the book isn't working, too. What I can't do a lot of the time is

figure out how to fix it. That's where writing craft books come in. But I'll be honest, books about writing beats or acts sound all well and good, but for me, when it comes down to my writing...I'm kind of baffled about how to apply those ideas to my books. Instinct vs. knowledge...not so easy in practical application. Which is why when it comes to finding a book like this one, I'm thrilled. This book is so easy to understand. EVEN I can read it and apply it to my writing. Jennie Jarvis has done an amazing job breaking down the writing process (i.e. those beats/acts) into a dramatic curve that works and is easily understandable. She uses a wide range of examples...from movies, to TV shows, to video games to show how the curve works and how to apply it to your work in progress. The dramatic curve that she employs (you can see the diagram of it on the cover up there) is made up of seven elements and she breaks down what needs to happen in each of those elements to get your book/story to where it needs to be. She illustrates the ideas so well through movies like Harry Potter, Pride and Prejudice, and even the not-so-great classics like Bill Ted's Excellent Adventure. She even shows how to build that same plot structure within the book for sub-plots. It's an incredibly readable book (I read it in a day and a half and am known for never finishing non-fiction books, so that's saying something for me.) She talks about how to develop characters and push them outside their boundaries. She has some great points about protagonists vs. antagonists and how to create conflict within relationships. And as a romance writer, I really liked the point that the antagonist can actually be either your hero or heroine...what a completely revolutionary idea...at least to me where I've always considered the antagonist to be the bad guy. The book employs some great writing techniques and I spent the weekend running all my current works-in-progress through the plotting technique the book illustrates with very positive results. I definitely recommend this book!

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Fresh perspective on Character

By Eric S. Wyatt

Jennie Jarvis certainly has a unique perspective on creating characters that readers will connect with. This is definitely different than any other character development book I have read (and my shelves are full of them). It has given me a lot to think about and to add to my own creative process, and I will be suggesting this book to clients/students of my creative writing classes as a good place to deepen their understanding of how character development influences, and is influenced by, the concept of a dramatic arc. The writing style of the book itself is light and easy, but not dumbed down. It was a quick read, but I'm sure I'll refer back to this text in coming months and years as I allow the concepts to sink in.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great, but needs an editor...

By Pharm76

I am a writing pantsler. I write out a very vague one page summary, if that, gather up my characters and then start writing. Sometimes it works for me and other times, well, I lose control of the story and never look at it again. I have an idea I've been trying to get off the ground for almost a year and a half. I know my characters well and I thought I knew their story, but I couldn't write it. This book helped me change that. I bought two books to see if one or both of them could help me figure out the story better. The other one helped too, but this one really solidified everything for me. The idea of a character arc being the driving force was perfect for me. I've written out some summaries for each of the main points on the curve and managed to find the opening, finally!!

Pros: you are walked through why everything is important. She even goes into helping you craft your characters. Honestly, her method for that was good without creating an entire novel on each major character like some have suggested. This book is short but sweet. No words are wasted.

Cons: the book needs an editor or a second pair of eyes to go through it at the very least. In one part the author talks about how in the Princess Bride the grandfather reads the book to the grandfather. What? The villain from National Treasure is Sean Bean not Sean Beam. Not major issues, but enough that it made me set the book down and wonder if the contents were really worth spending time on reading it or not. I'm glad I finished it because the method is sound, but still, it was frustrating to read in parts. These cons are enough for me to remove one of the five stars I would really like to give this book. That is how much it helped me.

In conclusion, if you are a pantsler and can only get about 60% of your writing to come together coherently or you're finding an idea is hard to solidify, I highly recommend giving this book a try. I hate outlines thanks to my high school English teacher, so this book was refreshing in that not once did she recommend creating an outline, but showed the reader how to create a usable, divided summary to get your idea written.

Many writers believe once they have their basic plot points in place, their stories are destined to succeed. But many narratives fall flat between those plot points and lose their audience before the big finish. Engaging the audience and moving the story forward in every scene is the responsibility of the characters, not the plot. But while many books on the craft of writing state that characters need to be three dimensional and change, a beginning writer isn't always sure how to turn these rather abstract ideas into concrete craft on the page. Crafting the Character Arc offers a practical guide to character creation and development by expanding upon the concept of the character arc and creating a step-by-step guide for writers to ensure that their characters are dynamic and engaging. Using narrative examples from multiple platforms, including novels, films and games, this is the essential guide for helping writers create an active and well-defined character arc. Crafting The Character Arc is structured in three main parts. Part One covers the more traditional, basic approach to creating character, including personality traits, depth, secrets, goals versus emotional needs, active versus reactive protagonists, and dramatic functions. Part Two introduces the Major Dramatic Curve, a detailed pictorial representation of a character arc and its major elements: place of rest, inciting incident, rising action, crisis point, climax and falling action/resolution. Part Three offers practical applications of the Major Dramatic Curve.

The writer is given guidance for using the curve to create a dynamic and engaging narrative work. Lastly, some variations in using the Major Dramatic Curve are explored and exceptions to the rules are addressed. Character Arcs are a critical part of every story making this guide applicable to multiple mediums: novels, short stories, films, TV, games, plays, and Web series.