

# STORY SCHOOL



KEEPING  
YOUR STORY  
ENGAGING:  
STORYCOASTER

Presented by  creators



# THE STORYCOASTER

In stories, things happen.

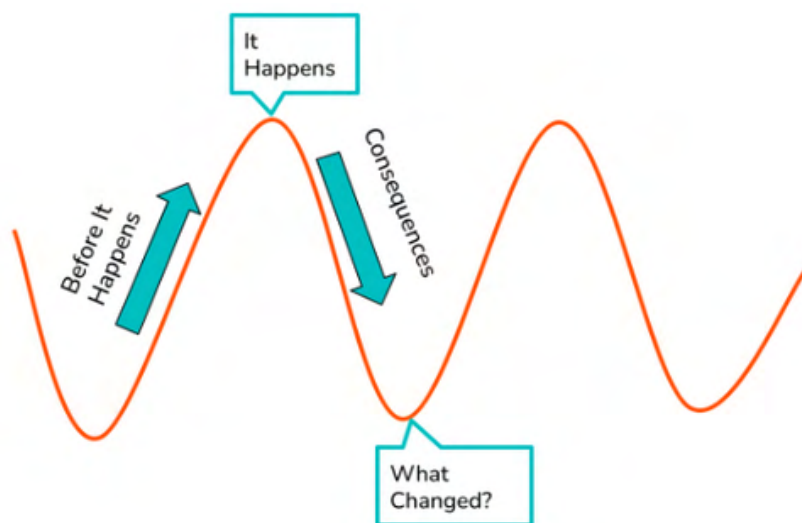
Characters act; they make choices and do stuff to try and overcome conflicts and obstacles, with the hopes of getting closer to their goal.

Here at Wattpad, we really, really love it when we read stories where stuff happens, and characters are actively chasing their goals. By trying to do stuff even if it doesn't work, by making choices even if they're not 100% effective, by pursuing a goal and trying to navigate conflicts and overcome conflicts, characters then have to deal with the consequences of their actions, which changes their circumstance and can create new conflicts and new goals.



# THINK ABOUT A ROLLERCOASTER

An easy way to think about the intermingling of action and conflict in your story is to think about a rollercoaster. A rollercoaster builds up slowly to a peak, and then sends you rushing down from that peak (which is the fun part!). A rollercoaster doesn't need to be hundreds of feet tall to be fun; it just needs to offer the rider ups and downs. The same is true of stories. This is the Storycoaster:





# LET'S BUILD YOUR STORYCOASTER.

Pick any chapter of your story (except for the first, which should be your Hook) and use the boxes to fill in the moments from the chapter that correspond to each part of the Storycoaster.



# THE CLIMB: BEFORE IT HAPPENS

This is the build-up of the scene, where tension rises because of the choices and actions a character is making in pursuit of their goal. The action, the actual things happening in the scene, slowly rises in intensity.



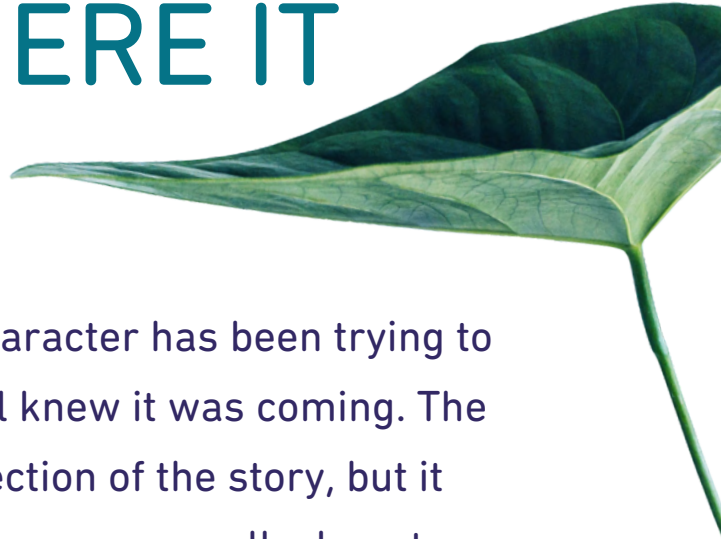
*The "Before It Happens" climb leads to...*

# THE PEAK

The Peak is the thing that the character wants or fears, the moment we've been building towards during the climb. This moment exists because of where we came from. The "It Happens" moment isn't a random event that comes out of nowhere, like a lightning strike coming down and hitting our rollercoaster car on a sunny day. The "It Happens" moment is caused by all the events that occurred during the "Before It Happens" climb: if you're going to have your character get struck by lightning, you better make sure it's raining on them first.



# THE PEAK: WHERE IT HAPPENS



The “It Happens” peak is where your character has been trying to get to or avoiding at all costs, but we all knew it was coming. The peak is the point of no return for this section of the story, but it doesn’t have to be a massive moment; one very small, almost insignificant action can be the turning point and cause ripples for the rest of the chapter.



*Once the peak is over, we're into...*

# THE PLUNGE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF IT HAPPENING



The change that happens in the Peak initiates a series of consequences. In a rollercoaster, this is the part where we speed down the hill and scream. In a story, this is where your character has to deal with the changes and repercussions of it happening. What happens after your character gets struck by lightning while riding a rollercoaster in the middle of a storm? The answer to that question is the Consequences plunge.



*Once the consequences are played out, we're onto the final stage...*

# THE VALLEY:

## WHAT'S CHANGED?

How did the consequences of the Peak change things for the character? What new desires or problems arise as a result of the Peak and the Plunge? Why did that Climb and Peak matter?



In the Valley, we take a quick breather before the next Climb, and then we do it all over again.



# GREAT WORK!

You're on your way to writing an engaging story.

This sequence of actions and consequences is how you make sure your protagonist is always trying to progress toward their goal. They don't even have to always succeed—in fact, failure can be more entertaining for a reader than success—but your characters must always be trying. This is how you make a chapter dynamic; this is how you make a character evolve; this is how you make a story engaging.