

How to Give Your Readers Their Emotional Fix

When we think about emotion in a story the word can mean different things to different people. The main divide and therefore the main difference is, of course, the male/female one. It might seem obvious, but if there is any doubt as to which you are writing for, men or women, think about it because your story must be couched to suit.

As a general rule women want to be moved by love, sympathy, uplifting sentiments, incidents of caring and nurture, etc. This is not to say that they don't want excitement, danger or cliff hangers, but most women will respond to the higher emotions more readily than men.

Men want, again as a general rule, to read about action, danger and success in conflict. The emotions they respond to are fear, anger, sometimes hate, triumph and anything that shows the hero feeling fulfilled by overcoming the obstacles that have been thrown his way. Which is not to say that they don't like the love element, but it is often, shall we say, on a more basic level.

Now please don't hold up your hands in horror and cry 'stereotypes!' Face the facts: men and women really are different! As a general rule.

When you begin a story take a good look at your hero or heroine and decide exactly how they would react in the situation you are about to pitch them into.

This means working out where they have come from in their life journey to date. Are they bitter as a result of life's trials, or are they resigned to their fate? Or what? A word of warning: don't make your hero too well balanced. Remember, 'well balanced' can also equal 'boring'.

Remember also that your hero or heroine should be flawed in some way. So decide what that flaw is and the experience that produced it. Then colour their emotions and reactions accordingly.

Your readers want to experience what your characters are feeling so they can live vicariously through them. To do this you have to show what a character is feeling. This can be done by simply describing what is happening, such as:

'Amanda felt the hot blood rush to her cheeks.'

The context of the incident should tell the reader why. Is she blushing with embarrassment, or is she angry?

You can let the character say what's happening:

'Stop talking like that! You make me so angry!'

For the male characters you can say something like:

'Dirk strode swiftly across the room, anger blazing in his eyes. His fist caught Parfitt squarely on the chin and sent him reeling. "Don't you dare talk to Amanda like that, you miserable toad!"'

Space the emotional scenes in your story so that the reader isn't in a constant state of emotional tension. It's OK to build these scenes as the story comes to a climax; just don't overdo it.

As a general rule (there's that phrase again!) readers want to feel satisfied, fulfilled and relieved that good triumphed over evil in the end. Learn to give them the emotional fix they're looking for and you will build a loyal readership eagerly awaiting your next story.

About the Author: Mervyn Love offers a warm welcome and a stress free zone for all writers at his website: <http://www.WritersReign.co.uk> Here you can relax and browse pages of advice, resources, competition listing, markets and much more. His free Article Writing Course has proved extremely popular, so why not sign up now while youre thinking about it? <http://www.writersreign.co.uk/WRac.html>

This article was printed from: <http://www.easyarticles.com/article-171152.htm>