

DO IT YOURSELF OPERA – Story is the Foundation

HOW TO MAKE A GREAT STORY - THE BASIC ELEMENTS

1. CHARACTERS

The protagonist is the hero of the story. The protagonist can be male, female, animal, creature or plant. In opera the protagonist is often the tenor or soprano (highest male or female voice). The antagonist is the person, thing or force that hinders the protagonist from getting something. In opera the antagonist is often the baritone/bass or mezzo soprano (lower male or female voices).

2. CONFLICT

A collision of wishes. In stories, the conflict is between the protagonist and the antagonist. The antagonist attempts to prevent the protagonist from getting what he or she wants.

3. SETTING

Where the story happens. The place (what country? inside or outside?) and time (past or present? day or night?)

4. RESOLUTION

How the conflict gets resolved to give a satisfactory ending to the story.

These are the four basic elements from which all exciting stories are made. Each element has nearly limitless variations, but all four are present in stories that hold our attention.

WRITING A STORY PLOT-LINE

Before constructing your own story, spend some time thinking about a well-known story like *Cinderella*. Who is the protagonist? Who is the antagonist? What is the conflict? Where does it all happen? In some stories these elements might not be obvious, like in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

Now, create a protagonist of your own. It might be you or your best friend, or someone or something entirely made-up. Then decide where this character lives: What town, country or planet (maybe Mars)? Imagine what this character might need or want. Next, create an antagonist. It could be an enemy. It could be a false friend. Decide why this character (the antagonist) does not intend to allow the protagonist to achieve his/her goal.

The story is simply letting these two people or forces fight it out. The exciting part of the story is in the conflict or collision of wishes.

The more intense the conflict, the more exciting the story. To make your story even more exciting, up the stakes. This means figure out reasons for the opposing characters to want the same thing, like the Stepsisters and Cinderella both wanting to marry the Prince.

Now, let the characters fight it out. Don't take sides! See what happens to resolve the conflict...