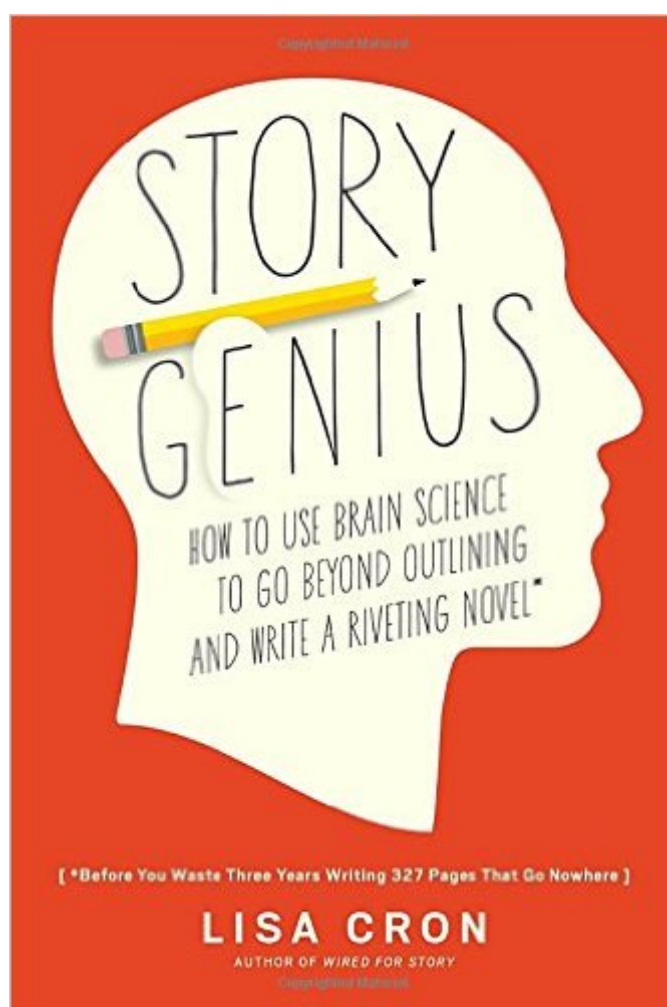


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Story Genius: How To Use Brain Science To Go Beyond Outlining And Write A Riveting Novel (Before You Waste Three Years Writing 327 Pages That Go Nowhere)



Synopsis

Following on the heels of Lisa Cron's breakout first book, *Wired for Story*, this writing guide reveals how to use cognitive storytelling strategies to build a scene-by-scene blueprint for a riveting story. It's every novelist's greatest fear: pouring their blood, sweat, and tears into writing hundreds of pages only to realize that their story has no sense of urgency, no internal logic, and so is a page one rewrite. The prevailing wisdom in the writing community is that there are just two ways around this problem: pantsing (winging it) and plotting (focusing on the external plot). Story coach Lisa Cron has spent her career discovering why these methods don't work and coming up with a powerful alternative, based on the science behind what our brains are wired to crave in every story we read (and it's not what you think). In *Story Genius* Cron takes you, step-by-step, through the creation of a novel from the first glimmer of an idea, to a complete multilayered blueprint—including fully realized scenes—that evolves into a first draft with the authority, richness, and command of a riveting sixth or seventh draft.

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Customer Reviews

This book stands apart from every other book about story I've ever read. And I've read quite a few. For someone who's primarily "interested" in the art and/or science of story, this book is bound to disappoint. But, for someone who's *engaged* in the hobby or profession of crafting stories that need to *work*, "Story Genius" is a godsend. Here's why: Lisa Cron has nailed down, in deceptively simple language, the very exact steps a writer needs to take to go from interesting prose to a

compelling story. While the book is highly readable and doesn't have lots of (any, in my reading) frightening and impressive words, I see the fingerprints of other geniuses on the page: Rupert Sheldrake, Nick Arrizza, Anders Ericsson, and even (and in this context, it's a high compliment), L. Ron Hubbard. Just fingerprints, though. The vast majority of the work here is all Cron's. She is so lighthearted and playful, you could easily miss the profound value (to the working storyteller) in her book IF YOU WEREN'T ALREADY STARVING FOR IT. Which I am. Because with all the wonderful books I've read and courses I've taken, a few things have been missing. Like: After you've identified the "wound" in the protagonist's past that informs the inner part of their journey through the story, what in the world do you do with that information? Most other writers, teachers, and gurus implicitly leave you with the challenge, "Well, that's for you to figure out." Translation: They don't know, and they don't want you to know that they don't know. Cron does, and she lays it out explicitly and generously.

Humans are "wired for story," but writers often miss the boat: "Writers often don't even know what a story is: So, even though they have a great idea, their prose is gorgeous, and there's a lot of action, there's no real story, and so no driving sense of urgency." Here's the essence of a story: A story is about how the things that happen affect someone in pursuit of a difficult goal, and how that person changes internally as a result. EVERY part of the book has to support the struggle of the protagonist. No matter how beautiful the prose, if it doesn't relate to the protagonist's struggle, the story falls flat. STORY GENIUS is designed to help you, the novelist, figure out how to make your story work. Here's the key: It's all about the struggle of the protagonist--how she is "making sense of what's happening, how she struggles with, evaluates, and weighs what matters most to her, and then makes hard decisions, moving the action forward." I believe Lisa Cron is dead-on right about the struggle of the protagonist in weaving a compelling story. I thought about a few authors that I really love. What makes Dean Koontz' "Odd Thomas" series great? Clearly, it's the struggles of Odd Thomas. We see the same thing in the famous "Kinsey Milhoune" series by Sue Grafton. These stories are a lot of fun because we identify with the struggle of Kinsey. Of course these two authors write well--but the books are good reads because of the compelling struggle of the protagonist. STORY GENIUS is not just theory, however--there are lots of excellent, practical suggestions. Here's the most important recommendation in the entire book: Use a story blueprint.

Wired For Story, in my opinion, was one of the better books on writing that I've read in quite some

time mostly because of the approach it took. Lisa Cron takes the concepts there and expands on them in a book that takes you by the hand and shows you how to, well, use brain science to "Go Beyond Outlining and Write a Riveting Novel (Before You Waste Three Years Writing 327 Pages.)" I've recommended *Wired For Story* to a number of fellow writers as it hits upon one of the main things lacking in many of the stories I've read over the years: the engaging the reader, or as I like to say, let your words on the page meet my imagination half way. *Story Genius* takes the concepts in *Wired For Story* and shows one how to go about implementing the strategies. The "blue-print" is there and is easily understood, delving into what gives the story and its various threads meaning. There are discussions about cause and effect and delving deep and narrowing down your main character's problem with clarity, all which helps readers empathize with what you're writing - empathize in the sense that empathy, at its root, is about understanding, with particular regard here to motivations; it's not necessary to "like" a character as it is to have your audience understand their motivations and why they choose to see the world the way they do through schemas. Beliefs--->Attitudes--->Actions. The one, somewhat minor problem for me is Lisa uses protagonist and main character interchangeably and, when dealing with narrative components, they are NOT one and the same.

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