**How to Write a Story that's not Boring**

**I. Who is John Gardiner? story of his conversion and his history** ..  
Always know the worldview of the author and you can read anything.

# II. Can’t we all write a good story? Why should we write one? to illustrate a principle. Jesus did that.

# III. Nine points to use to test every idea for a story

* 1. Main character who wants something  
     If the answer is “nothing” then you don’t have a story. If the answer is “I don’t know” or “I’m not sure”, then you are still in trouble. If the author is not sure, then the reader will become bored because he doesn’t know what the story is about.

*Little Willy wants Grandpa to get well.***Shrek (wanted to be loved for himself.)**

B. Why can’t the main character have what he wants?  
If the source of his distress (the reason the main character can’t have what he wants) does not loom as a formidable challenge, the reader gets bored. Imagine the lack of suspense if Goliath were shorter than David!

In Stone Fox, it is a bill for 10 years back taxes which Willy can’t pay.

C. What happens if the main character doesn’t get what he wants?

If nothing of major consequence happens to the main character if he doesn’t get what he wants, then the reader will become bored because the outcome doesn’t really matter.

Sally wants to drive the Mustang to school but her dad says no, she has to drive the Chevy. ??? Who cares?

**In Stone Fox, Grandfather will die.**

One of my students wrote that the main character wanted to buy candy. Who cares if he doesn’t get to buy candy?

How does my main character struggle to get what he wants?

If the main character doesn’t struggle to get what he wants, the reader will become bored, since there will be no doubt (suspense) about the outcome. Even Sherlock Holmes, was not too smart, too soon.  
  
In Stone Fox, back taxes are overdue. Little Willy   
tries to figure out how to earn some money.   
He struggles by harvesting the potato crop, but Grandfather doesn’t get better. He asks the banker for a loan, but is turned down, but he does get his college savings from the banker and uses it to pay the entrance fee for a dogsled race.. But the mighty Indian, Stone Fox, who has never lost a race enters too.

D. What additional hardships does your character face?

If the reader is given a chance to catch his breath, the reader is given a chance to get bored.

Did you ever wonder why the detective and the police captain never get along? Or why the getaway car has trouble starting? Additional hardships mean additional suspense.

In Stone Fox, little Willy must take care of his bed-ridden Grandfather; get through the winter;protect his dog from being shot; race with one eye swollen shut.

E. When does it appear hopeless?

If it doesn’t appear hopeless that the main character will get what he wants, then you risk boring the reader because you have not brought him to the “edge of his seat.”

“What’s going to happen now?” asks the reader, who can’t see that it is humanly possible for the main character to achieve his goal. This is the point of maximum suspense.

In Stone Fox, the hopeless part comes when Willy’s dog Searchlight dies 10 ft. from the finish line.

F. Does your main character get what he wants?

You have to know, as the writer, if he does get what he wants. The reader wants to know the answer; that’s why he read the story.

Confusion arises from not knowing explicitly what the main character wanted in the beginning.

In Stone Fox the answer is yes.. Grandfather gets better.

G. When is the distress alleviated?

If by the end of the story the main character still wants what he wanted in the beginnning, then the story doesn’t have an ending, and a story without an ending is boring.

If the main character gets what he wanted, then the distress is obviously alleviated.

If he does NOT, then an alternative satisfies the main character.

H. What is unexpected or surprising about the ending?

If the reader is able to guess the ending, then he will be bored. Have you ever seen a very predictable movie? It is not nearly as good as one with a surprise ending, is it?  
  
READ THE LAST CHAPTER OF STONE FOX ALOUD.

Many good stories have predictable endings, but the way that the main character gets what he wanted is the unexpected part.

I. Foreshadowing

Go back and drop “hints” about what the outcome will be. The race giving a $500 prize, Stone Fox- was he kind?

# IV. Finishing the story

Now, go back and give the hook: That is, writing something interesting that will draw your audience in to the story.

Here is the hook John used:

[Read the first page of the book.]

Another hook:

Prologue.. read first part of Top Secret.

“I am writing this with my flashlight on, under the blanket in my room. There is a car across the street…

(note: I don’t have a copy of the book, but maybe you do, Stefanie.)

***WANT STRUGGLE SURPRISE***

***YOU WRITE A STORY NOW!***

### HOW TO WRITE AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**I. Intro**

**II. Title**

**III. Coat of Arms**

**IV. Physical Description**

**V. Where I’ve Lived**

**VI. Pie of Life**

**VII. If I Had a Million Dollars…**

**VIII. Meet My Family**

**IX. Great Achievement to Date**

**X. If I Could Travel Anywhere**

**XI. Who is someone you admire?**

**XII. Where do you see yourself in 15 years?**

**XIII. Imagine yourself as an 80 year old…**

**XIV. Epitaph**

**P.S: The cover (do this last.)**