

STORY GRID

PERFORMANCE STORY CHEAT SHEET

**The performance story is a big crowd
pleaser because it concerns a life changing
pressure cooker moment...when we must
perform on demand and either attain
respect or live with ignominious shame.**

-Shawn Coyne

WHAT IS A PERFORMANCE STORY?

An arc plot (hero's journey) or mini-plot (multiple characters) external genre, the performance story culminates in the big event, when the hero/s are forced to display all their gifts under duress and society's critical evaluation.

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WHAT IS THE CONTROLLING IDEA OF THE PERFORMANCE STORY?

POSITIVE: We gain respect when we commit to
expressing our gifts unconditionally.

NEGATIVE: Shame results when we hold our
gifts back for fear of criticism and/or reprisal.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL VALUE AT STAKE ?

RESPECT AND SHAME

WHAT IS THE SPECTRUM OF THE GLOBAL VALUE?

**Honored/Respected to Flawed to Shamed to Respected
Publicly but Self-Ashamed**

Performance Stories have to be expressed at all three levels of conflict, extra-personal (society pressure), personal (antagonist pressure) and Inner (personal internal pressure).

OBLIGATORY SCENES OF AN PERFORMANCE STORY

1. An Inciting Performance Opportunity.
2. Protagonist sidesteps responsibility to perform.
3. Forced to perform, the protagonist lashes out.
4. Discovering and understanding the antagonist's object of desire is.
5. Protagonist's initial strategy to outmaneuver antagonist fails.
6. Protagonist, realizing he/she must change their approach to salvage some form of honor reaches an all is lost moment.
7. The Big Event Scene (the is the central event of the performance story...what the reader is waiting for), this is the moment when the protagonist's gift is expressed. The Big Fight, the Play, the Recital...
8. The protagonist is rewarded at least one level of satisfaction (extra-personal, personal or inner) scene.

CONVENTIONS OF PERFORMANCE STORY

1. Training...the protagonist must practice to gain and/or recover the skills necessary to perform.
2. The explicit "All is Lost Moment." The protagonist must understand that there is no getting around their imminent failure.
3. The mentor recovers moral compass or betrays the protagonist to act out perceived victimhood.
4. The power divide between the antagonist and protagonist is wide and deep.
5. Ironical ending...the protagonist wins and loses or loses and wins.

Performance Sub-Genres

1. Sports

- a. Rocky
- b. The Natural

2. Business

- a. Big Night
- b. Trading Places

3. Art

- a. Mr. Turner
- b. The Agony and the Ecstasy

4. Music

- a. Topsy Turvy
- b. Whiplash