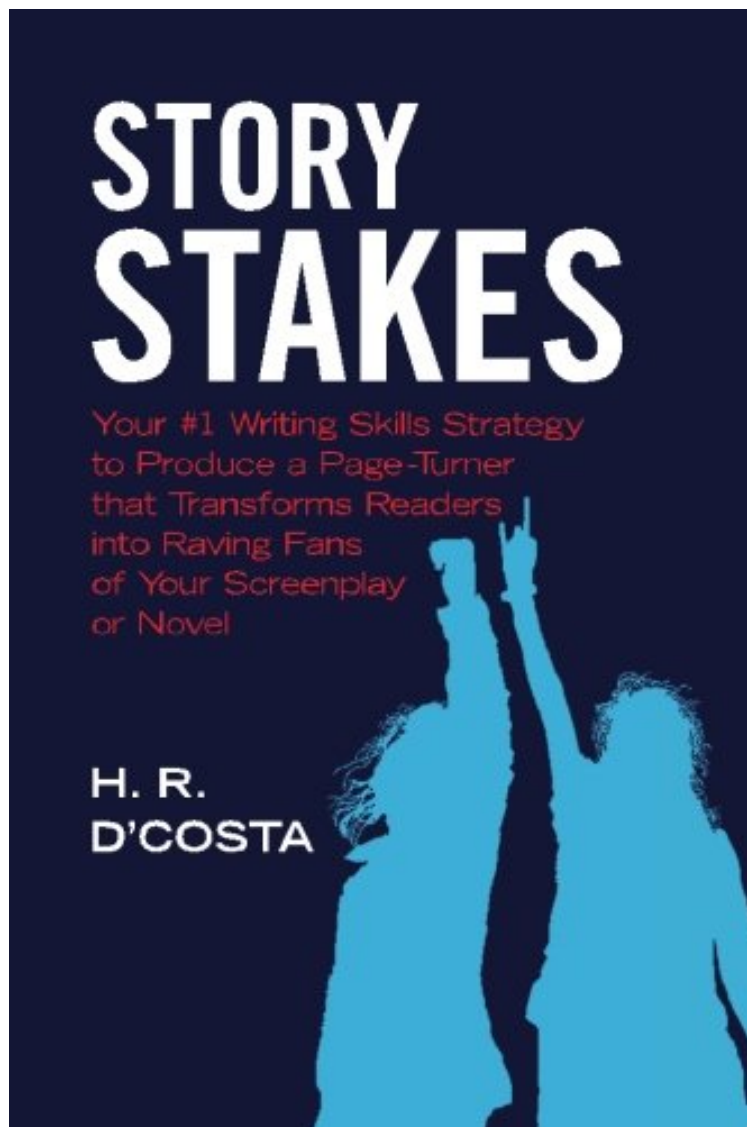


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Story Stakes: Your #1 Writing Skills Strategy to Produce a Page-Turner that Transforms Readers into Raving Fans of Your Screenplay or Novel

H. R. D'Costa

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A very good book. It goes into great depths, and has a lot of great ideas. But what I love most is that, unlike most books of writing, the author doesn't just fill the book with quotes from other books on writing. I absolutely hate when I buy a book on writing, and the author has simply repackaged ideas from other books. I would consider myself reasonably advanced in my progress as a writer, and have read many books on writing. As a result, I am often disappointed to find that many writing books give advice that is largely common sense, and then they fill up the remaining pages with tedious exercises. This book though, is really perfect for where I'm at as a writer, and I can imagine that it would also be suitable for people with less writing experience too.
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Turn up the Volume
By Allen G. Bagby
I've read many books on structure and outlining. Glad I circled back to remind myself how to "turn up the volume" in my current manuscript and why it's important to let the stakes/costs ring loud over what my protagonist is doing and what he and world stands to lose if he doesn't change/grow in character. I had been so focused on structure, which is extremely important, that I was speeding past the emotion of stakes. This book definitely helped reestablished my instincts for depth and not simply the mechanical side storytelling. D'Costa uses examples from books as well as movies. I found that using movies to illustrate story stakes is better than using books. Bookshelves are a lot more diverse than DVD shelves. Also, the book contains links to helpful downloads on her website, scribemeetsworld.com. After finishing the book I immediately went back to to explore other books by D'Costa.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Everything to lose
By Alex Kourvo
From book blogger Alex Kourvo at the Writing Slices blog
If the hero has nothing to lose, there are no stakes and therefore no story. We all want to make our stories as gripping as possible, but its not always easy to see how. H.R. DCosta spells out, in clear language, the different kinds of story stakes from freedom and justice to regret, protection of others, and the heros own death. She uses many examples from well-known books and movies, so you can see the stakes in action. She also includes modulating factors, things that can be used to make situations even worse for your poor hero, mostly by making them emotionally difficult. I would have liked to see a few more examples from books, rather than movies. The two mediums are quite different, after all. However, DCosta explains that by using mostly movie examples, she reaches a wider audience. This is a minor complaint in an otherwise excellent book.

Make your story a page-turner; make a living as a writer. Wouldnt it be great if readers stayed up all night to finish your screenplay or novel? After such an intense emotional experience, when theyre done with your story, these readers wont quickly forget about it and reach for another spec script or novel in their TBR pile. Nope. Theyll transform into raving fans wholl tell everyone they know about your work. Thats how you get onto Hollywoods radar and eventually make the big spec sale. Thats how you get the word-of-mouth recommendations that propel a novel to the top of the best-seller lists. Its how you finally achieve your writing dreams through your creativity. Sounds nice, right? But how do you make it happen? How do you keep readers glued to your screenplay or novel? At first, you might use your writing skills to create a likeable hero or craft a high-concept premise. Sure, these things are important. They entice readers to give your story a chance. But they only go so far. They dont keep readers engaged till the very end. To accomplish this, you need something more. You need stakes. Because of stakes, your hero cant walk away from his problem. As a result, readers wont be able to walk away from your story. See, when stakes are in play, readers will be wondering if your hero will succeed or fail at his goal. Then, they worry about him. Then, theyre under tension. To relieve this tension, they MUST stay up all night and finish your story and when they have, theyll rave about the amazing page-turner they couldnt put down. Theyll rave about you. Master story stakes, and your screenplay or novel will stand out in a crowded marketplace. This writing skills guide will show you how. Specifically, youll learn about:
11 Types of Story Stakes Which Increase Tension and Reader Engagement Some of them you already know. A few will be new. At the very least, youll have a convenient list to check the next time you need a new reason for your hero to save the day, trick your leading lady, or chase down a suspect. Plus, well cover best practices. That way, youll get the most mileage out of the stakes you choose to include in your story.
8 Modulating Factors Which Affect the Emotional Impact of the Stakes Think of modulating factors like the knobs on a stereo system. They can either turn up the emotional volume, or they can mute it. Oftentimes, modulating factors are the secret to wringing out the extra drop of emotion that will give your story an advantage over others in its genre.
The Story Stake Matrix This is where we put everything together. Its a tool which will show you: how to use stakes to craft a premise with more commercial appeal how to to raise the stakes (even when theyre already high!) how to avoid an anticlimactic ending Lets focus on that second benefit for a minute. Several writing guides will tell you that to keep readers interested, youve got apply your creativity and raise the stakes. But, these books are frustratingly vague on how to accomplish this. This book is not vague. This book will give you specific strategies you can use right away to make high stakes feel even higher. Buy this writing skills guide today and take a step closer toward enthralled readers, raving fans, and killer sales! Also available (in ebook):
Inciting Incident: How to Begin Your Story and Engage Audiences Right Away
Trough of Hell: How to Wrap Up the Middle of Your Story with Maximum Impact
Story Climax: How to Avoid Disappointed

Audiences and Craft a Screenplay or Novel Climax that Thrills and Delights