

## EXERCISE: THE TRANSFORMATION TEST

Is your hero's transformation as big as it can be? Have you hit all the beats hard enough?

Use this handy Self-Workshop Checklist to make sure your beats pass the transformation test!

### Opening Image

- Is your Opening Image *one* scene or one group of interconnected scenes?
- Is your Opening Image *visual*? (Are you showing, not telling?)
- Is one or more of your hero's flaws evident in this scene?

### Theme Stated

- Does your theme directly relate to your hero's need or spiritual lesson?
- Is your theme stated by someone (or something!) *other* than the hero?
- Can your hero easily and believably dismiss this theme?

### Setup

- Have you shown at least one thing that needs fixing in your hero's life?
- Have you introduced at least one A Story character?
- Did you clearly establish your hero's want or external goal somewhere in this beat?
- Have you shown your hero in more than one area of their life (such as home, work, and/or play)?
- Are your hero's flaws evident in this beat?
- Have you created a sense of urgency that imminent change is vital (stasis = death)?

### Catalyst

- Does the Catalyst happen *to* the hero?
- Is it an *action* beat? (No revelations allowed here!)
- Is it impossible for the hero to go back to their normal life after this?
- Is the Catalyst big enough to break the status quo?

### Debate

- Can you sum up your Debate with a question? Or if it's a preparation Debate, have you clearly defined what your hero is preparing for and why?
- Have you created a sense of hesitation in your hero?
- Have you shown your hero debating in more than one area of their life (such as home, work, and/or play)?

### Break Into 2

- Is your hero *leaving* an old world behind and entering a new one?
- If your hero isn't physically going somewhere, are they trying something new?
- Is your Act 2 world the *opposite* of your Act 1 world?
- Is the break between Act 1 and Act 2 clear and distinct?
- Does your hero make a *proactive* move or decision to enter Act 2?
- Is your hero making a decision based on what they *want*?
- Can you identify *why* this is the wrong way to change?

### B Story

- Have you introduced a new love interest, mentor, friend, or nemesis character?
- Can you identify how your B Story character (or characters!) represents the theme?

- Is your new character in some way a product of the upside-down Act 2 world? (Would they stick out like a sore thumb in the Act 1 world?)

### Fun and Games

- Do you clearly show your hero either floundering or succeeding in the new world?
- Does your Fun and Games deliver on the promise of your premise?
- Does your Fun and Games visibly illustrate how your Act 2 world is the upside-down version of your Act 1 world?

### Midpoint

- Can you clearly identify either a false victory or a false defeat?
- Have you raised the stakes of the story?
- Do your A (external) and B (internal) stories cross in some way?
- Can you identify a shift from the wants to the needs (even if it's subtle)?

### Bad Guys Close In

- Is the path of this beat a direct opposite of your Fun and Games? (That is, if your hero was succeeding in your Fun and Games, are they floundering here? And vice versa?)
- Have you shown or identified how the internal bad guys (flaws) are working against your hero?

### All Is Lost

- Does something happen *to* the hero in this beat?
- Is your All Is Lost *big* enough to push your hero into Act 3? (That is, have they really hit rock bottom?)
- Have you inserted a whiff of death?
- Does this beat feel like another Catalyst for change?

### Dark Night of the Soul

- Is your hero reflecting on something in this beat?
- Is this beat leading your hero toward an epiphany?
- Does your hero's life seem worse off than it did at the beginning of the book?

### Break Into 3

- Does your hero learn a valuable *universal* lesson (theme) here?
- Does your hero make a proactive decision to fix something?
- Is the decision based on what your hero needs?
- Can you identify why this is the *right* way to change?
- Is your Act 3 world a synthesis of Act 1 and Act 2?

### Finale

- Does your hero struggle to enact their plan? (That is, does your finale have conflict?)
- Is there a Dig Deep Down moment when your hero proves they've really learned their theme?
- Do the A Story and B Story somehow intertwine in this beat?

### Final Image

- Is your Final Image *one* scene or collection of interconnected scenes?
- Is your Final Image *visual*? (Are you showing, not telling?)
- Is it evident how your hero has *transformed*?
- Does your "after" snapshot somehow mirror your "before" snapshot (Opening Image)?

Remember back in chapter 2, when I told you that some of the beats were single-scene beats (like the Theme Stated, Catalyst, and All Is Lost), and some were multi-scene beats (like the Setup, Fun and Games, and Dark Night of the Soul)?

Well, when we start to lay out our cards on the board, we see much more of how that comes into play. Here is what the board should look like when it's set up:

