# Building Story

storytelling tutorial

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15

Introduction

As a storyteller I am known for my textually scarce and graphically elaborate stories, while altogether being rich in content and confrontational. I employ various styles but, often, this is what I do best.

'Fifteen' is a good example of this style and in this tutorial I dissect the story and analyse its creation as an example how to build stories of a similar nature. The story was originally created for Cowbird, an online storytelling platform. It can be found here.

This tutorial gives some guidelines to build a story. I use the word 'build' as it goes further than just writing a narrative. It is about bringing various elements together and editing to an extreme to receive a result like this. The steps, while they can't be seen separately, are very much building bricks creating the story, the home, for your narrative.

I separate the process in six different steps, each on which will be elaborated in this tutorial.
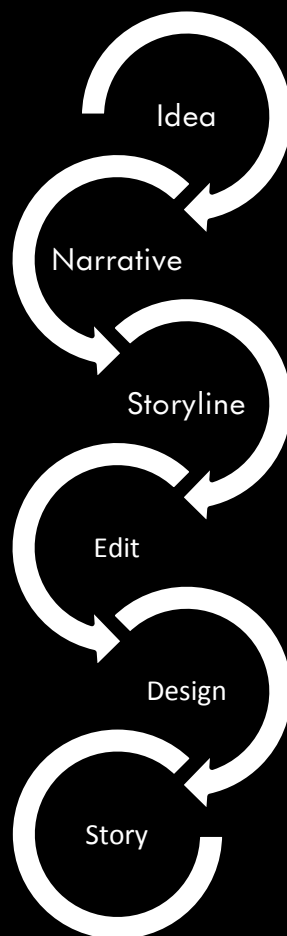
Idea

Narrative

Storyline

Edit

Design

Story

What is story?

Before we begin it makes sense to figure out what a story actually is. As on any topic, the opinions vary greatly. General consensus however is that a story contains a narrative, which is a series of events featuring at least one character (not necessarily human).

Narrative; storyline; arc; story; and more terms are often used interchangeably. There is however some difference. This is how I see the terms:

Narrative

The actual set of events in a chronological order

boy goes to school > boy studies > boy graduates > boy receives degree

Storyline

The order in which the set of events is prevented

boy receives degree > boy studies > boy graduates > boy goes to school

Arc

The storyline of a specific event of character

boy receives degree > boy studies > boy graduates > boy goes to school
teacher meets boy > teacher thinks boy is crazy > teacher retires

Story

Arcs pulled together in storylines, presenting a narrative:
the end product (often with additional elements like design)

the story of how a boy received his degree

In order to create a story it is important to keep this in mind. There will always be a narrative, even in fiction, but your story does not have to keep the logical order of the narrative. A storyline may mix things up a bit to engage and surprise those who see or read the story, presenting events in a non-chronological order is one way to do this when done with care.

The same applies to the use of arcs, a specific arc may at first appear useless or out of place but when the storyline is build up in an exciting way suddenly arcs may meet each other and start to make sense. While someone engages with the story the initial confusion will hopefully make them curious and keep them exploring it as they desire to understand.

This sounds all quite technical, and it is. However, when you start creating a story and you practice with this you will see it is not that complicated. This is very much building, rather than writing. Of course writing is an essential part of creating stories (even if the words are used for a script, to create an outline for graphics or to be spoken) but taking a pro-active approach with storylines and arcs I prefer to call building. Design, the look of your story, is a part of that too.

The files tell a story of things gone horribly wrong. They tell the story of a father who refuses to accept his child for who he is; the story of a man who gets unconditional support from his wife even if that support means she will lose her own child.

It is the story of a boy who wants to be loved but knows little more than fear.

I d e a

The average human being has several thousand thoughts a day. Many of those may be excellent for stories. Many of them are not.

One of my most common thoughts is: how would that work as a story?

I am someone who explores and observes, it is behaviour that comes natural to me and I see it as a fundamental part of my storytelling identity. I look at people, events, objects and wonder what they are about. I find a word or term that peaks my interest and seek more information behind it. What is the etymology? What is the history? Why do I see it here? Similarly, I explore everything that can hold my attention for more than a few seconds.

While this is second nature for me it is something that anyone can train and it is fundamental to work out the magic in life. The magic in life is what makes a good story special. The grotesque; absurd; beauty; magic, that is what a story needs to lift it from mundane to special. And fear not, all this can be found in the most common and seemingly boring events.

Often when you talk to writers of any kind and you ask them what the starting point is to become a good writer they will tell you to read. Read, read, read. They are not wrong by any means but I think it goes much further than that; especially when it comes to storytelling. Our world is much more than written words, it is much more than any form of culture. Explore everything. Never close your eyes for mystery. Always wonder.

My 'storytelling slogan' is 'I want to make you wonder'.
I can only do that if I keep wondering myself.

However you get an idea for a story, suddenly there will be one. Is it a good idea?

I test it with the following rules:

1. Something should be out of the ordinary;
2. It should somehow be relatable;
3. It has a clear narrative (assuming non-fiction);
4. It suits me as a storyteller;
5. I feel comfortable telling this story (while it may still be a challenge);

80% of my ideas never become something. 15% of my ideas may end up in writing but become articles, blogs or even tweets and status updates. While the latter can be a very short story, I find perhaps only 5% of my ideas actually to become story.

Be an enemy of your own ideas. Most of your ideas will be interesting, but how much is interesting for a story?

Also keep in mind that when you publish your material it is out there for others to see and read. People give you attention, a moment of their time. They deserve your best shot at making that a worthwhile experience.

An important note here is that storytelling in itself is not activism or making a point. A well told story, however, can certainly serve that point and be an excellent tool to create change.

Lastly, when telling a non-fictional story you may want to consider the specific events and characters. While non-fiction should stay close to the truth sometimes it helps the narrative as a whole to eliminate or slightly alter elements, just ensure you are not suddenly telling a different story.

I can picture my bedroom, any of the dozens I had, and see myself sitting there alone. Confused about so many things. Questioning how I am ever going to survive this; how I will ever accept who I am.

Looking at is from a storytelling point of view I've had an amazing childhood. It's is filled with quite the series of bizarre events and, frankly, atrocities. My childhood is a leading source in my storytelling and in Fifteen it also takes a prominent role.

The idea for the story, however, came from a present thought. As the story details, in the past and coming few years all documents compiled in my childhood by social workers and whatever more will be destroyed. While it will not directly impact my daily life it is significant. The realisation this is happening now felt like a great idea for a story.

Applying my own set of rules this is what you get:

Unordinary

Not many people have been so heavily involved with social workers etc. and literally hundreds of documents being drafted about them during their childhood. As a logical result, few people experience the relief later in life when these documents finally disappear.

Relatable

It is a story about freedom. It is finally getting rid of a burden. It is about being surprised about your own strength.

I am here today. Never thought I'd make it.

Narrative

The narrative is simple:

> boy gets in trouble > boy has professionals writing documents about him > boy becomes man > man still has these documents lingering in his past > legal deadline expires and documents will be destroyed > man feels liberated

Suitability

I create a lot of stories related to my childhood and seek out significant moments and facts that can be turned into story, often somehow relating to the present. This story suits that frame perfectly.

Comfortable and/or challenging

It remains a challenge to tell it in the most beautiful way, but as I have so frequently addressed very personal matters I am totally comfortable telling this story.

Narrative

Now with an idea that meets your standards it is time to further explore the actual narrative.

I often find it useful to just start writing. How do I feel? What do I remember about those documents? How did I feel about them at the time? How did I respond to the information in there? Who were involved?

When I start writing this I often begin directly with 'story' but it ends up being a rant where my thoughts wander in many directions. This is ok, it is basically a brainstorm and gathering of information: it is bringing together all the elements that belong in the narrative, though you will throw away at least 80% of what you have just written.

Uneasy memories. Tears from the past finding tears of today.

The memories are essential.

A reminder of a life past.
A reminder of things overcome.

Some thoughts may be that far away from your actual idea that they prove completely useless for this story but can be useful somewhere else in the future. 'That reminds me of…' works perfectly when you're alone. Keep the ideas separate however: incorporate only those thoughts that help this story and keep other thoughts for new stories (or other material).

I have written about 2000 words while building this story. The actual story contains under 300. Much of your words will get lost, or altered, here already.

When you examine everything you jot down now, it is time to kill your darlings. Yes, that memory is hilarious but what does it add to this story? Toss it out. There is that one time, that one person, who had something to do with it. How relevant is that part for the overall storyline? Toss it out.

When creating the narrative for Fifteen it started with this enormous pile of documents and the fact that now, 15 years later (hence the title) these documents finally will be destroyed.

The documents, however, are in many ways a symbol. They symbolize how many people were involved, how the processes of professional youth care work and, back to today, they show how the past can continue to haunt you.

Just telling that the documents were created once and now will be destroyed does not do the story justice. It is about much more.
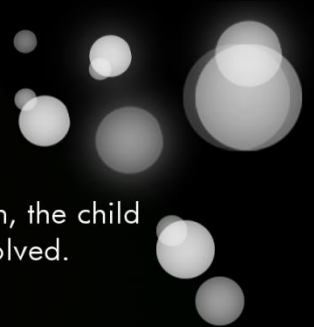
The files are hundreds of documents written by social workers, a guardian, the child protection services, a judge and many others who were professionally involved.

They were compiled between 1994 and 2000.

As I started writing, ranting, I realised that for every new place I was moved to new documents had to be created. Every new place had other staff and internal processes, all causing additional documents to be created.

But why did this happen to begin with? Under normal circumstances documents about a kid are not much more than a school report and perhaps some files from your GP. People who follow my work know about my childhood as much of it has been documented already but each story needs to be able to stand on its own.

While the cause of me being placed away from my parents is important, it is not the story. The story is about the documents and the impact they have had.

Going back to today again I notice how the documents have impacted me and still do, it is largely about what they represent but it is also awkward knowing in various archives there is so much information about you available. Not only demographic information, but about your feelings and whatever more. The fears I have expressed as a teen are on paper. The way people looked at me and what they thought was best is documented.

The few thoughts above, on this page, are as much words as the entire story but as you see there is a lot connected to it. Some things will have to be briefly explained, others will have to be eliminated and the core of it all has to be distilled.

This is where we start creating the storyline.

Storyline

While you are working on your narrative, gathering everything that may be part of your story, you will likely find an emerging storyline. Suddenly you find two elements that somehow work well together (they can correlate or bring great contrast). You may find that you can't ignore something that happened first but if you tell it first your story loses all its excitement (thus you place it elsewhere in your storyline). As you go along most likely some path within the words will become clear, if that is not the case you can force it a little later (or you may have to decide this idea was not good for a story after all, it happens).

The process of 'Narrative > Storyline > Edit' is not rigid, even the step after that, Design, can be partially included and you can always jump back again for a moment.

It is important however to globally keep the following order in mind:

6. Decide what you need and want to tell ('narrative')
7. Decide how to frame your story ('storyline')
8. Decide how to tell it ('edit')

We are now framing our story.

Sadness accompanied by a vague joy of survival.

Looking at Fifteen you'll see that I jump between the present and the past. I address a few memories that are all strongly connected to the documents which are essentially the framework of my story. The documents are the original idea. Yet, as became clear during the narrative brainstorm, only that as a narrative does not quite cut it.

This is the part I often struggle with the most.

When you go through your narrative, toss out everything you don't need. I tend to be radical and just delete it but you can also copy it elsewhere for the moment. Here you will really have to be harsh. Go through all the material you gathered and decide what you must use and what you don't need to use.

You may have written a paragraph on something connected that is essential for the narrative. Keep that paragraph for now but decide if it are the actual sentences or what you describe is that what you need.

If you do this, and you've been sincerely harsh on yourself, you will have little left.

Take a close look at your material. Is there enough left for a full narrative? It likely is still in a mostly chronological order. Do you need to add something again? Work with as little as is workable.
This should now be your final narrative and in the edit process we decide how exactly one sentence or the other will be written, how elaborate or brief we describe things. First, let's see where in the story they need to get a place.

The easiest part here is to move the elements that reveal everything at once, they go as far to the end as possible.

Other than that, keep moving things around. What makes sense where?

It is very much experimenting now and every time you feel you have something that makes sense check it. Check it once more. Can someone follow it? If something is unclear when the person reads it, is that ok? Are they able to work it out later? Did you move something more towards the end and does that not hurt the order more in the beginning?
I can write a lot of things here but this is something you just will have to do. The more stories you tackle this way the more a knack you'll get for it. It is simply experimenting which initially may feel forced but essentially, after a few stories, starts to make sense.

Don't be afraid to repeat one or a few lines to add a certain emphasis.

Just be really careful the story still works in the end. It may be good when you think you figured it out to let it rest for a few hours or ask somebody else to have a look at it.
Is it important to shake things up? Tough call but I often consider it essential to make the story work. As you typically have a lot of narrative and very few words, it is an essential part of your storyline. It enriches the story as a whole. Don't believe me? Play with it and see for yourself.

If you manage to do this well, the impact of your story will increase significantly.

E d i t

You now have a storyline with a full narrative. I realise that suddenly I dropped you in the deep with the storyline step, but I can't really make it different for you.

The problem is that while you can learn some techniques, story, as anything creative, is very much about intuition. It is about heart. If you don't understand that you may wish to figure that out first. Good stories can be told in a thousand ways. I don't believe however a good story can be told without passion.

That brings us back to the first step, Idea, for a brief moment. That is the one other requirement you need for an idea: you need to be passionate about it, one way or another. In fact, I dare say if you are truly passionate about something you can make anything work as a story.

Yet, that does not mean you should just ignore any kind of technique in telling a good story.

Archived as the law required now the files will be held by anonymous hands once more. They will be brought back from cellars and back rooms. They will be brought back only to finally be destroyed.

Soon they are nothing but a memory.

In any kind of creative work editing is crucial. At least if you want to reach an audience. Publishing it online means you may have an audience, small or big, and I consider it the duty of anyone who publishes to put a sincere effort in their work making it attractive for others. That does not mean it has to be flawless, it does not always have to be perfect. There should however be a sincere effort to not selfishly just bug others with your stuff. Make it about more than that. And yes, everyone has an interesting story to tell, as long as you can find the elements in your story that are worthwhile to hear, see or read and present them in beautiful personal ways.

If you thought you already killed all your darlings during the previous steps, better get a box of tissues ready. We've only just begun.

This, solely textual, is Fifteen:

1.

The files tell a story of things gone horribly wrong. They tell the story of a father who refuses to accept his child for who he is; the story of a man who gets unconditional support from his wife even if that support means she will lose her own child.

It is the story of a boy who just wants to be loved but knows little more than fear.

2.

I can picture my bedroom, any of the dozens I had, and see myself sitting there alone. Confused about so many things. Questioning how I am ever going to survive this; how I will ever accept who I am.

3.

I am here today. Never thought I'd make it.

4.

Uneasy memories. Tears from the past finding tears of today.

The memories are essential; a reminder of a life past. A reminder of things overcome.

5.

The files are hundreds of documents written by social workers, a guardian, the child protection services, a judge and many others who were professionally involved.

They were compiled between 1994 and 2000.

6.

Sadness accompanied by a vague joy of survival.

7.

Archived as the law required now the files will be held by anonymous hands once more, they will be brought back from cellars and back rooms. They will be brought back only to finally be destroyed.

Soon they are nothing but a memory.

8.

The memories are as much a burden as they are my strength.

They tell the story of a boy who searched for belonging; a boy once afraid to dream.

Yet, they also tell the story of a boy who fought; a boy who survived against all odds.

9.

That boy is here today. Never thought I'd make it.

p e r p e t u a l   f u s s   14/24

Fifteen is 282 words. I have used at least 2000 words to get here.

Let's take a closer look at the text.

As I indicated before there needs to be some background. Why did these documents ever come into existence? Why was there an apparent need for them?

I immediately answer these questions. The first sentences give the reader a very brief background. In those few lines it is however clear things have gone seriously wonky here. I mean the real situation, not the story. It provides enough background to place the narrative but at the same time for those who know my work they don't have to work themselves through the same story all over again. I try to make my stories suitable for both people who know my work (and my story) as well as for people who see my work for the very first time.

I also edited out the word documents here and replaced it with files. Why? Lyrical. It just sounds better. I search for synonyms all the time, to make it sound better and be less repetitive.

As I've mentioned before part of the reason document after document was created was that I kept moving around. It is a rather essential element of the story but this could take much space to explain.
Or I just say 'my bedrooms, any of the dozens I had'. Instantly you get that I moved around a lot. At the same time you also see there is no place to root, there is nothing to call home.

The perspective changed, as it does a few times. Suddenly it is first person. You first get the situation and now I, hopefully, pull you in.

The next page (we'll get to that later, why it are separate pages) is almost identical to the last page. The end is there why it is also the end.

You know when somebody tells a joke and mixes things up and starts with the punch line? That effect. It is endearing somehow, it is youthful. It is excitement. The difference with a joke, however, is that you don't know yet in the story it is the 'punch line' until you've seen the entire story. Then the click is made and it therefore does not interrupt the flow of the story.

Again, playing here is the trick. Part of your editing process will likely already begin when you're working on the storyline and it probably will finish somewhere in the design stage as there you notice it does not suit the design or discover a better way of saying it suddenly, seeing the story in a different way.

The key to good editing is your (potential) audience. Keep in mind what is interesting, what is relevant and what is necessary. From there, find creative ways of saying what you need to say. Tie elements together and keep it small.

For this kind of storytelling that is the key. The door in which that key fits you'll have to find yourself.

This is what Fifteen looks like finished:

The files tell a story of things gone horribly wrong. They tell the story of a father who refuses to accept his child for who he is; the story of a man who gets unconditional support from his wife even if that support means she will lose her own child.

It is the story of a boy who wants to be loved but knows little more than fear.

15

I can picture my bedroom, any of the dozens I had, and see myself sitting there alone. Confused about so many things. Questioning how I am ever going to survive this; how I will ever accept who I am.

I am here today. Never thought I'd make it.

Uneasy memories. Tears from the past finding tears of today.

The memories are essential.

A reminder of a life past.
A reminder of things overcome.

The files are hundreds of documents written by social workers, a guardian, the child protection services, a judge and many others who were professionally involved.

They were compiled between 1994 and 2000.

Sadness accompanied by a vague joy of survival.

Archived as the law required now the files will be held by anonymous hands once more. They will be brought back from cellars and back rooms. They will be brought back only to finally be destroyed.
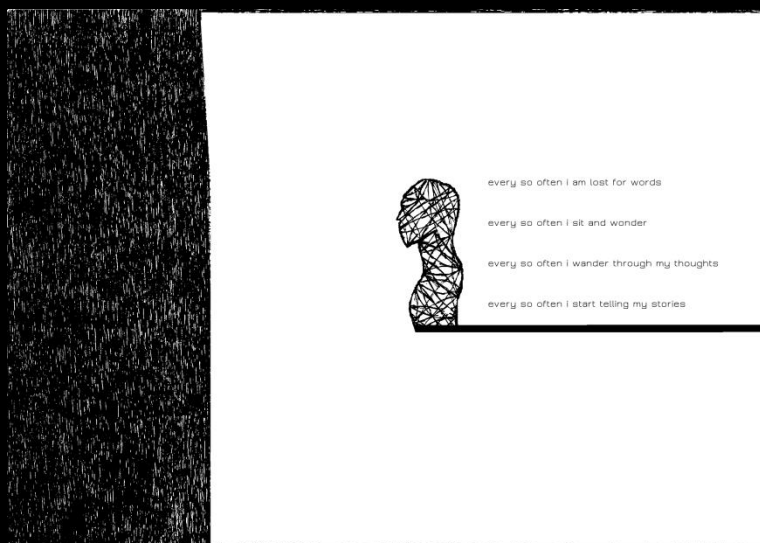
Soon they are nothing but a memory.

The memories are as much a burden as they are my strength. They tell the story of a boy who searched for belonging; a boy once afraid to dream. Yet, they also tell the story of a boy who fought; a boy who survived against all odds.

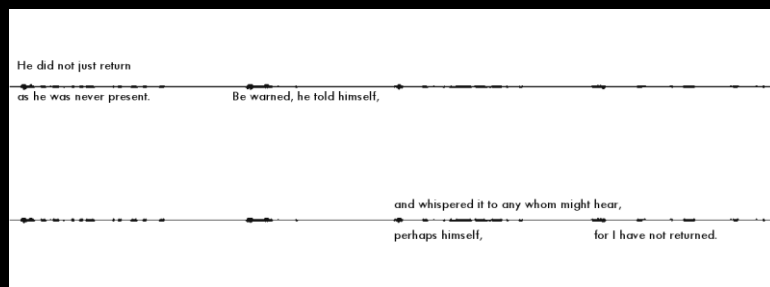That boy is here today. Never thought I'd make it.

Man rises

It was hard to find subtlety among the rhinestones that covered my knee-high boots, yet my real concern was the 12 cm stiletto heels. The boots were the first to put on.

While the whole happening presented quite a challenge everything else was a breeze in comparison to the balancing act these boots brought to the day.

For the entire Family

Close your eyes. So how do you feel today? Pout your lips. Do you think your parents would approve?

While in front of me the makeup artist and interviewer fought for my attention, behind me a battle ensued between the wig and wig artist; the boom boy simply stood in the way of everyone.

They wanted to film me while I was getting dressed. I declined; knowing that to get myself properly in the outfit, assisted by three people, I would surely expose parts of me I did not need on the screens in many a home.

For the second day I was followed by a documentary crew. They had approached me a while before, expressing their interest to document my story for national television, broadcasted at prime time.

EXCEPT...

While the wig was converted into a Victorian octopus the cameraman asked me to cross my legs, struggling to get a frame suitable for families.

Not only the boots were covered in rhinestones, so were my briefs. They too had been custom-made for the occasion.

A glittering crotch. Bring it on.

When they told me I would get custom briefs I had been slightly confused.
Surely I could provide my own and, while slightly uncomfortable, I understood I had to wear something not showing any lines.

But no, I was told the briefs would be visible. If needed there was padding available, they told me. Visible, you say?

I was the BRIDE
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It's so empty here.

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every so often i am lost for words

every so often i sit and wonder

every so often i wander through my thoughts

every so often i start telling my stories

Baldr died, as his dreams predicted. Mistletoe not only used to kiss.

He did not just return

as he was never present.   Be warned, he told himself,

and whispered it to any whom might hear,

perhaps himself,   for I have not returned.

These are all separate pages of various stories published on Cowbird.

1. The Glittering Crotch & The Victorian Octopus 2. White Space Fragments. 3. I don't know what to say anymore. 4. Twist. 5. Simulacrum to Love: The Heath Robinson Conundrum 6. Bang 7. Understanding Love 8. Eye See 9. Immer in meinem Herzen 10. Children. 11. Asleep

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bang unearthly gritty polished in silence nothing there it is here wanting it away wanting it to stay fear joy mingle rapid clouds evaporated emotions still there nowhere are you here silent your words always there i do not sleep pause the bang the noise the thunder waiting collapsing hoping it never is new is alien is uncommon is real i do not know where it ever will is now what about tomorrow i do not care i ignore i cherish whatever be what never be in dreams in days i hope i fear i wonder why now is here

p e r p e t u a l   f u s s   18/24

No, you hang up.
No, you hang up.
No, you hang up.

Eye stop
wundering an'yer, yer hold yer hoarsies,
aye? Dun yer see woh eye'm? Eye meight be graatly
d'stort'd, eye meight no'look s'warldy no moor but th'should be
n'need for introduckshuns. Jet, yer look at mi as eye am fin 'ar. Wear
d'we beggin? Yer hev read m'stories, see'no less and toget'er weave had er
jurney. And her today we're. How are yer, m'ate, yer wonderful beeng? Ar, yer
reeding, yer can't speek. Let me tell yer 'bout mer'adventours. It's bean like the meighty
see, travers' waves and sinkin' t'the bottom. This is no mir werld, this is no'mir hous
an' jet, here eye em. Here eye em. The'r feight is still meight. Yer, yer lung for
mer feist, mer glorie, bu' yer furget wha'eye see. Yer furget eye am a
s'renger. Ay, tha's grait, it shouws yer luv. And luv yer hav'. No
fin 'ar n'more, m'ate? Ner. Yer. Eye. Were wer goin'?
Am eye in yer werld? Am yer i'mein? Th's
s'renger eye alwees'm.
Welcum mir?

SO KISS ME

we looked into the sky
the sky so far away
we all had our stories
we all had more stories
than we should have at that age
we all had more stories
than we should have at any age
yet there we were
children
we looked up into the sky
the sky so far away

i7
childhood
we enjoyed it for the first time
so little childhood left
we lay in the grass
we looked up into the sky
the sky so far away
today we'll be children

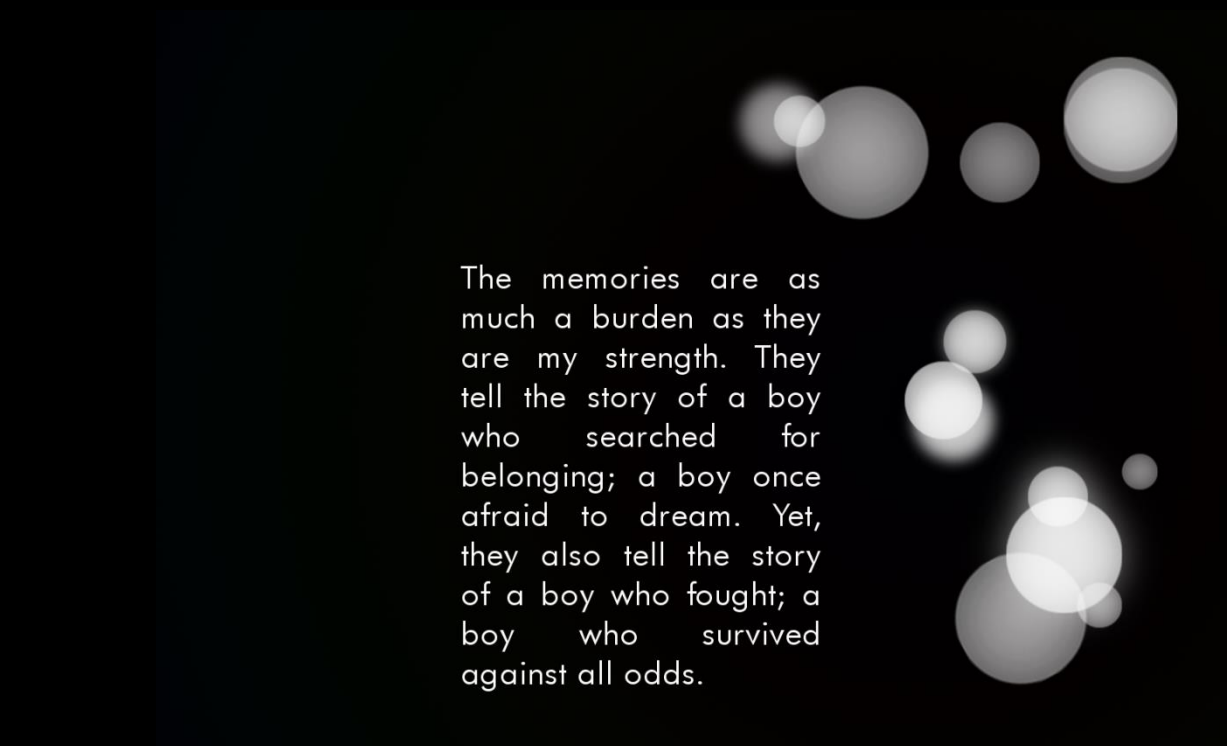p e r p e t u a l   f u s s   19/24

On the previous pages you see several of my designs for digital stories, in this case all for Cowbird, though some have been published elsewhere too.

My edit and design process go largely hand in hand. A particular design often limits your use of text: the text simply has to fit and everything be visually appealing. Depending on your form this will ask an additional layer of discipline to make your story work. No one said storytelling was easy.

Step 1 in a good design for a digital story is to understand the platform where you will publish it. Each site or app has its own design and features. I design specifically for a certain platform to ensure it looks the best at that particular space. The one negative here is that you can't easily adapt it to other spaces but with a proper design often it requires few adjustments to make it work elsewhere. You just have to hope a website doesn't suddenly change its entire design, but even if so, generally it should not destroy your work.

Fifteen was originally designed for Cowbird. This platform offers the option of multiple pages (for citizens - paid members). This feature is excellent for stories like these. Anyone reading the story is forced to click from page to page and this physical act 'breaks up' the story putting emphasis on the warped narrative that is now your storyline. If you don't have multiple pages you can think of excessive space or other visual cues that break up your story, it enhances the impact of every single line. You force your audience to work a little, this helps in the overall experience to make it memorable.

However, as you see sometimes a story works just fine on one page.

The memories are as much a burden as they are my strength. They tell the story of a boy who searched for belonging; a boy once afraid to dream. Yet, they also tell the story of a boy who fought; a boy who survived against all odds.

perpetual tuss

As I said in the beginning of this tutorial there is not one way of telling a good story. There are at least 1000. The same with design. My taste doesn't have to be yours. What you like today you may not like tomorrow.

I can't possibly tell you what your design should look like. I can however give you a few pointers:

1. Form follows function.
   Ask yourself why you design it one way or another, how does it enhance the story? Don't design just for the sake of design.
2. Be bold only once.
   Choose either strong colours, complex images, word jumbles, or another element and make that the focus. Everything else: keep it simple and muted.
3. Ignore trends.
   Unless you desire your story to look dated a year from now, focus on timeless design or very specifically emulating or related to a time and style.
4. Think about your typefaces too.
   Arial and Times New Roman won't always cut it. Neither does Verdana.
5. "Before you leave your house, remove the last thing you put on" – Coco Chanel
   Works for design just as good.

There is much more to say about design but that will have to be another tutorial. Look around if you need inspiration, almost everything has some design. What appeals to you and why? How can you use that in your own work?

Read about graphic design, concrete poetry. Look at animated text, gifs, brochures, commercials. Movies, art, packaging. Soak it in and then start to play.

I won't tell you more as I want you to discover your own voice. However, I do recommend you to read what other people have to say about design. But don't read the opinion of one person or only the work that instantly appeals to you. Read it all. Absorb it all.

And here I toss you in the deep once again, only with this as a last remark:

For those not familiar with software to create such graphics you may want to educate yourself as well. This tutorial won't address the technical side of creating graphics, but a simple search will bring you thousands of options. Keep in mind with some creativity common software such as Word and PowerPoint bring a lot more options than you may initially think. If you truly want software to create graphics and edit imagery but do not wish to spend the money I recommend GIMP. This is freeware and will bring you virtually all the options you need (and is also great to edit pictures).

Now you should have all the elements together. Do you?

Take a last look at your work, perhaps even sleep on it.

Ask someone to look at it if you want.

Ah, see, that can be edited.

Edit.

I know, it's some work.

Edit.

It's going down in history, that error.

Edit.

If you're like me there is a considerable chance you didn't edit it. Oh well.

Once you feel it is truly a finished story and you feel comfortable: publish it. Announce your work to the world and be proud!

If you took a very personal or controversial topic, or something that just isn't easy for you, it may be difficult to publish it. I strongly believe we should be bold and courageous and that we don't have to be ashamed for who we are and what we think.

Yet, there are those few things that can haunt us and continue to influence our lives for a long time to come. Be aware of that. I'd love to say something different but I do feel this needs to be said. Discuss it with someone. Generally I am not a fan of publishing under an alias or anonymous, but consider it if that seems to be the safer option.

Be courageous, yes, but don't be stupid.

Guess what? In case you don't publish it you nevertheless did create the story. You did something beautiful with that memory. Perhaps it helped you to deal with something. That's so worth it. That story is yours. Keep it. Treasure it. Use it as inspiration for your next story, one that you may publish.

You created a story.

About the author

Jaga N.A. Argentum considers himself to be a disastrous fairy tale.

A professional storyteller, blogger, visual artist and graphic designer, he also dabbles into sound work, animation and other creative fields. He prefers not to brag but let others discover his work on their own. His name is unique enough for Google.

Openly 'queer queer' (which is queer in more than one way but he hasn't figured it all out yet himself), and belonging to several other minorities he writes about his experiences and those of other people often considered the underdogs of society.

Perhaps an activist, Jaga tells stories to inspire people not only to fight for their own lives but also to keep their eyes open and make an impact in the lives of others and help create a more just society in which everyone can thrive.

Born in 1982 in a small village in The Netherlands he has moved around the nation and also lived and worked in Norway, Germany and the UK. After also having completed projects in France, Denmark and Moldova he continues to move around and providing a current location appears impossible other than 'Europe'. He works wherever his internet connection or a plane ticket may take him.

Jaga brings his work together under the brand Perpetual Fuss and is a fellow of Community Expressions.

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That boy is here today. Never thought I'd make it.

indulge me as i wish to give

PERPETUAL FUSS

jaga n.a. argentum