

Christopher Booker – Seven Basic Plots.

Plot Summaries

Overcoming the Monster

1. Anticipation Stage and Call.
2. Dream Stage.
3. Frustration Stage.
4. Nightmare Stage.
5. Thrilling Escape from Death and Death of the Monster.

Rags to Riches

1. Initial Wretchedness at home and "The Call".
2. Out into the World, initial success.
3. The central crisis.
4. Independence and the final ordeal.
5. Final union, completion and fulfilment.

The Quest

1. The Call.
2. The Journey.
3. Arrival and Frustration.
4. The Final Ordeals.
5. The Goal.

Voyage and Return

1. Anticipation Stage and "fall" into the other world.
2. Initial fascination or Dream Stage.
3. Frustration Stage.
4. Nightmare Stage.
5. Thrilling escape and return.

Comedy

Comedy cannot be summarised in quite the same way as the other basic plots because the very nature of the plot requires it to cover such a range of variations, but the essence of the story is always that:

1. We see a little world in which people have passed under a shadow of confusion uncertainty and frustration and are shut off from one another.
2. The confusion gets worse until the pressure of darkness is at its most acute and everyone is in a nightmarish tangle.
3. Finally, with the coming to light of things not previously recognised, perceptions are dramatically changed. The shadows are dispelled, the

situation is miraculously transformed and the little world is brought together in a state of joyful union.

Tragedy

Again, this story does not always fit conveniently into a summative structure. However five stage tragedy can be outlined as follows.

1. Anticipation Stage. The Hero is in some way incomplete or unfulfilled.
2. Dream Stage. The Hero commits to solving this unfulfillment through some contract or pact. For a while, things go well.
3. Frustration Stage. The Hero cannot find a point of rest. To try to solve this, he pushes harder/commits more "dark acts".
4. Nightmare Stage. Events slip out of Hero's control, as opposition rises all around him.
5. Destruction or Death Stage. Either by the forces he has aroused, or by his own hand. The Hero is destroyed.

Rebirth

1. A Young Hero or heroine falls under the shadow of a dark power.
2. For a while, things go well, the threat may even recede.
3. The threat returns in full force, until the Hero is imprisoned in a state of living death.
4. It seems like the dark power has triumphed.
5. Miraculous redemption occurs, usually from an external force.

More detailed explanations can be found in "Seven Basic Plots."