

BUILDING TENSION: WRITING A PAGE-TURNER IN ANY GENRE

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- inner striving, unrest, or imbalance often with physiological indication of emotion
- a state of latent hostility or opposition between individuals or groups
- a balance maintained in an artistic work between opposing forces or elements (Merriam Webster)

Unanswered Questions/Uncertainty/Waiting . . . (me)

Related Concepts

- Pacing: How quickly the story is told/How compelled the readers are to keep reading
- Conflict: Opposition/barriers to desire
- Resolution: End of conflict, answering of question, a sense that the story is finished

Starting with Tension

- Immediate Questions (Often Plot Related)
- Existential Question

Push and Pull in Each Chapter

- Piling on the Uncertainty
- Is your character conflicted?
- Every mini-resolution=new questions Every success=new challenges
- More and More is at stake

Revising for Tension

- Chapter-by-Chapter Outline of Finished Work
- How fast does each chapter start?
- Do chapter endings go on too long?
- Check sentence length, paragraph length, number of adverbs and adjectives
- Do you short-change emotional moments?
- Have you made it too easy on your main character?
- Are there places where a reader might put your book down, feeling that the story was done...before the end?

