

Binge Factors

THE BINGEABLE PROTAGONIST

MODULE ONE

binge | binj | informal noun a short period devoted to indulging in an activity to excess

In order to write binge-worthy characters (and, by extension, binge-worthy books), we need to know what makes US as individual readers binge something. Taste is highly subjective and as writers we generally like to write the sort of things we want to read. My advice is to always write the book you want to read—the one someone hasn't written, so you have to do it yourself. So we're going to take a deep dive into what makes YOU binge something. We're going to get specific.

First, do you have a genre you binge more than others?

Maybe you appreciate sci-fi the most, but you binge mysteries. Identify the genre and then identify what about that genre is binge-worthy for you.

What are the books you've binged?

Books that kept you reading until the wee hours or made you miss your subway stop because you were so engrossed in your reading?

How did you know you were bingeing these books? Physically, what happened to you? Or how did you act during the reading experience that was different than other books? If you can, identify at what point you knew, consciously, that you were bingeing this book.

Now, for each book, list what made you keep reading. You probably haven't thought about it, you just LOVED the book, so this might take a minute. Whatever comes to mind. Maybe you loved the world building or the action scenes or the romance. Jot it all down.

If there are things you DON'T like about the book, why were you willing to overlook those things?

Character, Character, Character

While you might binge a junk food kind of book that's all cheap thrills (and, hey, we all have to cheat on our diets sometimes), the best plots, the most emotionally resonant ones that really stick with us, almost always come from character. These plots put character at the center, with all action stemming from their desires and misbelief. They're plots about someone who desperately wants something and will do anything to get it, or die trying. They have obstacles to overcome, demons to banish, enemies to vanquish.

We enter into story through character, so it makes sense to have CHARACTERS that are binge-worthy. This way, no matter where they are, who they're with, or what they're doing, we want to stick with them, keep reading. We binge characters we identify deeply with or care about or are just so fascinated by: we want to hang out with them as much as we can. Chances are, if you really loved a book or short story, it was probably because of characters. And if it's a TV show, it was probably because of the actor/character, not the fancy plot and explosions or filming.

So how do we figure out what makes a character binge-worthy, and how do we do this in our own work?

Building A Binge-Worthy Protagonist

Choose your very favorite character from your list above. Jot down some specific things that you love about this character. What fascinates you? Do you identify with them? What about them is binge-worthy?

If there are things you **DON'T** like about this character or how they're written, why are you willing to overlook these things?

Think back to the lecture and jot down any other thoughts that come to mind about the binge factors of this character and how they might deal with things like **desire and obstacles**. We'll be diving into this more later, but just jot down what comes to mind.

Take a look at the character in your WIP. Do they have your binge factors? Jot down notes about how you might amplify your binge factors through your protagonist.