Playwriting Challenge #9
Happy Endings?

“And will I tell you that these three lived happily ever after? I will not, for no one ever does. But there was happiness. And they did live.”

– Stephen King, The Dark Tower

This is the final moment of your play, the last thing the audience will take away. How do you want your audience to feel at the end of the play?

Look back to our first exercise, Pixar’s 4th rule of storytelling.

Once upon a time there was_________________________________________.

Every day______________________________________________________.

One day______________________________________________________.

Because of that, ________________________________________________.

Because of that, ________________________________________________.

Until finally ___________________________________________________.

Maybe you’re the kind of playwright that has known the ending the entire time.

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Different Types of Stories require different types of endings:

7 story types:
- Overcoming the Monster
- Rags to Riches
- Quest
- Voyage & Return
- Comedy
- Tragedy
- Rebirth

5 ending types:
- Circular / Loop
- Surprise/ Ironic
- Cliff-hanger
- Lesson / Moral Ending
- Warm & Fuzzy Ending / Happy Ever After

DON’T FORGET YOUR HERO

“Heroes know that things must happen when it is time for them to happen. A quest may not simply be abandoned; unicorns may go unrescued for a long time, but not forever; a happy ending cannot come in the middle of the story.”
— Peter S. Beagle, The Last Unicorn

Ask your protagonist what kind of ending they want. Nothing can follow your ending.

HAPPY ENDING?

There are no happy endings.
Endings are the saddest part,
So just give me a happy middle
And a very happy start.

(a poem by Shel Silverstein)

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