



THE EDITOR'S SIX CORE QUESTIONS – © Shawn Coyne

GENRE: IT MATTERS MORE THAN YOU THINK

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1. What's the genre?
Non-Fiction: Big Idea

2. What are the obligatory scenes and conventions for that genre?
 - a. Obligatory Scenes:
 - i. Hero at the Mercy of the Villain: Valerie and the reader, in ignorance of the importance of genre, writing blindly, wasting time and money
 - ii. 8 Key Scenes of the Hero's Journey:
 1. **Shock:** the book isn't selling as expected (as a romance)
 2. **Denial:** sales will pick up (magically)
 3. **Anger:** but I worked so hard on this!
 4. **Bargaining:** if I just lower the price a bit, or change the keywords ...
 5. **Depression (all is lost):** I've tried everything, sales are still down.
 6. **Deliberation:** Do I write this book off without understanding why it doesn't sell and start writing the next one (thereby staying in ignorance and repeating the error)? Or, do I keep pumping time and money into promoting this book (thereby most likely continuing to lose both time and money)? Or, do I take a step back, re-evaluate my strategy and readjust (thereby both admitting to my ignorance and delaying the start of the next book)? (BBC)
 7. **Choice:** Take a step back, re-evaluate, readjust (realization that romance is Love Story > Courtship, that has little internal genre and no sub-plot)
 8. **Integration:** switch to women's fiction
 - iii. Ironic Ending (a paradox): Genre is easy to understand but difficult to innovate, and innovation is a must.
 - b. Conventions:
 - i. Three Forms of Persuasion:
 1. **Ethos:** Valerie is a best-selling author and Certified Story Grid Editor who has learned about the importance of genre both in the trenches and directly from Shawn Coyne. (combination of bio and article)
 2. **Logos:** Shawn Coyne, David Mamet, Aaron Sorkin, Robert McKee
 3. **Pathos:** Valerie's story
 - ii. A Blatant Idea (stated early and repeated throughout): Genre matters more than you think - understanding it is the key to success
 - iii. Destination Promise (explain to the reader what the outcome will be): By the end of the article, the reader will understand why genre is important, and one clear genre choice must be made
 - iv. Intellectual Adventure Story with a hero, victim and villain:
 1. **Hero:** Valerie and the reader



2. **Victim:** Valerie and the reader
 3. **Villain:** Ignorance (lack of understanding, not knowing how important genre really is)
 - v. Sidekicks of the Hero's Journey:
 1. **Mentor:** Shawn Coyne
 2. **Threshold Guardian:** Anne
 3. **Herald:** sales reports from online retailers
 4. **Shapeshifter:** the novel itself (from romance to women's fiction)
 5. **Shadow:** the author's shadow self (ignorance, pride, stubbornness)
 6. **Ally:** The Story Grid
 7. **Trickster:** Valerie (fooling myself into thinking I didn't need a thorough understanding of genre, or thinking I could change a reader's perception of genre)
 - vi. Clear Path and Methodology (explanation of how the author arrived at the big idea, and what the reader will know by the end): Valerie learned the hard way that genre impacts every aspect of Story.
3. What's the point of view?
Valerie is writing from the point of view of an author who has learned this lesson the hard way, and an editor who wants to see authors write great stories and earn a living from their creative work.
4. What are the objects of desire?
Want (as an author) and Need (as an editor): to clearly explain to fellow authors why genre is so important to every phase of their journey (writing, publishing, marketing), so their stories can reach as many readers as possible, and so they can earn as much money as possible from their creative work.
5. What's the controlling idea/theme?
Understanding Genre is the Key to Success
6. What is the beginning hook, middle build and ending payoff?
 - a. Beginning Hook:
Genre is about reader expectations. For a book to succeed the writer, reader and marketer must all have the same idea about what kind of story is being told.
 - b. Middle Build:
The Story Grid Genre Clover is a roadmap and a universal translator. It's the way writers can ensure they're telling a story that meets reader expectations.
 - c. Ending Payoff (surprising but inevitable):
Surprising because the Six Core Question Analysis is available for download (unexpected). However, it's inevitable in an article about the importance of genre.