

Emotional wound #2 Transcript

TOBI: Hello! Welcome back to another IGW Short video, number two for emotional wounds.

SHEILA: This is a big topic, and we got a lot to say about it as we do...

But this is a really nice part of it and it's funny, you know you're a plotter obviously. I'm a pantsner—big time—gives her a heart attack. We always come at things from different directions, and this is no exception. When we talk about having your character and the emotional wound in the story, I always say why is your character the absolute perfect person for the story. Tobi however...

TOBI: Always the worst person. Like, this has to be the worst person for this thing. (story)

SHEILA: So, believe it or not, we're talking about the same thing. It might just show my slightly more sadistic side. Maybe you don't know what the emotional wound for the character is. (But) it has to be absolutely perfect to the for the McGuffin, the crisis, the conflict of your story, the (story's) ultimate goal.

Tobi: So, Martin Brody is afraid of the water and he's the sheriff in Jaws. Worst guy for the job.

SHEILA: Perfect guy for the job! He's the perfect one. What you want is for your character to be like a key that slides in, the only one that can slide into that lock and solve the problem. And the key to making them the key is to giving them the perfect emotional wound so that whatever the crisis is it's going to trigger it on so many levels.

TOBI: It's got to hammer the wound.

SHEILA: It's got to hurt. You know, if you have someone who's absolutely perfectly confident in life and has been raised in a perfectly balanced family and knows their self-worth—I've heard there's people like that out there...

TOBI: I don't know them.

SHEILA: You're not going to want to put them in a position where their innate sense of self-worth is going to be in damage and in jeopardy because they're competent. They don't know.

TOBI: And likewise, you don't want to give your character an emotional wound that has nothing to do with the plot.

SHEILA: Would you like to give an example to me from a book?

TOBI: We won't mention the book, but yes, it has happened where somebody has their issues and it has nothing to do with the actual plot, the storyline, of the story. And when that happens, you don't connect as much to the character, you're less emotionally involved.

SHEILA: But I will say this and if you're writing as honestly as you can, if you have a good story idea and you're really giving your characters you know real legs and real flesh on their bones, the odds are good you're on the right track because you wouldn't have created this character for this particular challenge if you didn't on some level know that it's going to hurt them the most.

TOBI: True. I would also say sometimes it's (writing is) therapy for us, so even though you think you've created the emotional wound it's actually something totally different and when you go through revisions, you're like OK so maybe they weren't stood up at prom, maybe their father left and hated them.

SHEILA: I gotta go. No. It's when you're digging into your story, whether you're a plotter or pantsner, when you know what your main conflict is, and you know who your main character is, think about ways that they can be the only person. In my way, the best person for it...

TOBI: The worst person for it.

SHEILA: But they've got to be the most perfect person for that situation.

TOBI: All right, keep writing forward.