

anatomy of story by john truby

anatomy of story by john truby is a seminal work that delves into the intricate mechanics of storytelling, offering writers a comprehensive framework to craft compelling narratives. This article will explore the key concepts presented by John Truby, including the structure of a story, the importance of character development, and the various elements that contribute to a successful narrative. We will also examine Truby's unique approach to story structure compared to traditional methods, emphasizing the importance of moral dilemmas and character arcs. By the end of this piece, readers will gain a deeper understanding of how to utilize Truby's insights to enhance their storytelling skills.

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- Understanding Truby's Approach
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Understanding Truby's Approach

John Truby's approach to storytelling is both analytical and practical, focusing on the underlying mechanics that make a story resonate with audiences. Unlike traditional three-act structures, Truby emphasizes a more fluid and dynamic approach to narrative construction. He believes that all effective stories share common elements, which can be dissected and understood to improve writing. This method allows for a deeper exploration of characters and their motivations, as well as the moral complexities that drive the narrative.

Core Principles of Truby's Method

At the heart of Truby's philosophy is the idea that stories must be driven by characters who face significant challenges. This includes:

- **Desire:** Every main character should have a clear goal or desire that propels the story forward.
- **Weakness:** Characters should have flaws or weaknesses that they must confront throughout the narrative.

- **Moral Complexity:** The story should present moral dilemmas that challenge the characters' beliefs and values.

These principles help create a narrative that is not only engaging but also meaningful, allowing audiences to connect with the characters on a deeper level.

The 22 Steps of Story Structure

One of the most significant contributions of Truby's work is his detailed breakdown of the story structure into 22 distinct steps. This comprehensive framework serves as a guide for writers to develop their narratives systematically. The steps encompass everything from the initial premise to the resolution of the story, ensuring that all critical components are addressed.

Overview of the 22 Steps

Truby's 22 steps include the following key elements:

1. Weakness and Need
2. Set-Up
3. Point of No Return
4. Complications
5. Final Step
6. Climactic Choice
7. Theme Stated
8. Final Step
9. Revelation
10. Final Step
11. Climactic Choice
12. Final Step
13. Final Step
14. Final Step
15. Final Step

16. Final Step

17. Final Step

18. Final Step

19. Final Step

20. Final Step

21. Final Step

22. Final Step

These steps guide writers in building tension, developing character arcs, and ultimately leading to a satisfying conclusion. Each step is interconnected, creating a cohesive and engaging narrative flow.

Character Development in Truby's Framework

Character development is a cornerstone of Truby's storytelling approach. He emphasizes that characters should not only evolve throughout the story but also embody the thematic elements of the narrative. This is achieved through a deep understanding of their desires, weaknesses, and the challenges they face.

The Role of Character Arcs

Truby articulates the importance of character arcs, which represent the transformation of a character from their initial state to their final state. A well-crafted character arc involves:

- **Setup:** Establishing the character's initial weaknesses and desires.
- **Conflict:** Presenting obstacles that challenge the character's beliefs.
- **Growth:** Showcasing how the character evolves in response to these challenges.

By carefully constructing character arcs, writers can create relatable and dynamic characters that resonate with their audience, making the story more impactful.

Theme and Moral Argument

The theme is another crucial element in Truby's storytelling framework. He posits that every story should convey a moral argument or a message that relates to the characters' journeys. This thematic depth not only enriches the narrative but also provides audiences with a sense of closure and understanding.

Crafting a Compelling Theme

To effectively convey a theme, writers should consider the following:

- **Identify the Theme:** Determine what message or moral lesson the story aims to convey.
- **Integrate into Character Arcs:** Ensure that the theme is reflected in the characters' growth and decisions.
- **Reinforce Through Plot:** Use plot events to highlight and challenge the theme.

This integration of theme with character and plot creates a cohesive narrative that not only entertains but also provokes thought and reflection.

Practical Applications of Truby's Techniques

Writers looking to implement Truby's techniques can begin by analyzing their own stories through his framework. This involves mapping out the 22 steps, identifying character arcs, and ensuring that the theme is woven throughout the narrative.

Exercises for Writers

Here are some practical exercises to apply Truby's concepts:

- **Outline Your Story:** Use the 22 steps to outline your narrative from beginning to end.
- **Character Profiles:** Create detailed profiles for each character, focusing on their desires, weaknesses, and arcs.
- **Theme Exploration:** Write a paragraph summarizing your story's theme and how it manifests through character actions and plot events.

By engaging in these exercises, writers can refine their storytelling skills and create more compelling narratives that resonate with audiences.

Conclusion

Understanding the **anatomy of story by john truby** provides invaluable insights for writers seeking to enhance their storytelling abilities. By focusing on the intricate relationship between structure, character development, and thematic elements, Truby's framework offers a comprehensive guide to crafting narratives that are both engaging and meaningful. Writers who embrace these principles can elevate their storytelling, creating stories that not only entertain but also leave a lasting impact on their audience.

Q: What is the main premise of the anatomy of story by john truby?

A: The main premise of the anatomy of story by john truby is that effective storytelling is structured around a series of interconnected elements, including character desires, weaknesses, and moral dilemmas. Truby provides a framework of 22 steps that serve as a guide for writers to develop compelling narratives.

Q: How does Truby's approach differ from traditional story structures?

A: Truby's approach differs from traditional three-act structures by emphasizing a more fluid and dynamic storytelling method. He focuses on character development and moral complexity rather than strictly adhering to a set structure, allowing for richer narratives.

Q: What are the 22 steps of story structure?

A: The 22 steps of story structure outlined by Truby include elements such as Weakness and Need, Set-Up, Point of No Return, and Climactic Choice. Each step serves to build tension and develop character arcs throughout the narrative.

Q: Why is character development important in Truby's framework?

A: Character development is crucial in Truby's framework because well-crafted characters with clear desires and weaknesses drive the narrative. Their transformation through conflict and moral challenges creates a more engaging and relatable story.

Q: How can writers apply Truby's techniques to their own stories?

A: Writers can apply Truby's techniques by outlining their stories according to the 22 steps, creating detailed character profiles, and ensuring that the theme is integrated into character arcs and plot events.

Q: What role does theme play in storytelling according to Truby?

A: According to Truby, theme plays a significant role in storytelling as it conveys the moral argument of the narrative. A well-defined theme enriches the story, providing depth and meaning to the characters' journeys.

Q: Can Truby's methods be applied to different genres of storytelling?

A: Yes, Truby's methods can be applied to various genres of storytelling. His principles are universal and can enhance the narrative structure and character development in any type of story.

Q: What exercises can help writers implement Truby's concepts?

A: Writers can implement Truby's concepts through exercises such as outlining their stories using the 22 steps, creating character profiles focusing on desires and weaknesses, and exploring the story's theme in detail.

Q: Is the anatomy of story by john truby suitable for beginners?

A: Yes, the anatomy of story by john truby is suitable for beginners as it provides clear frameworks and practical exercises that can help novice writers understand the fundamentals of storytelling and improve their skills.

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anatomy of story by john truby: The Anatomy of Story John Truby, 2008-10-14 John Truby is one of the most respected and sought-after story consultants in the film industry, and his students have gone on to pen some of Hollywood's most successful films, including *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Scream*, and *Shrek*. *The Anatomy of Story* is his long-awaited first book, and it shares all of his secrets for writing a compelling script. Based on the lessons in his award-winning class, *Great Screenwriting*, *The Anatomy of Story* draws on a broad range of philosophy and mythology, offering fresh techniques and insightful anecdotes alongside Truby's own unique approach for how to build an effective, multifaceted narrative. Truby's method for constructing a story is at once insightful and practical, focusing on the hero's moral and emotional growth. As a result, writers will dig deep within and explore their own values and worldviews in order to create an effective story. Writers will come away with an extremely precise set of tools to work with—specific, useful techniques to make the audience care about their characters, and that make their characters grow in meaningful ways. They will construct a surprising plot that is unique to their particular concept, and they will learn how to express a moral vision that can genuinely move an audience. The foundations of story that Truby lays out are so fundamental they are applicable—and essential—to all writers, from novelists and short-story writers to journalists, memoirists, and writers of narrative non-fiction.

anatomy of story by john truby: The Anatomy of Genres John Truby, 2022-11-29 A guide to

understanding the major genres of the story world by the legendary writing teacher and author of *The Anatomy of Story*, John Truby. Most people think genres are simply categories on Netflix or Amazon that provide a helpful guide to making entertainment choices. Most people are wrong. Genre stories aren't just a small subset of the films, video games, TV shows, and books that people consume. They are the all-stars of the entertainment world, comprising the vast majority of popular stories worldwide. That's why businesses—movie studios, production companies, video game studios, and publishing houses—buy and sell them. Writers who want to succeed professionally must write the stories these businesses want to buy. Simply put, the storytelling game is won by mastering the structure of genres. *The Anatomy of Genres: How Story Forms Explain the Way the World Works* is the legendary writing teacher John Truby's step-by-step guide to understanding and using the basic building blocks of the story world. He details the three ironclad rules of successful genre writing, and analyzes more than a dozen major genres and the essential plot events, or "beats," that define each of them. As he shows, the ability to combine these beats in the right way is what separates stories that sell from those that don't. Truby also reveals how a single story can combine elements of different genres, and how the best writers use this technique to craft unforgettable stories that stand out from the crowd. Just as Truby's first book, *The Anatomy of Story*, changed the way writers develop stories, *The Anatomy of Genres* will enhance their quality and expand the impact they have on the world.

anatomy of story by john truby: Anatomy of a Premise Line Jeff Lyons, 2015-06-05 If a story is going to fail, it will do so first at the premise level. *Anatomy of a Premise Line: How to Master Premise and Story Development for Writing Success* is the only book of its kind to identify a seven-step development process that can be repeated and applied to any story idea. This process will save you time, money, and potentially months of wasted writing. So whether you are trying to write a feature screenplay, develop a television pilot, or just trying to figure out your next story move as a writer, this book gives you the tools you need to know which ideas are worth pursuing. In addition to the 7-step premise development tool, *Anatomy of a Premise Line* also presents a premise and idea testing methodology that can be used to test any developed premise line. Customized exercises and worksheets are included to facilitate knowledge transfer, so that by the end of the book, you will have a fully developed premise line, log line, tagline, and a completed premise-testing checklist. Here is some of what you will learn inside: Ways to determine whether or not your story is a good fit for print or screen Case studies and hands-on worksheets to help you learn by participating in the process Tips on how to effectively work through writer's block A companion website (www.routledge.com/cw/lyons) with additional worksheets, videos, and interactive tools to help you learn the basics of perfecting a killer premise line

anatomy of story by john truby: The Playwright's Manifesto Paul Sirett, 2022-09-08 Shortlisted for the STR Theatre Book Prize 2023 A manifesto for the future of playwriting, this book challenges you to be a part of that future in the belief that it is fundamentally important to write plays. Plays help us understand ourselves, others, and the world around us. Reading this book, you will be challenged to learn your craft, explode what you know, prioritise what is important to you, and write in the way that only you can write. Most books on playwriting explain how to create a believable character in a story driven by plot. This book, however, goes even further in its exploration of the playwright's most valuable tool: theatricality. By learning from the past, and the present, the playwrights of tomorrow can create new, vivid, theatrical drama for the future. This manifesto also examines the process of writing, the art of collaboration, and the impact of writing on a playwright's mental health. It identifies the highs and lows, as well as the trials and tribulations, of life as a playwright in today's world. Theatre is a living artform. It is time for playwrights to acknowledge that fact and to celebrate the unique, primal thrill that a live theatre experience offers us. The future of playwriting is in your hands. Do you accept the challenge?

anatomy of story by john truby: Story Structure and Development Craig Caldwell, 2017-05-19 Professor Craig Caldwell's *Story Structure and Development* offers a clear approach to the essentials of story. It lays out the fundamental elements, principles, and structure for animators,

designers, and artists so they can incorporate these concepts in their work. As a practical guide it includes extensive insights and advice from industry professionals. Readers will learn the universal patterns of story and narrative used in today's movies, animation, games, and VR. With over 200 colorful images, this book has been designed for visual learners, and is organized to provide access to story concepts for the screen media professional and student. Readers will discover the story fundamentals referred to by every director and producer when they say It's all about story. Key Features Consolidates into one text universal story structure used across the digital media industry Includes enormous visuals that illustrate and reinforce concepts for visual learners Organizes content for faculty to use sections in a non-linear manner Includes chapter objectives, review questions, and key terms to guide the reader

anatomy of story by john truby: The Ambitious Writer's Guide to Overcoming Creative Blocks and Building a Writing Routine that Works Katie Klein, 2021-09-13 Be Inspired. Be Bold. Break Through. What do Stephen King, J. K. Rowling, Virginia Woolf, and F. Scott Fitzgerald have in common? Writer's Block. Yes, in addition to being bestselling and/or celebrated authors, each of these writers admitted to suffering from writer's block at some point in their literary careers. In fact, writers of every caliber have faced a creative block at intervals throughout their journeys, but when it happens to us—when a project stalls, when the right words refuse to manifest, when the page remains empty—the doubt creeps in. What is happening? becomes What am I even doing? becomes Why am I even bothering? There is, however, a way out. The Ambitious Writer's Guide to Overcoming Creative Blocks and Building a Writing Routine that Works not only breaks down the components of a creative block—what it is and isn't, how it affects us, and how we can move past it—but also offers insights into the creative process, inspiration for writers at any stage, and tips for kick-starting a stalled writing practice. So if you've hit that proverbial wall in your current project, if the new project doesn't want to transfer from your head to the page, or even if you want to safeguard yourself so the creative blocks are fewer and farther between, then this book was written with you in mind. Keywords: writing, writer's block, creativity, personal success, writing reference, authorship, writing skills, creativity self-help, 2-hour reads

anatomy of story by john truby: Rediscovered Classics of Japanese Animation Maria Chiara Oltolini, 2024-01-25 Rediscovered Classics of Japanese Animation is the first academic work to examine World Masterpiece Theater (Sekai Meisaku Gekijô, 1969-2009), which popularized the practice of adapting foreign children's books into long-running animated series and laid the groundwork for powerhouses like Studio Ghibli. World Masterpiece Theater (Sekai Meisaku Gekijô, 1969-2009) is a TV staple created by the Japanese studio Nippon Animation, which popularized the practice of adapting foreign children's books into long-running animated series. Once generally dismissed by critics, the series is now frequently investigated as a key early work of legendary animators Isao Takahata and Hayao Miyazaki. In the first book-length examination of the series, Maria Chiara Oltolini analyzes cultural significance of World Masterpiece Theater, and the ways in which the series pioneered the importance of children's fiction for Japanese animation studios and laid the groundwork for powerhouses like Studio Ghibli. Adapting a novel for animation also means decoding (and re-coding) socio-cultural patterns embedded in a narrative. World Masterpiece Theater stands as a unique example of this linguistic, medial, and cultural hybridisation. Popular children's classics such as Little Women, Peter Pan, and Anne of Green Gables became the starting point of a full-fledged negotiation process in which Japanese animators retold a whole range of narratives that have one basic formula in common: archetypal stories with an educational purpose. In particular, the series played a role in shaping the pop culture image of a young girl (shôjo). Examining the series through the lens of animation studies as well as adaptation studies, Oltolini sheds new light on this long-neglected staple of Japanese animation history.

anatomy of story by john truby: Dragon Mine Donna Grant, 2021-07-12 I loved everything about Dragon Mine, from the scorching first chapter to the epic worldbuilding. It's my new favorite Donna Grant novel! All hail Donna Grant, the Dragon Queen! — New York Times bestselling author Larissa Ione Walk with New York Times and USA Today bestselling author Donna Grant through the

doorway into the next engaging installment of her captivating new Dragon Kings series... I am hers, and she is mine... Vaughn has spent eons searching for the woman who captured his heart, only to be disappointed time and again. Sure, he sees her in his dreams. May get to touch and hold her. But it's not the same. As the emptiness inside him grows, he jumps at the chance for a distraction. Setting his eyes on the dragons again in Zora is a balm, but it can't compare to once again coming face-to-face with the gorgeous beauty who holds a piece of his soul. With responsibilities comes sacrifice... Eurwen has never known anything but the burden and joy of ruling the dragons. But unlike her twin, she's always been curious about Earth and the Kings and felt as if something were missing from her life. When her reunion with her parents brings an unexpected surprise, she can't help but give in to the pleasure that Vaughn offers. Still, her loyalty lies with her realm, and the hurdles in their way to happiness seem insurmountable—especially with a new and unknown foe seeking to destroy them. Trust doesn't come easily, but love conquers all. And no amount of time or space can keep those who belong together apart. "I love fantasy romance and Donna Grant is one of the best at writing it. Dragon Mine defines what it means to have a true soulmate. I was captivated by this sexy love affair that was eons in the making." — New York Times bestselling author, Sawyer Bennett

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anatomy of story by john truby: Preaching from Inside the Story Jeffrey W. Frymire, 2022-06-02 Preaching from Inside the Story is a book that seeks to carve out an understanding of narrative preaching in an age where there is little agreement about its nature and practice. Capitalizing on the works of Craddock and Lowry, it seeks to find an expanded palette upon which the preacher may engage the larger canvas of narrative preaching. This book will engage the mind by introducing neuroscientific understandings of creativity; build upon the foundations of the philosophy of stories by engaging Aristotle's foundational understanding of narrative; and renew the Lowry Loop by expanding this seminal work and how it should be understood in our current culture. Preaching from Inside the Story breaks new ground by encouraging preachers to move inside stories and tell them from the inside out providing a positive effect, thereby affording non-narrative preachers to connect with storytelling principles. Ultimately, it is filled with examples of how to do narrative in a very practical way. However, in showing these practical examples, the reader is involved in a deep analysis of those narrative sermons and how they fit into an overall narrative understanding of preaching. In the final analysis, it invites the reader to take a fresh journey into narrative preaching.

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anatomy of story by john truby: Introduction to Screen Narrative Paul Taberham, Catalina Iricinschi, 2023-08-29 Bringing together the expertise of world-leading screenwriters and scholars, this book offers a comprehensive overview of how screen narratives work. Exploring a variety of

mediums including feature films, television, animation, and video games, the volume provides a contextual overview of the form and applies this to the practice of screenwriting. Featuring over 20 contributions, the volume surveys the art of screen narrative, and allows students and screenwriters to draw on crucial insights to further improve their screenwriting craft. Editors Paul Taberham and Catalina Iricinschi have curated a volume that spans a range of disciplines including screenwriting, film theory, philosophy and psychology with experience and expertise in storytelling, modern blockbusters, puzzle films and art cinema. Screenwriters interviewed include: Josh Weinstein (The Simpsons, Gravity Falls), David Greenberg (Stomping Ground, Used to Love Her), Evan Skolnick and Ioana Uricaru. Ideal for students of Screenwriting and Screen Narrative as well as aspiring screenwriters wanting to provide theoretical context to their craft.

anatomy of story by john truby: All the Words Kristen Tate, 2020-02-10 If you read one book about writing every week for a year, what would you learn? Thanks to the self-publishing revolution and events like National Novel Writing Month, the genre of writing craft books has exploded in recent years. Book editor Kristen Tate set out to read and review one writing advice book each week for a year, from classics like E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* and Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird* to newer works like Jane Alison's *Meander, Spiral, Explode* and Jessica Brody's *Save the Cat! Writes a Novel*. What she discovered was a dizzying array of approaches to writing: plotters who know even the smallest details about characters before they write a word; pantsers who blithely dive right into a draft without a plan; anti-adverb crusaders and advocates for complex sentences; and, always, that the best way to learn is to read the kinds of books you want to write. *All the Words* is also a meditation on the challenges and pleasures of starting and sustaining a weekly practice of reading, thinking, and writing. It's an optimistic, encouraging book that will motivate you to keep reading and, most importantly, keep writing.

anatomy of story by john truby: How to Write a Children's Book Using the Snowflake Method Ana Mafalda Damião, Discover the art of crafting enchanting children's books in *How to Write a Children's Book Using the Snowflake Method*. This comprehensive guide introduces you to a proven step-by-step system designed by physicist and writer Randy Ingermanson, adapted here to the unique demands of children's literature. From that first spark of inspiration to the final polish of your manuscript, each chapter walks you through practical strategies for creating engaging plots, memorable characters, and settings brimming with imagination. You'll learn how to: Define your story's core concept in a single concise sentence Expand that sentence into paragraphs and a synopsis, ensuring clarity and coherence Develop character profiles and biographies that resonate with young readers' fears, dreams, and everyday experiences Design settings tailored to specific age groups (from preschoolers to middle-grade readers) Use tension, conflict, and emotional arcs at levels appropriate to children's developmental stages Structure your narrative into scenes, refine your dialogue, and intersperse educational or moral themes naturally Integrate illustrations and consider design features that bring text and images together seamlessly Adapt the Snowflake Method to different genres and complexities, whether you're writing a simple picture book or a multi-chapter fantasy adventure Throughout the book, you'll find examples drawn from beloved children's classics and new story ideas. You'll also gain practical tips on developing your authorial voice, addressing different reading levels, and keeping the spark of creativity alive. For each stage, there's guidance on reviewing and polishing your work to ensure it's not only entertaining, but also emotionally resonant, age-appropriate, and truly unforgettable.

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include storytelling with smartphones (iOS and Android), storyboarding, framing, sequencing, shooting and editing high-quality content, and evaluating the success of content and campaigns. Contributions from five industry experts expand on privacy, community building and collaboration. The book concludes by looking to the future of social media storytelling, with industry professionals offering predictions for trends to watch out for. Social Media Storytelling is an essential resource for students of mobile and multimedia journalism, digital media and media marketing, as well as for professionals who want to learn how to create compelling content and tell impactful brand stories. The book also features accompanying online exercises.

anatomy of story by john truby: The Routledge Companion to Dramaturgy Magda Romanska, 2014-08-07 Dramaturgy, in its many forms, is a fundamental and indispensable element of contemporary theatre. In its earliest definition, the word itself means a comprehensive theory of play making. Although it initially grew out of theatre, contemporary dramaturgy has made enormous advances in recent years, and it now permeates all kinds of narrative forms and structures: from opera to performance art; from dance and multimedia to filmmaking and robotics. In our global, mediated context of multinational group collaborations that dissolve traditional divisions of roles as well as unbend previously intransigent rules of time and space, the dramaturg is also the ultimate globalist: intercultural mediator, information and research manager, media content analyst, interdisciplinary negotiator, social media strategist. This collection focuses on contemporary dramaturgical practice, bringing together contributions not only from academics but also from prominent working dramaturgs. The inclusion of both means a strong level of engagement with current issues in dramaturgy, from the impact of social media to the ongoing centrality of interdisciplinary and intermedial processes. The contributions survey the field through eight main lenses: world dramaturgy and global perspective dramaturgy as function, verb and skill dramaturgical leadership and season planning production dramaturgy in translation adaptation and new play development interdisciplinary dramaturgy play analysis in postdramatic and new media dramaturgy social media and audience outreach. Magda Romanska is Visiting Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University, Associate Professor of Theatre and Dramaturgy at Emerson College, and Dramaturg for Boston Lyric Opera. Her books include *The Post-Traumatic Theatre of Grotowski and Kantor* (2012), *Boguslaw Schaeffer: An Anthology* (2012), and *Comedy: An Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2014).

anatomy of story by john truby: Storyteller's Handbook Bill Vincent, 2024-07-01 Unlock the power of your imagination with *Storyteller's Handbook: Crafting Compelling Narratives* by Bill Vincent. This book is a treasure trove for both aspiring and seasoned storytellers, guiding you through the intricate art of crafting narratives that captivate and engage. Dive into the world of spontaneous adventures, poignant romances, and grand tales that come alive through collaborative storytelling. Unlike traditional forms of writing, storytelling in this context is a dynamic, interactive experience where the story evolves through the contributions of its participants. Vincent's handbook offers invaluable insights into creating well-drawn plots, developing deep characters, and embracing the unpredictable twists and turns that make each story unique. Whether you're a game master, writer, or a lover of narrative arts, this book will inspire you to create stories that resonate and endure. Embrace the challenge of crafting narratives that are as unpredictable as they are unforgettable, and join a community of storytellers who transform simple ideas into extraordinary adventures.

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