

What-if stories - concept & format outline (WGAW Registered)

what-if stories
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CONCEPT & FORMAT OUTLINE

For different reasons, I was used to create stories to entertain people, but based on something that happened or that I needed to remember.

The first time that I remember is when, to entertain my 2 year old brother that I was baby sitting (I was 9 year old), I rehearsed my history lesson by inventing stories about Egypt and Greece to have him listen.

The stories were actually build around Plato's Republic, that I had found in my father's library while looking for something on Greece and Egypt.

Fast forward to when I was working for a French company, to when a friend was resigning but she did not know how to cope with the stress of leaving.

So, I wrote a one-page script (I am an actor's son, and therefore as a kid I reviewed and disassembled scripts for fun), scripting her phrases, my phrases... and guessing the phrases that would have been told by the people.

She learned her role, and eventually the script was played as written- also by the other unwilling parties.

Later on, a German girlfriend complained why travelling across Germany that there was no FM coverage in some areas, so I started inventing stories to keep her busy (she was driving), based on a single fact that happened during the day.

Eventually, I told her to randomly pick the fact, and created a short story.

It happened again in the following years, sometimes to support business (to illustrate what would happen after some changes), sometimes to assess the consequences of activities (e.g. during negotiations and for strategies).

Recently, I was asked again by some friends to write short stories about themes, and then I created an online magazine that was called "UHF - United Hamster Front", as an online community showed a message stating "we are feeding the hamsters" whenever there was a problem.

To defuse a shouting match between the users and the administrators, I created the UHF, and described how the hamsters are the real power behind society, and re-interpreted current news under the all-wise, all-knowing wisdom of the hamsters.

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The What-if stories concept and format is based on few basic rules, that will be described in full detail after the first "pre-publish" series is ready, but that can be summarized as follows :

1. any story will be independent, and based on one or more unrelated news items
2. some will be linked to specific new worlds, .e.g the UHF- should the be the case, each story will be required to follow specific guidelines for that world
3. generally, no conspiracy theories will be considered, as those require accepting assumptions
4. instead, the interconnection between the news items should be provided by elements contained in each news item (e.g. the three items could all quotethe same person, location, product, series of events)
5. each story should be funny- no horror, no tragedies
6. each story should be readable or shown in 5 to 10 minutes, with 15 only if the story requires it
7. the "what-if" element should be logic but twisted, and the basis of the funny side-effects of the story

As part of the publishing activities, the actual what-if format will be focused on multiple platforms, to allow reusing the format and concept not only to create stories written or coordinate by me, but also to create a community of storytellers:

1. Internet publication and podcasting
2. "what-if" game, where the gamer is requested to pick from a list of news items, but creating the story without any access to time or other material, and then other gamers vote on the story created; the game could actually a show distributed across different media platforms that allow users to interact with the storytellers
3. comics and printing : if linked to the game, seeing their story converted in comics or online short movies distributed via youtube could be part of the prize for the story tellers