



**THE DREAMWORK COLLECTIVE**  
**presents**

# **FUTURE** **STORIES**



مؤسسة دبي للمستقبل  
DUBAI FUTURE FOUNDATION

**FUTURE**

**STORIES**

**PART 1: READ**

# FUTURE STORIES

- To be a good writer, you must be a great reader.
- Read voraciously in the genre you want to write.
- Ask yourself: What short stories have moved me? Why?

# FUTURE STORIES

## SHORT STORY RECOMMENDATIONS

CATHEDRAL

GHOST KITCHEN

FLASHLIGHT

INTERSTELLAR HAJ

**FUTURE**

**STORIES**

**PART 2: WRITE**

# FUTURE STORIES

## WHERE TO BEGIN

- Develop a daily writing habit (e.g. Morning Pages)
- Not everything you write needs to be publishable
- Embrace the unpublishable! It's part of the process

# FUTURE STORIES

## CHARACTERISATION & THE MDQ (MAJOR DRAMATIC QUESTION)

- Know your character inside out. Realistic and complex characters will help your readers to connect with your story
- Establish goals and motivations quickly in short stories
- Introduce a Major Dramatic Question to hook the reader. It's the central question that the story seeks to answer by the end. Typically, it revolves around the protagonist's main goal or conflict and is often phrased as a yes/no question.



# FUTURE STORIES

## EXAMPLES OF MAJOR DRAMATIC QUESTIONS

- Will the character survive being stranded alone on Mars and make it back to Earth?
- Is the AI character truly conscious and can she escape?
- Can the character lead humanity to victory against an alien invasion without losing their humanity?
- Can the character decode the code language in time to prevent global war?
- Will the character succeed in pulling off the ultimate cyberspace heist?



# FUTURE STORIES

## GMC (GOALS, MOTIVATION, CONFLICT)

- What does your character want (Goal)?
- Why do they want it (Motivation)?
- What's standing in their way (Conflict)?

**ACTIVITY:** Share your character's GMC in the chat.



# WRITING SCI-FI

# FUTURE STORIES

- Original 'What if?' concept: fresh, speculative premise that hasn't been explored in the same way before or that combines existing ideas in a new, surprising way
- Protagonist with high stakes: why what the character wants matters?
- World-building through hints, not walls of text
- Strong arc with twist, reveal (climax), or emotion: leave the reader with a lasting emotion or question
- Fresh perspective on tech/society



# **PITFALLS & FINAL TIPS**

# FUTURE STORIES

## PITFALLS

- Overworldbuilding slows pace
- Jargon before emotional engagement
- One storytelling mode dominates (modes include action, dialogue, description, exposition, introspection)
- Lack of reader connection with characters
- Dialogue sounds unnatural.

**TIP:** Read your dialogue aloud with a friend.

# FUTURE STORIES

- Keep it simple and clear
- Make the reader care
- Write every day

## SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

1 IS IT CLEAR?

2 IS IT COMPELLING?

3 IS THE VOICE UNIQUE?

4 DOES IT SAY SOMETHING BIGGER?