

# **NARRATIVE DRIVE:** The Engine That *Powers* Your Story



# **LYNN BOHART**

**Author, Freelance Writer, Story Coach**

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## WHAT IS NARRATIVE DRIVE?

Readers love to immerse themselves in the narrative of a good story. It takes them to places they've never been. Introduces them to people (characters) they've never known. And allows them to live vicariously through those characters to experience the full range of human emotions without getting their hands dirty.

But what's the single most influential thing that motivates readers to keep turning pages?

Is it suspense? A series of cliff hangers? Finding the answer to a burning question? Yes, and no.

All those things certainly add to the compelling nature of the story and help to motivate the reader to keep reading. But the single most influential aspect that compels readers to turn the page and finish the story *is a strong narrative drive*.

In short, narrative drive is the engine that powers your story. It influences almost every aspect of the story and is the main component that drives the plotline home. In fact, author Larry Beinhart goes so far as to say that it's narrative drive that sells books. According to Beinhart, narrative drive is the 'promise' or tease that something is going to happen in the story.

Ask yourself, "When was the last time I read a book that I couldn't put down?" Do you remember how it felt? My guess is that it felt as if there was a hidden element in the book that seemed to pull you through every page until you hit the end.

Well, Beinhart goes on to say that narrative drive is the 'constant' promise that something will happen. I believe that's the pull that draws you through the story—the constant promise of something.

Narrative drive can be an elusive concept, however, and many authors have trouble putting their fingers on what it is or how to create it.



In a nutshell, narrative drive consists of whatever your protagonist wants most and is chasing in the story. It's a clearly defined goal that influences everything your lead character thinks or does. In murder mysteries and thrillers, the narrative drive is up front and center, practically knocking you over the head. In more character driven novels, the narrative drive will be more subtle and layered yet still be there quietly chugging away.

Whether your protagonist's goal is to destroy the ring in the fires of Mordor (*Lord of the Rings*), survive alone in the swamps of North Carolina (*Where the Crawdads Sing*), or manage your stuttering so that you can make a speech to the entire country (*The King's Speech*), the protagonist's goal provides the forward momentum of the story. Whether subtle or not, it tends to influence every decision, conversation, or action the protagonist takes.

Think of narrative drive as the underlying motivation for the story itself. It can be as understated as your character's need to write a poem good enough to enter a school competition or as overly dramatic as outrunning a global disaster. Your job as the author is to make sure the goal is well-defined with clear motivation. That way, you'll keep every scene relevant and impactful. The goal must also be achievable (in whatever world the story is set in) and feel urgent so that the story moves forward with purpose.

Let's face it, readers will follow a character to the ends of the earth *if* that character is chasing something meaningful and of consequence. It must be something that matters deeply to the protagonist. Something personal but also difficult to attain. And it helps if the goal has a sense of urgency that threatens consequences if the protagonist fails.

Your character may be chasing a love interest. Protecting a deeply personal belief. Saving a family member. Realizing a dream. Finding a killer. Surviving a natural

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disaster. Recovering from a severe loss. Overcoming a major obstacle. Being able to rise above a personal weakness. Or any one of a million other things.

These are the kind of themes that frame a story, but it's the protagonist's need to answer a question or achieve a specific goal that will drive the story home.

## HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT THE PROTAGONIST'S GOAL IS?



The protagonist's goal (narrative drive) is triggered by a pivotal moment near the beginning of the story. This is the *inciting incident* (sometimes called the trigger or catalyst), and every story must have one. It's the exact point in time when the everyday life the protagonist currently lives in changes, and the story begins. This change can be subtle or

chaotic. Either way, it forces the character to act and/or move in a different direction.

In the movie *Legally Blonde*, Elle Wood, a young fashionista and influencer among her friends, has the singular goal of marrying her boyfriend, Warner Huntington III. Unfortunately, Warner announces he's going to Harvard Law School and breaks up with Elle, informing her that to achieve *his* goal of becoming a senator, he needs a "Jackie Kennedy" by his side (a woman of substance) and not a Marilyn Monroe (a shallow woman who relies on her looks).

This is the inciting moment, which shatters Elle. And because of this change in her normal world, her goal swiftly changes to getting into Harvard Law School herself so that she can win Warner back. Not such an easy task for someone who is known only for things like fashion and hair. But transforming herself into the woman Warner wants by his side becomes her overriding obsession throughout most of the movie. It influences everything she does. She does get into Harvard (much to everyone's surprise) and although thrust into an alien world full of serious law

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students, she excels. She even helps to win a murder case by relying on what? Her fashion expertise. This not only wins her accolades but leaves Warner in the dust. In the end, Elle proves her worth without Warner, which changes her goal again because she no longer needs him.

This is a great example of an inciting moment that functions as the trigger or catalyst in a story. It's that one moment when Warner tells Elle she isn't good enough that jump starts the story by thrusting Elle forward with a new goal.

The inciting moment in your story can be monumental (a group of careless youth start a wildfire and then have to outrun it in order to survive), more understated (a boy who stutters badly and gets bullied at school enters a spelling bee because his father has forced him to), or the abandonment of an internal desire (a young athlete who dreams of playing in the NFL is forced to take over the family's failing business and make it a success when his father dies).

When the inciting moment occurs, the protagonist is faced with a decision. She can accept the challenge and move ahead in a new direction or choose not to accept the challenge and weather the consequences.

The choice to do nothing, however, removes the unifying element of the story, causing the storyline to wander, lose focus, and eventually fade away. Think about it. What happens to the careless group of kids if there is no forest fire? What if the bullied boy doesn't enter the spelling bee? What happens if the athlete merely goes on to a professional career in the NFL, leaving his family's business behind? And what would happen to Elle if she didn't pursue Warner and go to Harvard?

It's not that there isn't a potential story there if the protagonist ignores the catalyst and goes on as normal; it's just a very different story.

One of my favorite examples of an inciting moment is in *Lord of the Rings*. I believe the full story begins when the Fellowship is in Rivendell with the elves, arguing over who will take the ring to Mordor to destroy it. Any one of them could successfully take up this dangerous task, but it is Frodo, the least likely of all, who

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steps forward and says, “I will take the ring.” To me, this is the inciting moment because, while it would have been a great story if any of the other heroes had been the one to take the ring, it wouldn’t have been Frodo’s story. And Tolkien was writing Frodo’s story.

## **ARE THERE OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES TO CONSIDER ALONG WITH THE INCITING INCIDENT?**

When crafting your story, you must make it clear what your protagonist will gain if she achieves her goal and what she will lose if she fails. That’s true even when you’re thinking about your inciting incident. What are the consequences if your character chooses *not* to take up the challenge at all?

Obviously, if the campers don’t even try to flee the devastating wildfire, they will probably die. If the boy doesn’t enter the spelling bee, he will most likely remain in his own isolated world bullied by others. If the athlete ignores his family’s needs and goes on to play for the NFL, his decision could cause financial ruin for his family. And Elle might never recognize she has so much more to offer the world than a good fashion sense.

The consequences may not be top of mind for the characters at the moment of the inciting incident. But you should be aware of them and make the consequences of going against the inciting moment clear to your reader, because it adds depth and conflict to your story, and is thus more engaging.

Consider the Jimmy Stewart movie “It’s a Wonderful Life,” where Stewart’s character, George Bailey, meets an angel who *shows* him what life would have been like had he not given up his lifelong dream of traveling the world to take over the family business. In this story, moviegoers get to *see* the tragedy of what life in Bedford Falls would have been like if George had never even existed. When George experiences what life would have been like without him, he is able to fully appreciate the fact that he already has everything he wants.

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So, clearly define what the risk is—what’s at stake if the character either fails in his quest or chooses **not** to pursue the new goal. This will heighten tension and make everything about the character's journey more captivating to readers.

## HOW DO WE CREATE AND MAINTAIN NARRATIVE DRIVE?

Once again, narrative drive consists of the key question, desire, or need the protagonist is chasing. A secondary but equally important element is conflict. After all, if it’s too easy for your protagonist to reach their goal, the story will be flat and boring. Conflict, then, is the tether that glues your readers to the page and creates the formula for success.

Goal + risks/consequences + urgency **VS** whatever or whomever stands in his way.

Now, we have a winning formula.



The obstacle stopping or posing a threat to your protagonist can be in the form of an antagonist (human, alien, robot), a natural disaster (volcano, earth quake), an internal negative belief (lack of courage, low self-esteem), a physical limitation (PTSD, autism), the supernatural (real or psychological), pervading culture (racism, misogyny), or something as simple as a clock that spells disaster when time runs out. If the obstacle(s) are believable and persistent, they present multiple opportunities for your protagonist to grow and change, which deepens the story.

Let’s look at an example. In *Lord of the Rings*, Frodo wants to go home more than anything else. He doesn’t really want to be on this quest. But his home (the Shire) is threatened by the ring, and so he accepts the challenge of destroying it. The road to Mordor, though, is paved with danger, which Tolkien makes known very early in the story. Frodo understands the risk and accepts the challenge because he knows that the consequences of failing are too great a loss to bear. This, then, becomes

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Frodo's greatest need and primary focus in the story, which then provides the forward momentum that drives everything and everyone around him toward the finish line.

How does the conflict play into this? The key here is to make the reality of failure ever-present. This is what maximizes reader engagement, so that it becomes all about answering the question, "Will he, or won't he?" Readers need to know the answer.

To do this, make the conflict meaningful and difficult to overcome. Frodo faces a multitude of obstacles on his journey, including Orcs, giant spiders, Trolls, a dragon, Ogres, and even his own lack of courage. At times, it seems his task is impossible, and we love every minute of it.

Be clear about what the consequences are if your protagonist fails and keep the risk in front of your readers. If Dorothy fails to return to Kansas, she could be stuck in OZ forever with a nasty witch on her tail. If Katniss fails at the Hunger Games, she loses her life. If Elle fails, she not only loses the man she loves but her self-esteem.



Conflict is crucial and helps to ratchet up the tension in your story. And tension equals reader engagement.

Note: be sure to throw in both internal and external obstacles for your protagonist to overcome. It's far more interesting for your reader and helps to make the character more relatable. Frodo not only has a long list of bizarre creatures to battle, but his own internal struggles, i.e. his lack of courage along with the growing need to wear the ring, which plays with his mind and forces him to mistrust his friends.

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## WHY IS NARRATIVE DRIVE SO IMPORTANT TO A STORY?

Without a strong desire/need for the protagonist to chase, there is no driving force for her to follow. No common thread that leads her (and the reader) to the story's end. The story becomes only a loosely assembled group of ideas or events that go nowhere.

Remember! A strong narrative drive is built upon your protagonist's *overriding need* to respond to the story's challenge—the inciting incident. This serves as the trigger that raises an overarching question or concern, such as:

- Will Katniss survive the Hunger Games?
- Will Dorothy make it back to Kansas?
- Will Frodo deliver the ring and save Middle Earth?
- Will Elle Wood get her boyfriend back by going to Harvard?



These are big questions that are posed at the beginning of the story and resolved by the end. And they rely on the protagonist's ability to stick to the plan and overcome a series of obstacles to succeed in their quest. In other words, keep the protagonist's object of desire front and center so that it consistently influences her decisions and actions.

Larry Beinhart tells us that it's not the character, the writing style, the subject matter, or anything literary that creates narrative drive. Instead, it is the character's focus on the goal and the strength of the opposition. And voilà, you have narrative drive.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR NARRATIVE DRIVE IS WORKING?

If you have a weak narrative drive, or no narrative drive at all, it will feel as if the story is going nowhere. After all, the narrative drive begins with the inciting

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incident and then pushes your protagonist in a certain, unifying direction. If there is no inciting moment or no clear beginning to your story AND no challenge to respond to, your story will lack focus, and your readers will feel lost.

### **EACH SCENE MUST SUPPORT THE NARRATIVE DRIVE**

It's important to remember that every scene or chapter in your story must have a reason for being there, namely helping to move the story forward. Narrative drive does that. When every scene is infused with your protagonist's need to achieve a specific goal and/or vanquish whatever stands in his way, the reader stays focused on the storyline. If you insert scenes merely to provide information, create atmosphere, or introduce an interesting character, it can pull the reader out of the story.

Ameilia Winters, fiction editor, puts it this way, "*Every scene in your story should work toward asking, exploring, or answering your driving narrative question.*" And the clearer and more well-defined the protagonist's goal, the more aligned each scene of the story will be. This is the way to grab your reader's attention and keep them hooked until the end.

Here's a caveat. If you choose to build in a subplot, make sure it runs parallel to the main driving force of the story and doesn't distract from it. In my book *Mass Murder*, Detective Giorgio Salvatori is focused on solving the murder of a young woman who attended a writers' conference held at a large monastery. To enrich his character, I built in two subplots: one in which his wife announces she is pregnant with their third child and the other with his alcoholic brother.

How did I create two strong subplots that didn't derail the main story?

When Giorgio is informed about his wife's pregnancy, he blows up. The idea of another child scares him because he's not sure they can afford it. The argument with his wife nags at him over the next couple of days as he continues to investigate the murder. But when she loses the baby because she falls down the stairs trying to get to the hospital after *he* has been injured in a fire set to kill him,

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he suddenly realizes how much he wanted the child and regrets the argument. You can see how I tied the two subplots together.

On the other hand, his brother is also a cop but on leave from his department because of a drinking problem. Rocky is helping Giorgio with the investigation, and Giorgio confronts him with his drinking while at the monastery. They have a heart-to-heart talk in the chapel about the murder of Rocky's fiancé (the reason he drinks) and the loss of their father when Giorgio was only sixteen and how Giorgio was suddenly thrust into being the man of the family.

These two subplots prey upon Giorgio's emotions *while* he's conducting the investigation, deepening our understanding of his character and his motivations. The important thing to note here, however, is that, 1) while Giorgio must deal with both these family issues as they arise, he does it while also focusing on the task at hand—the murder investigation. And, 2) both subplots are tied up neatly by the end so that readers aren't left with unanswered questions. In fact, the subplots are wrapped up in such a way as to add to the 'good feelings' after a story about child abuse and murder. You'll have to read the book to see how I did this.

The point to remember is that a strong narrative drive keeps you from adding irrelevant scenes that might feel good to you but don't move the story forward. I sadly cut a scene from my book *Grave Doubts*, even though I loved the new character in it, because in the end it didn't really add to the story. But... I'm saving that character for a future book.

## **HOW NARRATIVE DRIVE HELPS TO SHAPE YOUR STORY**

While there are several ways to structure a story, I will use the 3-act structure to illustrate how narrative drive plays such a critical role.

The 3-act structure is typically formatted as the *beginning* (the first quarter of the story), the *middle* (the second two quarters of the story), and the *end* (the final quarter). As Amelia Winters describes in her blog post *The Secret Foundation of*

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*Strong Stories: The Driving Narrative Question, “Your story’s beginning should pose a question that the middle explores and the ending answers.”*

Within the first quarter of your story, you will set things up by introducing your main characters and the world they live in. This is called stasis, or whatever your characters consider to be normal life in their world.

Then, something happens to disrupt the normal (the inciting incident).

Once your protagonist takes the bait and moves in the new direction, the narrative drive takes over as the story’s engine. It’s your protagonist’s decision to chase whatever is important to him at that moment that will push him through to the end.



Now, think of the middle two quarters of your story like a balloon filling with air.

During the middle of the book, your protagonist will explore ways to achieve his goal while battling against whatever opposing forces are in his way.

This is called the ‘rising action’ as your lead character meets and overcomes challenge after challenge, all the while keeping his eye on the goal. As the tension rises (air fills the balloon) and the time window to succeed narrows, adding more tension. At some point the balloon will pop, and we’re on the edge of our seats waiting for that to happen.

Frodo has made it to the fires of Mordor, but does he have the will to throw the ring in? Katniss has made it through the hunger games with only one remaining opponent—a close friend. Will she kill him to survive or come up with a different solution? Dorothy’s friends free her from the witch, but they are now being chased through the witch’s tower. Will Dorothy make it out alive and finally go home?

The story has now reached the climax or the final quarter. This is where all the energy of the narrative drive has been leading us—to the moment when, win or lose, your protagonist faces the biggest challenge of all. Will the balloon pop? Yes.

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And when it does, the tension fades, questions are answered, and a new normal will settle in during the falling action and resolution of the story.

Dorothy kills the witch by throwing water on her. Katniss comes up with a creative solution to save both her and her friend. Frodo hesitates to throw the ring into the fire, and so Sam does it for him.

Can you see how the narrative drive helps to shape your story and hook your readers?

### EXAMPLES OF NARRATIVE DRIVE IN ACTION



Here is an example from my book *No Place Like Home for a Murder*. I'll begin with the inciting moment and then show you different instances throughout the story where narrative drive influences the action.

Book: *No Place Like Home for a Murder* – Lead character: Julia Applegate –  
Inciting incident

My cell phone rang, making me groan with irritation. I put down my book and pulled the phone off the table next to me, wondering who would be calling so late. A glance at the screen told me it was my close friend and book club member Rudy Smith.

I swiped on the phone and said, “Rudy, can I call you back? I’m right in the middle of a good mystery...”

**“There’s a dead woman on my floor!” (inciting incident)**

“I’m sorry... what?”

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I had a momentary brain fart as I wondered how Rudy knew there was a dead woman on the floor of that little chapel in Britain. And then I realized she was talking about a different murder. I dropped the leg rest of my chair and sat up, pushing poor Minnie unceremoniously onto the floor.

“Rudy, what are you talking about?”

“I had a friend over for dinner, and now she’s dead. I don’t know what to do. There’s blood everywhere,” she said in a rush.

“Slow down and tell me exactly what happened.”

Here, Julia’s normal world is interrupted with a real-life murder at the home of one of her best friends. Will she involve herself in this case? Of course she will. In this next scene, Julia’s brother arrives at her home for a meeting about the investigation with a box in his hands. You’ll see how Julia is momentarily distracted by the box but quickly brings it back to the task at hand.

Ben set the box on the kitchen counter and pulled a stack of paper from it.

“It’s a manuscript I found at Carter’s. Believe it or not, he was writing a story.”

“No way!” I said, jumping up and moving over to grab the manuscript. As I skimmed the first page, I said, “Oh, for heaven’s sake. It’s a short story called ‘*The Case of the Missing Will*.’”

“Sounds like Nancy Drew or the Hardy Boys,” Blair said with a chuckle.

I shook my head as a wave of sadness washed over me. “Damn, I miss him.”

“Maybe you could finish the story for him,” Ben said, encouraging me with a raised eyebrow.

I chuckled. **“We’ll see. First, we need to solve the case of the dead woman in Rudy’s kitchen.”**

You can see here how Julia steers the conversation back to her primary focus, solving the murder at her friend’s home. In this next scene, Julia is planning a

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romantic evening with her beau (a detective). But you'll see how, although she has romance on her mind, her thoughts are never far from solving the murder.

“Listen, I’ve gotta go. You want me to stop by later?” David asked.

“Yeah. I’ll make something special? After all, I might be gone for a few days.”

“What do you mean?”

“Let’s discuss it tonight?”

We hung up, and I finished paperwork before checking in with April. By six o’clock, I had homemade spaghetti sauce simmering on the stove and a bottle of red wine ready for whenever David arrived. I thought an evening for just the two of us was warranted. **Not only did I have to convince him that my going undercover at the homeless camps** was a good idea, but I thought I deserved some close contact of a personal nature given **that soon I might be dressing up like a homeless person, looking and smelling like yesterday’s trash.**

Focusing on your protagonist’s primary goal doesn’t mean other things aren’t happening in their life. After all, just like humans, your characters need to be able to juggle multiple things at once. But if you keep your eye on the ball, namely your lead character’s driving need, you’ll be able to keep your readers’ focus there, too.

Here's an example of how I created a scene showing Julia doing a normal, everyday chore, namely food shopping for her bed and breakfast, while also keeping the narrative drive alive while she’s doing it.

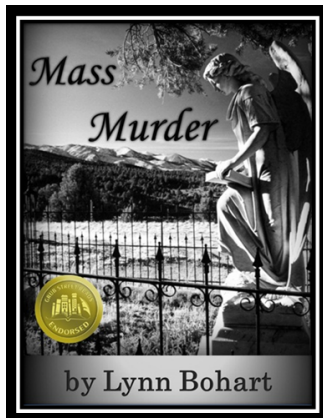
I entered Costco on auto pilot, wandering up and down aisles and pulling things off the shelves, thinking about why **Dr. Enzo might know Patch and what the two of them were doing when Ben saw them downtown.** And then my brain flicked to what Blair had said about Tacoma and **the abductions down there.** She’d said the women had gotten very chatty when they were having their hair done, and one of them said she had come up from Tacoma, where **two people she’d known had disappeared without a**

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**trace.** In fact, the woman said there was a **saying among the homeless people in Pierce County to stay ‘away from the blue van’.**

In the produce aisle, I stopped midstride, realizing I’d filled my cart with double the amount of milk and cheese we needed at the Inn. With a sigh, I went back to the refrigerated section and returned the excess items.

These examples show you how simple it is to keep the narrative drive as the focal point regardless of what else is going on in your protagonist’s life.



Here’s one last example: that scene from *Mass Murder* in which Giorgio and his brother Rocky share a quiet moment in the chapel of the monastery. This is an important and emotional scene when their conversation turns to Rocky’s drinking, the loss of Rocky’s fiancé, and the loss of their father.

The monk at the altar turned in response to Giorgio’s raised voice, prompting him to turn back to his brother and lower his voice a notch.

“I was the one who had to comfort Mom. Do you have any idea how hard that was? I was just a kid, but everyone said I was the man in the family now and had to be strong for the two of you. Crap, I was just as torn up.” He stopped and took a breath and lowered his voice even more. “I do know how you’re feeling. You want to scream, and you want to cry. Sometimes, you just want to run in front of a bus and end it all. But most of all, you just want someone to take away the pain. You want someone to fix it. But they can’t. Because death can’t be fixed, Rocky. And that’s why you feel so helpless.” He paused and took a deep breath. “And that’s why you drink.”

Rocky’s face had grown ashen, and he dropped his head.

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“Drinking won’t fix it either, though, little brother. And that’s the truth. Life isn’t a promise. It just is what it is. Nothing more. We get what we get!”

There was a pause. Then Rocky whispered, “And don’t throw a fit.”

Giorgio recognized that Rocky had just finished a childhood rhyme and chuckled.

“Yeah, and don’t throw a fit.” He moved over and sat next to his brother. “I don’t know what it’s like to lose →someone like Rebecca. I’m sure it’s a pain you’ll never get over, but there are people here who don’t want to lose you, too.”

“I know,” Rocky whispered.

“Then don’t quit on me,” Giorgio said. Giorgio recognized the moment was about to crumble into a sophomoric show of emotion and decided to end it. He took a deep breath. **“Okay, so you interviewed Julio and Francis. They’re two of the new recruits, right?”**

And with that, Giorgio goes right back to getting an update on the investigation. But once again, this gives us a window into both characters and how they handle some of the most difficult moments in their lives. And yet, they never move very far from the story’s narrative drive.

## **A WORD ABOUT CHARACTER MOTIVATION VS NARRATIVE DRIVE**



I’m sure you’ve heard it said that when an actor reads a screenplay, they will dig deep to find the character’s motivation in every scene. There’s a difference, however, between motivation and narrative drive.

When it’s lunch time, I’m motivated to get up and make a sandwich. When I’m immersed in a project, not feeling well, on a phone call, or otherwise busy, however, I’m not motivated enough to make that sandwich. On the other hand, if the

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hunger pangs begin to invade my comfort zone, then I'm *driven* to eat.

Do you see the difference?

If you look at the movie *Die Hard*, the character John McClain is a cop who is motivated to stop a group of terrorists who have taken hostages in a big hotel. He does what any cop would do. However, his wife happens to be among the hostages. This transforms his natural motivation into a driving need.

In my book *No Place Like Home for a Murder*, Julia's motivation is to save her friend Rudy from being arrested for the murder of the woman in her kitchen. But Julia's 'driving need' is more than that. She has a deep-seated need for justice, which forces her to insert herself into murder investigations repeatedly throughout the series.

## **WHAT ABOUT MULTIPLE CHARACTERS WITH MULTIPLE GOALS?**

Stories like *Lord of the Rings* involve multiple leading characters with different driving narratives. If your story includes a large cast of lead characters like this, be sure that each individual character's need is connected to the overarching story need. For instance, each member of the Fellowship has their own reason for wanting to destroy the ring, even though Frodo is the one to carry it. In this way, the collective driving needs are aligned with the story goal.

Tolkien, however, inserted a wonderful conflict that haunts every member of the group. The ring has a power that whispers to each of them to take it from Frodo and control it. Not only does the individual character have to overcome that gnawing whisper, but Frodo feels it as well, and begins to mistrust his brothers in arms. Just one more wrinkle in a great story.

So, if your story depends on a large cast of protagonists, make sure that each of the characters' internal needs are connected somehow to the overall story need. If you don't, you might find that the characters don't work well together, and the story will lose cohesiveness.

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## IN CLOSING

My advice is to figure out the protagonist's narrative drive before you do anything else. Too often, new writers come up with an 'idea' for a story and just begin writing. Halfway into the story, they realize they don't know where they're going or are told by beta readers that the lead character feels flat. Then what?

Don't go down that rabbit hole, and save yourself the heartache.

The driving need is the deep-seated reason behind your protagonist's motivation. It's the internal pistons that force them forward. And, if you get this right, your readers will have a hard time putting down your story.



Thanks so much for purchasing this short book on narrative drive. I hope it clarifies what it is and why it's so important

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and will help you as you craft your story. I also encourage you to read other articles on this subject to make sure you have a good grasp of it.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions or need help in your writing journey. I love talking to other writers and/or fans of my books. You can email me at **Lildog67@icloud.com** or contact me through either one of my websites. Be sure to mention this little eBook so that I know your frame of reference.

I wish you the best of luck.

Happy writing!

***Lynn Bohart***

Author/Freelance Writer/Story Coach  
Lildog67@icloud.com

[www.lynnbohart-author.com](http://www.lynnbohart-author.com)

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After retiring from a 35+ year career in the nonprofit world, Ms. Bohart launched her own freelance writing company, Lil Dog Communications, and now writes for clients all over the world. She holds a master's degree in theater, has taught "Crafting the Story" through

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Green River College for 10+ years, and has written for both Patch.com and the Renton Reporter.

Currently, she has eleven paranormal mystery novels, two short story books, and now three nonfiction books on Amazon, along with several books on writing offered through her website.

As a mystery and true crime aficionado, she has redesigned her author website into ***The No Alibi Zone*** to showcase criminal investigations. Her bi-monthly newsletter called “Let’s Talk About Murder,” includes blog posts and interviews with people who talk about, write about, and investigate crime as well as information on writing, her summit presentations, and her books. You can sign up to receive the newsletter for free by going here on her website: [Sign up here](#).

If you’re interested in Lynn’s story coaching services, you can reach out to her here: [Lildog67@icloud.com](mailto:Lildog67@icloud.com) or visit her website.

***OTHER BOOKS BY LYNN BOHART***

*Available on Amazon.com*

**Detective Giorgio Salvatori Series**

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*Mass Murder*  
*Murder in the Past Tense*  
*The Essence of Murder*

**Old Maids of Mercer Island Series**

*Inn Keeping with Murder*  
*A Candidate for Murder*  
*A History of Murder*  
*All Roads Lead to Murder*  
*The Key to Murder*  
*No Place Like Home for a Murder*

**The Unstoppables**  
*Case of the Missing Will (YA book)*

**Stand-Alone Books**

*Grave Doubts*  
*Stand-alone mystery novel*  
*Your Worst Nightmare*  
*Anthology of short stories*  
*Something Wicked*  
*Single short story*

**Nonfiction Books**

*When Hope is Not Enough*  
*The Little Book of Unconventional Marketing Ideas*  
*Raise More Money Through Better Messaging*

**Books on Writing**

*Writing a Novel*

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*Show Don't Tell*

*From a Great Idea to a Great Story*

*SETTING: It's More Than a Location*

*Creating Characters Readers Can't Quit*

*How to Grab & Hold a Reader's Attention*

*Narrative Drive: The Engine That Fuels Your Story*

*Coming Soon: Creating Authentic Dialogue*