



# Story Physics: Harnessing the Underlying Forces of Storytelling

*Larry Brooks*

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## Story Physics: Harnessing the Underlying Forces of Storytelling Larry Brooks

Learn how to make your story soar! In the physical world, gravity, force, and other elements of physics govern your abilities and can be utilized to enhance your every movement. In the world of writing, "story" physics can be harnessed in much the same way to make your novel or screenplay the best it can be. In *Story Physics*, best-selling author Larry Brooks introduces you to six key literary forces that, when leveraged in just the right way, enable you to craft a story that's primed for success--and publication.

Inside *Story Physics*, you'll learn how to: Understand and harness the six storytelling forces that are constantly at work in your fiction. Transform your story idea into a dramatically compelling concept. Optimize the choices you make in terms of character, conflict, subplot, subtext, and more to render the best possible outcome. These literary forces will elevate your story above the competition and help you avoid the rejection pile. With *Story Physics*, you won't just give your story wings--you'll teach it how to fly.

"Larry Brooks speaks my kind of language about story. Any writer, even those trucking in the world of nonfiction, will benefit from going deeper into the physics of storytelling as Brooks explains in these pages."  
- James Scott Bell, best-selling author of *Plot & Structure*

"Larry Brooks has done it again! If you liked "Story Engineering," I suspect you're going to love "Story Physics," which dives even deeper into the essence of story. "Story Physics" is an essential addition to every novelist's bookshelf." - Randy Ingermanson, author of *Writing Fiction for Dummies*

## Story Physics: Harnessing the Underlying Forces of Storytelling Details

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Larry Brooks**

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## From Reader Review Story Physics: Harnessing the Underlying Forces of Storytelling for online ebook

### A.a. Motylinski says

This is the wordiest, most pretentious writing book I have read in my entire life. Also, if you took out every italicised word, it would be about 200 pages shorter.

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### Rich Silvers says

I read this book twice as I struggled with plotting my first novel. It gave me a deeper understanding of the process. I found it extremely helpful.

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### H. S. Palladino says

Highly recommended

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### Charissa says

This is a good companion book to Story Engineering. I really enjoyed it, and felt it help cement the principles the author has taught in the last book and the new ones in this one. The first book is A MUST, in my opinion, for all writers to read. I wish I had read it years ago. It's the best writing book I've read and really helped me hone my craft. This book built on that one, and helped me firm up the things I learned last time and helped me see how the story principles and physics apply to actual books out there. This was definitely worth the money spent for a paperback to keep pulling out and re-reading to help me stay focused on what really works in creating a winning story.

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### D. Thrush says

I recommend reading Story Engineering first which discusses the importance of structure in writing. Story Physics talks about what goes within that structure. I've found these two books extremely helpful. I've always let my stories flow from the characters and initial idea, and have often gotten stuck wondering what to write next or finding myself writing filler. These books help you develop a better process that will give you more focus and intention in writing your story. Optimally, you want every scene to serve a larger purpose and move the story forward. You might realize you haven't identified the ultimate purpose of the story within your idea even though you may think you had. Breaking your story down into sections makes it easier. I'm trying this out on a book I'd already written but hadn't yet published. I'm rearranging scenes to keep the story building. And it's helped me to clarify what the actual heart of the story should be and how to build everything around that idea. Story Engineering and Story Physics are well worth reading and will make it easier to write more efficiently with fewer drafts and more focus. For me, it was the missing puzzle piece. Hopefully, it will help you write better books!~

## Zoe says

### **Italics are direct quotes from the book.**

Another must read by Larry, for any aspiring writer. I found myself getting through this one slowly, but only because I had to stop to get the ideas he inspired written down somewhere. He forces you face a few home truths about your own story idea, concept, premise or full blown draft, whatever stage of planning you may be in. He also accounts for those who don't plan, who can use his tips, either in a revisory manner or on a subconscious level.

As others have said, there is some repetition throughout, but isn't a little repetition necessary when learning, for something to really hit home? I don't think the repetition is just a filler, the information is simply presented in more than one way to account for as many readers as possible, what will turn on that light bulb of realisation for one reader might not work for another.

The use of examples, explanations and analogies is key to ensuring story physics and the importance of them in a bid for commercial success, sink in.

***“Plot is the stage upon which your characters reveal themselves.***

*Characters are the catalytic moving parts of the plot.*

*Emotions are the currency of everyone's involvement in the plot.*

*Stakes are the consequences of the actions of the characters in context to the involvement.”*

Larry's intentions are for story physics to become second nature to those who don't get it naturally, as he says the gifted writer isn't born *“We can get there if we obtain knowledge and awareness, and evolve a nuanced touch and sensibility”*. He brings hope to the new writer and awareness to the experienced.

Planner or not, Story Physics mean the whole process of writing the story will be a little less brain-wracking and considerably quicker to get to that high quality final draft. The final draft, which, with a thorough understanding of both his previous book 'Story Engineering' and 'Story Physics' combined, could be the first draft. I would recommend reading both in that order, but even if you don't there is so much to be taken from either as a stand alone.

Larry's intentions are quite obviously to help the writer, by showing us the requisites to elevate. He doesn't make any big promises of success, he simply **shows you how**, without a hint of hypocrisy - *“Show, don't tell”*.

I'm a big fan of highlighting any important things to note via the kindle highlight tool, I found it hard to restrict myself from highlighting everything because there's just so much Stellar material. I've just recounted my highlights after one read of the book and there are 97 notes and marks already in my kindle version. If you don't feel as though you have taken anything from Story Physics, you probably have, you're just not consciously aware you did.

Some have complained that the first section of the book is like a sales pitch, but doesn't any good book start by drawing you in, fiction or none fiction? The real test is whether the rest of the book delivers something that changes and teaches you, leaving you in a different place than before you started.

Story Physics will open your eyes to the literary forces in play, forces which for any writer, are imperative to triumph. He shows you how to elevate yourself as a writer, from the literary equivalent transition of cook, to chef (his analogy) through the understanding and new found control over these forces so that you can pave the way to your own shot at success.

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## Meghan says

I think "story physics" is a potentially useful metaphor that is barely explored in this book at all, which is disappointing. There is plenty of repetition of "Story physics is what makes stories work!" and "Here is a story. It is working. Because story physics!" This is not particularly enlightening and a complete waste of your time.

Probably the most useful part of the book is where he breaks down *The Hunger Games* according to his story physics rubric, since this forces him to discuss some things in actual concrete detail. (He also does this with *The Help*, but it's a much longer book and he engages with it much more generally, whereas with THG he really breaks it down scene by scene and you can see where some of the moving pieces are.)

Also, repeatedly using *The Da Vinci Code* as one of your only cited examples of a good book takes some *chutzpah*.

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## Derek says

REVIEW FROM FIRST READING, AUGUST 2014:

Alan Watt (The 90-Day Novel) wrote, "Most books about writing novels miss the point. They tend to be technical and dispassionate, and are often written by blocked creatives who shed their imaginations in graduate school. The advice is not even benign-- it's actually counterproductive, because so many of these books are result-oriented and actually pull you out of your imagination."

Am not saying this book is a culprit of the above, but yeah, I found it technical and dispassionate. So many big concept words in there that detract from the process of easy understanding and applicability. The main reason I read this book was because for the last couple of years I've been a huge follower of Larry Brooks' website and had found the short tutorials and interviews, etc very enjoyable and helpful, the book, sadly, wasn't.

That, though, doesn't take away anything from the wealth of good advice to be found here.

REVIEW FROM SECOND READING, FEB 2015:

After reading this book for a second, I still hold onto my first review of it, although with much less trepidation. I appreciate it a little more now, that is not to say I passed a harsh judgement the first time around... something I'm realizing now, is that books on writing craft need more than one read to really get them. This book is definitely one of those must re-read kinda books.

Story Physics isn't a book for the beginning writing, no, no way, don't do yourself and the book that injustice. As the title says, it's 'story physics' not 'how-to-write-better physics'. It's main focus is STRUCTURE, STRUCTURE, STRUCTURE! Nothing here about the craft itself. To really get something valuable out of this book you need to have been writing for a while, you must be able to write write, but are just stuck in that

place where you need to optimize your story and take it to the next level.

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### **Jason McCuiston says**

Eighty percent sizzle and twenty percent steak. Most of the text is devoted to WHY you should apply story physics rather than HOW to do so. I got so much more from his other book, Story Engineering. I highly recommend that one. This one, not so much.

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### **Kevin T Johns says**

Another fantastic book on writing novels from Larry Brooks. I would say STORY PHYSICS is a step up in complexity from the preceding book, STORY ENGINEERING, and I could see someone who hasn't read ENGINEERING becoming confused, given that PHYSICS adds six new forces to the six core competencies discussed in ENGINEERING. All that said, if you read both books and take the time to really pay attention and learn what Brooks is discussing, there is a lot of great material to be had. The exploration of story structure in the later portion of STORY PHYSICS, in particular, is not to be missed. Also, if you are a fan of THE HUNGER GAMES or THE HELP, you may want to check out this book given that Brooks' deconstructs both books in great detail.

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### **John says**

I was one of many anticipating the release of Story Physics by Larry Brooks. I had bought Story Engineering, and found it to be immensely helpful in understanding the criteria for establishing the structure of my novel. It gave me a clear understanding of the criteria required to satisfy readers and publishers. Story Physics is Larry's follow up book, but it is not an add-on. It takes the process of writing a novel further down the path of ensuring that expectations are met. Where Story Engineering deals with the six core competencies (Concept, Character, Theme, Structure, Scene Execution, and Writing Voice and Style), Story Physics starts with the search for story, finding a compelling narrative, premise or question. This first step is critical in creating a viable story to build on. Searching for story, design of that story, and execution of your story are covered in detail, with clear explanations of the six forces of Story Physics: Compelling Premise, Dramatic Tension, Expository Pacing, Hero Empathy, Vicarious Reading Experience, and Narrative Strategy. As Larry points out, "Story physics aren't the recipe for a story. Rather, they are the qualitative nature of the ingredients that comprise the recipe." The six essences of Story Physics are not the same as the six core competencies. The basic essences of Story Physics are the underlying forces that make the core competencies effective. In essence, as Larry explains, the writer has six things that need to be put into a story (core competencies)...and six reasons (forces) why they should.

I highly recommend both Story Engineering and Story Physics. They gave me the tools and insight to approach story development and execution, and as an added bonus, Larry provides an amazing story analysis service, linked directly to the concepts in his books. You don't even need a written story, his questionnaire is written specifically to determine how successful you have incorporated the core competencies and story physics in your story outline or synopsis. It is an amazing bargain. I have had two critiques done, and will have more done as I develop future books.

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## Charlie says

This was nowhere near as informative and inspiring as the first book, Story Engineering.

This book references his first book many times, and mentions the 6 elements of story physics, but, I could not repeat them back to you for the life of me.

This also uses chapter after chapter to let you know, that at the end of this book (Chapter 24), he goes into great detail breaking down The Hunger Games (Chapter 24), which while that may or may not do it for you, this should be about teaching the reader what you mean by Story physics.

Instead we got countless references to others movies and novels (Chapter 24) without any real understanding of what the author means by Story physics. Even when you did reach the often mentioned CHAPTER 24, there is no explanation for what the parts are, and he basically explains every scene, giving the reader Cliff Notes to the Hunger Games, instead of insight.

And, he mentions constantly, does the author do this intentionally? We don't know. But it fits.

So, you don't know, you assume, you praise, but without any real grasp of the author's approach. I would rather have seen the physics in action, even if in a lame small story scale, to understand, instead of being forced to analyse the Hunger Games without knowing what physics are in play. I get to see the six core competences again, but I already knew those.

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## Corwin says

I think you'll find this is a \*badly written\* book. Even many of the book's admirers complain about the author's WRITING. Consider the irony: would you buy a book about WRITING, about which the number one complaint was the author's...WRITING?

The complaints (based on a major bookseller's website) were about what most described as his "style." This included such things as constant repetition (within the book itself, and in terms of content from other books by the author), constant self-promotion, an inability to get the point, the awkward structure of the book, the author's tone, excessive empty verbiage, and much more.

I am a writer, and am trying to learn the art of crafting novels. I bought this book based on a) the strength of the many rave reviews on the web site I found it on, and b) the fact that the author had written five novels that had apparently done well. I only picked up on the pattern of complaints after I tried to read the book. I got about a quarter of the way through the book before I gave up. For me, the book was unreadable.

Why? For me, the author's number one problem is what I will also call "style." And the style he uses is one I found \*totally\* inappropriate for a book of this nature.

It would seem a safe assumption that a reader reads a book because he has an interest in the topic. When the book is instructional in nature, most want – EXPECT – to learn something. We are not reading for enjoyment: time is valuable, and at least most of us appreciate a teacher who gets to the point, who SHOWS us rather than TELLS us that what he has to offer is of value. The author's refusal to get a point is mind-numbing; he babbles and rambles. We are more than 1/8 of the way through the book before he even starts to define "story physics." Most of us also value a presentation that is well-ordered, that builds on a solid

foundation, i.e., one that does not expect you to read something on page 210 before you read something on page 30.

But this author takes a different approach. He is described as attempting to create a “passionate” discussion. I \*surmise\* what is thought of as “passion” is exactly what his reviewers are complaining about. This is suppose to be an instructional book, in which a little passion would go a long way - and this author goes further yet. If he wanted to write passion, he should try a Harlequin Romance. He also tells us, over and over again, how good this book is. But – we’re already reading the book: we do NOT need (or want) an on-going sales job. What IS needed, and which is not provided in the first 25% of the book, is ANY proof the book has valuable content. Everything I read had been said elsewhere by others, and in a far briefer, more direct, clearer, and stronger manner than this author achieves. If there is four pages' worth of actual information in the 60-odd pages I read, I'd be surprised. And none of that information was "new." Maybe the author managed to say something helpful in the remainder of his book. But if so, his constant empty palaver kept me from ever reading that far. Reading this book yielded such a poor return on my investment (money, time, and energy) that I couldn't take it anymore, I couldn't finish it. If an author can not say SOMETHING worthwhile in the first 25% of an instructional book, it strains credulity to think the rest will be different.

If you have little or no experience in writing, you may get more out of this book than I did, but you will have to suffer through what others besides myself have complained about: his writing. BUT even if you have never read a single word on the craft of writing, I urge you to look elsewhere: **there are many fine books out there that provide more direct information, are much easier to learn from, and are far less painful to read than this particular book.**

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### Sue Coletta says

This book delves deeper into the six elements of storytelling. I read this after Story Engineering and it really helped to implement all that I learned. It's an amazing craft book. With Story Physics and Story Engineering there is really no need for any other craft books in your writer's toolbox, IMHO.

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### Christopher Owens says

This was one of the most disappointing writing craft books I've ever read. We are told over and over again about the importance of story physics, but never told in significant depth about them. We are also told about the importance of optimizing the six core competencies, but never shown how to optimize anything.

There is a great deal of repetition in this book, but nearly always in generalities and almost never in specific actions writers can take. I have the feeling that the bulk of the book is taken from the authors blog posts, as there is so much repetition and so little logical organization to facilitate the reader in using what information the author provides.

I was so frustrated with this book, I nearly gave it one star, but its analysis of the Hunger Games did prove somewhat useful so I upped it to two stars instead.

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