

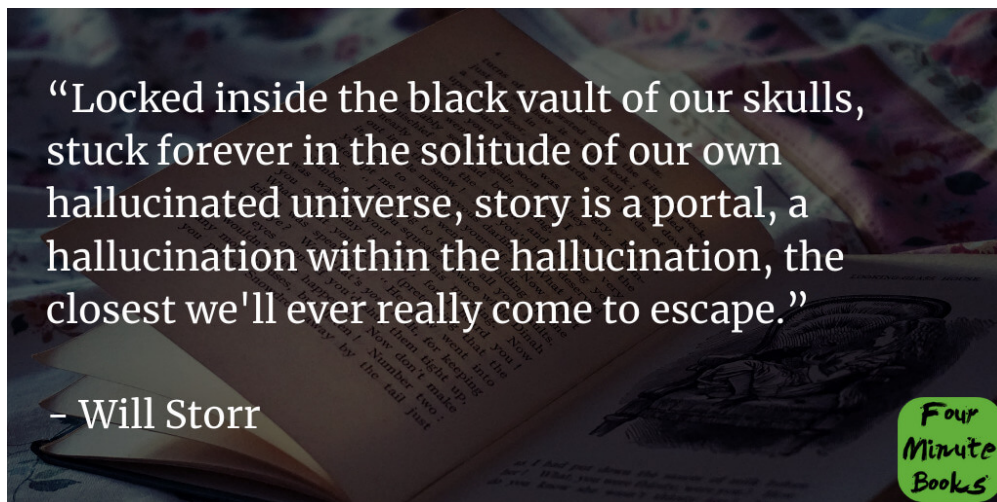
The Science Of Storytelling Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *The Science Of Storytelling* will make you better at persuasion, writing, and speaking by outlining the psychology of telling good tales, including why our brains like them and how to craft the perfect ones.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



You listen to a podcast on your commute. When you arrive at work, you spend your distracted time reading people's life experiences on Reddit. And upon getting home after a long day at the office you relax on the couch while watching Netflix.

Each of these seemingly disconnected events has one thing in common. They all involve the consumption and creation of stories.

We love hearing tales of all kinds, and listening to them is as common as eating and sleeping. And even if you don't realize it, you even craft your own narratives every time you gossip, write a letter, or make an excuse.

But why are stories such an integral part of our daily lives? Where did they come from and why do we love hearing them so much? And what does it take to craft the perfect one?

The answers to these questions and more are what you'll discover in Will Storr's *The Science of Storytelling: Why Stories Make Us Human and How to Tell Them Better*. It will teach you that the ultimate secret to great stories is simply finding out how our brains work.

Here are 3 of the greatest ideas I got from this book:

1. We're psychologically wired to enjoy stories.
2. If you want to write a great story that draws people in, give your characters flaws.
3. You can find a change in status at the heart of every great tale.

Once upon a time, there was a book that could teach us how to tell good stories. Let's get to these lessons and learn about it!

Lesson 1: It's part of human nature to like stories.

Is what you're experiencing right now a simulation? If you've ever wondered this you're not alone. And you'll be interested to discover that there is some truth to the idea.

Your reality is simply a combination of the stories that your brain tells you about what's going on around you. When you mistake a garbage can for a person on your nightly jog, for a second you actually did see someone.

In the stories you tell yourself, your brain always places you as the main character. This can make you adjust your past to make you a hero. You might, for instance, consider stealing okay if it was from someone who is greedy.

Another way your brain works to make sense of narratives is by making everything linear. It looks for cause and effect sequences in place that they don't even exist.

A pair of filmmakers discovered this when showing images of an expressionless person next to different scenes to an audience. The people-watching commented on the skills of each actor, acclaiming their sadness or thoughtfulness that wasn't actually there.

Stories are also a way that we attempt to understand those around us. This is part of our survival instinct that began in the earliest *Homo sapiens*. The better a person was at communicating, whether for trading or cooperation, the better chances they had for survival.

We use stories in the same way today to help us understand others around us and thrive.

Lesson 2: Give your characters flaws if you want to write the kind of story that gets people's attention.

One side effect of your brain always casting you as the hero of your stories is that it makes you morally above everyone else. This is one reason that you're so bad at seeing your own weaknesses. But seeing other's inadequacies can help.

Every time you read a story and enter the mind of a flawed character, you open your mind to exploring faults, including your own.

Most of your weaknesses come from the beliefs you gained as a child. These cultural influences warped your understanding of the world, including yourself.

Consider the difference between an old Western novel and another placed in Victorian England. The Westerner likely values freedom and individuality, while the Englander prizes self-discipline and composure.

As an adult, you cling to these beliefs and try to defend them, blinding you to their disadvantages. When you dive into a story, however, you can see the mistaken beliefs of the characters more clearly.

Additionally, because you enjoy setting and achieving meaningful goals that you can control, you also like to see this in stories. Of the books on the New York Times bestseller list, many included goal-focused words like “want,” “need,” and “do.”

Lesson 3: At the heart of every great tale is a change in status.

Status is a big deal in the animal kingdom. Crickets keep track of how many times they’ve won against their enemies. Chimps watch alphas closely to determine if it’s time for a new leader. And our species is the same.

The prestige we get from other people is important to us. So much that it affects our mental and physical well-being. But we also feel pressure to act in our own best interests, which makes it difficult to maintain our status.

Another way to look at this is that status-seeking is a form of goal-setting. **The plot of our own story only keeps moving forward if we have concrete goals, the end of which is always an improved status.**

We’re also drawn to participate in other people’s progress toward their goals. This is why games with clear and shared objectives, like Fortnite, are so popular.

When it comes to your own goal-setting journey, you tend to view yourself as the underdog. This makes you cheer for those with lower status and hope that those above you get the bad things they’ve got coming to them.

Status changes also spur on the deconstruction of long-held belief systems, which is another major component of the most fascinating stories. Take Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, for example. His status change and the breakdown of the belief that everyone does what’s best for him are the main reasons this story is so interesting.

The Science Of Storytelling Review

I’ve read a lot of books about storytelling recently and *The Science Of Storytelling* has to be one of the best. Usually, I’m trying to learn how to use the power of tales for marketing, but I love that this reminded me of how enjoyable stories are just for the sake of it. I hope to get better at this art not just for the sake of my business, but also to improve my ability to connect with others.

Who would I recommend The Science Of Storytelling summary to?

The 49-year-old journalist that wants to learn how to use persuasion better, the 29-year-old that wants to become a great writer, and anyone that's curious to know why they get sucked into every story in a podcast, book, or movie.