

My Storybook Process (Part 7): creating an ending

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/my-storybook-process-part-7-creating-an-ending/>

This entry is part 7 of 10 in the series [My Storybook Process](#)

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Last week I was facing procrastination mode, so rather than write *around* that and explain what I had already finished up to that point, I chose to divulge how it really was - and got into some detail about how I handle procrastination, or what I call the **pit moment.**

If you've ever hit a wall with a project and found yourself starting to back away from it, this can really [help you push through that phase](#).

This is a first go at illustrating PAGE 5. I made a few changes to emphasize certain emotions. (See below.)

That phase in a project isn't inevitable, but it is usual, so it's [good to be prepared](#) for that when it does hit.

This week, I'll show you some of the newest images I've created for **Bunny and Witch** – because that's where I am with the project. But I'll also be breaking down the story content and how I made certain decisions about the second half of the manuscript. These are the pages that build-up to a happy ending. (See earlier articles in this series to find out what happened with pages 1-19 of the story and why.)

Not sure what a formal manuscript for an illustrated storybook should look like? [Sign up for my](#)

[newsletter](#) and I'll send you my storybook manuscript guide, what the industry professionals expect from a writer and what an illustrator will need from you.

In this version, I decided to try showing heightened emotions through their clothes and dolls. Witch's socks are pulled all the way up and her hair-things are more dominant. Bunny's doll is more visibly unhappy and her bunny ears are vibrating with anger. On a real storybook page, the characters won't be quite so close to each other.

Let's get to it!

Pages 18 and 19 left off at a suspenseful moment, because we don't know what Witch is going to try next. This is why I put the [page turn](#) there, to create some tension.

Remember that a story without any tension at all isn't much of a story – even for little kids. It can't all be rainbows and blue birds all the time. [That's just boring.](#)

Here's what happens on the following pages.

PAGES: 20-21 (Spread)

Please?

This time, Witch really meant the word.
This magic word worked a wonder.
It worked on Witch and made her see
what to do. It hit like thunder.

<**PANEL 1:** Witch is asking now for the robot. Bunny is skeptical, but considering.>

This is an important turning point in the story, because Witch is at last being sincere. The problem for Witch now is that Bunny isn't quite sure what to think about it.

Rising Tension... and then the Pay-off

There's no reason to simply resolve the conflict because one character has delivered the right words. In a story as in life, words are often not enough. Our actions have to mean something too.

PAGES: 22-23 (Spread)

<**PANEL 1 (across spread, on top.):** Witch is gone from the panel. Bunny quietly plays with the three toys, but is also waiting for Witch to return.>

<**PANEL 2 (across spread, along the bottom.):** Witch brings a dinosaur toy and offers to play with Bunny, together.>

Please?

Now the girls can play together.
With the magic word of “please”
both Witch and Bunny found the keys
to be friends forever!

This is the moment when Witch and Bunny win. Next comes the pay-off.

PAGES: 24-25 (Spread, tilted 90°)

Thank you.

<**PANEL 1:** The girls hug.>

I want this to be a wonderful, happy moment. To underscore the importance of what’s happening on these two pages, I’m forcing the reader to turn the entire book to the side, so that the image is a tall spread (rather than the usual wide spread).

This is my second take at the illustration for PAGE 3. (The first one is lost - I must have deleted it.) I wasn’t quite happy with this, so did some more work. (See below.)

The Ending Cometh

Is the story finished? Not quite. This is the pay-off, but it isn’t The End. To really make this a story that feels complete and satisfying, we need a little more.

PAGE: 26 (Left)

<**PANEL 1:** Now the two girls are playing together, both smiling.>

PAGE: 27 (Right)

The End.

<**PANEL 1:** The girls are hand in hand, walking away from us “towards the sunset.” Witch has the robot and Bunny has the dolly.>

The first page here (page 26) shows that the girls can now play together. Ultimately, this is the true happy ending, because they can finally meeting eye to eye. They’re able to “work together” – or in this case, play together, which is what needs to happen between them.

I’ve made some changes to the boy doll, based on tweaks on another page. I’ve enlarged the girl doll’s eyes so that it’s clearer she’s happy. I’ve opened Bunny’s eyes, but I’m still not happy with it. I’ve also changed her nose a little and her mouth. I think I need to change the eyes back to what they were. (See

below.)

The Buddy Team Dynamic

This shows beyond a doubt now that Bunny and Witch are a buddy team. That's the dynamic, one that will need to continue through any other stories I tell about them. Each story will be about the girls reconciling their differences. What will change from book to book is *how* that happens. How it happens will depend on the specific lesson I want to convey in that story.

IMPORTANT NOTE: the point of your storybook might not be to reconcile differences - that is entirely up to you! Because I've chosen a buddy team dynamic for Bunny and Witch, I know going into the story writing process that the books will involve their learning to reconcile. That's what buddy teams do.

On the last page of the story (but not of the book), I like to include the words, "The End," because an illustrated storybook just doesn't feel right without it. Whenever I read books to kids, I always say, "The End," even if the words aren't there. It's a necessity for them. It signals that the story really is at an end.

Just playing around, I wanted to see what Bunny would look like with dark skin and slightly kinky hair. (See below for more.)

With this particular story, I want the characters to walk away from us (the viewers), "towards the sunset," as I've noted in my manuscript. I have this in quotes because I want to do something else that represents a sunset somehow. The exact image I want to create? I don't know. I do know what I want the image to mean.

Will kids get this metaphor? No, probably not. But I'm not creating this just for the kids. I'm also not creating it for any adults who might read it. Ultimately, I'm creating the story for myself.

Is this a story I would want to read? If it's my story, it better be! I want to enjoy it, want to enjoy reading it and looking at the pictures.

How Many Pages???

You might have noticed that I've ended this story at page 27. The storybook should be 32 pages long. I paced the story to end here on purpose; I have other special pages that I feel are necessary to this book.

Because this book is for early education, pages 28 through 31 have after-reading questions and activities. Page 32 is my personal note to the adult reader. What I have in mind here is a focus on the types of questions and activities someone might be able to use in a daycare center, kindergarten or library setting.

I changed Bunny's eyes back, made a slight change to the mouth again. I outlined the dolly's boots in

white so you can see them better. I like the yellow circle, but I'm not sure I'll keep it. That will depend on how things start to look when I'm getting the panels onto their pages. Now that I've seen Bunny as a black girl, I might go with that in the end. I'm not sure - it's all very spontaneous and not part of my original concept or plan. But I do like it... any thoughts or feedback here would be greatly appreciated!

Does this mean the book isn't meant for private, family use? No, of course not. What it does mean though is that Mom or Dad can read this to their child before bed, or they can read it during the daytime and actually have a special chat about the story afterward. This gives parents a great opportunity to understand their child on a level that is generally reserved for teachers.

Next week, I'll detail the decisions I made about the after reading questions and activities, along with the other non-story pages of the book that are actually necessary. Do I include all this information in my manuscript? Sure. Check here next week for that, or just sign up for my newsletter and I'll send it right to you.

Have you put an illustrated storybook on the market yourself? Write below and let me know - or just send me an email. I'm always interested in hearing about what people are doing.

[Keep creating](#), no matter what.

This entry is part of the series

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