



# **YOUR MANUSCRIPT: BUILD IT RIGHT!**

Melanie Rigney

[editor@editorforyou.com](mailto:editor@editorforyou.com)

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# **THE BIG PICTURE**

- **Laying the Foundation**
- **Constructing the Framing**
- **Installing the Roofing**
- **Insulating the Home**
- **Cleaning Up and Landscaping**



# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

- Who's going to live there?
  - You?
  - Your family and friends?
  - Who's the renter?
    - Agents/publishers/websites/magazines?
    - Readers?
  - What's in the covenant?





# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

- What is your theme?
  - Desire for love, order, justice, pleasure or validation
  - Fear of death, the unknown or unknowable
  - Challenge of making choices
  - Sometimes, your theme becomes your title  
(*You Can't Go Home Again; Gone With the Wind*)



# CONSTRUCTING THE FRAMING

- Framing builds from your foundation
  - The four “walls”:
    - Characters—flawed people worth reading about
      - Protagonist—someone to root for
      - Antagonist—the person who stays in the way of the goal
      - Supporting characters: people who help the protagonist or antagonist and serve a useful purpose
    - Setting—where they do what they do





# CONSTRUCTING THE FRAMING

- Plot—what they do to fix the flaw to get what they want, the driver for getting to the theme
  - Subplots—always tie back to the main plotline, always serve as a force for change
- Style—what makes this house distinctive from (and similar to!) the others in the subdivision
  - Word length
  - Story arc
  - Pacing
  - Voice
  - Point of view
  - Genre characteristics



# INSTALLING THE ROOFING

- Roofing is where the four walls meet
- Overarching structure to protect the foundation and walls
- In writing, that structure is transformation
  - Something happens, somebody changes





# INSULATING THE HOME

- Insulating isn't easy, clean, or fun... and neither is critique
  - Read in your genre
  - Find knowledgeable test readers
    - Is the conflict believable?
    - Are the characters compelling?
    - Is the voice consistent?
    - Does each scene move the story forward?
    - Is the theme clear throughout?







# INSULATING THE HOME

- Insulate your ego... and begin revising
  - Do the comments have a commonality?
  - Will the change improve or enrich your work, and perhaps take it in a better direction?
  - Does the comment reflect your own reading in the genre?
  - Is there a reason other than your own bias as the author **not** to make the change?



# **CLEANING UP & LANDSCAPING**

- **Time to get rid of the garbage and make the outside look pretty!**
  - **Content editing**
    - Point of view shifts, redundancies, info dumps
  - **Line editing (copyediting/proofreading)**
    - Grammar, spelling, continuity, punctuation, adverbs/adjectives





# THANKS FOR COMING!

- Questions?

Melanie Rigney

[www.editorforyou.com](http://www.editorforyou.com) or [www.melanierigney.com](http://www.melanierigney.com)

4201 Wilson Blvd. #110328

Arlington, VA 22203

[info@editorforyou.com](mailto:info@editorforyou.com)