



Writing Subtext: How to craft subtext that develops characters, boosts suspense, and reinforces theme (Elizabeth Lyon on writing)

By Ms. Elizabeth C Lyon

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In “Writing Subtext,” editor and author Elizabeth Lyon shows writers how to craft subtext that develops characters, boosts suspense, and reinforces theme. Subtext is one of the most elusive and powerful elements of craft. Literally meaning what lies beneath the text, it is an undercurrent, a hidden agenda, a vibe, a reinforcement of theme, and it exists in what is implied but not explicitly spelled out. It has impact because what you don’t say is often more powerful than what you do say. Examples of subtext are drawn from classic and contemporary novels in multiple genres related to sexual attraction, predator menace, and unaware and naïve characters. Lyon demystifies techniques for developing subtext including the use of character development, nature and human settings, mood and atmosphere, and imagery and symbolism. Lyon uses the same incisive and clear instruction that she is well known for in Manuscript Makeover. For many writers, adding subtext is the missing link to writing powerful prose.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Elizabeth Lyon is the author of Manuscript Makeover, featured in The Writer magazine as "One of 8 Great Writing Books" in 2008, described by reviewer Chuck Leddy as "perhaps the most comprehensive book on revising fiction." Lyon is the author of A Writer's Guide to Fiction, The Sell Your Novel Toolkit, A Writer's Guide to Nonfiction, and her first, widely acclaimed book, Nonfiction Book Proposals Anybody Can Write. A teacher who loves teaching, Lyon has presented workshops on all aspects of writing craft to writing groups, conferences, and organizations. She has worked as an independent book editor since 1988, participating in a long list of Client Successes (www.elizabethlyon.com).

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