



Resolving Series Narratives

The resolution of a story follows the climax and ties all the narrative arcs together. The resolution doesn't just end the story, it gives the reader a sense of how the character's lives will continue beyond the end of the story, both for stand-alone stories and series. When you are writing books in a series, however, the resolution must serve two purposes: It must both wrap up the story in a satisfying way, set up the next story in the series, and make your reader want to read the next book. Authors use various strategies to do this:

- Leave the "boss villain" or ultimate source of evil or conflict in play (i.e., Harry resolves the main problem in each of the Harry Potter novels, but Voldemort remains in play until the last one).
- Use a cliffhanger; resolve everything at the end of the book except the overarching story arc.
- Resolve the conflict in the book, but introduce a new conflict or possibility that "opens a window" to a new story (the next book).
- Resolve the main plot conflict in the book, for example, a specific crime, but leave an ongoing conflict in the main character's personal life ultimately unresolved (i.e., will the detective ever make peace with his troubled past?).

What is your book about?

What genre are you writing in?

What is the relationship between the books in your series?

What is the main conflict in this book?

What are some possible ways that you could resolve this narrative so that it leads readers to the next book?