

How To Make A Mini-Bible

By Larry Huber

A Definition of Terms

- *A bible*
- *A mini-bible*
- *A Writers show bible*

What is a bible?

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The sacred writings of any religion.

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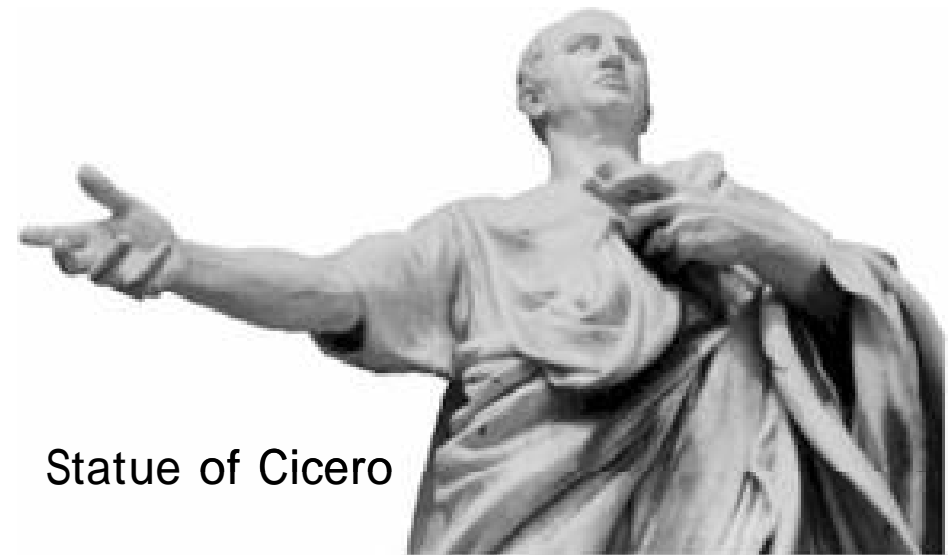


What is a bible?

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A bible is any reference book so important as to be considered the ultimate authority on a subject.

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Statue of Cicero



WHAT DOES “A BIBLE” HAVE TO DO *WITH*
MAKING CARTOONS?

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A theatrical film or an animated television series requires a collaborative effort.

TV

With the same goals in mind, all parties (Management, Creative & Marketing) must be working together for a successful product.

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Communication and agreement is essential to keeping everyone on track for the same goals and the Series bible makes that possible.



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If Management orders fruit, Creative may make bananas while Marketing is selling oranges!

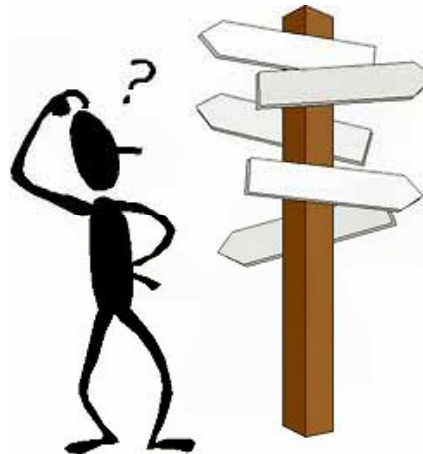
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MANAGEMENT: FRUIT



CREATIVE: BANANAS



MARKETING: ORANGES



The Series bible is the unifying document on a TV series that links together the management team, the creative crew and the marketing department.

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PUTTING THINGS IN PRIORITY: THE CREATIVE PROCESS

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THE ASIAN METHOD PRIORITY ORDE

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1)THE BUSINESS PLAN (OWNERSHIP / SALES)

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2) THE CHARACTER DRAWING (GRAPHIC)

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3) THE STORY (WRITING – BIBLE - SCRIPTS)

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PUTTING THINGS IN PRIORITY: THE CREATIVE PROCESS

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THE AMERICAN METHOD Priority order:

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1) THE STORY (WRITING)

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2) THE CHARACTER DRAWING (GRAPHICS)

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3) THE BUSINESS PLAN (SALES)

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STORY, STORY, STORY...

- In America, there is more respect for a *Story well told* than a Drawing well done. ALL production begins with a STORY concept.
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- The Series bible is an integral part of the storytelling process. The Mini-bible is used to entice interest for funding.

SELLING A SHOW IN HOLLYWOOD

What are the writing needs?

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The Live-Action Feature

The Animated Feature

The Television Series (Live-Action) TV ()

The Television Series (Animated) TV
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The Live-Action Feature Film

- A script of the STORY sells the feature
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- A-List (Popular) Actors lock in the Funding
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- No graphic art work is required
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The Animated Feature Film

- Writing: An Outline or Treatment of the Story sells the feature.

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- Voice Talent (star actors) sometimes enhances the deal.

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- Art work of characters and background styling releases the funding for development.

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The Television Series (Live Action)

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- A Mini-bible sells the Series.

Episode Premises enhance the deal.

An Outline or Treatment of the Pilot Episode releases the funding to move the project into Development.

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The Pilot Episode “Greenlights” the series.

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A-List actors not required for “greenlighting”.

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The Series Bible moves the series into Production.

The Television Series (Animated)

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- A Mini-bible sells the Series.
- Art work of characters, background styling plus Episode Premises enhance the deal.
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- A written Outline or Treatment of the Pilot Episode releases the funding to move the project into Development.
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- The Pilot Episode “Greenlights” the series.
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- Preferred Voice Actors not required for “greenlighting”.
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- The Series Bible moves the series into Production.

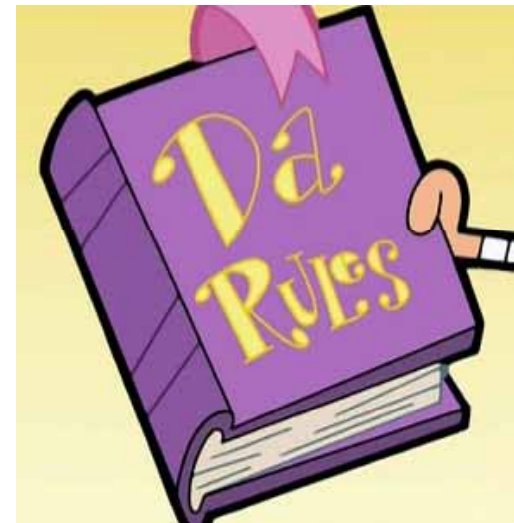
WHAT IS THE SERIES-BIBLE?

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- As regards a series of related episodes for television animation production:

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The Bible is the book of rules.



A Series Bible (cont.)

- A series “bible” should contain answers to all the questions that come from the artists and writers working on the film. It includes the complete vision of the creative team that developed the series.

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- Q: How important is this bible?

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- A: It is an essential requirement of every broadcast Network in America.

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WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR?

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- The Bible is the unifying document on a TV series that links together the management team, the creative crew and the marketing department.
- The Story Editor creates the bible for use with the writers. The bible, together with the pilot episode as a guide, aids the writing team as to the type of stories, the personalities of the characters and the environment details they have to write.

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WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR?

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- The Bible eliminates miscommunication with diverse departments and allows work to be done in advance of production requirements.



WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR?

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- For the Network, it assures that the creative crew will not wander far from the goals set by management. The writers/artists cannot change the personalities of the lead characters, the location in which they work or switch from drama to comedy without violating the agreement reached by all participants.

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WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR? 가?

Also for the Network, it guarantees distribution and marketing deals will be satisfied.

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WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR?

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- For the Art Department, the Bible allows them to proceed with model designs and locales with assurance that their efforts will be met with success rather than frustration and delays. It allows them to be creative within parameters.

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WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR? 가?



WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR? 가?

- For Marketing, the Bible, together with the graphic elements from the Art Department allows the creation of a Style Guide.

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WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR? 가?

- A Style Guide contains accurate information regarding the look, stories and direction of the series that will be used for publicity, publication, ancillary toy and game design prior to the broadcast of the first episodes.

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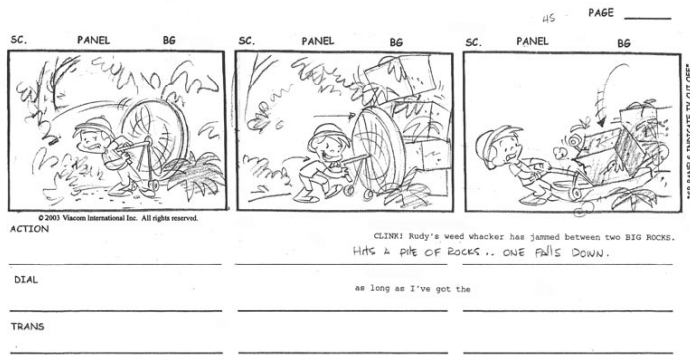
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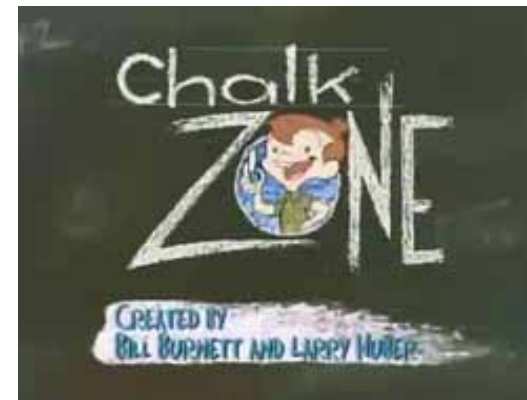


WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR? 가?

- Chalkzone Art



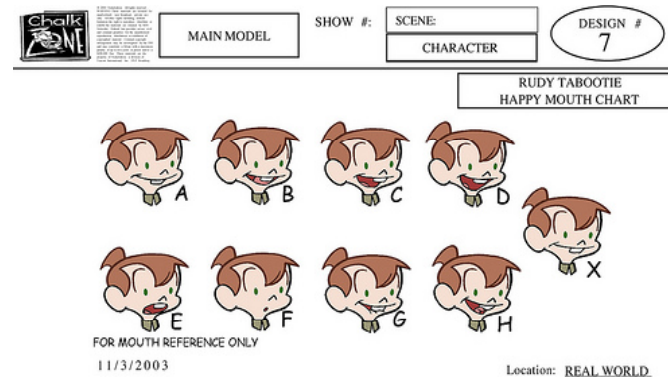
Chalkzone
Storyboard



Chalkzone Title Art



Snap
toy



Rudy: Mouth Charts

WHAT IS THE “BIBLE” USED FOR? 가?

- THE BIBLE IS A “CONTRACT” BETWEEN ALL PARTICIPANTS THAT ENABLES THEM TO MOVE AHEAD WITH CONFIDENCE. IT ALLOWS EFFICIENTCY BOTH IN TIME AND BUDGET. CHANGES TO THE BIBLE AFFECTS ALL THESE ELEMENTS.

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CHANGES TO THE *Unchangeable* BIBLE

- The *Unchangeable* bible, can be changed. The Bible is a “living” document and additions as the result of mistakes, inconsistencies or new information should be incorporated as a matter of course. These are not “changes” but “corrections”.

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CHANGES TO THE *Unchangeable* BIBLE

- Changes should be made at the earliest stages so that it has the least negative effect on budget and schedule.

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- Changes should be made in the form of “Additions” rather than “replacements” of material in the Bible.

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- “Core” elements should remain inviolate with changes made only to auxiliary items.

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CHANGES TO THE *Unchangeable* BIBLE

- Changes that involve the inclusion or substitution of major characters, movement of location or essential rethinking of basic story elements require a NEW Bible and a new arrangement between participants.

- Changes to a series-bible would have the same gravity as amendments to a country's constitution. Some of these changes can be “deal breakers”.

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IS THE BIBLE NECESSARY IN PRODUCING A NON-NETWORK SERIES?

Non-network

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- The Bible is USEFUL in all television series production but is not REQUIRED if the series is being produced with independent financing.
- If the series is under-funded, a bible may be considered an expendable item.

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IS THE BIBLE NECESSARY IN PRODUCING A NON-NETWORK SERIES?

Non-network

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- If the series is simple in execution (limited production value), the stories may be simple also.

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- If the series is for the youngest audience, a complex bible may be unnecessary.

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IS A BIBLE NECESSARY? (Cont.)

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- In Hollywood, a bible is even more important for the youngest audiences because of educational issues in distribution.

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- In Hollywood, a bible is essential for action-adventure shows and soap operas that contain multi-level plotting.

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IS A BIBLE NECESSARY? (Cont.)

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- Everywhere, a bible is useful where more than one source of funding is involved and a document that delineates the design and direction of the show is necessary.

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- Co-productions are a good example of where the bible keeps all partners on the same page.



We've talked about Series bibles. What is a Mini-bible?

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- A SERIES-BIBLE IS USED IN PRODUCTION.
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- A series-bible is necessary when the purchased show moves into development and production. These elements are included in the presentation package.

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- A MINI-BIBLE IS USED IN SALES. A Mini-Bible is used to sell the show to a broadcaster.
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What is a Mini-bible?

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- A Mini-bible is a presentation package
- This material should give the client a clear idea of the “look” of the show (best shown by graphic art) and the type of stories the show intends to tell (best shown by written examples).

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What to Include in a Mini-bible 가?

- The GRAPHICS should include designs of the lead characters, heroes and villains.
- It is wise to show them in action as well as static poses.
- It also should include paintings of the various locations used in the series.
- Important vehicles or props, like space suits, laser weapons etc., should be depicted as well.

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What to Include in a Mini-bible 가?

- The TEXT should include descriptions of the characters, their personality flaws, strengths and basic relationships.
- It should give a basic but informative description of the series, including the types of stories to be told, comedy, action, drama, educational, etc.,
- The back-story (what happened before in the characters' lives) is included here.

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What to Include in a Mini-bible 가?

- The PILOT episode should be represented by a detailed OUTLINE of its plot.
- There should also be several examples of future episodes in PREMISE form.
- A Premise is a brief (no more than a paragraph) episode description
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What to Include in a Mini-bible? 가?

- Ideally, a short (2-4 minute) sales film in DVD form should be attached, showing the dramatic, humorous or action-packed type of animation you plan to create for the series.
- 가 2~4 가 DVD 가 ,



Making a Mini-bible

- A Mini-bible for an animated series is created from two sources of inspiration:
 - 1) A charming or interesting character
 - 2) An original story idea or situation.
- Use the Mini-bible to answer the questions the distributing network will ask

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- 1)
- 2)
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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

(TV)

The inspiration for my show, ChalkZone, came from both sources:

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1) A charming / interesting character:

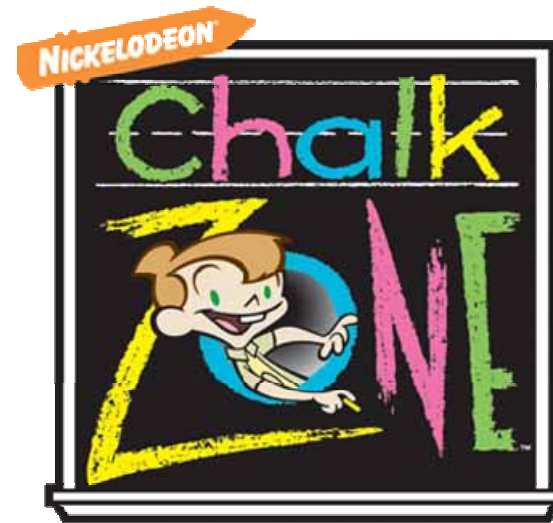
2) An original (engaging) story or situation ()



CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

(TV)

- The Charming Interesting Character is Rudy Tabootie, who loves to draw.
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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

(TV)

Children's drawings, their simplicity and charm,
Inspired the IDEA of a world where these drawings
Came to life. This idea created many questions.



CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- This is the basic idea for the show but it's not enough, even with great pictures of child-like characters and environments, to sell the series. There were many more questions Nickelodeon Network wanted answered.

CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Q: Who are the heroes?
- A: RUDY, an artistic boy who likes to draw more than study in school...
- Q: 가 가?
- A:



CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- ...and SNAP, a character that Rudy liked to draw all the time. Snap is kind of an alter-ego for Rudy. He's an aggressive, super-boy with no powers who knows all the answers. He gets the timid Rudy into lots of trouble in ChalkZone.
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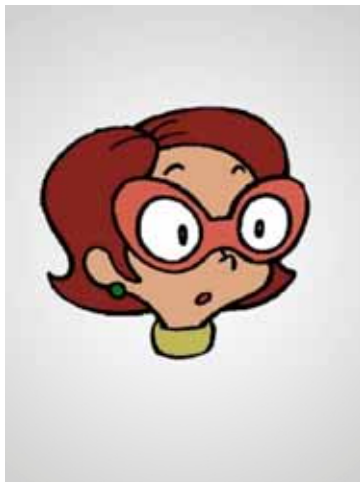
CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Rudy and Snap



CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Q: What? No girls?
- A: Okay! Okay! Rudy has a best friend in school, PENNY, who's this math-science whiz. She's the brains to match Rudy's artistic talents and Snap's courage.
- Q: ? ?
- A: ! 가 가 가 .



CHALKZONE (The TV Series)



CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Q: And the villains?
- A: Mr. WILTER, Rudy's teacher, who HATES cartoons and BULLNERD, the school bully.
- Q: 가 가?
- A: Mr.



CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Q: Is there any cultural diversity to this show?
- A: Penny SANCHEZ! She's an American- Mexican girl. Her mother is the local veterinarian.
- Q: What about Rudy's parents?
- A: His Dad runs a butcher shop/restaurant and his Mom writes a "Happy Home maker" column for the local newspaper.
- Q: 가?
- A: , .
- Q: 가?
- A: .

CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Q: Don't Rudy's parents care that their son runs off into this weird "ChalkZone"?
- A: They would if they knew about it! This is a secret that the kids keep to themselves; otherwise, their parents would never permit them so much liberty.

- Q:
A:

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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- All the answers to the questions asked must be included in a series-bible. They comprise the information that should be included in a Mini-bible.
- This question and answer format should be an activity played by the creator with himself to have the answer to questions that will most likely be asked of the financing and marketing partners. They will certainly be asked by American broadcasters.

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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Remember we talked about the “RULES” of a Series?
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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- The mini-bible must also include the “rules” of this new ChalkZone world.
- Here are some examples:
- Rudy discovers only ONE magic chalk. What does he do when it is used up?

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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- More Chalkzone “Rules”
- The magic chalk comes from a Magic Chalk Mine guarded by a Biclops. Rudy must steal more chalk from this mine to continue to visit ChalkZone.
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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- More Chalkzone “Rules”
- A portal (i.e. a doorway) into ChalkZone can only be drawn on a chalk-prepared surface, like a chalkboard. It can't be used anywhere. A sidewalk that has previously been used as a chalk drawing surface CAN become a way into ChalkZone as well!
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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- More Chalkzone “Rules”
- Once in ChalkZone, Rudy can “draw” with the chalk in the air. He can make a door in a wall or a ladder for an escape. It allows his artistic talents to become a real asset in his adventures.
- Rudy is three dimensional in ChalkZone and can be injured but flat chalk drawings always recover. Good for Snap but bad for Rudy.

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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- More Chalkzone “Rules”
- Although these “rules” may seem to restrict creativity, they often provide a solid base for new stories:
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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- Stories that evolved from “the rules.”
- In one episode an artist in China drew a giant dragon in Tiananmen Square. The rain washed it away before the artist finished the drawing. The unfinished dragon washed into ChalkZone as Chalk Rain (the name of the episode). Rudy had to bring the dragon’s creator into ChalkZone so the dragon could be finished. This episode was the result of the rules about chalk drawing surfaces.

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CHALKZONE (The TV Series)

- In another episode, Snap is accidentally trapped in Rudy's real world. The local bully can't hurt Snap but a sudden rainstorm washes Snap's hand away!

- Rudy draws a monster-version of the local bully, Bullnerd on the chalkboard at school. His teacher erases it into ChalkZone. The next time Rudy enters ChalkZone, the Bully-Nerd Monster is waiting there for revenge! Be careful what you draw, Rudy!

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What to Include in a Mini-bible 가?

- pages including more details of the story. Premises: short paragraph, briefly describing the episode
- Springboard: 1-2
- ; ,
- ; 1~2



Writing Stages: Definitions

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- Premises: short paragraph, briefly describing the episode
- Springboard: 1-2 pages including more details of the story
- Outline (or treatment): All the major story points of the episode, characters and settings.
- Script: The full script – all story points, settings, time of day, dialogue
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- ; 1~2
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- An Artistic mind is not restricted by “Rules” but finds a way to be creative within them. An artist is restricted by the limits of the size of his canvas but designs his masterpiece to fit. So a good writer manages to create limitless stories within the limits of a Story Bible.
- Go and do likewise.
- The end
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Thank You!