

Writing Tool:

# Sanderson's Character Sliders (Part 2)



# Sanderson's Character Sliders

## Character Introductions & Character Arcs



Credit to  
**Brandon Sanderson**

Sources:



Writing Excuses  
Podcast



BYU Creative  
Writing Lectures



# Sanderson's Character Sliders



**LIKABILITY**

Relatable, sympathetic, or "nice"

Low



High



**COMPETENCE**

Capable or skilled

Low



High



**PROACTIVITY**

Progresses the plot

Low



High



"Engaging" characters are typically high on one or more sliders

# Spoiler Warnings

**Guardians of the Galaxy 2**

**Frozen**

**Megamind**

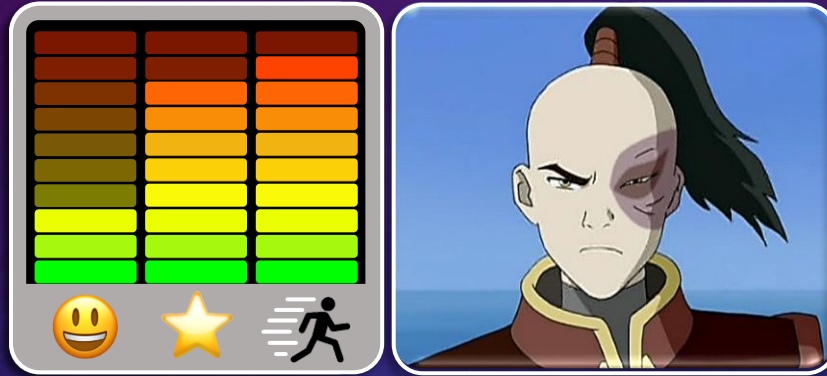
**Game of Thrones**

**Avatar: The Last Airbender**

# Sliders for Character Intros & Arcs

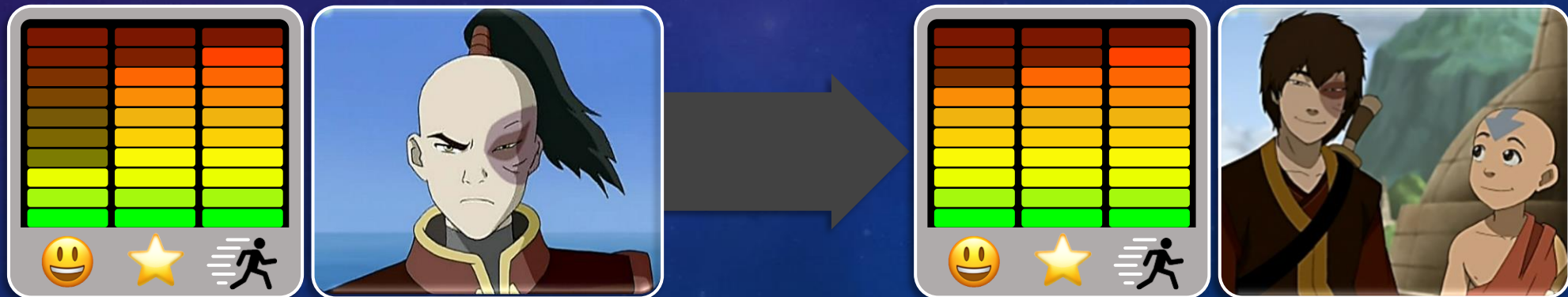
Character Intro

"First Impression" slider configuration



Character Arc

Before & after sets of sliders

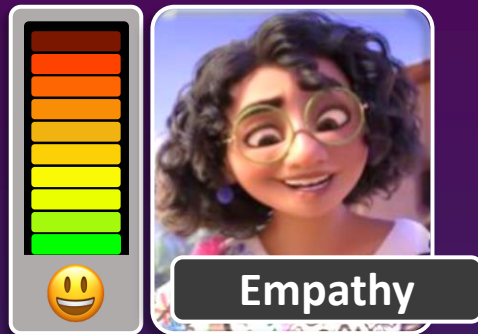


## Character Intro

## "First Impression" slider configuration



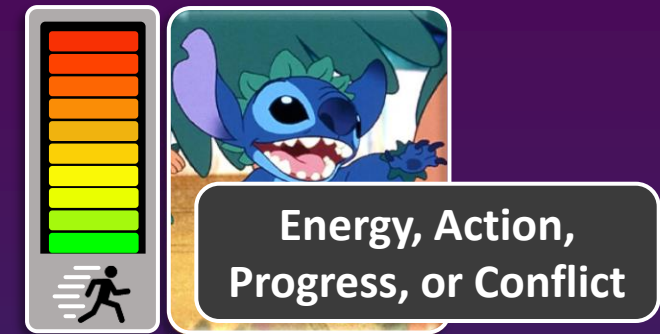
- Hook the audience with an engaging set of character sliders



High Likability



High Competence



High Proactivity



### First Impressions Form Quickly!

- Lead with what makes the character engaging
- Or else use foreshadowing or smaller hooks to keep audience attention



Audience bored?  
Not connecting?

Introduction  
is not working



# Troubleshooting Character Introductions

## Character Slider Worksheet

😊 Likeable  
★ Competent  
🏃 Proactive

Intention?



Name: *JAR JAR BINKS*

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:



Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:



Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:



Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

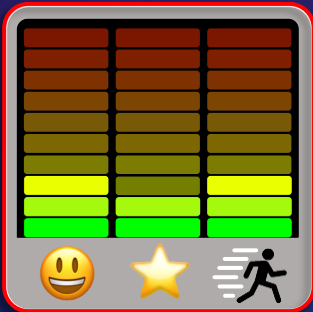
Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

Unengaging



Annoying

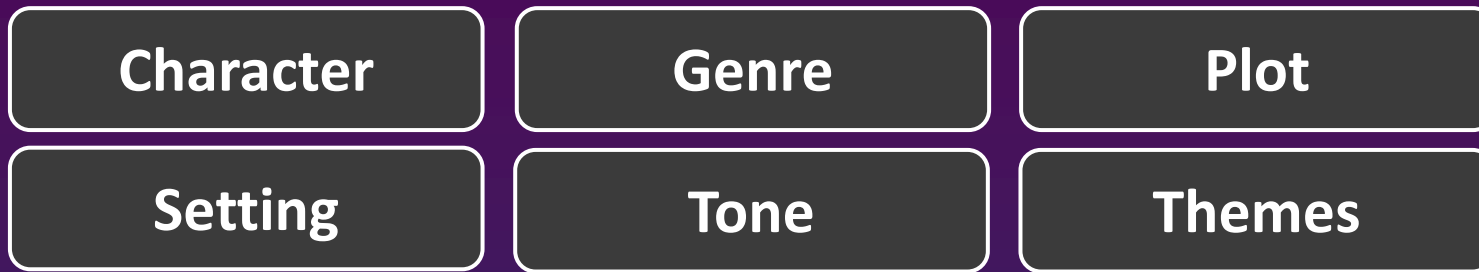


## Character Intro

## "First Impression" slider configuration



- Set audience expectations for the character and the story



**Expectations & Anticipation**  
can increase audience  
enjoyment.

If a writer understands the audience expectation, they can  
**Fulfil**, **Twist**, or **Subvert** them in a satisfying way

- Slider configurations can set audience expectations





# Sanderson's Character Sliders

😊 Likeable  
★ Competent  
🏃 Proactive



Examples based on characters' states at the beginning of their stories

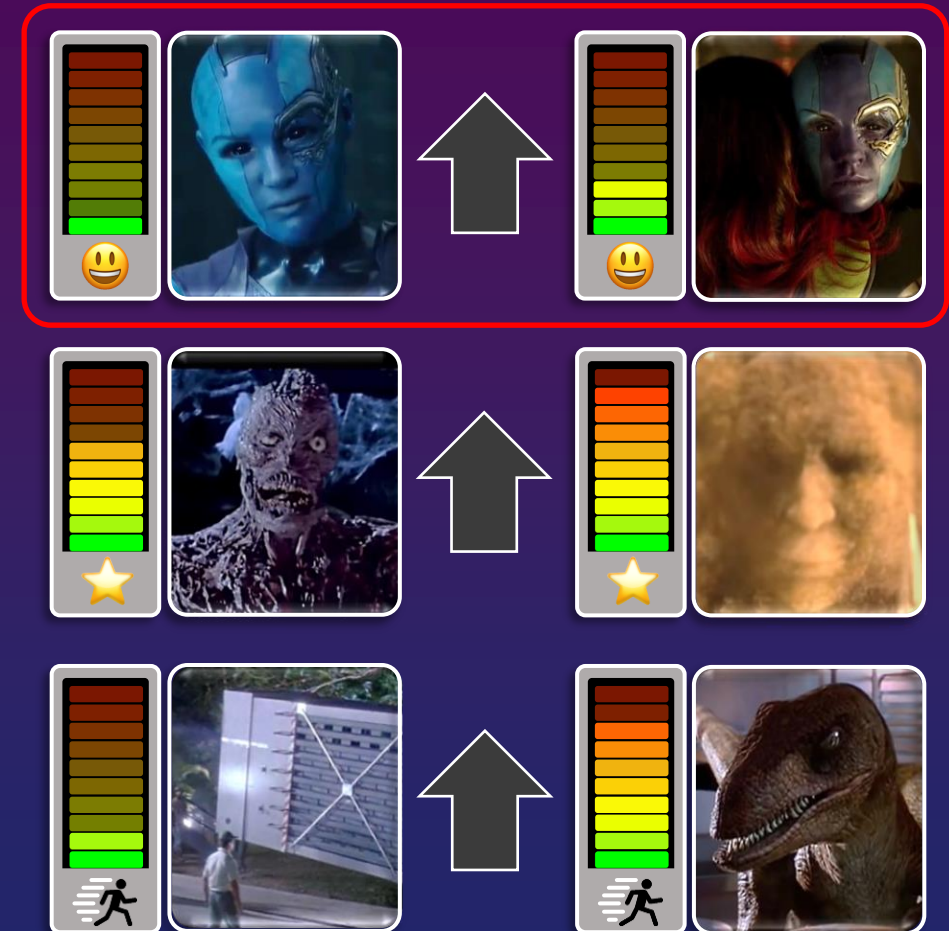


# Character Arc

## Before & after sets of sliders



- Character arcs with an **increasing** slider

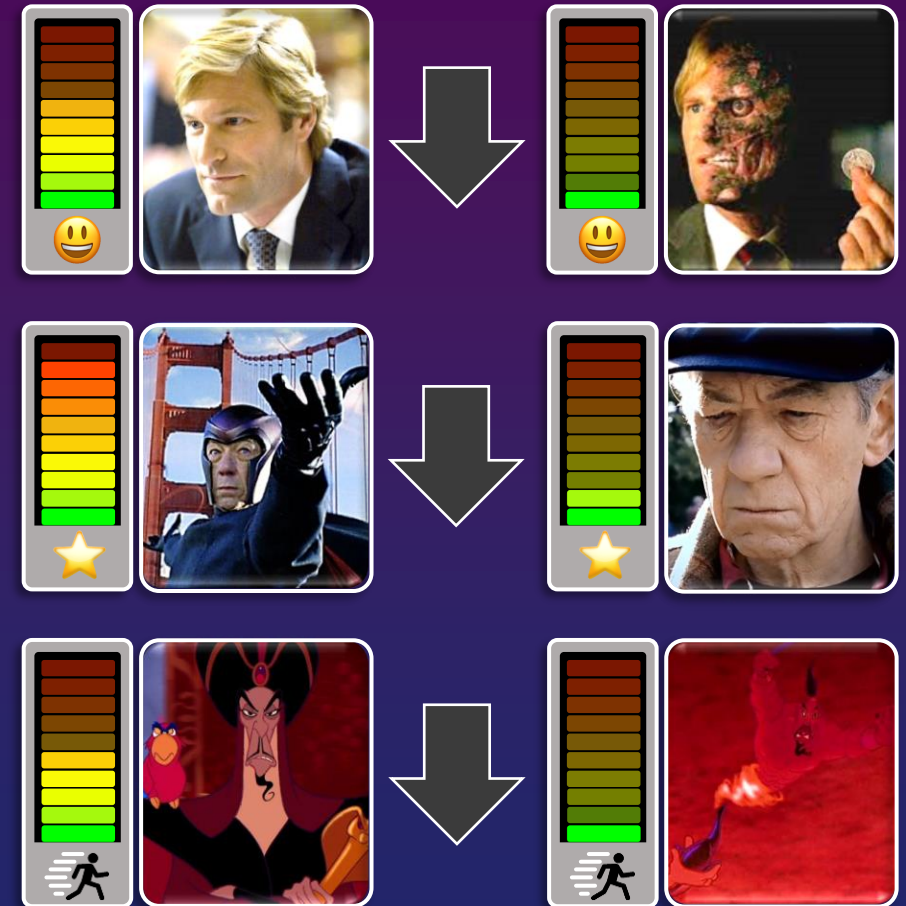


# Character Arc

## Before & after sets of sliders

😊 Likeable  
★ Competent  
🚶 Proactive

- Character arcs with a **decreasing** slider



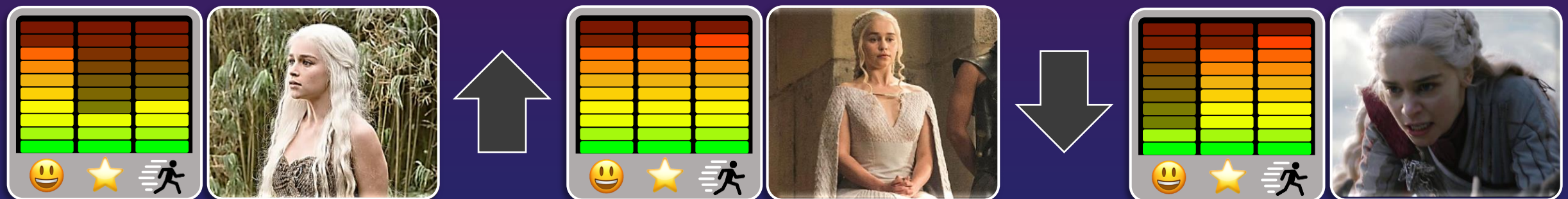


# Character Arc

## Before & after sets of sliders



- Character arcs with **complex** slider movement



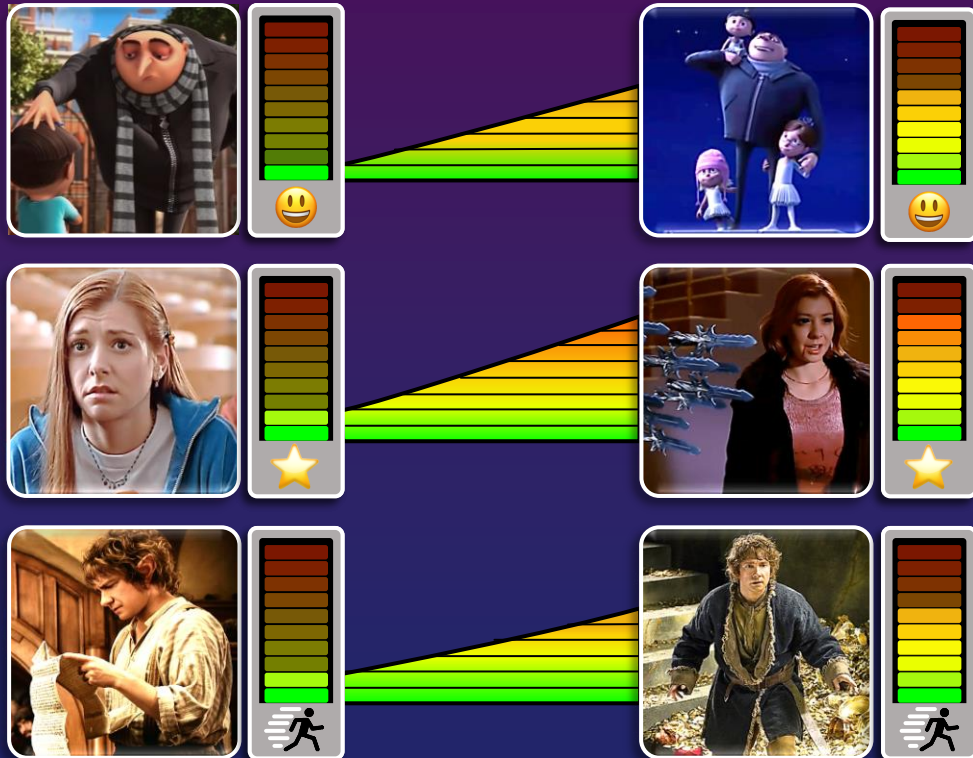
# Character Arc

Before & after sets of sliders

😊 Likeable  
★ Competent  
🚶 Proactive

- Character slider changes can be **Incremental** or **Sudden**

Incremental



Sudden



# Starting Sliders for Arcs can differ from Intro

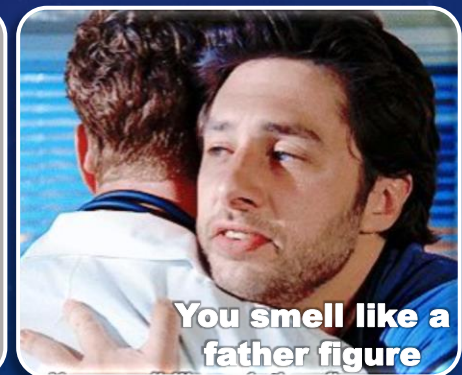
## Character Intro

Expert doctor, hostile to J.D., great at insults



## Character Arc

Learning how to be a mentor and father





# Character Slider Worksheet

- 😊 Likeable
- ★ Competent
- 🚶 Proactive

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

[illegible]

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

Likeab

Comp

Proactivity:

Proactivity:

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

Proactivity:

Name:

Likeable Traits:

Competences:

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Name:

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