

Money Heist Takeaways



Takeaway #1

If characters are 'grouped' together, consider creating similarities in how they're introduced

The professor gets his own introduction, but each team member is via voiceover and mugshot. The victims are introduced extremely differently - through action and dialogue with no comments from Tokyo.

Takeaway #2

If you're giving exposition, infuse it with the narrator's opinions, emotions, and unique voice.

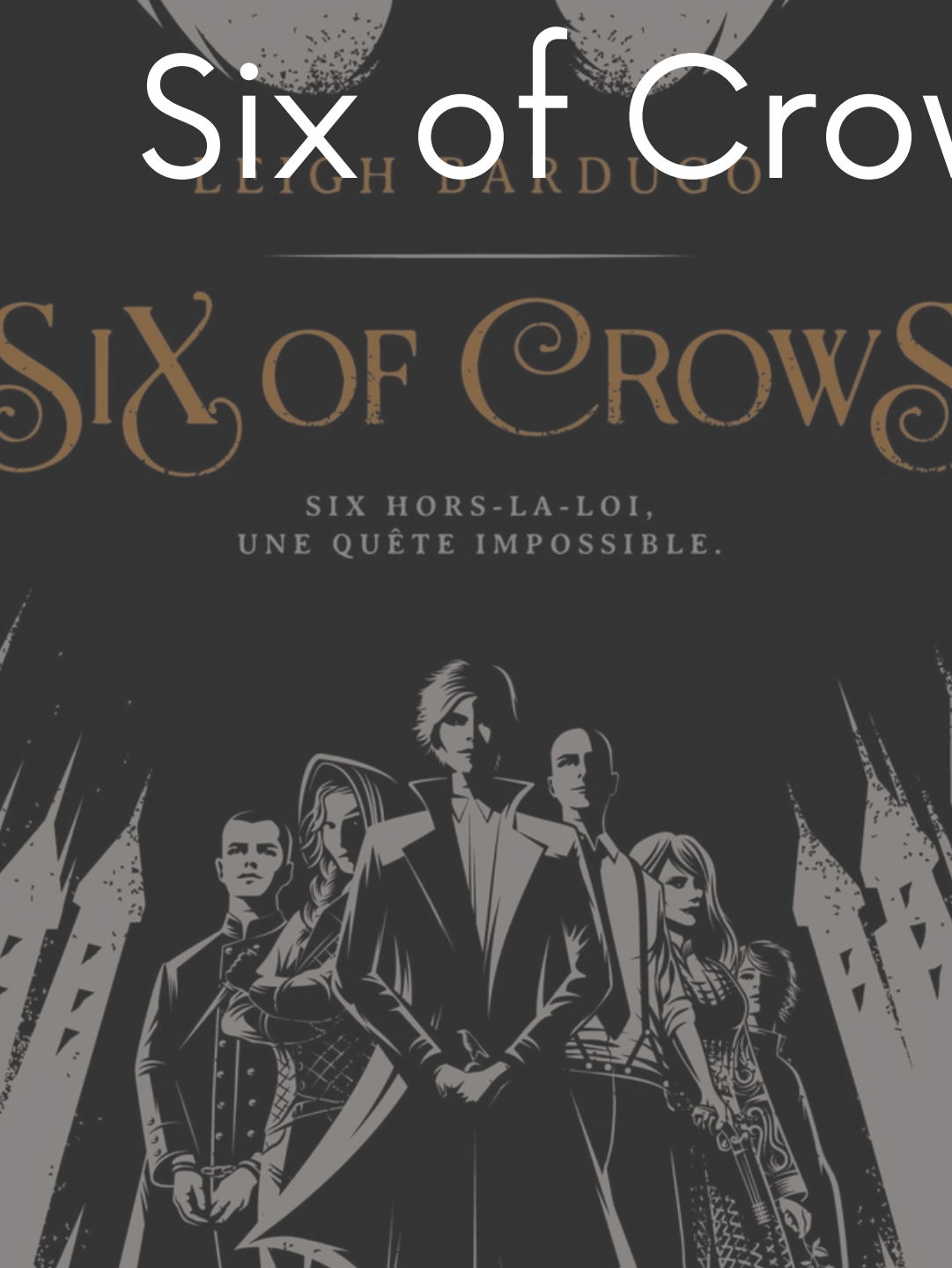
Tokyo's introductions work because she has strong, spicy opinions of these people - shaped by her interactions with them. (i.e. "He's the one staring at my ass")

Takeaway #3

Stating a compelling objective at the start grips audiences. They're more likely to forgive sins (or sit through long character intros) if they know where this is headed.

By the end of the first scene, we know their goal is to pull off the biggest heist in history. We also understand exactly why Tokyo is joining. And through that, we get a strong sense of her character (as well as investment in the story).

Six of Crows Takeaways



Takeaway #1

Characters can be introduced effectively before they're ever in a scene via other characters thinking or talking about them.

Inej's description of Kaz establishes the legend of him. The subsequent scene has us evaluating how accurate that legend is through his dialogue and action.

Takeaway #2

Introduce readers to the prototypical version of your characters. If they're a funny or upbeat character, their introduction should not occur on the one day a year they're grumpy and humourless.

Inej is introduced weilding her knives, slinking around rooftops, helping Kaz.

Kaz is introduced pulling one over on the audience and the rival gang (as he will for the rest of the series).

Takeaway #2*

But what about Mathias? He's introduced as trying to strangle Nina - is that really "prototypical?"

Mathias is a shape-shifter for a good chunk of the duology.

Mathias was set-up before his on-page introduction as someone Nina wants to rescue. Although he is literally trying to kill her, we're already clued in that this character and his relationships are complex.

Takeaway #3

Consider making the introduction a miniature of the entire story.

In this intro:

- Kaz has a hidden plan
- We think he's losing when everything is actually going well
- Inej and Jesper anticipate their roles
- Kaz "wins" through his intelligence and strategy
- Surprising but satisfying twist (Big Bollinger)

Downton Abbey Takeaways



Takeaway #1

Order matters. Audiences will make assumptions on how important a character is based on when (and how) they're introduced.

Audiences are now "conditioned" to know the first character they see isn't necessarily the main character, but order still implies importance. All influential characters should generally be introduced (or at least mentioned) no later than the start of Act 2 ("B characters").

Takeaway #2

Use setting, dialogue, and action to communicate a character's "status" in the world (and subsequently more information about the world).

No one needs to tell us Robert has more power than Daisy. No one questions for one second whether a character is a servant or part of the family - the distinctions are made obvious by the dialogue and the actions the characters take in their daily lives.

Takeaway #3

When introducing a lot of characters, consider leaning on recognizable archetypes or tropes.

Daisy tends the fires, kneeling in front of them - an image reminiscent of (among other things) Cinderella and scullery.

Mary looks out her window at the messenger below, reminiscent of a princess in a tower.

The Mother Daughter Book Club Club Takeaways



Takeaway

Openings don't need to be thrilling and action-packed to be compelling.

Heather VF really focuses on creating empathy for the characters, on hinting that there are layers and complex backstories, on making them relatable to the target audience, and on giving a strong intro to each character's main problem.