

# ThrillerChat Transcript for April 19, 2010

All times are Pacific Time

- [12:52 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Just under ten minutes until [#thrillerchat](#)
- [12:53 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Tonight we're discussing endings using [@egtalbot](#)'s great post as a starting point <http://bit.ly/c3ezI6> [#thrillerchat](#)
- [12:57 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Hey there, have done my [#thrillerchat](#) homework :) That was sneaky, by the way!
- [12:58 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Ready to talk endings on [#thrillerchat](#)? It starts in just a few minutes if so. [#writechat](#) [#amwriting](#)
- [12:59 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [@AllInky](#) Hey there. Glad to see you. Sneaky? How so? [#thrillerchat](#)
- [12:59 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: If I go dopey and stupid during [#thrillerchat](#), it's likely because I'm listening in on [#WGCawards](#) with my other eyeball.
- [1:00 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: It's that time! Welcome to another edition of [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:01 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: [@Selorian](#) Getting me to read homework for [#thrillerchat](#) while in mid [#ScriptFrenzy](#) ? Definitely underhanded stuff there. ;)
- [1:01 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [@AllInky](#) I have kids getting ready for bed, so I may go dopey and stupid at times as well. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:02 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: [@AllInky](#) Ah, yes. Anything I can do to make it a little harder. ;-)  
[#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:02 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: [@Selorian](#) hello there [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:05 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Glad to have you, [@egtalbot](#). Thanks for writing the article that inspired tonight's chat. <http://bit.ly/c3ezI6> [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:05 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I know it was focused on short stories, but I think it can apply to novels as well. [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:06 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: [@Selorian](#) my pleasure. Endings sometimes come easily and other times are like wrestling a gator [#thrillerchat](#)
- [1:07 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: [#thrillerchat](#) Howdy. Saw the hashtag and, being a thriller guy, thought I'd stop by.
- [1:07](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Endings are tricky, no doubt. Even when they come easy, they still

[am](#) need great care taken with them. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:08 am](#) [Danisidhe](#): heeheeheeheeheehee My order from Passion4Pens has arrived already! I love packages!!! Going to be a little late for [#thrillerchat](#) heehee

[1:08 am](#) [Selorian](#): @[John Marlow](#) Glad you did! Welcome. We're discussing endings tonight. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:09 am](#) [egtalbot](#): @[John Marlow](#) welcome, just talking about how novels and shorts share some of the same ending challenges [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:10 am](#) [John Marlow](#): @[Selorian](#) Endings, hmmm? No matter how well you've done, there's always time to screw up the ending and drive off your readers [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:10 am](#) [John Marlow](#): Or viewers. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:11 am](#) [egtalbot](#): @[John Marlow](#) the hardest thing IMO is knowing you've got it right - you almost have to get feedback b4 you're sure [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:12 am](#) [Selorian](#): A bad ending is worse than a bad beginning. The story can be salvaged with a bad beginning. No such luxury with the ending. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:12 am](#) [John Marlow](#): These days, you want an ending that seems definitive, yet leaves sequels open. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:12 am](#) [AllInky](#): Hope you won't exclude screenwriters in [#thrillerchat](#), @[Selorian](#) :) This and the last-10-pp homework from [#scriptchat](#) , I'll be done!

[1:13 am](#) [John Marlow](#): Dunno 'bout you, but I pretty much know the ending when I begin, or soon after. Not always, but most of the time. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:14 am](#) [John Marlow](#): @[AllInky](#) Hope not; I'm screenwriter and novelist. [#thrillerchat](#) [#scriptchat](#)

[1:14 am](#) [egtalbot](#): in a novel or screenplay, yeah, ideally you want a sequel. in a short, that may not be as important [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:14 am](#) [AllInky](#): Of the endings @[egtalbot](#) proposed, I think ambiguous is the hardest to bring off, dramatically or commercially. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:14 am](#) [John Marlow](#): @[Selorian](#) Absollutely; best of course to have a good beginning, too! [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:15 am](#) [Selorian](#): @[AllInky](#) Of course I won't. I know next of nothing about them, so I may not talk a lot about them, but scripts are welcome. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:15](#) [egtalbot](#): I usually know the ending in a general sense when I start something,

am but often the details are the critical part [#thrillerchat](#)

1:16 am [John Marlow](#): You can draw readers in, pull them along--and still lose, disappoint, or piss them off at the end. That's fatal. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:17 am [John Marlow](#): [@egtalbot](#) Sometimes your characters surprise you. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:17 am [AllInky](#): [#thrillerchat](#) I think, really, I start with the ending, and fill in the beginning.

1:18 am [John Marlow](#): In retrospect, the ending should seem inevitable?but the reader shouldn't see it coming. That's the trick. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:18 am [egtalbot](#): [@John Marlow](#) indeed, characters sometimes do the most unexpected things ;) [#thrillerchat](#)

1:19 am [Selorian](#): I usually have a faint idea of the ending, but it usually changes at least a little by the time I get to it. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:20 am [Selorian](#): RT [@egtalbot](#): [@John Marlow](#) indeed, characters sometimes do the most unexpected things ;) < Exactly. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:20 am [John Marlow](#): For me, a good ending seems inevitable, emotionally fulfills the audience in some way. It seems...right, for that tale. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:20 am [egtalbot](#): [@John Marlow](#) sometimes in thrillers that lean towards horror or drama, ending doesn't have to be a surprise [#thrillerchat](#)

1:20 am [AllInky](#): [#thrillerchat](#) The recent trend seems to be to twist endings, but, I'm not sure it hasn't been twisted to death in some cases...

1:22 am [John Marlow](#): The better your story is, the more you damage yourself with a bad ending. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:22 am [egtalbot](#): I didn't mention this in my blog post, but there also can be a distinction between the ending and the climactic scene [#thrillerchat](#)

1:23 am [Selorian](#): The ending can definitely be influenced by the particular genre. I personally like endings that surprise me. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:24 am [John Marlow](#): [@egtalbot](#) Sure, there's climax and denouement. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:25 am [Selorian](#): Join me for a [#thrillerchat](#) TweetChat at: <http://tweetchat.com/room/thrillerchat> [#thrillerchat](#)

1:25 am [John Marlow](#): [@Selorian](#) A bad story is one where what you think is going to happen next, happens next. [#thrillerchat](#)

1:25 am [blanghinrichs](#): [@John Marlow](#) But what can you do about it except writer better endings (or worse beginnings)? [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:25 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[John\\_Marlow](#) yes, I tend to like a climactic scene, the a denouement that hints at the sequel #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:27 am](#) **[John\\_Marlow](#)**: @[blanghinrichs](#) Write outside the box or--like Se7en--inside the box, but different. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:27 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) I think leaving less for the resolution, wrapping up the subplots before the big A line finale, helps tighten the ending?

[1:28 am](#) **[John\\_Marlow](#)**: @[egtalbot](#) These days they do more than hint. Look at Batman Begins, Iron Man, Sherlock Holmes sequel setups. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:28 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[blanghinrichs](#) I think that is where the strength of beta readers comes in. They offer valuable insight into what needs fixed. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:28 am](#) **[John\\_Marlow](#)**: @[AllInky](#) I think it depends on the story. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:29 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[John\\_Marlow](#) true about sequels. In novels, I prefer more of a hint than a "this is what you get in the next book" #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:30 am](#) **[John\\_Marlow](#)**: @[Selorian](#) That's a tricky issue, if the readers aren't pros, or at least more accomplished in some way than the writer. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:31 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[egtalbot](#) I agree. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:32 am](#) **[John\\_Marlow](#)**: ?Thank god those writers savaged it when they read it. If they'd all said nice things, I'd be dead.? ?William Goldman #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:34 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[John\\_Marlow](#) True. But readers don't need the skills of a writer to point out the problems. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:34 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) I've written alternate endings from time to time, to see if there's a better fit. The original idea generally works best.

[1:36 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Best advice I've received: If the reader doesn't "get it," I didn't write it properly. :) Usually true. :) #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:36 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: How many times have the ending you envisioned not been the ending that worked, no matter how bad you wanted it to? #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:36 am](#) **[John\\_Marlow](#)**: @[Selorian](#) Nonpro readers can only tell you what they like and dislike. It's personal taste, rather than commercial assessment. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:38 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[AllInky](#) that's good advice, though usually I wait to hear something from multiple readers b4 changing #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:38 am](#) **AllInky:** @[Selorian](#) Not often, but, again, probably because the ending comes first for me, the story - by whatever route - is the goal. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:38 am](#) **Selorian:** @[John Marlow](#) I'll agree with that, but the readers you're writing for aren't all pro readers. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:38 am](#) **John Marlow:** @[Selorian](#) I've changed endings a few times, when original intention just didn't fit where the story had gone. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:39 am](#) **AllInky:** #[thrillerchat](#) Really, though, pros are always the first genuine audience. Whether agent, script reader, or publisher, they're pros.

[1:40 am](#) **egtalbot:** @[John Marlow](#) given success rate 4 pubs picking profitable books, I don't think ANYONE can make good comm. assessments for novels #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:40 am](#) **John Marlow:** @[Selorian](#) Well, thing is, you need to know both how intrinsically good it is AND whether it's got a chance in the market. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:41 am](#) **John Marlow:** @[Selorian](#) And if it hasn't got a chance in the market, you're become a hobbyist. (Just ask the IRS.) #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:41 am](#) **TonyNoland:** RT @[John Marlow](#): @[Selorian](#) you need to know both how intrinsically good it is AND whether its got a chance in the market. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:42 am](#) **John Marlow:** @[AllInky](#) But those people should not be your first audience. You get one shot with them--and it had better be good by then. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:43 am](#) **TonyNoland:** @[John Marlow](#) Or that you need to find a diff market? Perhaps including a re-write to hit that market more squarely? #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:44 am](#) **John Marlow:** @[TonyNoland](#) Have to know your market before going out with book / script. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:45 am](#) **Selorian:** @[John Marlow](#) No argument there. Knowing market viability is essential. But meaningful feedback can be gotten from any reader. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:45 am](#) **AllInky:** @[John Marlow](#) By "genuine," I meant the deamakers. Opinions before that? Advice. They are the gate to a public audience. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:46 am](#) **John Marlow:** @[Selorian](#) Well sure--but your chances of getting useful feedback rise exponentially with the reader's industry experience. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:47 am](#) **Danisdhe:** Amen! RT @[AllInky](#): Best advice I've received: If the reader doesn't "get it," I didn't write it properly. :) Usually true. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:47 am](#) **AllInky:** #[thrillerchat](#) If your product doesn't fit with an agent, publisher,

[am](#) producer... ideal, it's dead. Short of producing it yourself or epub.

[1:49 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: @[Danisidhe](#) Largely true, if reader is your market. There are people who don't "get" Avatar. Not many, of course! #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:49 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) The ending seems to be what readers/viewers remember. It has to be good. Ambiguous is a tough sell.

[1:50 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Ambiguous is the province of the small indie. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:50 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I'll consider market appeal, but I also consider readers (not just pros), because if I write for them. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:51 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: Craft a definitive ending, even if u plan a sequel; don't leave readers hanging, major issues unresolved. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:51 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Once it is with agents and editors, I'll make necessary changes they want. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:51 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) Worst reader comment ever? "You had me right until the ending!" Ow. ow. ow.

[1:51 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[John Marlow](#) for thrillers, yes, you don't see ambiguous from the majors #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:52 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Amen! #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:52 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: @[Selorian](#) Absollutely; some pros are knowledgeable only about their own niche. Could be useful--or not. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:52 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) I tend to equate indie scripts with prose's "literary." Rewarding to a smaller audience. Most people like a "real" ending.

[1:53 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: @[Selorian](#) Uhm, question--does that mean you know changes are needed, but won;t make them beforehand? Not clear on that. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:54 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) In thrillers, I think twists are appreciated - if they are well laid. Like mystery, it's a game we play with the audience.

[1:54 am](#) **[Danisidhe](#)**: @[John Marlow](#) @[AllInky](#) Also cultural. Japanese stories tend to have endings that feel ambiguous or unfinished to Westerners. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:55 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[John Marlow](#) No, I'd make them beforehand. I just mean I concentrate for readers first, then adjust according to market. #[thrillerchat](#)

[1:56](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Of course, though, my early readers are people that read a lot in the

am genre I write. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:56 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: [#thrillerchat](#) Did The Bone Collector ending work better in film or book? I liked the book.

[1:56 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: If they like it, then that adds to my perception of market viability. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:57 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: Asian joke: What is an American? Why do you want to know? We want everything explained, put in neat little boxes. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:57 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[AllInky](#) agree about twists - when done well, are a great game. of course when done poorly. . . [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:58 am](#) **[Danisidhe](#)**: @[John Marlow](#) well, yes. I am also a fan of the "It's not FOR you." response LOL [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:58 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: Seeking feedback from those in your genre is good?but don't limit yourself to that, or you may never transcend the genre. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:58 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: @[Selorian](#) gotta run, thanks for the [#thrillerchat](#) !

[1:59 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: A bad twist ending is a disaster. They have to fit, they can't be done just for the sake of being done. [#thrillerchat](#)

[1:59 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: [#thrillerchat](#) They used to change the ending of Christie books for film, to give readers a new surprise. Never worked - no basis laid.

[2:00 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[egtalbot](#) Thanks for being here. Have a great night. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:01 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[John Marlow](#) I agree with that as well. They can help you make your book fresh in its genre. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:01 am](#) **[egtalbot](#)**: hope I didn't lose too many followers with all my [#thrillerchat](#) tweets. Goodnight all

[2:02 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: Anyone else see A Perfect Murder? Had me... right to the end, when the twists stopped and the "straight" ending seemed dumb. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:02 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: Not exactly thrillers--but Sopranos series ending angered audience. And at that point, Chase didn't need them to come back. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:03 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[egtalbot](#) Hahaha. I hope not. If so, send them my way. I'll explain why they need to re-follow. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:03 am](#) **[John Marlow](#)**: 6 Feet Under series ending [spoiler!] killed everyone in a few minutes, but was beautifully done and...right, for that series. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:04 am](#) [AllInky](#): @[John\\_Marlow](#) Still, I would have thought, after nailing it for so long, the Sporano ending should have been strong, you know? #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:05 am](#) [John\\_Marlow](#): @[AllInky](#) Loved A Perfect Murder, loved the ending. Sorry. (Really I'm not.) #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:06 am](#) [AllInky](#): #[thrillerchat](#) I wonder how well the sequel idea really plays in thrillers. Sort of a Yoda then, do, do not, but try? Save the World! Or not.

[2:07 am](#) [AllInky](#): #[thrillerchat](#) But, if she had a relationship with cops, knew her husband capable of anything, why confront him at all? Dumb woman?

[2:07 am](#) [Selorian](#): The Sopranos ending was awful. Never watched 6 Feet Under or saw A Perfect Murder. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:08 am](#) [John\\_Marlow](#): @[AllInky](#) Works for Bourne; they're talking No. 4 now. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:08 am](#) [AllInky](#): #[thrillerchat](#) For me, that ending was the equivalent of going into the scary basement? Why? Who would?

[2:08 am](#) [Danisidhe](#): @[AllInky](#) Or the classic "There can be only one!" or a couple of us, no look, even more! And from Space! lol #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:09 am](#) [John\\_Marlow](#): @[Selorian](#) In Perfect Murder, guy is so behind the eight ball, so screwed--and so smart, he allllmost pulls it out. Fascinating #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:10 am](#) [AllInky](#): #[thrillerchat](#) Trek, from "boldly go!" to "Help, I wanna go home!"

[2:10 am](#) [John\\_Marlow](#): Ah, it is about that time. Nice meeting everyone--and thanks Selorian for the chat! #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:10 am](#) [Selorian](#): @[John\\_Marlow](#) I'll have to watch it. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:10 am](#) [MetaPhoenix](#): I don't see a problem including crime-related series/films in #[thrillerchat](#). Better than making an uber-long hashtag.

[2:11 am](#) [AllInky](#): #[thrillerchat](#) The guy side of Perfect Murder is brilliant, but, the ending only works if you presume the female side was stupid.

[2:12 am](#) [Selorian](#): @[John\\_Marlow](#) My pleasure. Nice meeting you and hope we see you again! #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:13 am](#) [Selorian](#): @[MetaPhoenix](#) Any genre is welcome in #[thrillerchat](#). Any genre can have elements of a thriller. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:13 am](#) **[Danisidhe](#)**: @[John\\_Marlow](#) @[AllInky](#) I think there's a distinction between a stand alone with a sequel and a series like Bourne #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:14 am](#) **[John\\_Marlow](#)**: @[AllInky](#) [Spoiler] I don;t see it that way--she prevails. 'Night #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:15 am](#) **[SopranosTweets](#)**: RT @[Selorian](#) The Sopranos ending was awful. Never watched 6 Feet Under or saw A Perfect Murder. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:15 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) I think I like "lateral" series, where a cast can encounter lots of adventures, but, I don't need to see 1 to get 2?

[2:18 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Lateral series are nice. I've always considered a series different than a trilogy or a sequel or whatever it may be. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:19 am](#) **[MetaPhoenix](#)**: @[Selorian](#) Good point. I'm glad you guys are flexible in that regard. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:19 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) I don't mind a character growing over the course of several novels, but, I like the plots to be self-contained. Make sense?

[2:20 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Yes, self-contained plots are what I like as well. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:21 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[MetaPhoenix](#) We try to please. :-) #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:22 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) Hmmm  
#[thrillersuspensemysteryscifiromancecomedychat](#) Nah... takes up too much space. :) But they do all connect.

[2:24 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Heh! That is one long hash tag. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:26 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) So, any ideas for next week? No homework until after #[scriptfrenzy](#) please! :)

[2:26 am](#) **[Danisidhe](#)**: @[AllInky](#) Makes total sense and I agree, that is my preference, too. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:27 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: So we'll wind down for a 10:30 EST end. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:27 am](#) **[Selorian](#)**: I promise, no homework for the next chat. ;-) I'm open to suggestions for the next topic. #[thrillerchat](#)

[2:30 am](#) **[AllInky](#)**: #[thrillerchat](#) Maybe something on \*how\* suspense is generated in thrillers, mystery, etc? The ticking bomb, high stakes, that sort of thing?

[2:31](#) **[Selorian](#)**: Thanks to everyone for coming and the great chat. Feel free to

[am](#)

suggest topics any time you want. See you all next week!  
[#thrillerchat](#)

[2:31](#)  
[am](#)

[AllInky](#): [#thrillerchat](#) Night and, once again, thanks for an interesting chat!

[2:32](#)  
[am](#)

[Selorian](#): @[AllInky](#) I think we can do that. We've touched on it before, but it's always worth revisiting. [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:32](#)  
[am](#)

[Selorian](#): Night, everyone! Thanks! [#thrillerchat](#)

[2:33](#)  
[am](#)

[Danisidhe](#): @[Selorian](#) Thanks for the chat, it was great to see a craft-focused chat! Love @[Allinky](#)'s idea for next week - would def come!  
[#thrillerchat](#)

[2:44](#)  
[am](#)

[Danisidhe](#): Okay, [#thrillerchat](#) is over, the [#storycraft](#) / @[Story\\_Craft](#) community has started to grow so time to get back to the WIP. See you soon!

[2:49](#)  
[am](#)

[Selorian](#): Tonight's [#thrillerchat](#) transcript will be posted tomorrow. Join us next week when we discuss Sustaining Suspense Throughout Your Novel.