

# Spoilers freshen up stories

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## *ScienceNews:*

People who read the last page of a mystery novel first may be on to something. Giving away plot surprises generally makes readers like stories better, say psychology graduate student Jonathan Leavitt and psychologist Nicholas Christenfeld, both of the University of California, San Diego.

Volunteers especially enjoyed classic short stories, including mysteries and tales with ironic twists, after seeing spoiler paragraphs that revealed how the yarns ended, Leavitt and Christenfeld report in a paper published online August 12 in *Psychological Science*.

“Spoilers may enhance story enjoyment by making texts easier to read and understand, leading to deeper comprehension, or they may reduce readers’ anxiety about what’s to come, allowing them to focus on a story’s aesthetic details,” Leavitt says. These responses could explain why a favorite book can be read many times with undiminished pleasure, he suggests.

It’s also possible that spoilers amplify stories’ appeal by increasing tension, Leavitt adds. Giving away the ending of, say, *Oedipus Rex* may elicit pleasurable tension as a reader contemplates the title character marching unknowingly to his doom.

Read the whole story: [ScienceNews](#)