

**Writing  
Illustrations**



# **Infographics**



**Grant P. Ferguson**  
**WritingForEternity.com**

# Plan

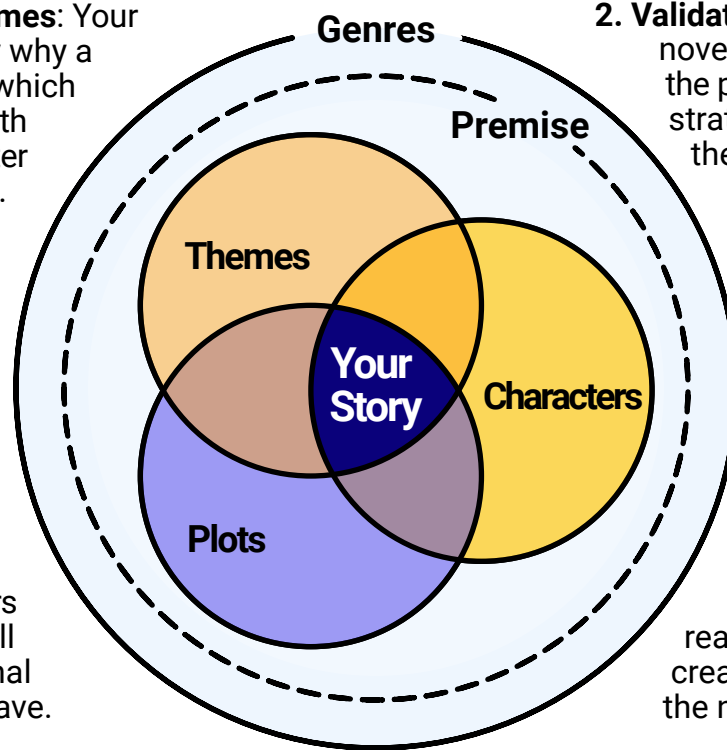
Writers approach tasks differently, and that's why the *process* of gathering and applying story details is divided into separate workbooks and worksheets.

**Start Here...**

**1. Choose Genres:** It's your chosen genre's conventions and key scenes that help you satisfy readers' expectations.

**5. Identify Themes:** Your themes convey why a story matters, which will resonate with readers long after a book's ending.

**2. Validate Premise:** Writing a novel is complicated, and the premise will guide you strategically to complete the essential first draft.



**4. Plot Events:** Story events force characters into conflicts that will produce the emotional reactions readers crave.

**3. Develop Characters:** A story's plot may draw readers, but the characters create loyal fans who buy the next book in the series.

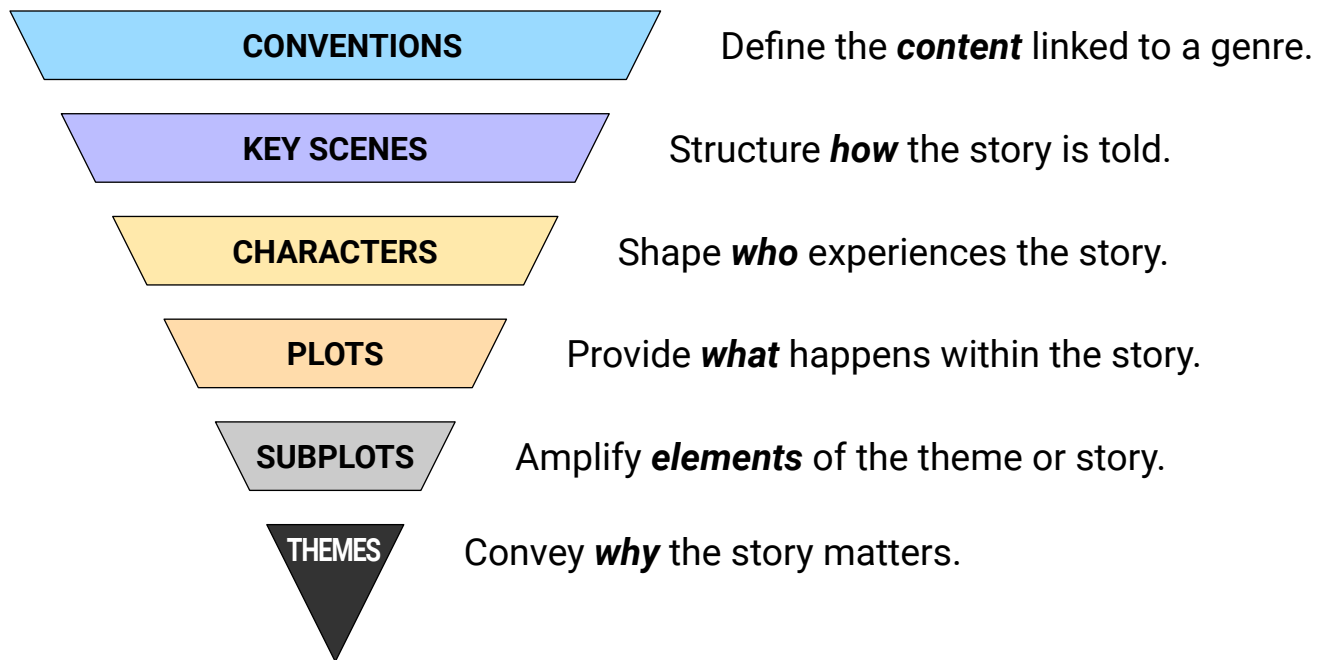
**Create Your Story...**

**6. Outline Beats:** Arrange the story details into the patterns preferred by readers.

**7. Write Scenes:** Use the gathered details to write scenes, each a mini-story that, when linked, turns the elements into a narrative necklace.



# Genres Drive Audience Expectations



**Conventions:** Readers expect a genre's content to fulfill expectations set by a lifetime of stories they've heard, watched, and read.

**Key Scenes:** A key scene fulfills a specific function in the story expected by readers' based on their experience with TV shows, films, and books.

**Characters:** The people populating novels range from realistic to fantasy characters, and they show an array of traits, behaviors, and emotions.

**Plots:** The main plot weaves a thread of crucial events of what happens within the story, and those events force characters into conflicts.

**Subplots:** A subplot interjects more events and characters, amplifying the main plot and the story's themes.

**Themes:** The story's external, internal, and philosophical themes convey to readers why the story matters.

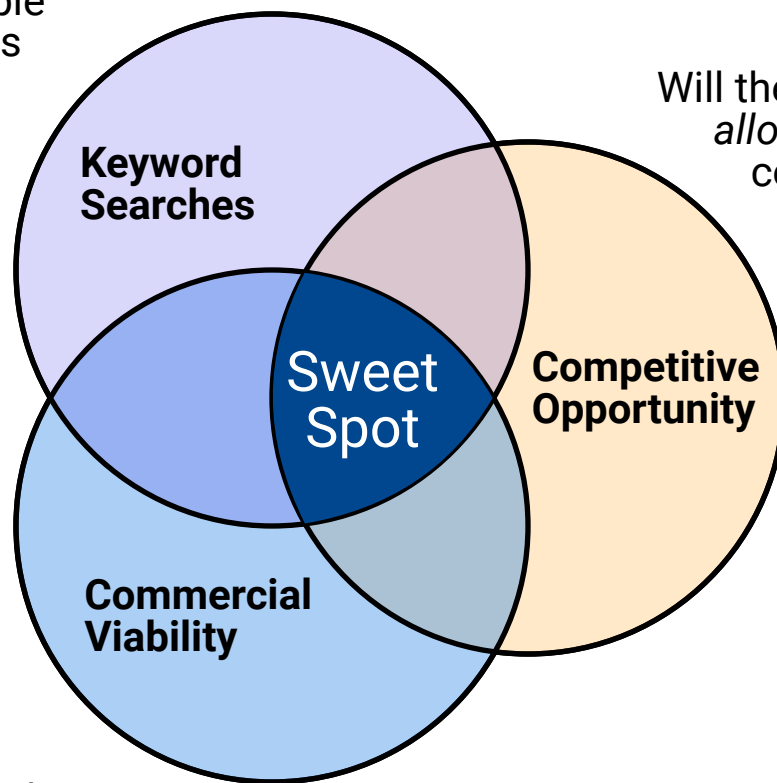


# Story Premise Validation

Research to validate your book's premise before spending time working on your first draft.

How many people  
search for books  
like yours?

Will the market  
*allow* you to  
compete?



How many  
persons actually buy  
books like your premise?



# Characters Enneagram Types

## The Challenger

Leads &, intense; desires strength; avoids weakness & vulnerable situations; **Inner**: coercer vs. persuader  
**Basic Fear**: harmed, controlled, violated  
**Basic Desire**: self-protection  
**Stress**: secretive & fearful (neg. Type 5)  
**Secure**: open-hearted & caring (pos. Type 2)

## The Peacemaker

Charming & laid back; desires to keep the peace & merge with others; avoids conflict; **Inner**: fantasy vs. reality  
**Basic Fear**: loss, fragmentation, separation  
**Basic Desire**: wholeness, at peace  
**Stress**: fear & worry (neg. Type 6)  
**Secure**: self-developing & active (pos. Type 3)

## The Perfectionist

Ethical & dedicated; desires right living; avoids being faulted or blamed; **Inner**: anger vs. serenity  
**Basic Fear**: corruptness, imbalance, being bad  
**Basic Desire**: goodness, integrity, balance  
**Stress**: moody & irrational (neg. Type 4)  
**Secure**: spontaneous & joyful (pos. Type 7)

## The Enthusiast

Adventurous & fun; desires happiness & stimulating experiences; avoids pain; **Inner**: extremism vs. moderation  
**Basic Fear**: to be trapped in pain and deprived  
**Basic Desire**: to be satisfied and content  
**Stress**: perfectionist & critical (neg. Type 1)  
**Secure**: focused & loves life (pos. Type 5)

## The Helper

Relatable & caring; desires love and being needed; avoids showing personal needs; **Inner**: pride vs. humility  
**Basic Fear**: being unloved  
**Basic Desire**: to feel love  
**Stress**: aggressive & dominating (neg. Type 8)  
**Secure**: self-nurturing & sensitive (pos. Type 4)

## The Loyalist

Practical & social; desires reassurance & safety; avoids danger & murky endeavors; **Inner**: fear vs. courage  
**Basic Fear**: no support or guidance  
**Basic Desire**: to be supported and guided  
**Stress**: competitive & arrogant (neg. Type 3)  
**Secure**: relaxed & optimistic (pos. Type 9)

## The Achiever

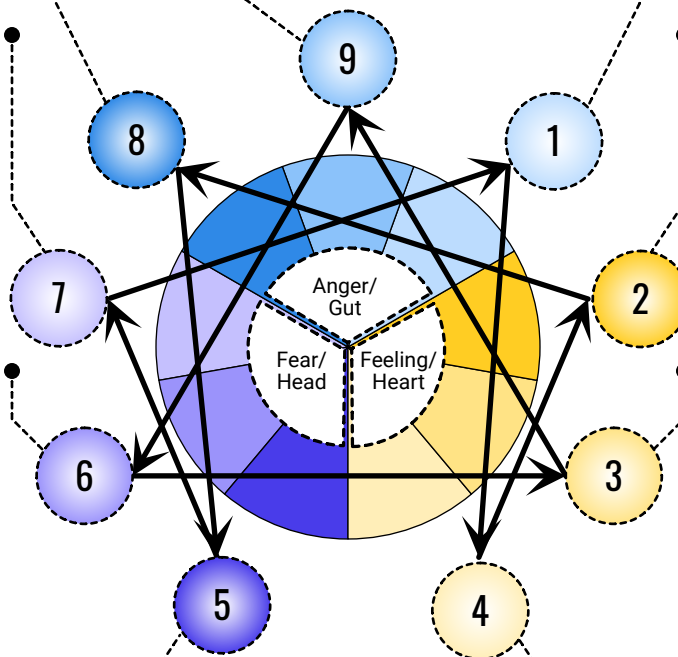
Successful & productive; desires achievement; avoids failure; **Inner**: deceit vs. authenticity  
**Basic Fear**: worthlessness  
**Basic Desire**: to feel valuable  
**Stress**: disengaged & apathetic (neg. Type 9)  
**Secure**: cooperative & committed (pos. Type 6)

## The Investigator

Analytical & private; desires knowledge; avoids wasting energy & relying on others; **Inner**: greed vs. generosity  
**Basic Fear**: helpless, incapable, incompetent  
**Basic Desire**: mastery  
**Stress**: hyperactive & scattered (neg. Type 7)  
**Secure**: self-confident & decisive (pos. Type 8)

## The Individualist

Creative & sensitive; desires understanding & feelings; avoids being ordinary; **Inner**: trivial vs. significance  
**Basic Fear**: having no identity or significance  
**Basic Desire**: to be a unique person  
**Stress**: over-involved & clinging (neg. Type 2)  
**Secure**: objective & principled (pos. Type 1)



# Characters Type Identification

Identify Character Type in Table 3 based on paired descriptions from Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1**

- a.** I'm fairly independent and assertive, taking on life directly as it comes. Making things happen is what I set goals for. I don't like to sit idle and instead, strive to accomplish big things with an impact. I don't seek confrontation, but won't shy away from conflict. Mostly, I know what I want and pursue it, working and playing hard.
- b.** I'm mostly quiet and don't mind being by myself. In social settings, I don't seek attention, and seldom assert myself. I'm more of a follower and prefer to contribute than compete. Those who know me say I'm a dreamer, and they're probably right because I get excited imagining life's possibilities. I'm comfortable being still rather than active all the time.
- c.** Being responsible and committed all the time is something I lean towards. I agonize over situations where I'm unable to carry out my commitments and fulfill expectations. I strive to let people know I'm available to help, and will do what I perceive as best for them. That includes making personal sacrifices, even if others don't realize what I've done for them. Because of my sense of responsibility and commitments, I do what needs to be done first before taking time for myself.

**Table 2**

- i.** My general perspective is positive, believing things will work out and usually for the best. Mostly, I pursue life with enthusiasm, finding various ways to keep busy. I socialize and strive to make others happy, sharing my happiness even when I don't feel great. Because of striving for happiness, I delay dealing with issues, and that sometimes comes back to cause even bigger problems.
- ii.** No doubt about it, I have powerful feelings about things, and those around me know it. I can be guarded, but I'm actually more sensitive than others perceive. I seek to know how others see me and whether they stand with or against me. When things aren't going the way I planned, I want others around me to get riled up, too. I don't like to be told what to do, and I'll decide whether to follow or skirt the rules.
- iii.** I prefer self-control and logic rather than dealing with emotions. I strive for efficiency and perfection, so I prefer to work independently. When tackling problems and conflicts, I avoid letting my emotions influence the situation. People sometimes see me as too detached, but that's not quite accurate because I don't want emotions to steal my focus on what matters most to me. I tend to hide my feelings when someone gets the better of me.

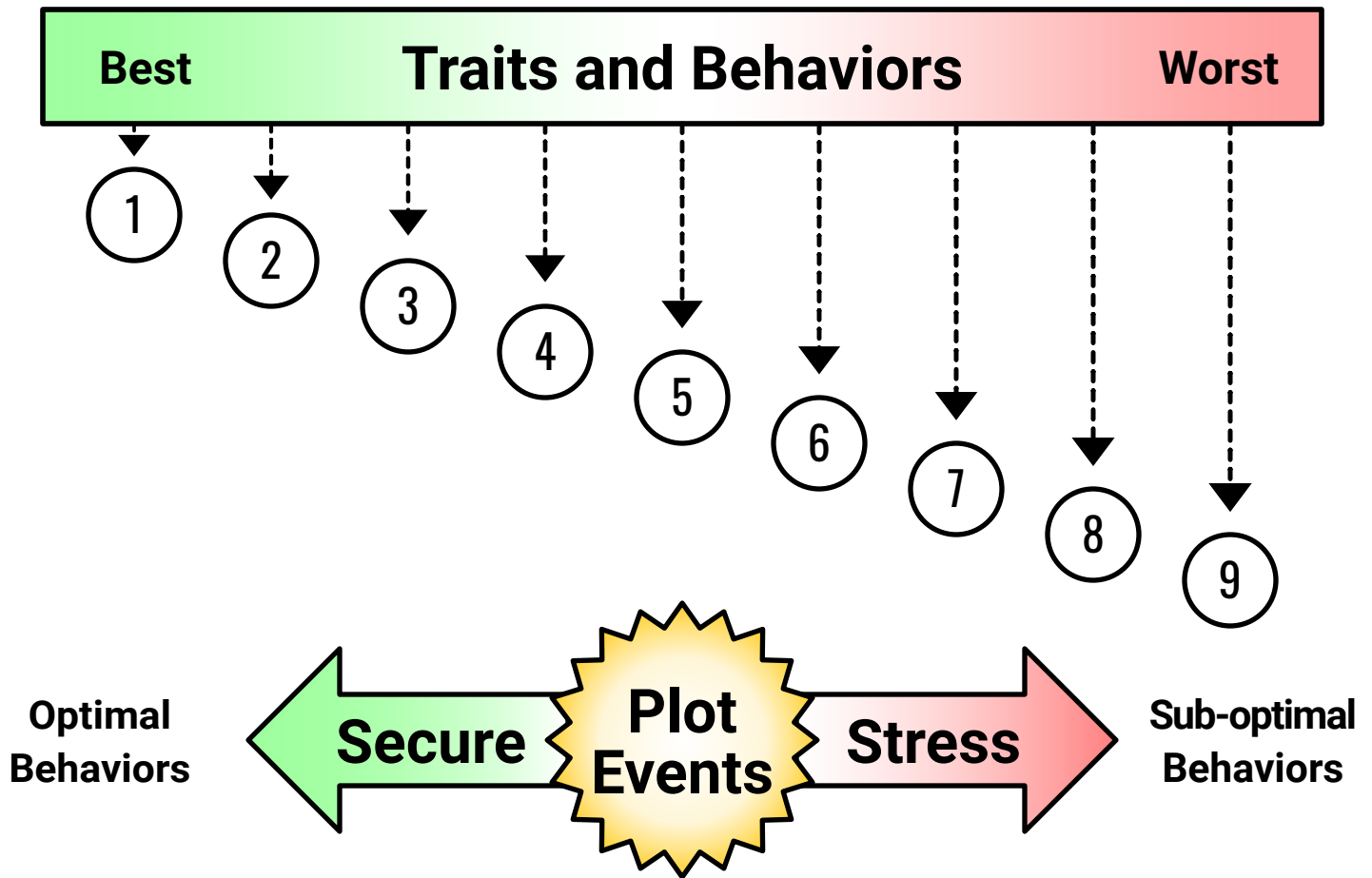
**Table 3**

Pairing:	Type:	Type Name and General ( + / - ) Traits:
<b>a. + i.</b>	7	<b>The Enthusiast: (+) Upbeat, accomplished; (-) impulsive</b>
<b>a. + ii.</b>	8	<b>The Challenger: (+) Self-confident, decisive; (-) domineering</b>
<b>a. + iii.</b>	3	<b>The Achiever: (+) Adaptable, ambitious; (-) image-conscious</b>
<b>b. + i.</b>	9	<b>The Peacemaker: (+) Receptive, reassuring; (-) complacent</b>
<b>b. + ii.</b>	4	<b>The Individualist: (+) Intuitive, aesthetic; (-) self-absorbed</b>
<b>b. + iii.</b>	5	<b>The Investigator: (+) Perceptive, innovative; (-) detached</b>
<b>c. + i.</b>	2	<b>The Helper: (+) Caring, generous; (-) possessive</b>
<b>c. + ii.</b>	6	<b>The Loyalist: (+) Engaging, responsible; (-) defensive</b>
<b>c. + iii.</b>	1	<b>The Perfectionist: (+) Rational, principled; (-) self-controlled</b>



# Characters Type Levels

Pick a character's starting development level and show changes in "Best" and "Worse" Traits and Behaviors based on the plot events.



Stress can influence a character's *thoughts, choices, speech, and actions*. Use the Development Levels to describe the reactions to problems, conflicts, and obstacles.



# Characters Type Matrix

<- OPTIMAL										<- MIDRANGE ->				SUB-OPTIMAL ->		
Type:	Levels:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9						
G U T	8. THE CHALLENGER Externalizes Anger Stress: secretive/fearful Secure: open-hearted/caring	Self-restrained, magnanimous, merciful, forbearing	Self-assertive, self-confident, strong	Decisive, authoritative, commanding	Self-sufficient, enterprising, pragmatic,	Domineering, (environment & others), self-promoting	Combative, intimidating	Defiant, ruthless, dictatorial	Delusional, over-extended	Dangerous, destructive, vengeful, barbaric, murderous						
	9. THE PEACEMAKER Forgets Anger Stress: anxious/worried Secure: self-developing/active	Indomitable and all-embracing	Deeply receptive, accepting, unconscious	Optimistic, reassuring, supportive	Fear conflicts, self-effacing, and accommodating	Active, but disengaged, unreflective, inattentive	Distant from problems, a people pleaser	Highly repressed, undeveloped, ineffectual	Dissociated, disoriented	Severely disoriented, catatonic						
	1. THE PERFECTIONIST Internalizes Anger Stress: moody/irrational Secure: spontaneous/joyful	Extraordinarily wise, discerning, realistic, humane	Conscientious, highly moral, intensely aware of right and wrong	Extremely Principled, fair-minded, responsible	Idealistic, striving, dissatisfied with reality	Afraid of mistakes, consistent, orderly, rigid, workaholic	Critical, picky, judgmental, impatient	Dogmatic, self-righteous, Inflexible	Obsessive, contradictory, hypocritical	Condemnatory, punitive, cruel,						
H E A R T	2. THE HELPER Feels for Others Stress: aggressive/domineering Secure: self-nurturing/sensitive	Deeply unselfish, humble, altruistic	Empathetic, compassionate, feeling for others	Encouraging, appreciative, nurturing	Well-intentioned, people-pleaser, overly friendly	Overly intimate, intrusive, needy, possessive	Increasingly self-important, self-satisfied, overbearing	Self-justifying, manipulative, self-serving	Entitled, coercive, demanding	Resentful, angry, victimized, a burden to others						
	3. THE ACHIEVER Unaware of Feelings Stress: disengaged/apathetic Secure: cooperative/committed	Self-accepting, inner-directed, authentic	Self-assured, energetic, competent	Ambitious (self-improvement), motivated, effective	Success-oriented, driven, scornful of failure	Image-conscious, pragmatic, efficient, insincere	Self-promoting, narcissistic, arrogant	Fearful of failure and humiliation, jealous of others	Devious, duplicitous, opportunistic, untrustworthy	Vindictive, monomaniacal, relentless, destructive of others						
	4. THE INDIVIDUALIST Feels for Self Stress: over-involved/clinging Secure: objective/principled	Profoundly creative, inspired, self-renewing, regenerating	Self-aware, introspective, intuitive, sensitive, tactful	Highly personal, individualistic, authentic	Focused on the romantic and artistic aspects of life, individualistic	Fixated on feelings, self-absorbed, introverted, temperamental	Self-indulgent, dreamer, decadent, disdainful	Self-inhibited, self-hatred, alienates self from others	Delusional, tormented by self-contempt, blameful	desperate, hopeless, self-destructive.						
H E A D	5. THE INVESTIGATOR Externalizes Fear Stress: hyperactive/scattered Secure: self-confidant/decisive	Visionary, open-minded, pioneer	Perceptive, insightful, alert, curious, engrossed	Masterful, knowledgeable, innovative, independent, whimsical	Conceptual, modeler, builder, resourceful, specialized	Detached, preoccupied, detached, high strung, intense	Antagonistic, extreme, provocative, abrasive, cynical	Reclusive, isolated, eccentric, nihilistic	Threatened by competing ideas, horrified, delirious	Detached from reality, deranged, self-destructive						
	6. THE LOYALIST Internalizes Fear Stress: competitive/ Secure: relaxed/optimistic	Self-reliant, trusting, cooperative, courageous	Engaging, appealing, endearing, lovable, reliable, affectionate,	Dedicated, builder of communities, responsible, trustworthy	Dutiful, loyal, vigilant, proactive	Ambivalent, defensive, passive-aggressive	Insecure, sarcastic, belligerent, blameful, authoritarian	Panicky, volatile, self-disparaging, unreliable	Paranoid, antagonistic, irrational, violence prone	Hysterical, self-abasing, self-destructive						
	7. THE ENTHUSIAST Forgets Fear Stress: perfectionist/critical Secure: focused/loves life	Awed by life, joyful, ecstatic, satisfied	Responsive, excitable, cheerful, enthusiastic	Practical, realistic, productive, prolific	Restless, adventurous, worldly wise, somewhat unfocused	Hyperactive, uninhibited, flamboyant, witty	Excessive, unsatisfied, self-centered, materialistic, greedy	Anxious, impulsive, depraved, offensive, abusive	Flighty, impulsive, frustrated, moody, compulsive actions	Exhausted, overwhelmed, paralyzed, panic stricken						

G U T

H E A R T

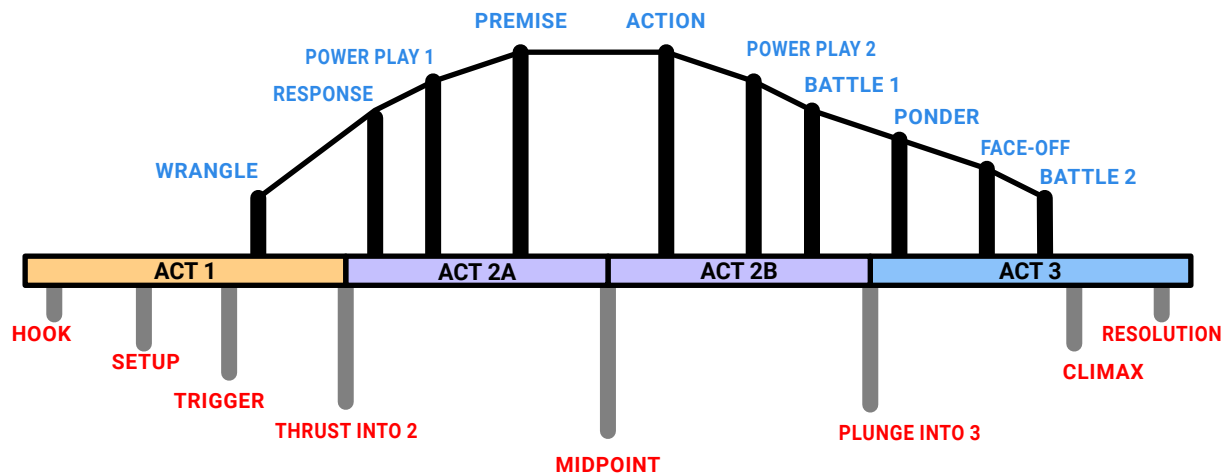
H E A D





# Story Structure Bridge

The Trellis Method uses three writing tools to bridge the gap between recording story ideas and creating actual scenes. The worksheet prompts for the details you'll use to write content.



- 1. Story Spine:** This writing tool uses an intuitive format to build a Story Spine, and like the supporting piers of a bridge, the Story Spine allows you to envision the entire story.
- 2. Story Body:** Based on prompts, you'll build the Story Body on the foundation of the Story Spine, creating a HOOK-to-RESOLUTION synopsis of your entire narrative.
- 3. Story Beats:** If pleased with the Story Body synopsis, the Story Beats prompt you to create detailed notes designed to help you write engaging scenes with confidence.



# The Trellis Method: Plot Lens

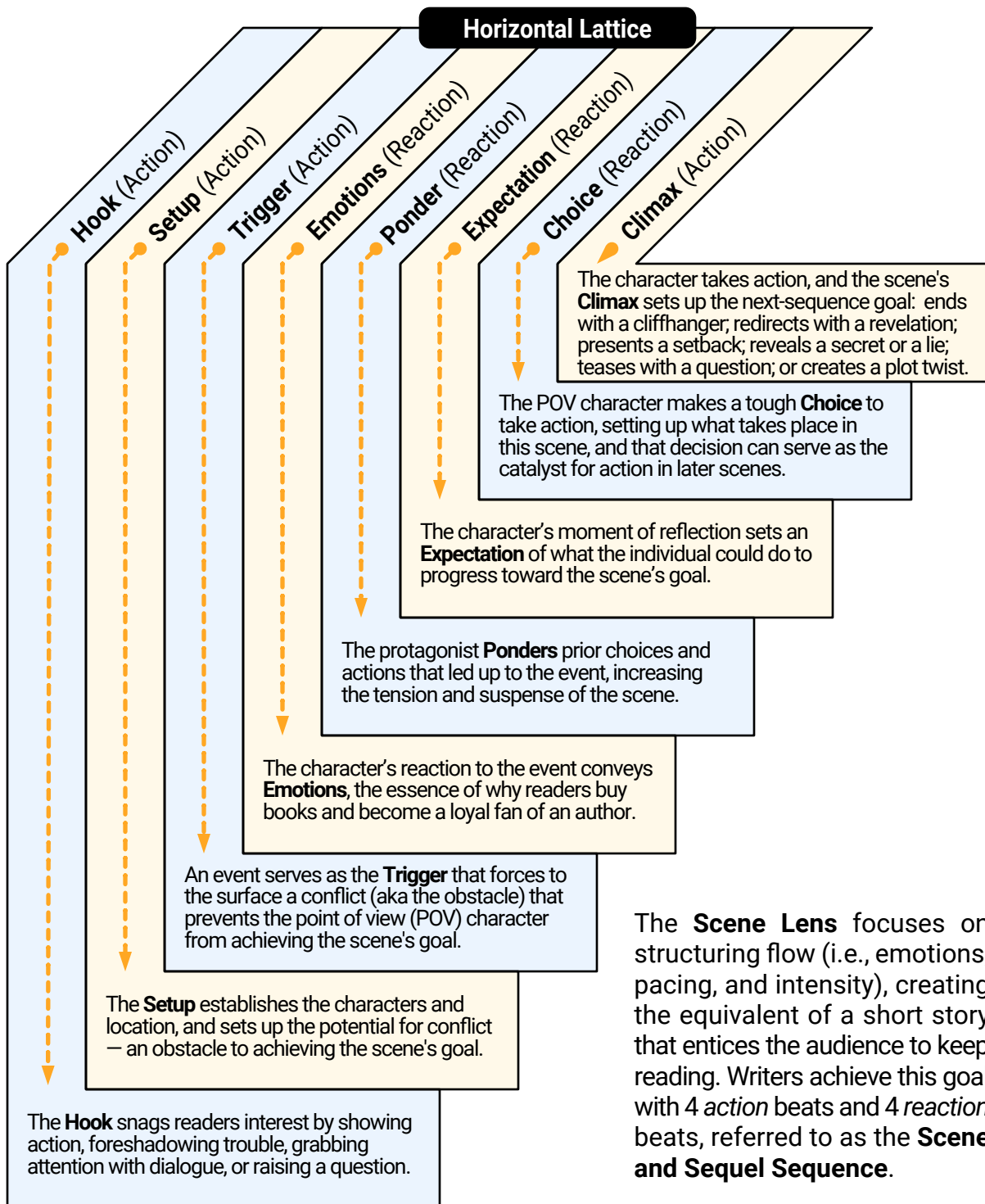
Based on the common elements of popular story structures, the Plot Lens focuses on 18 Story Beats made up from single scenes and scene sequences.

			Position
Vertical Lattice	ACT 3	<b>RESOLUTION</b>	The last scenes tie up loose ends to satisfy readers with the emotions they expect from the Changed World. 98%-100%
		<b>CLIMAX</b>	The scene concludes with the chief protagonist achieving a positive or negative outcome tied to both the Story Goal and the character's Need. 98%
		<b>BATTLE 2</b>	The chief protagonist and the chief antagonist fight intensely, knowing only one will survive the second battle. 88%-98%
		<b>FACE-OFF</b>	This scene includes a face-off between the chief protagonist and the chief antagonist, brought on by the main character's prior choices. 88%
		<b>PONDER</b>	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist ponders prior choices, goal dedication, self worth, and personal abilities. 75%-88%
		<b>PLUNGE INTO 3</b>	In this scene, the victory at the end of Act 2 is reversed, plunging the chief protagonist into an all-is-lost state. 75%
	ACT 2B	<b>BATTLE 1</b>	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist fights the chief antagonist, and appears to win (or lose) BATTLE 1. 62%-75%
		<b>POWER PLAY 2</b>	This scene hints at what is coming when the chief protagonist PLUNGES INTO 3, emphasizing the ever-increasing stakes. 62%
		<b>ACTION</b>	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist takes action based on discovery, changing the character's trajectory (i.e., up or down). 50%-62%
	ACT 2A	<b>MIDPOINT</b>	This scene shows the chief protagonist's status, increases the stakes, and gives the protagonist insight, shifting the focus from want to need. 50%
		<b>PREMISE</b>	This sequence of scenes fulfills the novel's premise, giving readers the events and emotions they crave. 37%-50%
		<b>POWER PLAY 1</b>	This scene shows the chief antagonist's power, provides clues, and establishes the core conflict. 37%
		<b>RESPONSE</b>	In this sequence of scenes, the chief protagonist responds to the unstable world, and meets who will help the character learn the theme. 25%-37%
	ACT 1	<b>THRUST INTO 2</b>	In this scene, the chief protagonist acts on the choices made in the WRANGLE sequence, thrusting the character into an unstable world. 25%
		<b>WRANGLE</b>	In this sequence of scenes, the hero wrangles with the move-forward choices, but resists need for change. 12%-25%
		<b>TRIGGER</b>	Halfway through Act 1, a major event triggers the disruption of the chief protagonist's stable world, stopping the character from staying as before. 12%
		<b>SETUP</b>	This sequence of scenes in the stable world establishes the characters, their wants, the stakes, story theme, and the need for change. 1%-12%
		<b>HOOK</b>	The first scene introduces essential aspects of the story and grabs readers with an intense need to know what happens next. 0%-2%

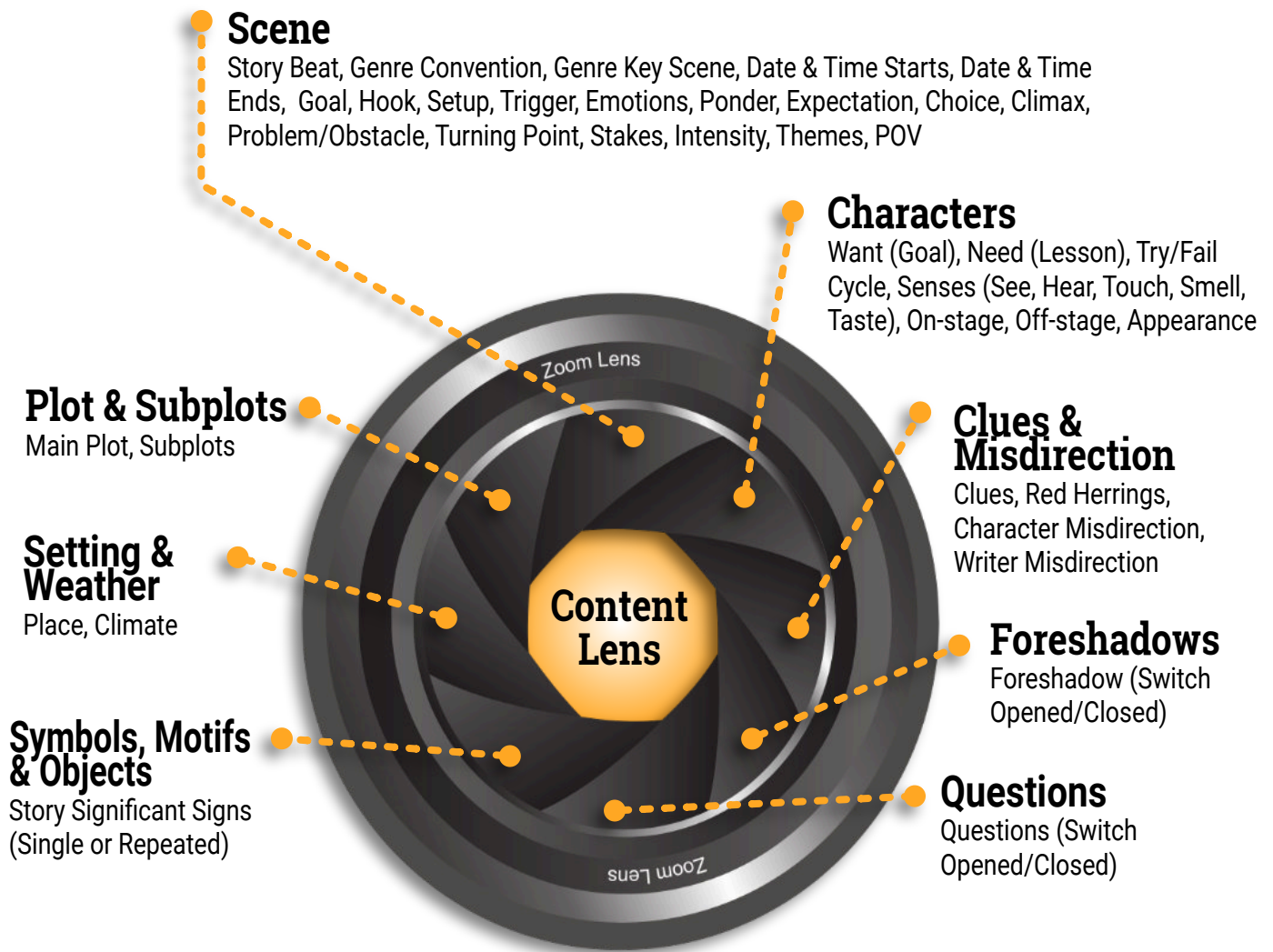
Beats take place within sentences, paragraphs, scenes, and scene sequences. **Story Beats** are the scene actions that move the story forward and these plot events force characters into conflicts. The Story Beats marked in red support the **Story Spine**.



# The Trellis Method: Scene Lens



# The Trellis Method: Content Lens



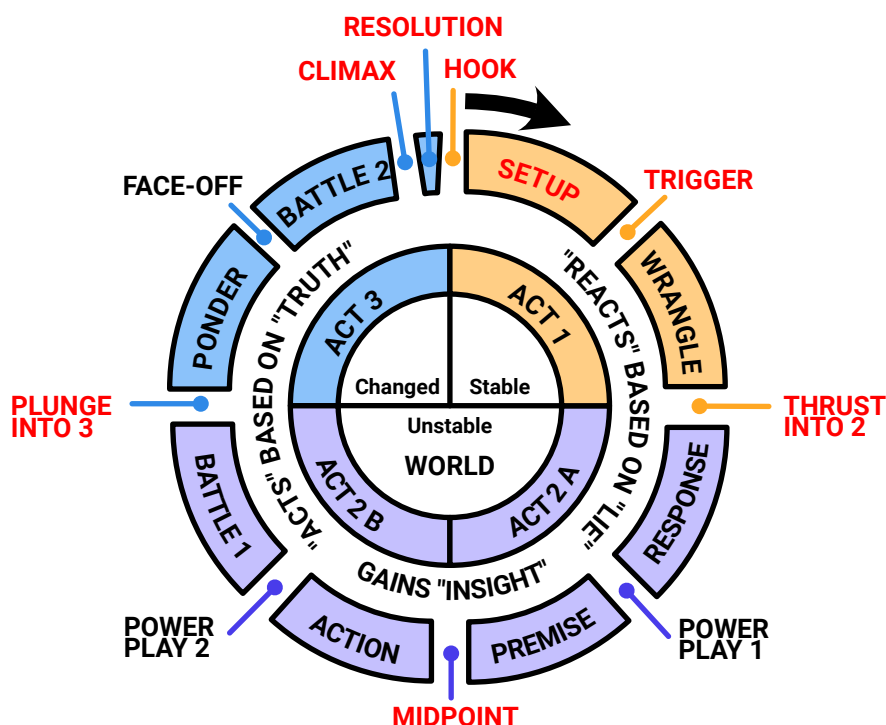
The Content Lens focuses on the details and familiar patterns readers expect.

Writers can tap into a nearly endless supply of writing techniques. To narrow that focus, the Content Lens prompts writers to zoom in on what matters most. By following the worksheet prompts, you get a boost of creativity and a dose of consistency, making sure to align the essential details across the entire narrative.

Writers use the *Scene Development Workbook* to plan, write, and edit your content.



# The Trellis Method: Story Beats



**1. HOOK (0% to 1%):** The first scene introduces essential aspects of the story and grabs readers with an intense need to know what happens next.

**2. SETUP (1% to 11%):** This sequence of scenes in the stable world establishes the characters, their wants, the stakes, story theme, and the need for change.

**3. TRIGGER (12%):** Halfway through Act 1, a major event triggers the disruption of the protagonist's stable world, stopping hero from continuing as before.

**4. WRANGLE (13% to 24%):** In this sequence of scenes, the hero wrangles with move-forward choices, but resists the need for change.

**5. THRUST INTO 2 (25%):** In this scene, the hero acts on the choices he made in the Wrangle sequence, thrusting him into an unstable world.

**6. RESPONSE (26% to 36%):** In this sequence of scenes, the hero responds to the unstable world, and meets who will help him learn the theme.

**7. POWER PLAY 1 (37%):** This scene shows the bad guy's power, provides clues, and establishes the core conflict.

**8. PREMISE (38% to 49%):** This sequence of scenes fulfills the novel's premise, giving readers the events and emotions they crave.

**9. MIDPOINT (50%):** This scene shows the hero's status (i.e., winning or losing), increases the stakes, and gives the protagonist insight, shifting the focus from want to need.

**10. ACTION (51% to 62%):** In this sequence of scenes, hero takes action based on insight, changing the protagonist's trajectory (i.e., up or down).

**11. POWER PLAY 2 (63%):** This scene hints at what is coming when the hero Plunges Into 3, emphasizing the ever-increasing stakes.

**12. BATTLE 1 (64% TO 74%):** In this sequence of scenes, the hero fights the bad guy, and appears to win the first battle.

**13. PLUNGE INTO 3 (75%):** In this scene, the victory at the end of Act 2 is reversed, plunging hero into an all-is-lost state.

**14. PONDER (76% to 87%):** In this sequence of scenes, the hero ponders his prior choices, goal dedication, self worth, and personal abilities.

**15. FACE-OFF (88%):** The scene includes a face-off between hero and adversary, brought on by the protagonist's prior choices.

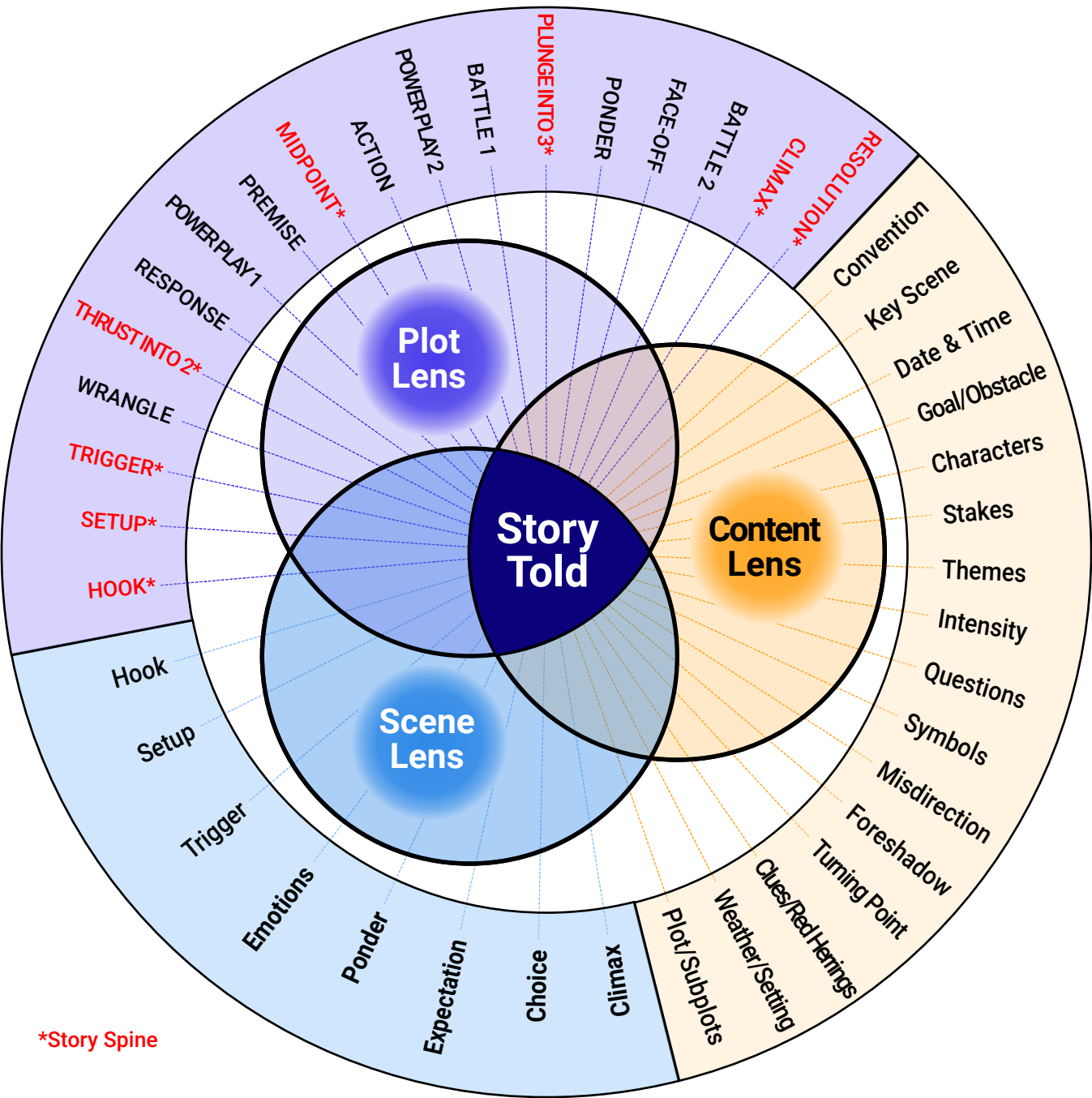
**16. BATTLE 2 (89% to 95%):** In this sequence of scenes, the hero and bad guy fight intensely, knowing only one will survive the second battle.

**17. CLIMAX (96-98%):** The scene concludes with hero achieving one of four results tied to his want and need: win/win, win/lose, lose/win, or lose/lose.

**18. RESOLUTION (99% to 100%):** The last scenes tie up loose ends, satisfying readers with the emotions they expect from changed world.



# The Trellis Method: Lens Intersection



# Cozy Mystery Plot

## CONVENTIONS

### Act 1

- Murder creates a puzzle (who done it?)
- Death is offstage and discovered early
- Reason for killing must be plausible
- All clues are visible to readers
- Red herrings used to distract audience
- No explicit profanity, sex, or violence
- Crime occurs within the community
- Killer is from the community
- An event forces sleuth to investigate

### Act 2A

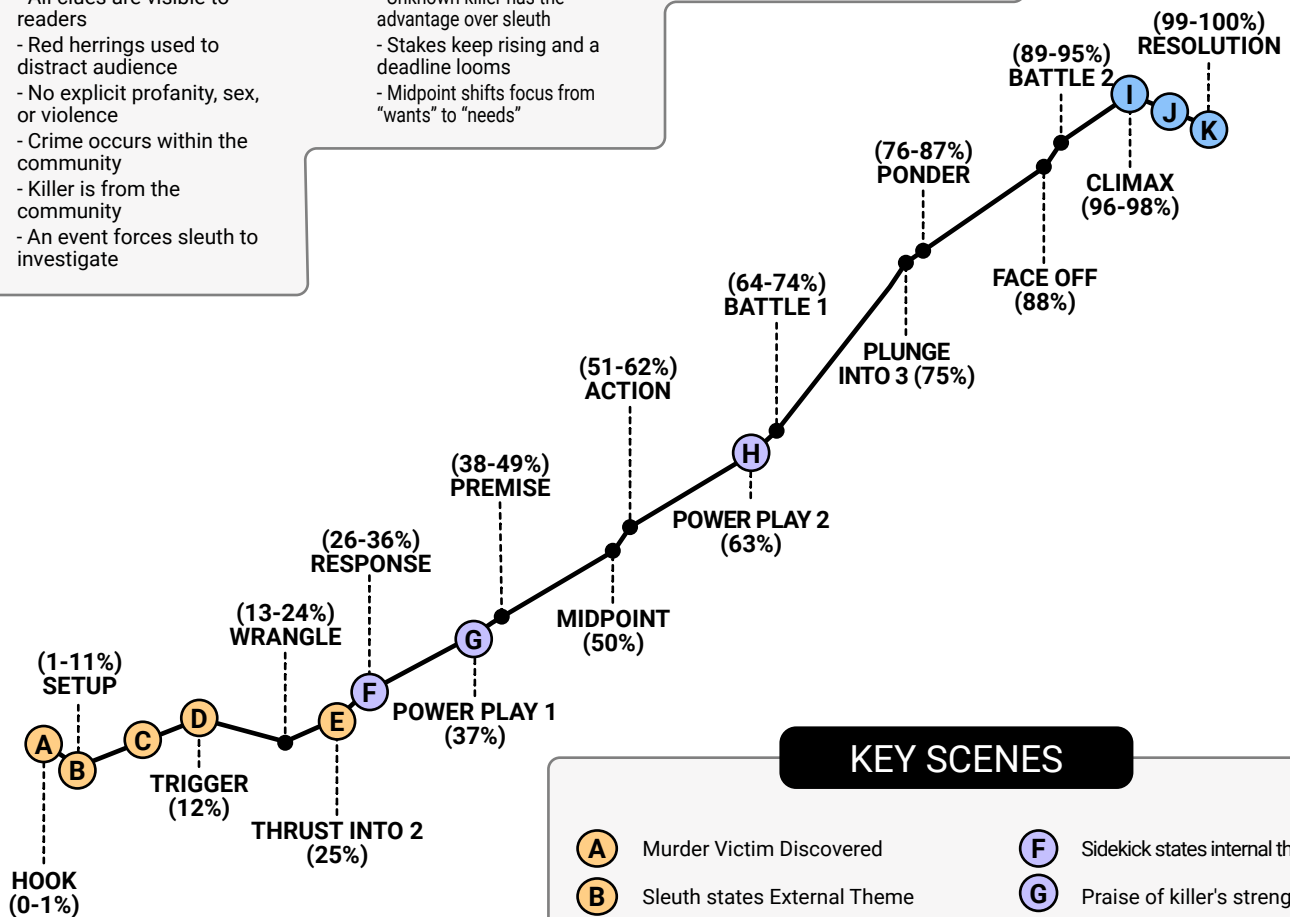
- Sleuth actively investigates murder
- Story introduces one or more subplots
- Sleuth encounters obstacles and conflicts
- Unknown killer has the advantage over sleuth
- Stakes keep rising and a deadline looms
- Midpoint shifts focus from "wants" to "needs"

### Act 2B

- Sleuth eliminates each of the suspects
- Killer makes it personal, taunting sleuth
- Sleuth doubles efforts to reveal killer

### Act 3

- Sleuth reveals the truth about the murder
- Sleuth is changed by the events



## KEY SCENES

- |                                           |                                         |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Murder Victim Discovered         | <b>F</b> Sidekick states internal theme |
| <b>B</b> Sleuth states External Theme     | <b>G</b> Praise of killer's strengths   |
| <b>C</b> An event bonds readers to sleuth | <b>H</b> Sleuth discovers MacGuffin     |
| <b>D</b> MacGuffin is hinted              | <b>I</b> Sleuth exposes killer          |
| <b>E</b> Sleuth chases true/false clues   | <b>J</b> Killer is brought to justice   |
|                                           | <b>K</b> Loose ends tied up             |





# Romance Plot

## CONVENTIONS

### Act 1

- A love triangle of protagonist, love interest, and rival (e.g., a person or some distraction)
- Other characters help and harm the relationship

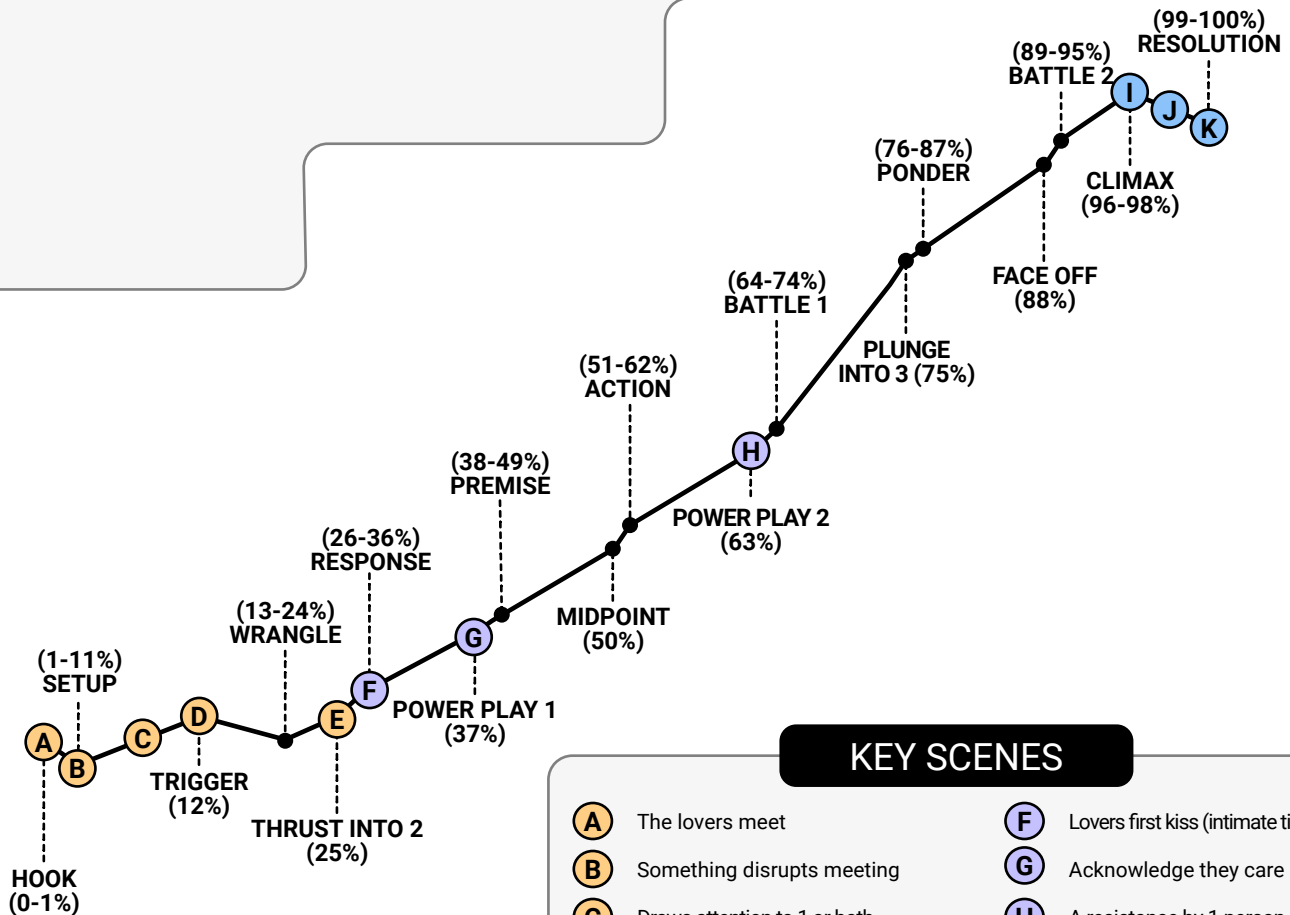
### Act 2A

- Opposite character traits influence the budding relationship
- Forces oppose the relationship (e.g., secrets, rituals)
- Secrets draw or oppose the budding relationship, causing conflict
- Characters share moments that only they appreciate (e.g., traditions, histories, private language, inside jokes)

### Act 2B

### Act 3

- Moral flaws of the individuals cause conflicts
- The lovers must overcome their flaws or moral failings



## KEY SCENES

- |                                               |                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> The lovers meet                      | <b>F</b> Lovers first kiss (intimate tie) |
| <b>B</b> Something disrupts meeting           | <b>G</b> Acknowledge they care            |
| <b>C</b> Draws attention to 1 or both         | <b>H</b> A resistance by 1 person         |
| <b>D</b> A level of resistance from 1 or both | <b>I</b> A break up (all is lost moment)  |
| <b>E</b> Looks as if they'll not get together | <b>J</b> Show love with some sacrifice    |
|                                               | <b>K</b> Reunite & commit or separate     |



# Thriller Plot

## CONVENTIONS

### Act 1

- Narrative atmosphere detailed and threatening
- A specific MacGuffin (Villain's object of desire)
- Early event reveals a clue about Villain's MacGuffin
- Excitement delivers the emotions readers crave
- A capable Hero tries to thwart a powerful Villain
- Lives depend on the Hero's success
- Story contains elements of suspense
- An ever increasing threat of risk and danger
- Not all clues are visible to readers

### Act 2A

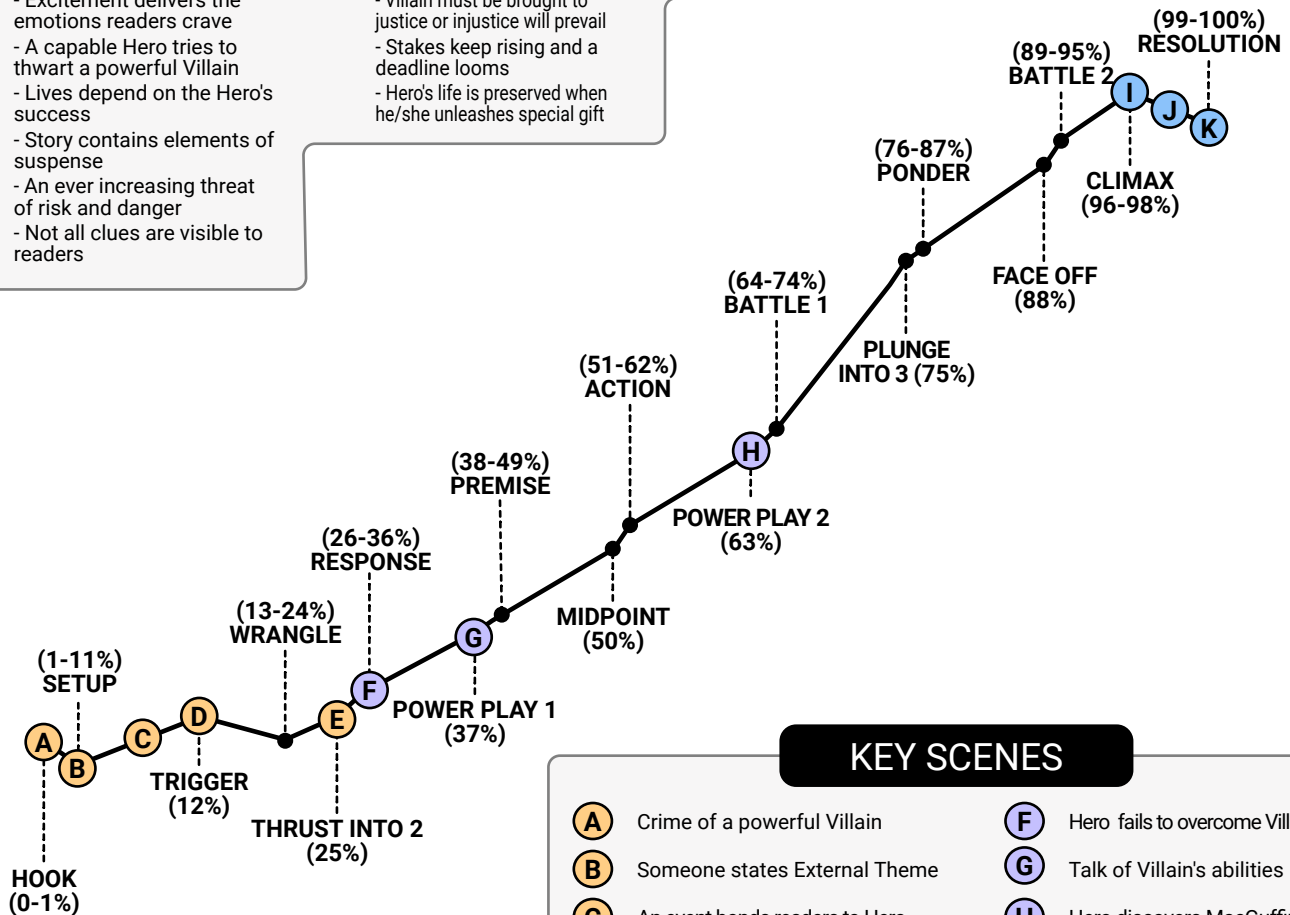
- Brilliance of Villain revealed by someone's talk
- Ruthless Villain proves to be unreasonable and merciless
- Characters positively and negatively impact Hero
- Villain must be brought to justice or injustice will prevail
- Stakes keep rising and a deadline looms
- Hero's life is preserved when he/she unleashes special gift

### Act 2B

- Stakes show fate worth than death is damnation
- Villain makes it personal, taunting Hero
- Hero becomes victim, at the mercy of the Villain

### Act 3

- Story ends in either justice or injustice
- Hero is changed positively or negatively by the events



## KEY SCENES

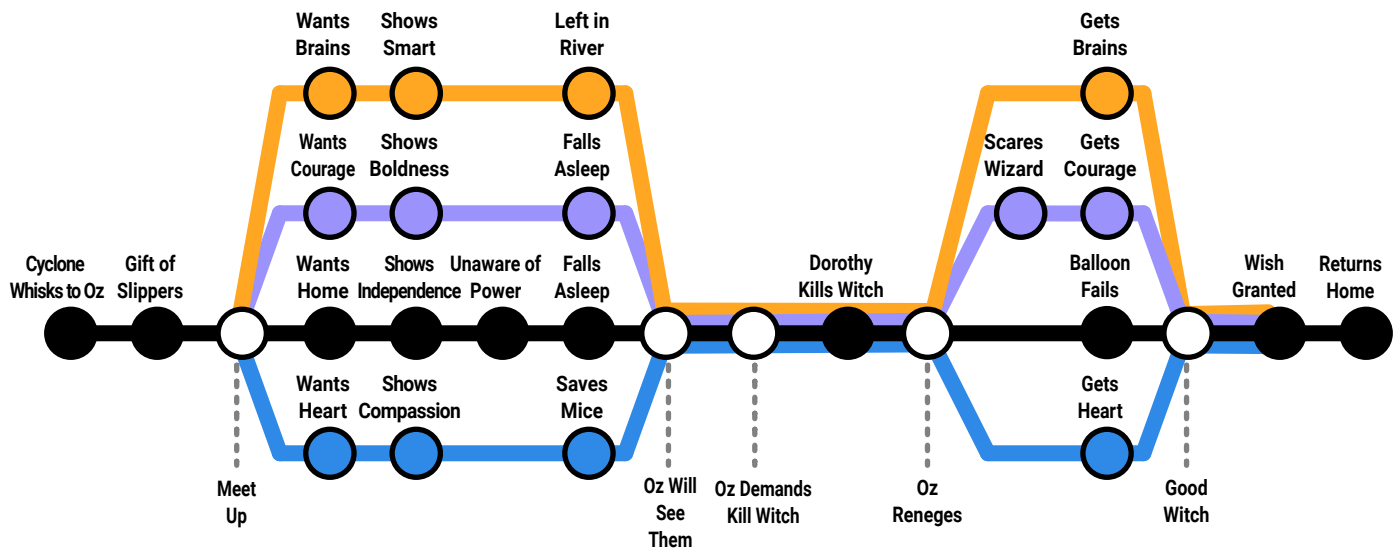
- |                                          |                                         |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> Crime of a powerful Villain     | <b>F</b> Hero fails to overcome Villain |
| <b>B</b> Someone states External Theme   | <b>G</b> Talk of Villain's abilities    |
| <b>C</b> An event bonds readers to Hero  | <b>H</b> Hero discovers MacGuffin       |
| <b>D</b> MacGuffin is hinted             | <b>I</b> False ending (win or lose)     |
| <b>E</b> Hero crosses point of no return | <b>J</b> Hero at Villain's mercy        |
|                                          | <b>K</b> Hero changed (+/-)             |



# Parallel and Merge Plot

The **Main Plot** is a thread of crucial events that comprise the narrative of *what* happens within the story, forcing characters into conflicts. The **Subplots** add more events and characters to amplify and build out the main plot.

## Book Example: *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum



- **Plot (Dorothy):** Will Dorothy learn inner-power and return home?
- **Subplot (Scarecrow):** Will Scarecrow get brains?
- **Subplot (Cowardly Lion):** Will Cowardly Lion get courage?
- **Subplot (Tin Woodman):** Will Tin Woodman get heart?
- **Merge (All Threads):** Will they work together to achieve their goals?

*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* offers an excellent example of a “Parallel & Merge Plot.” It starts with the main plot (Dorothy) followed by three subplots (Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, and Tin Woodman) that merge at strategic points. The subplots influence the main plot. Dorothy recognizes an inner strength to achieve her goal and return home.

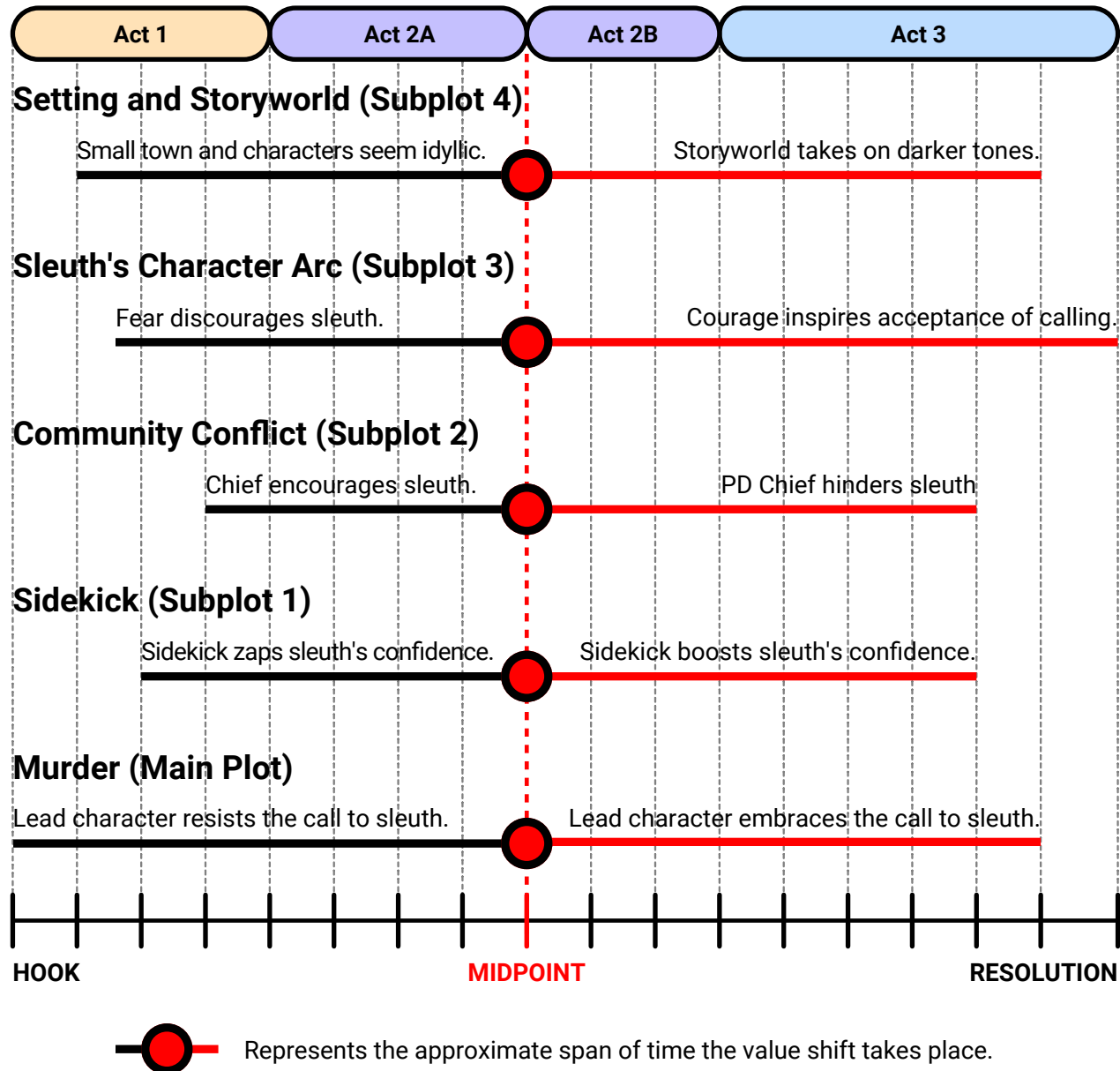
**Writing Principle:** Subplots serve as support to the main plot, connecting key points and amplifying essential details.

**How-to:** Begin a Parallel & Merge Plot using the 8 Story Spine beats.



# Cozy Mystery Plot Timeline

Even though the **Main Plot** and **Subplot** threads start at different points in the story, all values change at the Midpoint. Prioritize so there are no lulls in the story and all shifts occur within the shortest possible span of story.



# Cozy Mystery Themes Example

## Crime Genre (External)

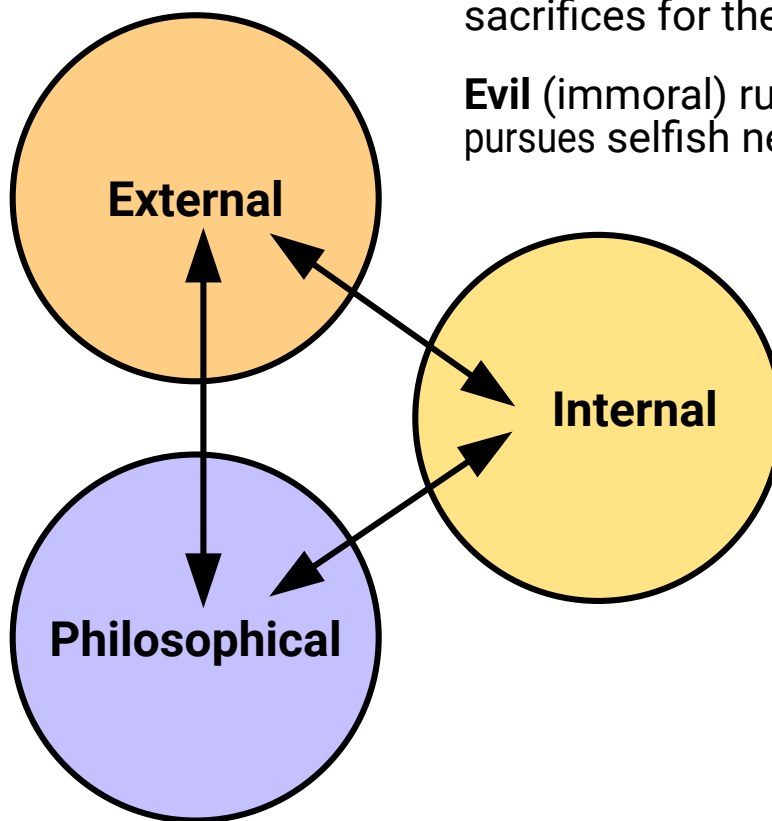
**Justice** rules when the protagonist succeeds.

**Injustice** rules when criminals succeed.

## Inner Character (Internal)

**Good** (moral) rules when a person sacrifices for the needs of others.

**Evil** (immoral) rules when a person pursues selfish needs ahead of others.



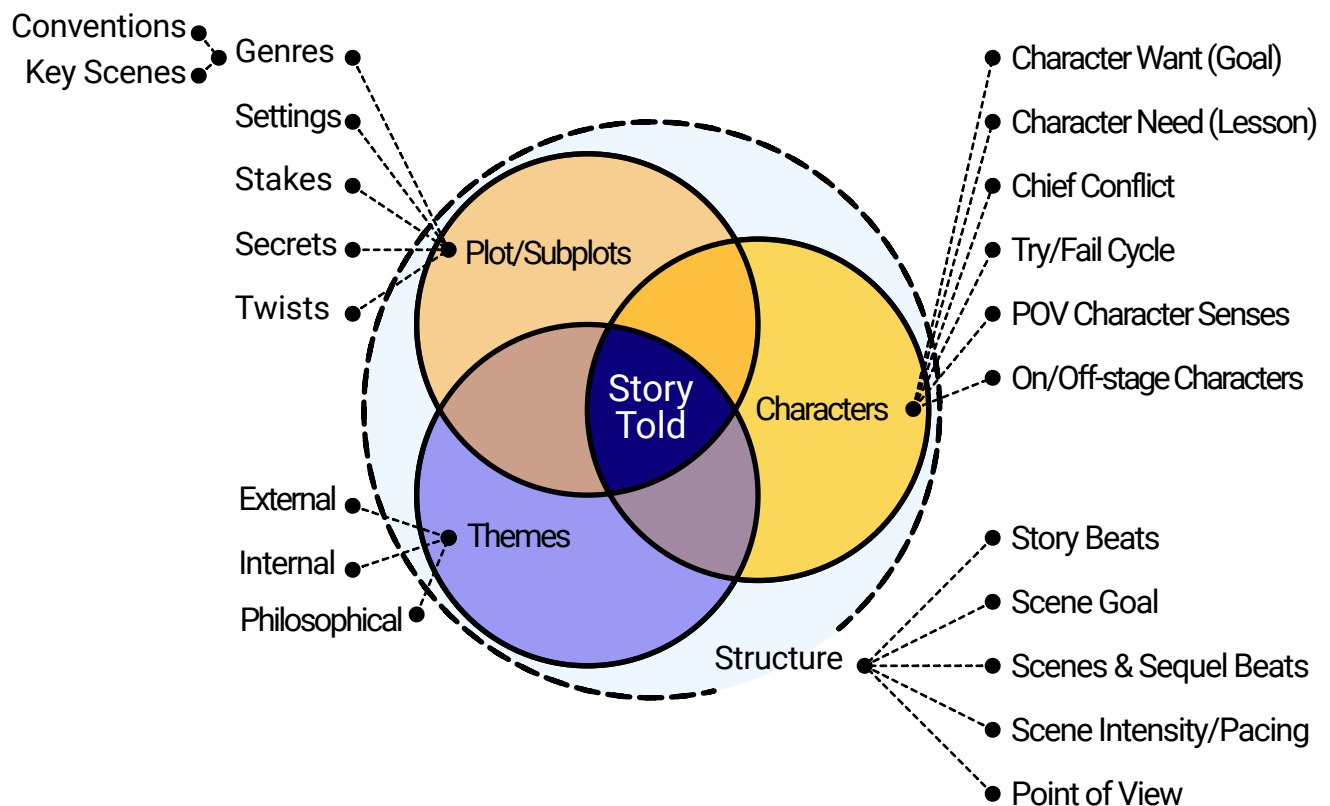
## Character Reflection (Philosophical)

**Honor** results when a person lives values without compromise.

**Shame** results when a person compromises personal values.

# Story Elements

Story elements make up the basic building blocks of storytelling. For example, characters react to plot events, giving readers the emotions they crave. Story themes often resonate with audiences long after they finish the book. Understanding story elements helps you master story structure.



The use of story elements relies on principles, *not* rules. As you look at the many details, consider how the mix influences not only the book you write but also how you gather and track the information. The Trellis Method helps you organize and manage the tasks required to produce a full-length novel.



# Scene Details

The audience reads a book from beginning to end, but writers don't work that way.

Characters take on lives of their own. Scenes dance randomly through the writer's mind. Plot insights come at unexpected moments, and not in a linear order.

Writers order scene flow and key details based on their notes from Story Beats.

<p><b>Framework Details:</b> Track the story and scene flow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key Event (Plot/Subplot)</li><li>• Genres (Conventions, Key Scene)</li><li>• Scene Purpose (Story Beats)</li><li>• Scene Structure (Hook, Setup, Trigger, Emotions, Ponder, Expectation, Choice, Climax)</li><li>• Scene Goal &amp; Obstacle</li><li>• Point of View</li></ul>	<p><b>Scene Details:</b> Provide the details from your Story Beats notes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Date &amp; Time (Start/End)</li><li>• Turning Point</li><li>• Stakes</li><li>• Intensity</li><li>• Theme (Introduced/Reinforced)</li></ul>
<p><b>Character Details:</b> Provide the character details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Want (Goal)</li><li>• Need (Lesson)</li><li>• Try/Fail Cycle</li><li>• Appearance</li><li>• Senses (See, Hear, Touch, Smell, Taste)</li><li>• Names (On-stage/Off-stage)</li></ul>	<p><b>Additional Details:</b> Supply additional details that support the scene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clues, Red Herrings, Character Misdirection, Writer Misdirection</li><li>• Foreshadowing (Switch Opened/Closed)</li><li>• Questions (Switch Opened/Closed)</li><li>• Symbols, Motifs, &amp; Objects</li><li>• Setting &amp; Weather</li><li>• Plot &amp; Subplots</li></ul>

**Writing Principle:** Writers who stay focused on giving their target audience what they want are more likely to write a book readers will love.

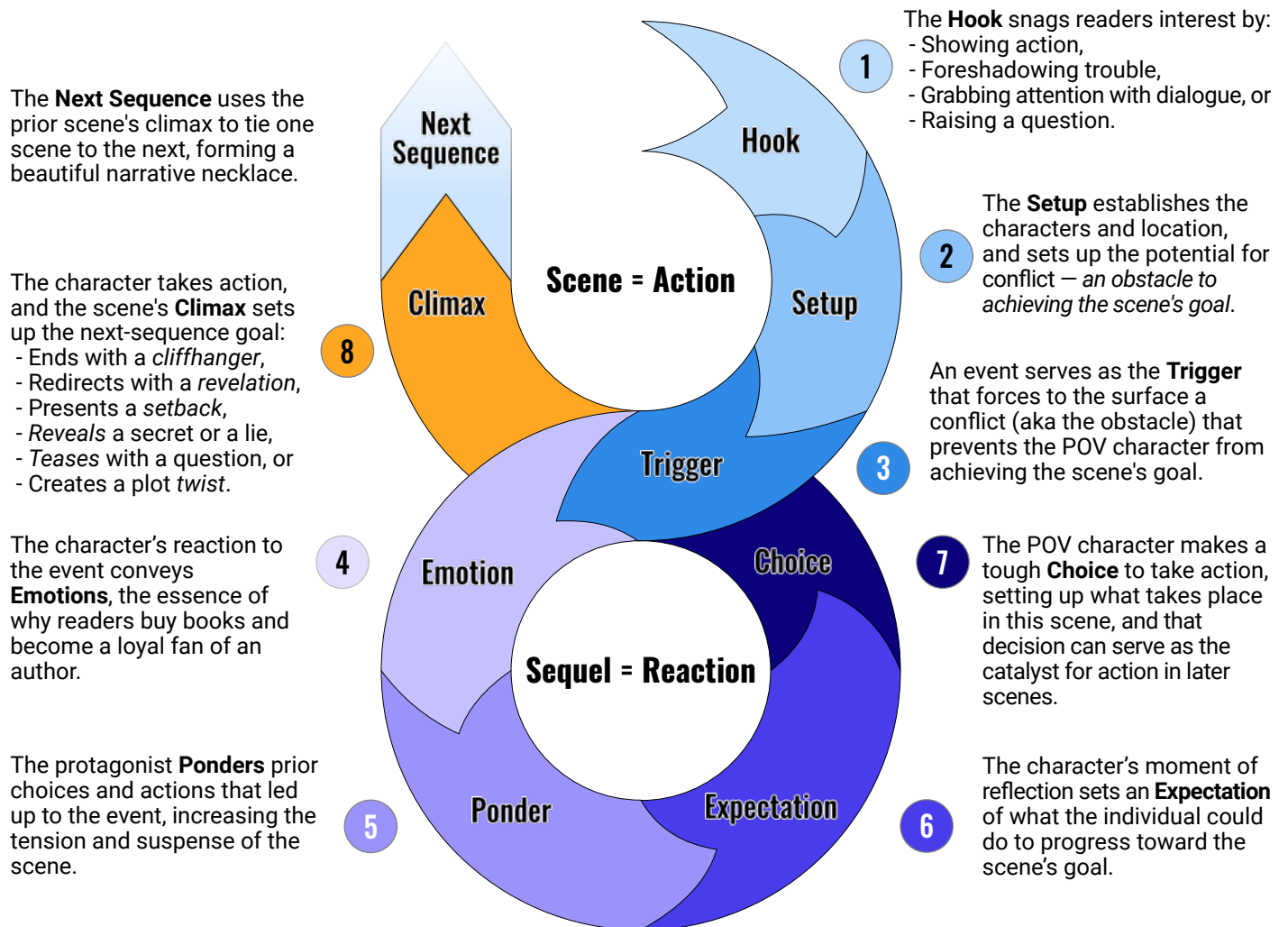




# Scene Flow

A **scene and sequel sequence** is an **action** followed by a **reaction**.

- The **scene** is a plot event where **something happens**.
- The **sequel** is the character's **emotional reaction** to the event.
- The **sequence** can occur in either **one or two scenes**.



Beats take place within sentences, paragraphs, scenes, and scene sequences. **Scene & Sequel Sequence Beats** are the *actions* and *reactions* within the scene.



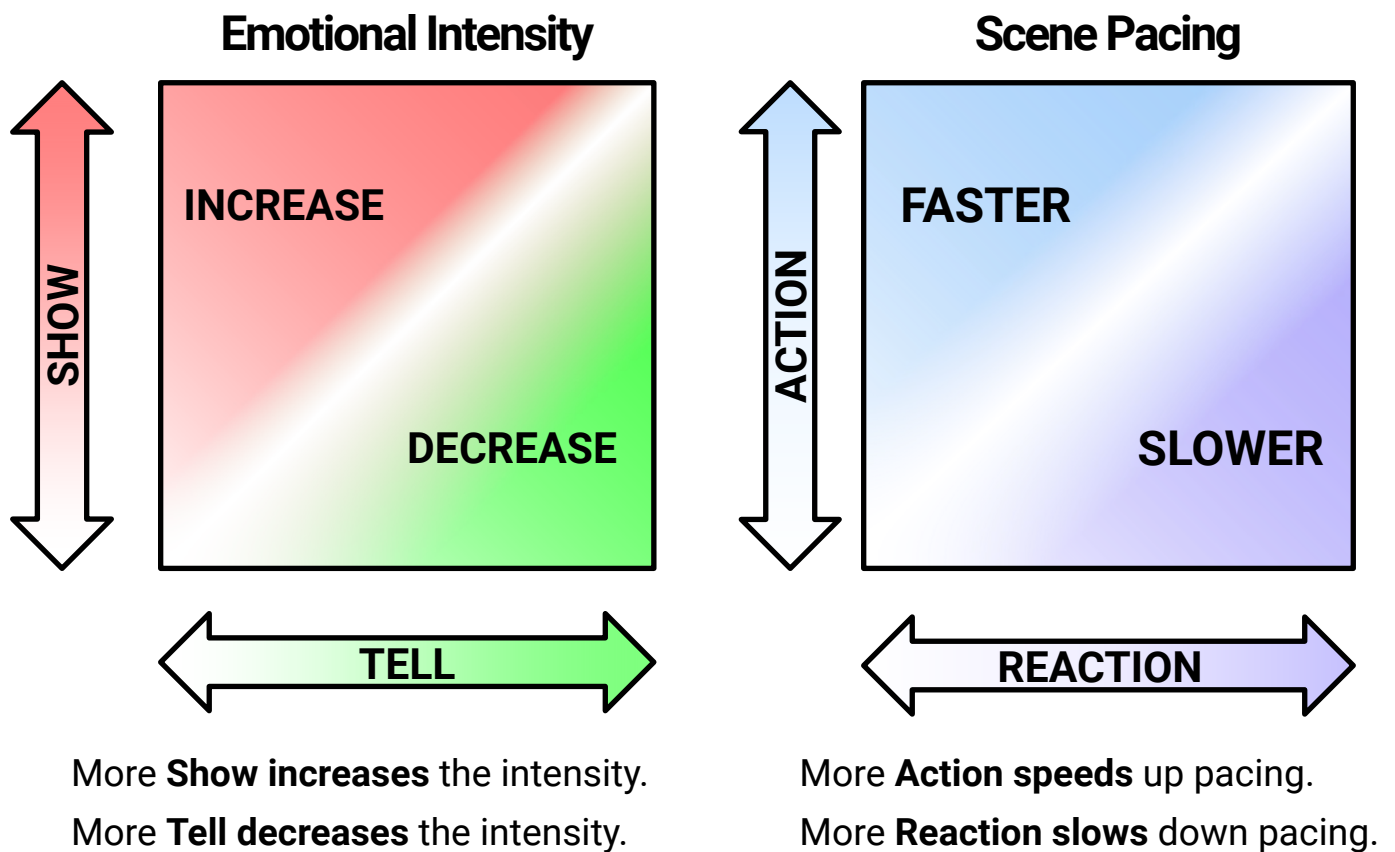
# Scene & Sequel Sequence Influences

A **scene and sequel sequence** is an **action** followed by a **reaction**.

- The **scene** is a plot event where something happens.
- The **sequel** is the character's emotional reaction to the event.
- The **sequence** can occur in either one or two scenes.

**Show and Tell** techniques influence the scene's **emotional intensity**.

Varying the amount of **Action and Reaction** influences **scene pacing**.



# The Trellis Method Checklist

## Phase I: Plan.

- ☐ Choose your **genres**.
- ☐ Define conventions & key scenes for each **genre**.
- ☐ Create the story **premise** (GO/NO GO Decision #1)
- ☐ Validate your story **premise**.
- ☐ Develop dynamic **characters** for essential roles.
- ☐ Define beginning to end **character** transformation.
- ☐ Plan your main **plot**.
- ☐ Create supporting **subplots** & define cross-overs.

## Phase II: Outline.

- ☐ Complete the **Story Spine** worksheet.
- ☐ Make the **Story Spine** GO/NO GO decision #2.
- ☐ Complete the **Story Body** worksheet.
- ☐ Make the **Story Body** GO/NO GO decision #3.
- ☐ Complete the **Story Beats** worksheet.
- ☐ Revisit and update Phase I: Prepare as needed.
- ☐ Make the **Story Body** GO/NO GO decision #4.

## Phase III: Write.

- ☐ Complete the worksheet for each **scene**.
- ☐ Track **scene** details in spreadsheet or writing app.
- ☐ Compare **scenes** to Story Beats.
- ☐ Rewrite & rearrange **scenes** to achieve story flow.
- ☐ Evaluate each **scene** for details (e.g., senses).
- ☐ Assess & update **scenes** until satisfied with story.
- ☐ Read story to ensure **scenes** connect like a chain.
- ☐ Adjust **scenes** to speed up/slow down pacing.
- ☐ Adjust **scenes** to increase/decrease intensity.
- ☐ Rearrange **scenes** to tell the best story.
- ☐ Insert/delete **scenes** for the greatest impact.
- ☐ Inspect **scenes** for consistent point of view.

## Next Steps: After you finish your novel...

- ☐ Edit your work (e.g., ProWritingAid/Hired Editor).
- ☐ Arrange for beta readers to critique your work.
- ☐ Establish a return date for beta reader feedback.
- ☐ Determine which suggestions to accept.
- ☐ Update the manuscript.
- ☐ Repeat the edits (e.g., ProWritingAid /Hired Editor).
- ☐ Choose publishing method (e.g., self; traditional).
- ☐ Make sure your book is ready for release!
- ☐ Follow a book-launch process & schedule.
- ☐ Promote your book (e.g., guest posts; ads).
- ☐ Write your next book, repeating Phases I-III.

**Note:** *The Trellis Method guides like a roadmap, but feel free to detour as needed.*

