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STORYTELLING BOOTCAMP

Providing Effective Feedback

➤ Focus on the content and not on grammar or spelling when you review each other's writing.

➤ In giving feedback, avoid general comments such as, "it's cool," "I like it" or "it was good." *What* was good?

➤ Give specific comments such as, "The fact that the race car driver in your story is blind is fascinating!"

➤ Feel free to ask many clarifying questions. For example, "Why do you say the girl is an orphan if you mention that her dad is trying to kidnap her?"

➤ Listen and do not interrupt. If you don't understand something, say so when the person speaking is finished, but do so respectfully.

➤ Be patient.

➤ Do not pass judgment and be open-minded.

➤ No put-downs.

➤ Employ the "feedback sandwich": Start with positive feedback, followed by constructive feedback and finish with another positive.

➤ Be willing to offer and receive constructive criticism. Do not get defensive.

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Logline

A **logline** is a one (or two) sentence description consisting of 20-30 words that boils down a script to its most essential details in a clear and creative manner.

A logline needs three elements to work:
- **a main character/ protagonist (who and why is this character interesting?)**
- **a goal (what does this character want? This drives the script forward)**
- **an obstacle/ antagonist (what/ who keeps the protagonist from achieving the goal?)**

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Logline Worksheet

Instructions: Over the next five minutes, come up with a story from your own life (either about you or someone you know) and turn it into a logline using the three elements of: character, goal and obstacle.

Character:

Goal:

Obstacle:

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Effective Loglines

➤ Keep it short! Don't add unnecessary information such as character names, physical attributes (unless its central to the character, the goal and the obstacle), etc.

➤ DO tell us something about the **character** (athlete, cop, singer, scientist, etc.) and use an adjective to describe the character (<u>injured</u> athlete, <u>crooked</u> cop, <u>famous</u> singer, <u>mad</u> scientist, etc.)

➤ Be clear on what the character's **goal** is. For example:
- The injured athlete wants to compete in the Olympics.
- The crooked cop wants to break off ties with the mob boss.
- The famous singer wants to quit and retire.
- The brilliant scientist wants to publish her invention which will save the world.

➤ Clearly describe the **obstacle**. For example:
- The injured athlete wants to compete in the Olympics but his jealous coach forbids it.
- The crooked cop wants to break off ties with the mob boss but the mob wants him to do one more dirty job first.
- The famous singer wants to quit and retire but her biggest fan kidnaps her and refuses to let her.
- The brilliant scientist wants to publish her invention which will save the world but her jealous rival tries to kill her and publish it himself.

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Session 1 Clip Guide

The Breadwinner Trailer:
https://youtu.be/yQBQw-Bh1pg

Jaws Trailer:
https://youtu.be/U1fu_sA7XhE

Blade Runner Trailer:
https://youtu.be/iYhJ7Mf2Oxs

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Story and Plot

❖ **STORY:** Is what a movie or book is about.

This is not to be confused with…

❖ **PLOT:** The events that are used to tell the story.

Another way to think of it is:

❖ **A STORY** is an overall view of **WHAT** happens.

❖ A **PLOT** is **HOW** it happens (and in which order).

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Story and Characters

❖ The heart of your story is a character. Your story is about your characters.

❖ Without a character, you do not have a story.

❖ Without character you have no drama and no driving force.

❖ You must figure out what motivates your characters.

❖ Characters and their motivations propel your story (and plot) forward.

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Protagonist Profile

1. Who is the protagonist? Name? Age?

2. Physical appearance? Sense of style?

3. What makes this character unique? Special skills?

4. Where is the character from?

5. How does this character talk? Accent? Slang? Halting? Quick?

6. Confidence level? Outgoing or shy?

7. Deepest fears?

8. Deepest secrets?

9. Spiritual or non-spiritual?

10. What does he/she want? (Be specific)

11. What is at stake if this goal isn't achieved?

12. What is standing in the way of achieving this goal?

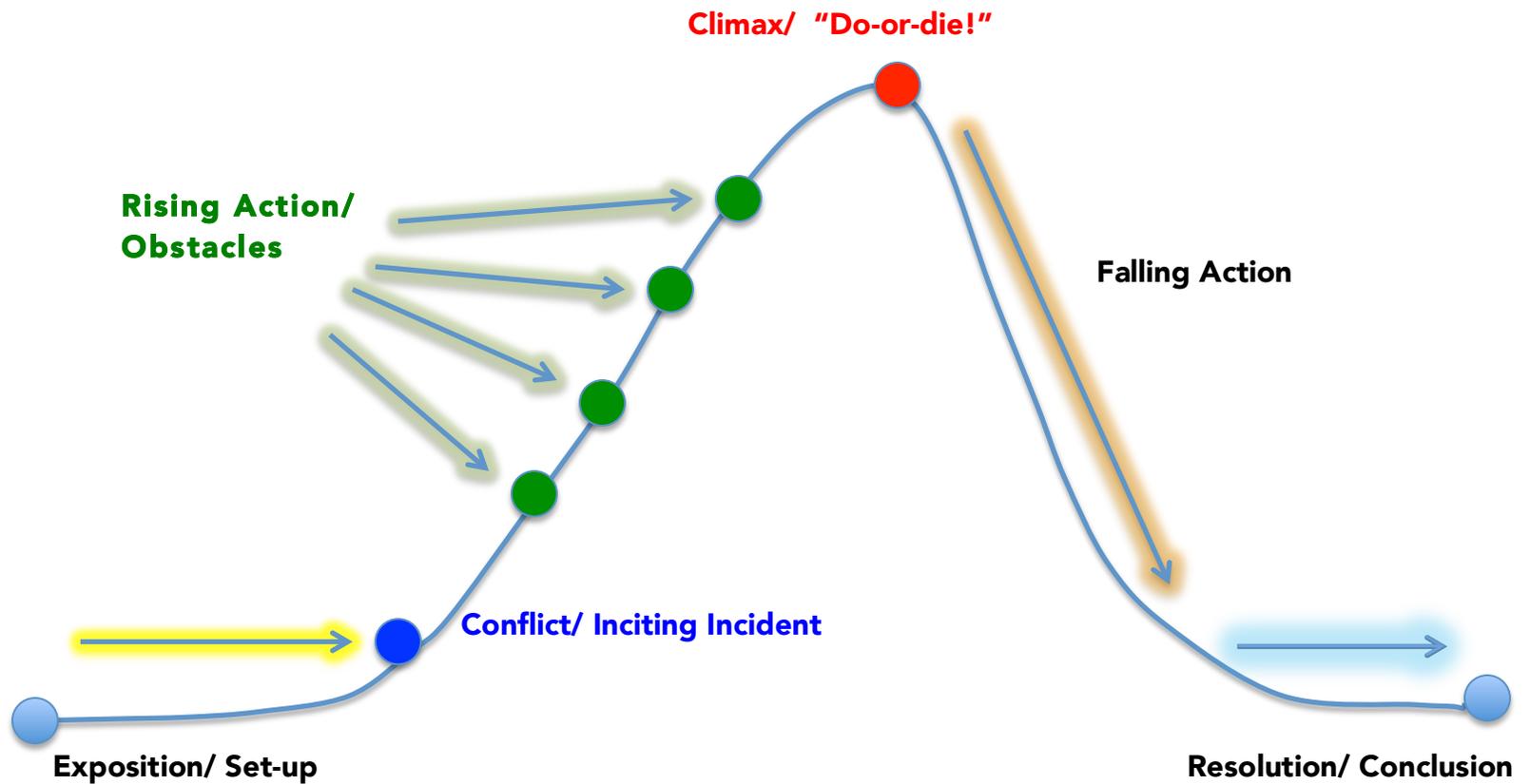13. How does your main character plan on overcoming their obstacle?

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Obstacles and Conflict

- Who is the main character?

- What is the goal?

- What are the obstacles?

- What is the conflict?

- Does the character show change?

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Diagram: Elements of Plot

Climax/ "Do-or-die!"

Rising Action/ Obstacles

Falling Action

Conflict/ Inciting Incident

Exposition/ Set-up

Resolution/ Conclusion

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Outline Worksheet

- **The set-up:**

    Who is your main character?

    Where does it happen (the setting)?

- **The conflict:**

    What causes your main character to begin their journey?

    What is their obstacle?

o **Rising Action:**

Write three obstacles that raise the stakes for your main character as he/she tries to accomplish their goal.

1.

2.

3.

o **Climax:**

What the do-or-die moment for your character? What is their point of no return?

o **Falling Action:**

What happens after the climax?

Does the main character achieve his/her goal?

o **Resolution:** How does your story end?

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POV Worksheet

Please answer the following questions.

o **What is your story about?**

o **Who's POV does your story idea take?**

o **How is this POV unique?**

o **Why does it need to be told?**

o **Why should you be the one to tell the story?**

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Screenplay Elements

Screenplays are comprised of:

➢ Scene slugs (establish scene: location type, location description, time of day)

➢ Description (less is more. Avoid using camera directions)

➢ Character slugs (keep them consistent)

➢ Dialogue

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Dialogue

Dialogue is a conversation between two or more characters.

➤ Listen carefully to how people actually speak.

➤ Remember that most communication is actually non-verbal. You need to balance how characters behave with what they do (or do not) say.

➤ Do not focus on dialogue to the exclusion of everything else. You can juxtapose what is being said as opposed to being what is shown.

➤ What is your character thinking and feeling?

➤ Dialogue can reveal the nature of a relationship between characters.

➤ Every word should have a purpose.

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Write a Scene

Write a scene with dialogue that does <u>one of the following</u>:

o Reveals tension between the main character and another character.

o Reveals a plot-twist (unforeseen circumstance).

o Reveals an interaction between the main character confronting the antagonist (obstacle/conflict).