CONFLICT

The Key to Plotting or Pantsing
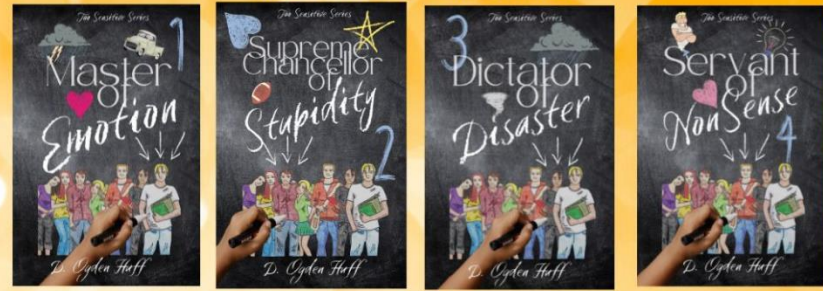
DeAnn Ogden Huff

BROOKLYN BRIDGES SERIES

Brooklyn BRIDGES — A Novel — D Ogden Huff

Brooklyn HEIGHTS — An 1880s Novella — D Ogden Huff

Brooklyn DEPTHS — A 1920s Novella — D Ogden Huff

NEW RELEASES!

TOO SENSITIVE SERIES

The Sensitive Series 1 — Master of Emotion — D. Ogden Huff

The Sensitive Series 2 — Supreme Changellor of Stupidity — D. Ogden Huff

The Sensitive Series 3 — Dictator of Disaster — D. Ogden Huff

The Sensitive Series 4 — Servant of NonSense — D. Ogden Huff

D. OGDEN HUFF

BECAUSE EVERY GENRE NEEDS ROMANCE

EPIC TALES FROM THE HIGH SEAS — ABOVE, BELOW, AND BEYOND THE SEA

Michael 21 — 2 FRAGILE HEARTS — 1 EXPERIMENT — 0 CHANCE THAT LOVE SURVIVES — D. OGDEN HUFF

Once Upon a TOUR — D. OGDEN HUFF

STAND ALONE NOVELS

Create CRAFT CRITIQUE AND MORE — A GUIDE TO THE MANY FACETS OF WRITING

WARDS & RUMORS OF WARDS — AN AMERICAN NIGHT WRITERS ASSOCIATION SHORT STORY ANTHOLOGY DEDICATED TO OUR FOUNDER, MARSHA WARD
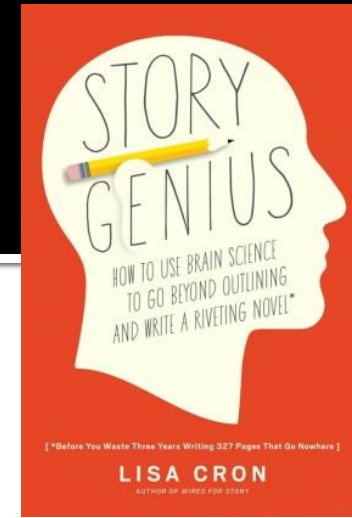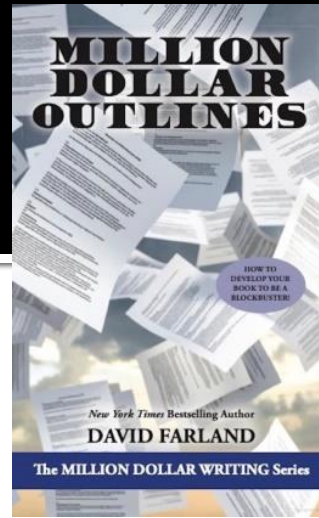
From Ashes

Kismet — TALES FROM A DATING APP
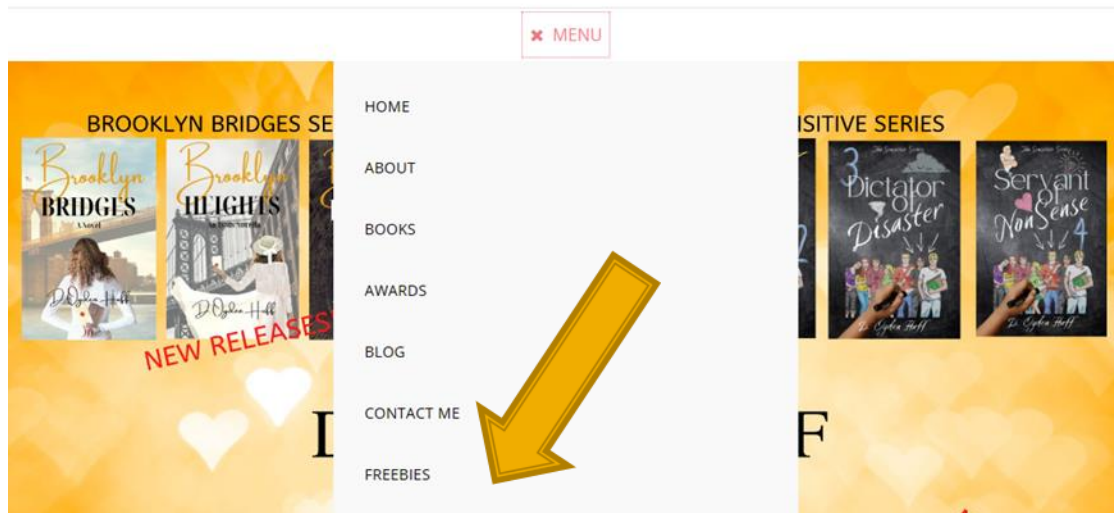
GRIMM EVER AFTER

ANTHOLOGIES

CONFLICT

- My Sources:
  - *Million Dollar Outlines* by David Farland
  - *Story Genius: How to Use Brain Science to Go Beyond Outlining and Write a Riveting Novel (Before You Waste Three Years Writing 327 Pages That Go Nowhere)* by Lisa Cron

My Notes

- Find a .pdf of this presentation and a worksheet on my website:
- https://www.dogdenhuff.com/

CONFLICT

- We avoid conflict in real life but crave it in our stories. Why?

Lisa Cron claims that our brains are hardwired for story. Stories allow us to simulate intense experiences in a safe environment and, thus, learn how to react.

"Stories instill meaning directly into our belief system the same way experience does—not by telling us what is right, but by allowing us to feel it ourselves." Lisa Cron

CONFLICT

"According to Jonathan Gottschall, author of The Storytelling Animal, functional MRI (fMRI) studies reveal that when we're reading a story, our brain activity isn't that of an observer, but of a participant." **Lisa Cron**
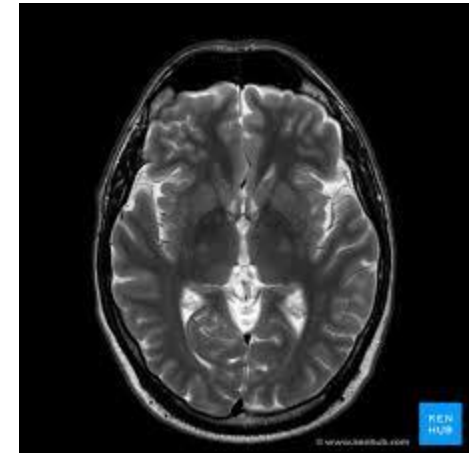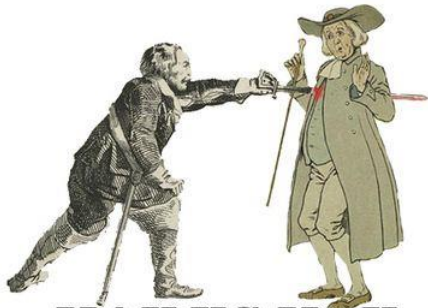

"The takeaway is: We don't turn to story to escape reality. We turn to story to navigate reality." **Lisa Cron**

"What am I going to learn here that will help me not only survive, but prosper?" **Lisa Cron**

Which type of conflict is most important?

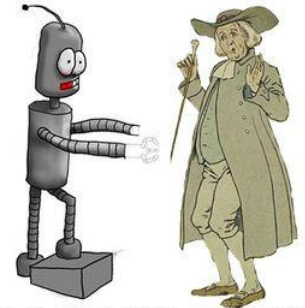TYPES OF CONFLICT

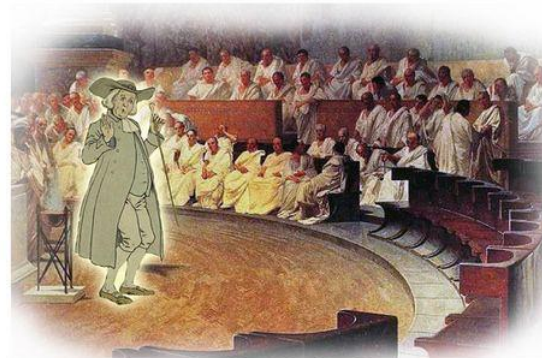MAN VS MAN   MAN VS NATURE   MAN VS SELF   MAN VS TECH

MAN VS SUPERNATURAL   MAN VS SOCIETY   MAN VS GOD

PERSON VS SELF

"Any story that doesn't have an identity conflict at its heart will pale in comparison when set aside one that does have such a conflict." Dave Farland

"No matter how completely you devise a character's emotional and psychological history, that character will not come to life and feel complex unless he has conflicting feelings and philosophies about things. In short, the character has to have "duality." Everyone is torn about something. If your audience does feel that they know what your protagonist is going to do in any situation, it's a sign that your protagonist isn't conflicted enough." Dave Farland

PERSON VS SELF

- In *Story Genius*, Lisa Cron claims that a successful story depends on the protagonist's inner struggle and internal transformation.

"Story is about an internal struggle, not an external one. It's about what the protagonist has to learn, to overcome, to deal with internally in order to solve the problem that the external plot poses. That means that the internal problem predates the events in the plot, often by decades. So if you don't know, specifically, what your protagonist wants, what internal misbelief is standing in his way—and most important, why—how on earth can you construct a plot that will force him to deal with it?" Lisa Cron

PERSON VS SELF

- "Story first, plot second, so that your novel has the juice to instantly captivate your readers, biologically hooking them before they know what hit 'em." Lisa Cron

So...what is a STORY?

Theme (What's your point?)

+ MC Desire (Want)

+ MC Misbelief

+ MC Past Experiences (including Wound)

+ MC Change (from what they want to what they need)

= STORY

PERSON VS SELF

Themes in Literature

Judgment • Survival • Peace and War • Love • Heroism

Good and Evil • Circle of Life • Suffering • Deception • Coming of Age

ThoughtCo.

- Theme

"What's your point? That's the source of your protagonist's internal conflict… That's why the first thing you need to do… is to decide what point you want your story to make, because the point will tell you exactly what kind of internal problem your story will be about." Lisa Cron

PERSON VS SELF

- Desire (Want and Need)

Want = What the character <u>thinks</u> they need to become "happy"
Need = What the character <u>actually</u> needs to become whole/happy

WANT   NEED

IT'S HARD TO DO THE
RIGHT THING WHEN
THERE IS SYRUP INVOLVED

PERSON VS SELF

- Misbelief

"All protagonists stand on the threshold of the novel they're about to be flung into with two things about to burn a hole in their pocket: A deep-seated desire—something they've wanted for a very long time. A defining misbelief that stands in the way of achieving that desire. This is where the fear that's holding them back comes from." Lisa Cron

The Lie the Character Believes

helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com

PERSON VS SELF
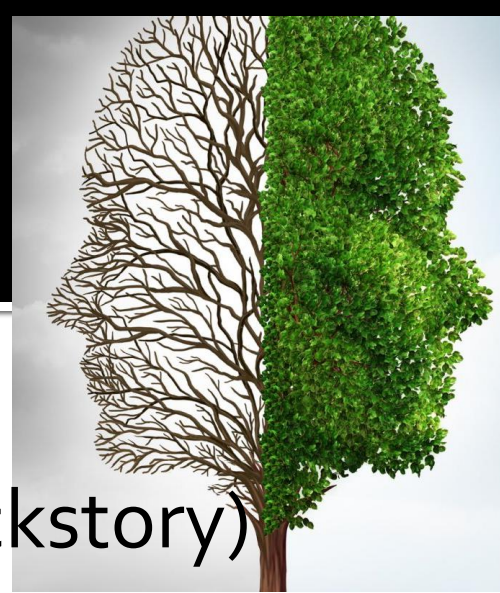
- Past Experiences (Wound and Backstory)

"You can't write about how someone changes unless you know, specifically, what they're changing from. You can't write about a problem unless you know, specifically, what caused it. And as real life has taught us all too well, by the time we're forced to face a thorny problem, chances are it's been building for quite a while—years, decades, often our whole life up to that moment." Lisa Cron

PERSON VS SELF

- Past Experiences

"Here's the real truth: your novel itself begins "in the middle of the thing"—the "thing" being the story. What starts on page one is the second half of the story, when the plot kicks in. The second half—the novel itself—will contain large parts of the first in the form of flashbacks, dialogue, and snippets of memory as the protagonist struggles to make sense of what's happening, and what to do about it." Lisa Cron

PERSON VS SELF

Questions to Ask:
- What's my point? (THEME)
- What happened to force MC to act? (PROBLEM)
- What does my MC want more than anything? (DESIRE)
- How does my MC view the world incorrectly? (MISBELIEF)
- What great fear is keeping them from achieving that desire? (WOUND)
- What happened in my MC's past that created that misbelief and wound? (PAST EXPERIENCES)
- Given my MC's misbelief, what does my MC think is the worst thing that could happen? (CONFLICT)

PERSON VS SELF

Each question should be answered by an EVENT:
- Event that Introduces Theme
- Event where MC decides how to solve the Problem
- Event that introduces MC Desire
- Event that introduces MC Misbelief
- Past Experience #1 that created Wound
- Past Experience #2 that created Wound
- Past Experience #3 that created Wound
- Event where MC learns the Misbelief is False
- Event that shows that MC has changed

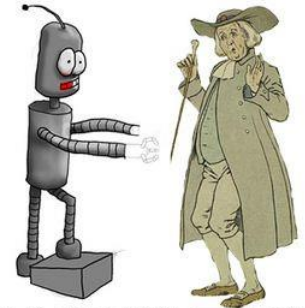# What about the rest?

TYPES OF CONFLICT
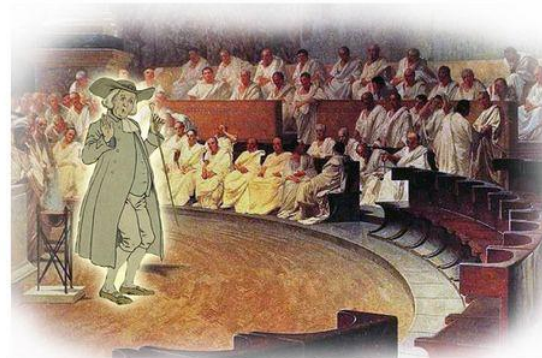
MAN VS MAN   MAN VS NATURE   MAN VS SELF   MAN VS TECH

MAN VS SUPERNATURAL   MAN VS SOCIETY   MAN VS GOD

Designed by Corey Truax and created for https://quintessentialeditor.com

PERSON VS EVERYTHING ELSE

- How plan or analyze your conflicts:
  - Identify Your Main Characters –Your main characters in a story include anyone whom you will follow through the story. Map both your characters' and villain's growth arcs.
  - Identify Your Main Conflicts - man vs. self, man vs. man, man vs. society, man vs. nature, man vs. God, man vs. technology, man vs. supernatural
  - Identify Conflicts for each of Your Characters.
  - Embellish on the Conflicts - Brainstorm specific events in which your characters will try to resolve them.

Action vs Conflict

Don't confuse conflict with action. Just because something is happening in your story doesn't mean that there is conflict. Two characters playing a friendly game of racquetball is action. Two characters in the same game who are driven to beat each other, at all costs, is conflict.

Action OR Conflict? *Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. Jack fell down and broke his crown, and Jill came tumbling after.*

Action OR Conflict?

Action OR Conflict? Jill wants to bring a bucket of water from the magic well to her dying father to save his life, but Jack needs the well's bucket to bail the water from his sinking boat, which is his only means of making a living. Both desires can't be fulfilled at the same time. If Jill takes the bucket to her father, then Jack's boat might sink. If Jack takes the bucket to bail out his boat, then Jill's father dies.

HOW TO PLAN CONFLICT

- Planning Conflict:
  - State the Conflict in terms of **"Objective A," BUT "Conflicting Problem B."**

  - Example:
  - Jill <u>wants</u> to save her dying father and prove her worth to the village, BUT the magic water in the well only works for the pure in heart and she's afraid her anger for the village will stop the magic.

HOW TO PLAN CONFLICT

- ## Planning Conflict:
  - The OBJECTIVE and the CONFLICTING PROBLEM should be introduced in separate events that show (not tell) the problem.

Example:

<u>Introduce Problem with Event-</u> Show Jill caring for her father and the doctor's diagnosis that her father is dying. Doctor suggests that when her father dies, she might want to leave the village.

<u>Introduce Conflicting Problem with Event</u> – Dialogue between Jill and her father about how the magic water from the well works (only works for the pure in heart and she's afraid her anger for the village will stop the magic)

HOW TO PLAN CONFLICT

- Planning Conflict:
  - There should be at least three attempts to resolve the problem.
  - "….if the hero does not have to make three attempts to resolve a problem, then the problem was not difficult enough in the first place. And any villain who does not at least try to victimize people more than twice isn't really a quite villain—yet." Dave Farland

HOW TO PLAN CONFLICT

- Planning Conflict:
  - Each increasing attempt to resolve the problem should **deepen** and **broaden** the problem. **Increasing effort**. **Increasing disasters** and consequences.
  - "…each attempt to resolve a problem should require **greater effort and resources** from your hero, and each attempt should also require you as an author to spend more time creating the scenes than the previous attempt…. Often we say that the conflict "deepens" or "broadens." **A conflict that deepens is one that becomes more personal to your protagonist**, one that strikes closer to home. …But this story also "broadens." **A conflict that broadens is one that begins to touch more and more lives as the story grows**." Dave Farland

HOW TO PLAN CONFLICT

- Planning Conflict:
  - Each conflict must be resolved by the end of the plot.
  - "When you boil a story down to its fundamentals, an ending is nothing more than a series of conflict resolutions." Dave Farland

SCENE/SEQUEL

Scenes don't consist ONLY of a goal, attempt, and disaster, followed immediately by another goal, attempt, and disaster. When you're hit with a disaster you have to recover. You react, physically and emotionally, to your last disastrous attempt. You need a SEQUEL.

Elements of a Scene

1. Goal
2. Conflict
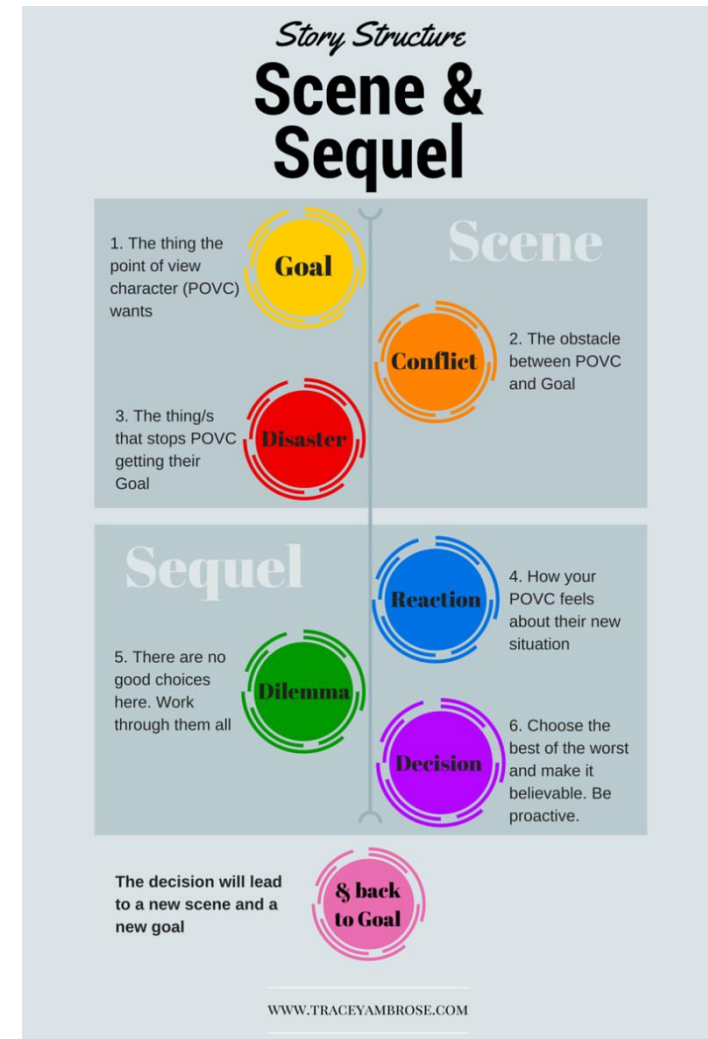3. Disaster

(In that order)

Elements of a Sequel

1. Reaction
2. Dilemma
3. Decision

(In that order)

SCENE/SEQUEL

- Planning Conflict:
  - Dwight V. Swain, in Techniques of the Selling Writer (1965) defined the **structure of a <u>scene</u> as:(1) goal, (2) conflict, (3) disaster** and the **structure of a <u>sequel</u> as: (1) reaction, (2) dilemma, and (3) decision**.

Story Structure
Scene & Sequel

1. The thing the point of view character (POVC) wants — **Goal**

Scene

2. The obstacle between POVC and Goal — **Conflict**

3. The thing/s that stops POVC getting their Goal — **Disaster**

Sequel

4. How your POVC feels about their new situation — **Reaction**

5. There are no good choices here. Work through them all — **Dilemma**

6. Choose the best of the worst and make it believable. Be proactive. — **Decision**

The decision will lead to a new scene and a new goal — **& back to Goal**

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What to do with EACH conflict:

Our plan for EACH CONFLICT would look like this:

- Conflict (Stated as: OBJECTIVE, BUT CONFLICTING PROBLEM)
- Objective Introduced
- Conflicting Problem Introduced
- First Attempt to Resolve
- Conflict Discussed
- Second Attempt to Resolve - Increasing Intensity and Consequence
- Conflict Discussed
- Third Attempt to Resolve - Highest Intensity and Consequence
- Conflict Discussed
- Solution
- Solution Discussed

How do I start? Jill's Story

- Find a .pdf of this presentation and a worksheet on my website:
- https://www.dogdenhuff.com/
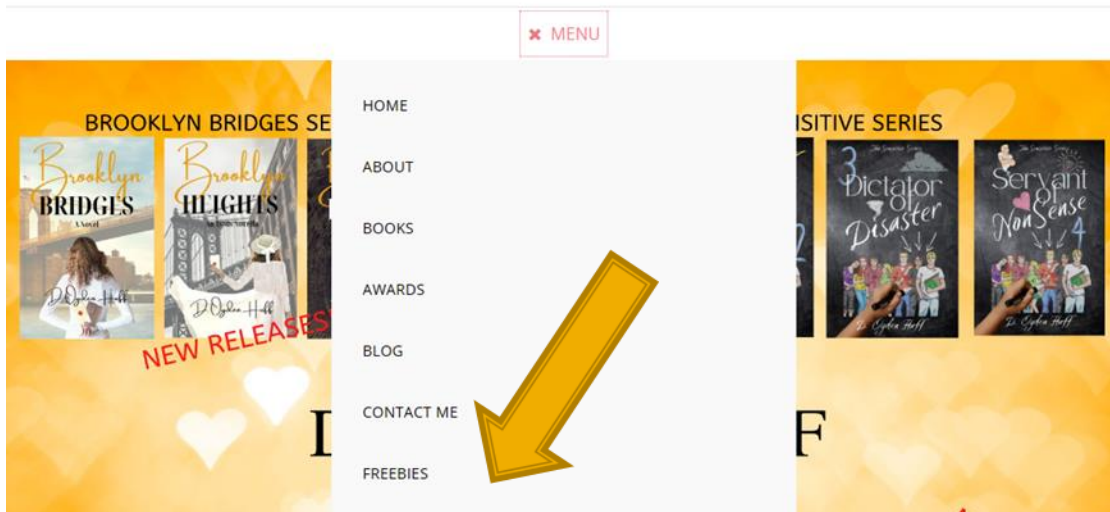
How do I start? Jill's Story

Questions to Ask:

- What's my point? (THEME) Our worth shouldn't be dependent on what others think of us.
- What does my MC want more than anything? (DESIRE) Jill WANTS to be valued.
- How does your MC view the world incorrectly? (MISBELIEF) Jill BELIEVES that if she saves her father's life, her village will value her.
- What great fear is keeping them from achieving that desire? (WOUND) Her village has de-valued her efforts all her life.
- What happened in my MC's past that created that misbelief? (THREE PAST EXPERIENCES) Jill tries to gain village's respect by learning to cook, working hard, and boasting.
- Given my MC's misbelief, what does my MC think is the worst thing that could happen? (CONFLICT) Her father could die.

Jill's Conflicts

Person vs. Self/Jill vs. Herself

Internal Conflict (Person vs Self) should be tied to Theme of "Our worth shouldn't be dependent on what others think of us."

Jill wants to save her dying father to prove her worth to the village, BUT the magic water only works for the pure in heart and she's afraid her anger for her village will stop the magic.

Jill's Conflicts

**Person vs. Person
Jill vs. Jack**

Jill needs the well's only bucket to hold the magic water that can save her father, BUT Jack needs the bucket to bail out his boat.

Jill's Conflicts

**Person vs. Supernatural
Jill vs. the Hill**

Jill wants to reach the top of the hill where the well sits, BUT the hill is covered with magical entrapments, like rocks that jump under her feet and twist her ankle.

Jill's Conflicts

In each case, the character has an objective or desire BUT there is another problem that gets in the way of the character accomplishing the first goal.

Person vs Technology
Person vs Nature
Person vs Society
Person vs God

Jill vs _____

Jill wants _____, BUT _____.

Jack's Conflicts

Person vs. Self
Jack vs. Himself

Internal Conflict (Person vs Self) should be tied to Theme of "Our worth shouldn't be dependent on what others think of us."

Jack wants to escape his step-mother, but a hit on his head is causing hallucinations where Jack thinks Jill is his step-mother who doesn't value him.

Jack's Conflicts

Person vs. Nature
Jack vs. the Storm

Jack wants to deliver his cargo in order to make enough money to leave his mean step-mother's home, BUT a huge storm swamps his boat and he must bail it out before he continues.

Jack's Conflicts

Person vs Person

Person vs Technology

Person vs Supernatural

Person vs Society

Person vs God

Jack vs _____

Jack wants _____, BUT _____.

Remember:

#1: If a conflict can be solved in fewer than three attempts, it's not a significant enough conflict.
#2: Each attempt to solve the conflict must increase in effort and intensity. Each attempt must end in disaster of increasing intensity and consequence.
#3: Each scene needs a sequel.
#4: Each conflict must be resolved.

What to do with EACH conflict:

Our plan for EACH CONFLICT would look like this:

- Conflict (Stated as: OBJECTIVE, BUT CONFLICTING PROBLEM)
- Objective Introduced
- Conflicting Problem Introduced
- First Attempt to Resolve
- Conflict Discussed
- Second Attempt to Resolve - Increasing Intensity and Consequence
- Conflict Discussed
- Third Attempt to Resolve - Highest Intensity and Consequence
- Conflict Discussed
- Solution
- Solution Discussed

What to do with each conflict:

<u>Conflict 1</u>: Jill needs the well's only bucket to hold the magic water, BUT Jack needs the bucket to bail out his boat (Man vs. Man).

Objective Introduced: Jill's father collapses and, in a whisper, he tells her about the only cure—water from a magic well.

Conflicting Problem Introduced: Jack's boat is caught in a storm and runs aground on a sandy reef with his boat full of water. On a hill above the beach, he sees a well, and he's sure there's a bucket hanging at the end of a rope. He swims to shore, heading toward his only hope.

Attempt #1: Jill finally makes it to the top of the rocky hill, only to find a boy there, hauling the bucket up by the rope. She explains her predicament and asks him to give her the bucket. Jack laughs at her fairy tale and then ignores her.

Conflict Discussed: Jill remembers the last time someone ignored her—a village boy she'd had a crush on. His slight had embarrassed her in front of her friends.

Attempt #2: Jack ignoring Jill makes her angry, and she demands the bucket. She stomps her foot, forgetting that she'd twisted her ankle earlier, and screams in pain. Jack thinks she's the local lunatic and uses the rope to tie her up.

Conflict Discussed: Jill has some very angry and pointed words to share with Jack, in a tone that's not at all polite.

Attempt #3: Jack turns to walk away with the bucket, and Jill lunges for him. She catches his heel, making him trip, and he hits his head on one of the rocks.

Conflict Discussed: Jill worries to herself because she now must care for two hurt people, yet she's tied up.

Solution: With Jack hallucinating, Jill is able to get loose and tie Jack to the well so she can fill the bucket with water. She takes it to her father and then goes back to rescue Jack's boat with the bucket and her father's boat. Jill returns the bucket to the well and gives some water to Jack.

Solution Discussed: Once Jack's head clears, Jill explains what she's done, and they become friends.

What to do with each conflict:

Conflict 2: Jill wants to reach the top of the hill where the well sits, BUT the hill is covered with magical entrapments which keep her from reaching the well (Man vs. Supernatural).

Objective Introduced: Jill's father collapses and, in a whisper, he tells her about the only cure—water from a magic well. (Note that this objective is the same as Conflict 1. That's okay. Some events will be duplicated.)

Conflicting Problem Introduced: Jill's father warns her that the well is at the top of an enchanted hill.

Attempt #1: The second she steps onto the slope of the hill, a rock jumps under her foot, making her twist her ankle. She retreats and goes to find something to wrap her ankle.

Conflict Discussed: She meets an old woman who gives her a bandage but warns her about more dangers.

Attempt #2: Jill tries to ascend the hill again but is stopped by a ring of thorny bushes that rise up suddenly. She climbs a tree with a branch that reaches over the bushes and jumps.

Conflict Discussed: Jill talks to herself as she assesses the damage to her other ankle. Now both ankles are hurt. And her elbow is scraped.

Attempt #3: Once Jill gets the water from the well, she must find a way down the hill without spilling the water. As she starts down, a root grows up and trips her. She falls down the hill, spilling the water from the bucket as she tumbles.

Conflict Discussed: Jill lies on the ground at the bottom of the hill and contemplates giving up.

Solution: Jill realizes that her clothes are soaked in the water and the bucket is next to her. She wrings her wet clothes into the bucket and takes the water to her father.

Solution Discussed: Jill asks the old woman why Jack could get to the top of the hill unharmed and the woman tells her that Jack wanted the bucket, not the magic water. The hill knew that, somehow.

What to do with each conflict:

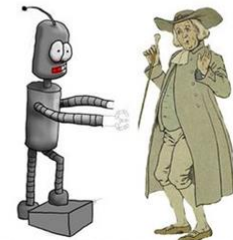Now, plan attempts for every other conflict you've discovered.

What do I do now?

Each conflict can have at least ten events, meaning that our five Jill and Jack conflicts (after adding "Story" events) might generate 60+ plot events. Now, you need to get them in the order that you want them to appear in your book.

You already know that, for each conflict, the events and discussions should stay in the order you planned them so the conflict escalates.

How to Organize Events

Elements of a Scene

1. Goal
2. Conflict
3. Disaster

(In that order)

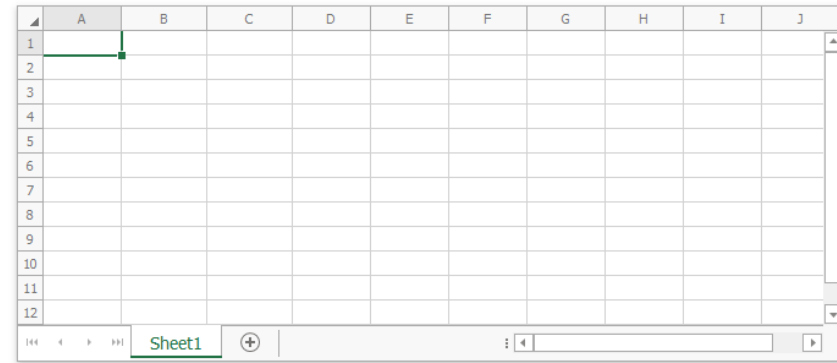**Elements of a Sequel**

1. Reaction
2. Dilemma
3. Decision

(In that order)

As you group events into scenes, remember to organize them by Scene and Sequel elements.

What do I do now?

There are two methods I suggest for keeping track of conflict points:
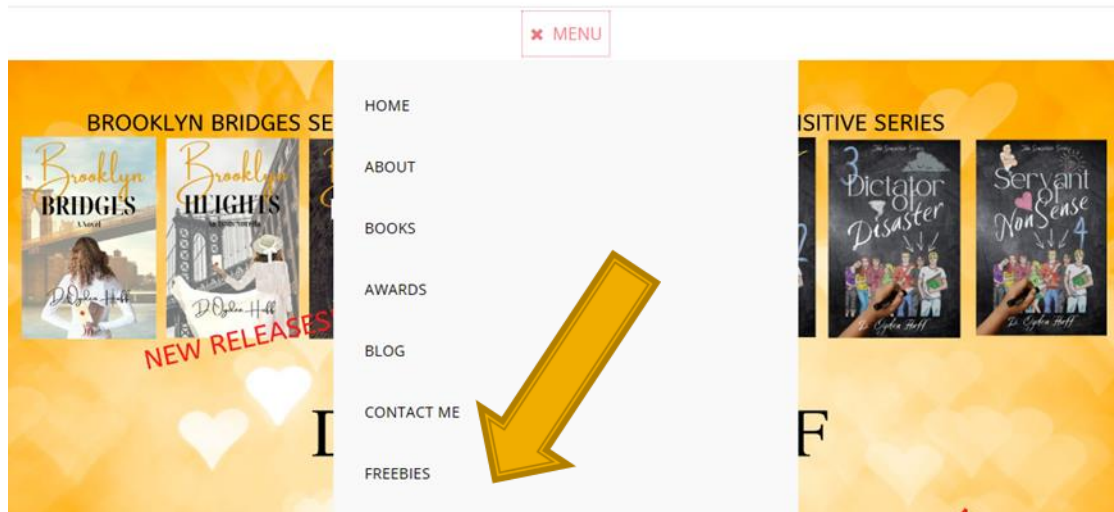
The Spreadsheet Method.

The Note Card Method

Demonstration: Jill's Story

- Find a .pdf of this presentation and a worksheet on my website:
- https://www.dogdenhuff.com/

The Spreadsheet Method

1. Label a sheet "Conflict" and in column A add row labels to match our outline items:
Conflict (OBJECTIVE, BUT CONFLICTING PROBLEM)
Objective Introduced
Conflicting Problem Introduced
First Attempt to Resolve
Conflict Discussed
Second Attempt to Resolve - Increasing Intensity and Consequence
Conflict Discussed
Third Attempt to Resolve - Highest Intensity and Consequence
Conflict Discussed
Solution
Solution Discussed
2. In column B, type your first conflict (Objective, BUT Conflicting Problem) on the same row that's labelled "Conflict" in col. A.
3. Add each of the events/discussions relating to the conflict in col. B into the corresponding row. Start each cell with a typed label, "B1,B2, B3 ...," in the order they appear on your outline. For instance, the event that introduces your objective would be B1. The event that introduces your conflicting problem would be B2. And so on ...
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for each of your conflicts.

The Spreadsheet Method

5. When your spreadsheet is filled in, copy the range of cells that contain events and discussions and paste it into another sheet. Label this one "Outline."

6. In the Outline sheet, I label an unused column "Outline" Then I read the events on the first row and decide what I want to happen FIRST in my story. I drag that event into my outline column. Then I choose the second event and drag it into my outline column in the next row. I continue choosing and dragging the next event/discussion until all the items are gone.

7. I highlight this "Outline" column of cells and copy it. Then I paste it into my word document where I'll be writing my manuscript. I write the first scene based on the first event (or events) and place it BEFORE my outline. When I "use" an event in my writing I simply erase that event in the outline, so I always have my outline of "unused" events at the end of my manuscript.

8. Before I finish writing, I peek at the next few events in my outline so I can brainstorm until my next writing opportunity.

9. If I'm in the mood to write a scene out of order, I go to the place in the outline where I think it will work best and write the scene there.

10. Theoretically, when I change a planned event or solution to one I like better, I should go back to my spreadsheet and update my outline. In practice, I seldom do.

11. I keep writing until I've used all the events/discussions/solutions and my first draft is done. The same guidelines for the note card method also apply to the spreadsheet method.

The Note Card Method

1. Write your first conflict (Objective, BUT Conflicting Problem) on a note card. Label this notecard "A." For instance, our first notecard would read: "Conflict A: Jill needs the well's only bucket to hold the magic water, BUT Jack needs the bucket to bail out his boat."

2. Write each of the events/discussions relating to your first conflict on a separate note card. Label each notecard "A1, A2, A3 ..." in the order they appear on your outline. For instance, the event that introduces your objective would be labelled A1. The event that introduces your conflicting problem would be A2. And so on ....

3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for each of your conflicts. We would end with six sets of eleven notecards (66, in all).

4. Lay your six notecard piles (six piles of eleven cards) side-by-side in a row in front of you.

5. Underneath each conflict card, should be the pile of corresponding cards IN ORDER with A1 on top and A10 on bottom.

6. Now, with the row of conflict card piles in front of you, remove the top card of each pile (the conflict cards listed in #4 A-F above) and set them aside. The cards that are left (labelled A1 through F10) each contain an event/plot point.

7. Read the events on the top cards (A1 through F1) and decide what you want to happen FIRST in your story. Pick up that card and lay it FACE DOWN in front of you. Choose the second event and lay that card down. Continue choosing the next event/discussion from the six top cards until all the cards are gone. It's like a game!

8. Put a rubber band around the cards, and pull them out when you're ready to write. Write the first scene based on the first event (or events.) When you "use" an event in your writing, put that card to the back of your pile.

9. Before you finish and replace the rubber band, peek at the next few cards so you can brainstorm until your next writing opportunity.

10. When you change a planned event or solution to one you like better, jot a note on your card. This finished stack of notecards will help you write a summary later.

11. Keep writing until you've used all the events and your book is done.

Guideline for Both Methods

Some Guidelines
• As you put the events in "book" order, you DO NOT have to pick all of the "1" events before you can choose a "2." It's even okay to have a whole pile/column gone before you start on another, if that's what you want to do. For instance, with our Jill vs. the Hill conflict (Conflict B in #4), Jill must make three unsuccessful attempts and one successful one to get up the hill BEFORE she ever meets Jack. That means that cards B1 through B9 will ALL come before card A2 (see #2 above.)
• It's okay to have an event be an attempt for more than one conflict. For instance, there will be a conflict of Jill vs. Jack, but also another of Jack vs. Jill. Some of the same events and discussions might occur, but some events, as well as their internal thought discussions, will be different. Just make sure you pick up those "same event" cards at the same time.
• It's also okay to leave events blank if you haven't come up with a great idea yet. Simply label it "Event (or discussion) that _____ (accomplishes a specific objective.)"
• Some writers plot all the attempts but then leave all the solutions blank, figuring out the ending once the protagonist has been brought to the lowest point.
• The most successful endings are ones where several "solution" events happen at the same time, or very near each other.
• An outline is a suggestion, not a law. Sometimes the words or characters take charge, and as long as they are accomplishing your goals, your outline can change and adjust.

The Note Card Method for Pantsers

1. It's still important to identify some of your potential conflicts ahead of time. Write your first conflict (Objective, BUT Conflicting Problem) on a note card. Label this notecard "A."

2. Label each notecard with "A1, A2, A3 …" and the type of event/discussion in the order they appear on our outline here:

Objective Introduced

Conflicting Problem Introduced

First Attempt to Resolve

1st Conflict Discussed

Second Attempt to Resolve - Increasing Intensity and Consequence

2nd Conflict Discussed

Third Attempt to Resolve - Highest Intensity and Consequence

3rd Conflict Discussed

Solution

Solution Discussed

3. For instance, the card that introduces your objective would be labelled, "A1 - Introduce objective - Jill needs the well's only bucket to hold the magic water." The card that introduces your conflicting problem would be labelled, "A2 - Introduce problem - Jack needs the bucket to bail out his boat." The next card might read, "A3 - Jill's first attempt to get bucket." You'll notice that there are no actual events listed, only the type of event/discussion that's needed.

The Note Card Method for Pantsers

4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for each of your conflict.
5. If you have a few events in mind already, go ahead and add a note about the event to the appropriate card.
6. You won't place the cards in any order, but as you "discover" the event that is the first attempt, simply jot a note about the event you chose onto the appropriate card and slip it out of the pile. Repeat as you discover each plot event.
7. If you have a blank wall, hang the cards on the wall with the conflict on top and the event/discussion outline cards below. That way you can see at a glance if you haven't addressed a conflict, if you should be escalating an attempt, or it you forgot to discuss an attempt and let your character recover. As you write your story and fill in the cards with the events, you can remove the cards from the wall and put them in a stack to help write a future summary.
8. Before you finish writing, peek at the next few cards that need to be used so you can brainstorm until your next writing opportunity.
9. Keep writing until you've used all the cards and your story is done.

Additional guideline: you can easily add conflicts as you (or your characters) create them in your writing. Just grab a new set of eleven notecards and label them accordingly.

Why Plan Conflicts?

- **<u>Top Ten Reasons to Plan Conflicts</u>**:
  - 1. Planning your conflicts ahead of time allows you to write more words per hour.
  - 2. You'll write more often when you are driven by looking forward to what's next.
  - 3. Knowing where you're going always helps you to arrive at the destination faster.
  - 4. When life interrupts your writing, but you finally get back to it, it's easy to read your outline to catch up with where you are in the story and where you're going next.
  - 5. Planning conflicts helps build excitement to move forward in the story.
  - 6. You'll look forward with anticipation to write, which will create more passion in your words.
  - 7. A short pencil is better than a long memory. If you have a great idea for your story, an outline is an easy place to record it so you don't forget.
  - 8. Events can easily be changed when you get a better idea.
  - 9. When editing, you'll have fewer deleted scenes and less backtracking because you went off on a tangent that isn't working.
  - 10. Since outlining conflict forces you to know your characters and their motivations early, your character is less likely to be one-dimensional at the beginning.

And the real reason…Jack and Jill need their story told and they don't want to wait.