32 PAGES OF VINTAGE DRAMATICA!

SCREENPLAY SYSTEMS
Presents

THE SECRET OF
GREAT STORIES

Based On A Theory and Materials Developed By Melanie Anne Phillips & Chris Huntley
WE ALL THINK WE KNOW HOW STORIES WORK. WE SEE THE DAMNED THINGS EVERYWHERE: MOVIES, BOOKS, TV, COMICS. THOSE WHO ACTUALLY SIT AND WRITE, HOWEVER, KNOW THAT WHAT STORY REALLY IS... UH... GEE, WELL IT’S COMPLICATED! READ ON, AS SCREENWRITER PENN WRIGHT GETS (WITH THE HELP OF DRAMATICA) A FASCINATING ANSWER TO THAT EVER-LOVIN’ QUESTION:

ISN’T THIS GREAT SO FAR?

SO, THEN OUR HERO SEES THE TERRORISTS HAVE A BOMB! STILL DRESSED LIKE A WOMAN, HE LEAPS INTO ACTION... CINDY, I DON’T HEAR YOU CHEERING.

PENN, THIS IS JUST LIKE ALL YOUR OTHER STORIES! THERE’S NO DEPTH! YOU DON’T EVER OPEN UP, IN YOUR WRITING OR WITH ME.

NO DEPTH? I’VE SOLD THREE SCRIPTS!

YOU DON’T GET IT.

YOUR STORIES AREN’T YOU. THEY TELL ME YOU’RE A PRETEND ARTIST.

I’M AFRAID WE’RE AT A DEAD END AND I NEED A RELATIONSHIP THAT GROWS WITH ME. I NEED TIME TO THINK.

PENN! WHAT’S UP, ROMEO?

BUT...

HI DAMIEN, CINDY JUST LEFT ME CAUSE I’M NOT OPEN WITH HER.

HEY! IF I PUT DEPTH INTO THIS SCRIPT, I CAN SHOW HER WHO I AM! MAYBE I CAN GET HER BACK!

LET ME HELP. I’M A DEVELOPMENT EXEC., YOU KNOW!
LET’S GO!

HELLO, WHAT’S THIS? A TINY LIGHT FOLLOWS PENN, MENACINGLY.

I KNOW WHAT CINDY’S SAYING: WRITE FOR THE AUDIENCE!

O.K., IF FORMULA CAN ADD DEPTH, I WISH THERE WAS ANOTHER WAY, THOUGH.

YOUR MUSE, DARLING! WITH MODERN WRITING ADVICE.

I HAVE A GOOD STORY IDEA, BUT IT NEEDS "HEART." I CAN’T TELL WHERE TO ADD STUFF AND WHAT TO LEAVE ALONE.

I USED TO GIVE ELIXIRS TO ANCIENT GREEK POETS...

NOT TRUE, AND BE GLAD ‘CAUSE YOUR STORY’S IN TROUBLE.

TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT AND I CAN HELP.

TRY DRAMATICA.

"CREATIVE WRITING PARTNER?"

DRAMATICA WON’T WRITE YOUR STORY, IT HELPS YOU GET YOUR STORY RIGHT!

SOUNDS LIKE GOOD AD-COPY TO ME.

WHAT WRITER NEEDS COMPUTERS TO WRITE FOR HIM?

DRAMATICA’S A TOOL BASED ON A NEW THEORY OF STORY. BY ANSWERING ITS QUESTIONS, YOU GUIDE DRAMATICA TO CREATE A “STORYFORM” - THE BLUEPRINT OF YOUR STORY.

A STORYFORM HAS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR STORY COMPLETE. IT WILL HELP YOU GET THAT EMOTIONAL SIDE FULLY DEVELOPED.
COMPUTERS CAN'T DEVELOP STORIES.

WHY? I JUST GOTTA WORK ON THIS FORMULA SOME MORE!

WATCH IT! THESE THINGS AREN'T FREE!

DRAMATICA WORKS USING THE STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS INHERENT IN ALL STORIES. YOU CAN'T JUST THROW IN EMOTIONAL "STUFF" TO FIX YOUR SCRIPT.

STORY IS LIKE AN ARGUMENT: EVERY PART RELATES TO ALL THE OTHERS.

YEAH?

CREATING A STORYFORM IS LIKE DRAWING A CIRCLE BY USING THE POINTS ALONG ITS EDGE.

AFTER YOU SET A FEW POINTS IN PLACE, YOU CAN SEE WHERE THE REST HAVE TO FALL...

STORIES WORK THE SAME WAY. ANYTHING YOU PUT IN AFFECTS HOW THE REST WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT.

LIKE WHEN EVERYTHING FALLS INTO PLACE - WHEN YOU GET A SENSE OF CLOSURE.

PRETTY MUCH. WHEN YOU THINK OF IT, WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT STORIES - ABOUT HOW THEY WORK?

I KNOW STORY I'VE STUDIED ALL THE GURUS! IT HAS CHARACTER, PLOT, THEME, AND NARRATIVE DRIVE!

AND IT WORKS WHEN YOU SELL ONE!

PSHAW!
But what exactly is a story?

I don't have an exact definition. I just know when I see one.

Well, that's where Dramatica began, by trying to explain story completely.

Hold on, darlings!

One concept that sets Dramatica apart is called the "Story Mind."

This is the idea that a complete story is the model of a single mind at work finding the solution to a single problem.

Your story's characters, plot, theme, and genre are like the thoughts coming out of this mind as it works.
THAT'S STORY?
IT'S JUST A BIG BRAIN! WHERE'S THE STRUCTURE IN THAT?

THIS IS THE BIG PICTURE...

...FOR STRUCTURE WE'LL HAVE TO GO INSIDE.

PRETTY CEREBRAL.

THIS IS WHERE STRUCTURE COMES FROM. THESE DOORS LEAD TO THE FOUR PERSPECTIVES...

THE FOUR THROUGHLINES

OVERALL STORY
MAIN STORY
IMPACT STORY
MAIN VS. IMPACT

...WHICH YOU FIND IN ANY STORY. THE STORY MIND EXPLORES THESE IN LOOKING FOR THE PROBLEM AT ITS CENTER.

TAKE DOOR #1, PENN. LET'S GET THE HECK OUT OF HERE!

OVERALL STORY

"BE CAREFUL IN THERE..."

"THAT'S THE OVERALL STORY VIEW!"

"NEVER MIND!"
"These four perspectives create the thoughts of the story mind as it works out its problem."

"The overall story view sees the entire story from a distance..."

"As if the story was a battle which the overall story view watches from a hill. It sees everything that happens, but is not really involved."

"The main character view is the first person, 'I' perspective of one special soldier in that battle."

"Through him we experience how it feels to go through the story, as if we were the main character."

"There's one other special character in every story, forcing the main character to face his personal problems. This is the impact character."

"Isn't that just a fancy name for the antagonist?"

"The impact character has the strongest personal impact on the main character—making him question his deepest beliefs."

"This relationship between the main and impact character is the emotional heart of your story. These two argue about some personal issue until one of them changes at the end."

"The main character and impact character are characters whom we deal with emotionally."

"The impact character's impact on the main character creates an argument between them, which is the story mind's fourth point of view: the main vs. impact story."

"No! Those are two different kinds of character seen from two different points of view. The antagonist and protagonist are overall story characters, seen by their function in the overall story."

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"This relationship between the main and impact character is the emotional heart of your story. These two argue about some personal issue until one of them changes at the end."
These four perspectives stretch from the beginning of the story to the end. They are its four structural throughlines.

**Overall Story**
- Main Character
- Impact Character
- Main vs. Impact Story

**Beginning**

Can I see an example? Sure. Remember Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*? The main character is a girl named Scout.

"The overall story throughline follows the trial of a wrongly accused man. The antagonist is his accuser, Bob Ewell."

"To Scout, though, local boogy-man, Boo Radley is her impact character."

"In the main vs. impact story, Boo eventually forces Scout to change her prejudice about him."

Yeah, I see those throughlines. I'm writing a script that I call "Every Man for Himself."

When a navy SEAL who is now writing a "love" column using a woman's name is forced to dress as a woman to protect his identity, he's caught this way when terrorists attack the cruise. To save the day, he has to fight as a woman. The impact character would push him to do this— that should be his wife!

Yea, she could push him to take the cruise job and then go along with him on the trip.

Develop her, then tie her to the bomb. We can get this from *Die Hard! Let's get out of here.*

A missing impact character can hamstring a story's emotional involvement.

Can she impact him emotionally act by act through the story?

Yeah! She could push him to change her prejudice about him.
"LET ME SHOW YOU DRAMATICA'S 12 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS. THEY'LL CREATE THE BLUEPRINT FOR YOUR STORY'S THROUGHLINES, CHARACTER, PLOT, AND THEME."

"THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING YOU'VE EVER HEARD ABOUT STORY."

"THE 12 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS COME IN THREE GROUPS: THE FIRST FOUR QUESTIONS SET UP THE MAIN CHARACTER, THEN FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT PLOT, AND FINALLY FOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OVERALL STORY THROUGHLINE."

"THESE ANSWERS GET YOU A SINGLE STORYFORM, DETERMINING YOUR STORY'S STRUCTURE."

"THE NEXT STEP IS TO WRITE EXAMPLES OF HOW THAT STRUCTURE PLAYS OUT IN ILLUSTRATING."

"SYMBOLIZING YOUR STORYFORM GETS YOU TO FULLY KNOW YOUR STORY."

"THEN COMES STORY WEAVING DECIDING HOW TO PRESENT THIS STORY TO AN AUDIENCE—WRITING YOUR FIRST DRAFT."

"TREATMENT OR FIRST DRAFT!"

"DRAMATICA HELPS YOU THROUGH THESE STAGES SO YOUR STORY ENDS UP Communicating EXACTLY THE FEELING YOU INTEND."
Alright, I’ll look at your questions. Cindy would want me to.

First, what do we know about your main character?

Great!

I know everything about him: where he was trained, what kind of gun he uses, the dresses he wears...

Uh... Good... well...

This first question sets up where this guy is going in your story. “Main character resolve” asks “will your main character ultimately change or remain steadfast?” Every main character’s either the same at the end of the story as when he started out, or he’s changed. Dramatica asks you to determine this right up front.

Roof!

That’s Ebenezer Scrooge and his impact character, the ghost of Christmas. Will he change or remain steadfast?

Scrooge changes, duh!

All characters change, or else there’s no growth or development.

Well, what about Dr. Richard Kimble in The Fugitive or James Bond in most James Bond movies—these are steadfast main characters who force their impact characters to change.

In my story, Irving saves the cruise and walks into the sunset still dressed as a woman.

But what does it mean? He’s saved the day, but what happened to his character?

I love it! What an image!

I guess he’s changed, right? He’s reached his “sensitive side.”

“Resolve” shows how this will work for your story.
HOW ABOUT THIS:
HE GETS ON THE BOAT
HATING HIS PEN-NAME.
THROUGH HIS
RELATIONSHIP WITH
HIS WIFE HE
ENDS UP... GIVING
PRESS
CONFERENCE
AND HAPPILY EXPLAINING
ABOUT THE TERRORISTS,
DRESSED AS HIS PEN-NAME. NOW
HE SEES "HER" AS PART OF HIM.

WOW, THAT'S WAY MORE CLEAR!

SO THIS IS ABOUT "CHARACTER ARC."
DON'T BAFFLE PENN WITH YOUR DEVELOPMENT TERMS. I'M ASKING WHETHER THE MAIN CHARACTER ENDS UP DRIVEN BY HIS ORIGINAL MOTIVATION OR NOT.

SO STEADFAST CHARACTERS KEEP THE SAME MOTIVATION, DO THEY GROW?

I GUESS IRVING STARTS TO LIKE HIS PEN-NAME AND STOPS WORRYING ABOUT HIS MACHESMO.

YOU CAN WRITE IT EITHER WAY, BUT PICKING ONE DIRECTION MAKES THE WHOLE STORY CLEARER. SHOULD IT FEEL LIKE HE'S CAUSING HIS PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND HAS TO STOP, OR THAT HE'S LETTING PROBLEMS GO TOO FAR AND HAS TO START DEALING WITH THEM?

HE'S TOO COMMITTED TO HIS "TOUGH-GUY" IMAGE. HE'S ALREADY A SUCCESSFUL LOVE COLUMNIST, HE JUST HAS TO STOP BEING ASHAMED OF IT.

THEN PICK STOP. NOW WE'RE GETTING TO KNOW WHO IRVING IS.

THE POINT IS TO CLARIFY WHETHER THE MAIN CHARACTER'S PROBLEM IS BECAUSE OF WHAT IS THERE THAT SHOULDN'T BE, OR BECAUSE OF WHAT IS MISSING.

SCROOGE IS A CHANGE-START CHARACTER. HE'S STINGY, NOT AGGRESSIVELY MEAN, WHICH IS THE ARGUMENT THAT GETS HIM TO CHANGE.

IN THE 80'S THEY REWRIT SCROOGE AS EXTRA MEAN--TO DO THIS RIGHT WOULD MEAN REWRITING THE ARGUMENT TO MAKE HIM CHANGE.

BUT THEY KEPT THE "START GIVING" ARGUMENT AND THE STORY SUFFERED.

I KNOW ANOTHER CHARACTER THAT I WISH WOULD STOP.

START OR STOP?
THAT'S LIKE ASKING IF A GLASS IS "HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY." WHAT'S THE POINT?

ALL MAIN CHARACTERS GROW, EITHER TO HOLD OUT MORE STEADFASTLY OR TO CHANGE.

THANKS TO THIS TOO. MAIN CHARACTER GROWTH ASKS REGARDING HIS GROWTH, IS THE AUDIENCE WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO START OR STOP?

THIS ALWAYS REFERS TO MAIN CHARACTER GROWTH, A "CHANGE" CHARACTER WILL GROW EITHER BY STARTING A NEW CHARACTERISTIC OR STOPPING AN OLD ONE.

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I GUESS IRVING STARTS TO LIKE HIS PEN-NAME AND STOPS WORRYING ABOUT HIS MACHESMO.

Yeah, he does both!
WHOA! WHAT'S GOING ON? THIS MAN WILL HELP DEMONSTRATE THE NEXT QUESTION.

WHAT'S YOUR MAIN CHARACTER'S APPROACH—DO-ER OR BE-ER?

I CAN'T TAKE IT!

YOU'RE A DO-ER! YOU DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO COPE WITH HIS NOISE. DO-ERS PREFER TO PROBLEM-SOLVE EXTERNALLY. IF PENN WAS A BE-ER, HE'D JUST TAKE IT?

NOT NECESSARILY. A BE-ER PREFERENCES TO PROBLEM-SOLVE INTERNALLY.

LET'S WATCH A BE-ER AT WORK.

HERE, LET'S WATCH DIRTY HARRY...

DO-ER.

I GUESS IRVING IS A BE-ER AND A DO-ER. HIDING AS A WOMAN, HE COPES WITH A LOT OF SEXIST TREATMENT. BUT HE'S VERY WILLING TO KICK TERRORIST BUTT WHEN HE HAS TO.

GREAT! MIX IT UP SO HE'S UNPREDICTABLE.

BEING BOTH A BE-ER AND A DO-ER IS UNPREDICTABLE BECAUSE IT'S UNREALISTIC. CHARACTERS MAY HAVE TO USE BOTH APPROACHES IN THEIR STORIES, BUT THEY ALWAYS PREFER ONE APPROACH IF GIVEN A CHOICE.

IRVING SOUNDS LIKE A DO-ER. HIDING AS A WOMAN IS A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO TRYING TO SOLVE HIS PROBLEMS, AS IS TAKING ON THE TERRORISTS.

YOU'RE RIGHT, HE'S A DO-ER. HE SHOULD HATE COPING WITH BEING TREATED LIKE A LADY.

How does that feel? LIKE IRVING'S BECOMING A LOT MORE REAL.
FINE. NOW THE LAST MAIN CHARACTER DYNAMIC: PROBLEM SOLVING STYLE.

HEY LADY! I'M STYLIN' HERE...

ONE STYLE IS INTUITIVE...

I WAS GONNA SAY THAT!

THE OTHER IS LOGICAL...

LIKE, "HE'S FROM MARS, SHE'S FROM VENUS?"

USUALLY MEN FAVOR LOGICAL, WOMEN INTUITIVE.

WHAT MAKES SENSE.

LIKE DO-ER/BE-ER, PROBLEM SOLVING STYLE IS A TENDENCY.

WHAT KIND OF PROBLEM SOLVING DOES YOUR MAIN CHARACTER USE: LOGICAL OR INTUITIVE?

HOW DOES YOUR MAIN CHARACTER SEE PROBLEMS? THERE ARE TWO WAYS:

LOGICAL STYLE SEES PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF CAUSE AND EFFECT, SEEKING LINEAR EXPLANATIONS.

INTUITIVE STYLE SEES PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS INVOLVED, HOW THEY BALANCE AS A WHOLE.

FOR EXAMPLE, LET'S LOOK AT YOUR FIRST KISS WITH CINDY - YOU BOTH SAW THIS DIFFERENTLY.

YOU WERE THERE?

YOU SAW YOUR FLOWERS, THEN THE MONEY YOU SPENT, THE GOOD FOOD, AND THE TIME TOGETHER ALL ADDING UP TO THE POINT WHERE YOU FELT YOU DESERVED A KISS.

FROM HER HOLISTIC POINT OF VIEW, IT WAS THE COMBINATION OF MUSIC, ATMOSPHERE, YOUR BEHAVIOR, AND CONVERSATION THAT FINALLY SHIFTED INTO CREATING A GOOD MOMENT FOR A KISS. THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEEING THINGS LOGICALLY AND INTUITIVELY.

NEITHER POINT OF VIEW IS RIGHT OR WRONG, BUT ONE CARRIES MORE WEIGHT FOR YOUR MAIN CHARACTER AND AFFECTS HOW HE PERCEIVES OR DECIDES ANYTHING.

IT'S NOT AS FUN AS IT SOUNDS.
WON'T LOGICAL STYLE CHARACTERS ALL BE MEN AND INTUITIVE STYLE CHARACTERS ALL BE WOMEN?

NO, IT'S INDEPENDENT OF GENDER.

FOR EXAMPLE, RIPLEY IN THE MOVIE ALIEN USES A LOGICAL STYLE. SHE THINKS OF EVERYTHING LINEARLY.

RIPLEY, OPEN THE HATCH!

I CAN'T DO THAT. IF WE BREAK QUARANTINE WE COULD ALL DIE.

OPEN IT, RIPLEY! THAT'S A DIRECT ORDER!

IF SHE WAS LOOKING AT THE "BIG PICTURE", RIPLEY WOULD PROBABLY HAVE REALIZED SOONER THAT THE COMPANY WAS BETRAYING HER.

I HAVE TO BRING THAT ALIEN HOME, RIPLEY, KILLING YOU IF NECESSARY!

JACK RYAN IN THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER USES INTUITION. HIS HOLISTIC IMPRESSIONS OF THE RUSSIAN CAPTAIN ALLOWS HIM TO SEE THAT THE MAN WANTS TO DEFECT WHICH NONE OF THE OTHERS CAN UNDERSTAND.

...THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY. I THINK HE'S TRYING TO DEFECT.

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SOUNDS LIKE LOGICAL PROBLEM SOLVING, HE THINKS LINEARLY. THIS WON'T MAKE HIM BLIND TO HOLISTIC THINKING. HE'LL JUST HAVE A BIAS NOT TO SEE IT. WHEN YOU NEED HIM TO GET THE BIG PICTURE, HAVE SOMEONE HELP HIM PUT IT TOGETHER.

LIKE HIS WIFE.

WAVERING ON PROBLEM SOLVING STYLE WILL NOT CREATE VARIETY, BUT MUDDINESS. ASK YOURSELF, DOES IRVING SEE EVERYTHING AS CAUSE AND EFFECT OR DOES HE PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE SHIFTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND HIM?

HE CLEARLY BELIEVES HIS FEMALE PERSONA HAS CAUSED HIS SUCCESS. HE'S PRETTY OBLIVIOUS TO THE DOWNSIDE THIS HAS ON HIS RELATIONSHIPS.

GOOD! PROBABLY BOTH MEN AND WOMEN WILL DIG A CHARACTER LIKE THAT.

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LIKE HIS WIFE.
That completes the main character dynamics. how he thinks, acts, and grows through your story. later, dramatica will tell a lot more about your main character — based on the rest of these questions.

Now, let’s shift gears. the next four questions are about plot. for example... story driver asks what drives your story, actions or decisions?

Penn’s story’s got actions and decisions! that’s what makes it so good. all stories have both, but one always forces the other. story driver asks which comes first in your story.

Football games provide a good example for this. when you’re on offense, is football driven by actions or decisions?

Neither! football’s driven by salaries! no, the offense makes its plans in the huddle. so... for them it’s driven by decisions!

what about the defense?

right! their actions all follow careful deliberations.

On defense, the players follow that ball wherever it goes. to them, the game is driven by actions.

Right again. every story is driven in one of these two ways. choosing sets up the story’s inciting incident... concluding incident, and every act break.

Right! a main character’s approach mixes with “story driver” and he may or may not find that mix comfortable.

John McClane in Die Hard is a do-er, suited to his action driven story.

Just picking doesn’t say how much action or deliberation there’ll be. just which forces the other.

The Fugitive has lots of action. but it’s a decision driven story...

“While being there is quite subdued, yet it’s a story driven by actions.”

I think my story’s driven by actions too. the job on the cruise and the terrorist attack come out of nowhere to push the story along.

Put some unforced decisions in there too. twice the obstacles makes twice the suspense.

Shh.

Story driver also affects the main character. Hamlet’s story is driven by actions—beginning with the appearance of a ghost.

But Hamlet tries to solve things through deliberations.

That’s because he is a be-er!

Shh.

John McClane in Die Hard is a do-er, suited to his action driven story.
IF IT ONLY WORKED THAT WAY. USING UNFORCED DECISIONS AND UNPLANNED ACTIONS MAKES A STORY FEEL OUT OF CONTROL. TROUBLES IN A STORY SHOULD COME FROM ONE SOURCE. PENN MADE A GOOD ARGUMENT FOR ACTIONS. JUST FOLLOW IT THROUGH SO THAT ACTIONS DRIVE AND END THE STORY.

THAT'S WHY IRVING'S COMFORTABLE SOLVING THE TERRORIST PROBLEM -- HE'S A DO-ER IN AN ACTION STORY.

WHAT ABOUT CREATING MORE CONFLICT? THAT'S ALL DRAMA IS, YOU KNOW, CONFLICT.

MUCH MORE. FOR EXAMPLE, STORY LIMIT HAS A STRONG IMPACT ON THE CONFLICT IN YOUR STORY.

A STORY IS MORE THAN JUST DRAMA, THOUGH.

STILL, WHAT ELSE CAN YOU SHOW ME ABOUT CONFLICT?

WHAT WILL RAISE TENSION AND BRING YOUR STORY TO AN END?

...RUNNING OUT OF TIME, LIKE HIGH NOON?

...OR RUNNING OUT OF OPTIONS LIKE IN A "WHO-DONE-IT?"

I HADN'T CONSIDERED IT. I GUESS THE HOSTAGE SITUATION COULD GO ON FOREVER.

I BET YOU DON'T WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO FEEL LIKE THEY COULD BE WATCHING YOUR STORY FOREVER.

THE BUTLER!

I KNEW IT!

I COULD HAVE THE TERRORISTS DEMAND SAFE PASSAGE WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, OR ELSE THEY'LL BLOW UP THE SHIP.

THAT'S A TIME-LOCK. SET UP THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOUR CHARACTERS HAVE RIGHT UP FRONT...

...THEN CHECK THE CLOCK AT LEAST THREE MORE TIMES AS THE STORY HEADS TOWARD ITS CLIMAX.

HEY, THAT DOES TIGHTEN THINGS UP.

FOR EXAMPLE, IMAGINE YOU HAVE TO SEARCH A MANSION FOR CLUES TO A MYSTERY. A TIMELOCK WOULD BE IF YOU ONLY GET FIVE MINUTES TO SEARCH AS MANY ROOMS AS YOU LIKE.

AN OPTIONLOCK WOULD BE IF YOU ARE ONLY ALLOWED TO CHOOSE FIVE ROOMS TO LOOK IN. CONFLICT RISES AS YOUR STORY EITHER RUNS OUT OF TIME, LIKE EDDIE MURPHY'S 48 HRS., OR OUT OF OPTIONS LIKE ALADDIN AND HIS THREE WISHES.

THE KILLER IS SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM!

THE BUTLER!

I KNEW IT!
WE’LL FIND THE FINAL TWO DYNAMICS AT THE STORY’S END.

FIRST OFF, STORY OUTCOME ASKS SIMPLY, "DO THE CHARACTERS ACHIEVE THE COMMON GOAL THEY SET OUT FOR, OR NOT?"

IF THE GOAL IS ACHIEVED, IT’S "SUCCESS." IF IT ISN’T (EVEN IF IT’S CLOSE) THEN IT’S "FAILURE." THE OUTCOME WILL BE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

THIS DOES NOT, HOWEVER, SAY HOW MUCH OF A SUCCESS OR FAILURE YOUR CHARACTERS WILL EXPERIENCE. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE GREAT TO SUCCEED OR BE THE WORST THING IN THE WORLD TO FAIL.

I THINK HE’S A DO-ER!

THE AUDIENCE JUST HAS TO KNOW IF THE ORIGINAL GOAL WAS REACHED OR NOT.

OUTCOME IS A COLD LOOK AT THE STORY GOAL. THE NEXT QUESTION, STORY JUDGMENT, IS MUCH MORE EMOTIONAL.
STORY JUDGMENT ASKS, "DOES YOUR MAIN CHARACTER RESOLVE HIS PERSONAL PROBLEMS OR NOT?"

IF HE’S FREE OF HIS EMOTIONAL ANGST IN THE END, THE JUDGMENT IS "GOOD."

...IF HE’S STILL PLAGUED BY IT IN THE END, THE JUDGMENT IS "BAD."

OUTCOME AND JUDGMENT COMBINE TO CREATE FOUR KINDS OF ENDINGS.

TRAGEDIES, WHICH END IN FAILURE/BAD LIKE HAMLET.

PERSONAL TRAGEDIES, ENDING IN SUCCESS/BAD WHERE THE MAIN CHARACTER REMAINS TROUBLED IN SPITE OF SUCCESS—LIKE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS.

PERSONAL TRIUMPHS WHICH HAVE FAILURE/GOOD, LIKE RAIN MAN WHERE CHARLIE BABBITT GIVES UP HIS GOAL IN ORDER TO BECOME A HAPPIER PERSON.

AND FINALLY THERE ARE TRIUMPHS—SUCCESS AND GOOD ENDINGS—LIKE CASABLANCA.

MY STORY’S A FULL BLOWN TRIUMPH TOO! IRVING SUCCEEDS IN CAPTURING THE TERRORISTS AND HE EVENTUALLY FEELS GREAT ABOUT MAKING HIS PEN-NAME A PART OF HIMSELF.

GREAT! HAPPY ENDINGS SELL!

THIS COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP!
I LIKE THESE QUESTIONS. MY CHARACTERS AND PLOT ARE STRONGER, BUT MY ANSWERS HAVEN’T REALLY STRUCTURED MY STORY. I NEED AN EMOTIONAL POWERHOUSE TO GET CINDY BACK.

YEAH. I CAN ASK PENN A BUNCH OF QUESTIONS TOO-- WITHOUT DRAMATICA!

THE STORYFORM IN ROMEO AND JULIET FOR EXAMPLE COULD BE SET AS SHAKESPEARE DID IT-- IN OLD ITALY...

...OR THE SAME STORYFORM COULD BE SET IN NEW YORK CITY. THE STORY-TELLING WOULD CHANGE, BUT ALL THE CONCEPTS OF PREJUDICE AND LOVE WOULD STILL BE THERE.

AFTER THAT COMES STORY-WEAVING: DECIDING HOW TO PRESENT THOSE DETAILS TO AN AUDIENCE. LIKE, WHAT WILL BE ON PAGE 1? DO YOU START NEAR THE END AND FLASHBACK THROUGH THE STORY AS IN REMAINS OF THE DAY?

THE EIGHT QUESTIONS WE’VE ANSWERED SET UP YOUR STORY’S DYNAMICS. NEXT WE’LL SET UP ITS STRUCTURE. THEN, ONCE YOU’VE ARRIVED AT A SINGLE STORYFORM, WE’LL MOVE ON TO ILLUSTRATING AND STORYWEAVING.


THEN LET’S KEEP GOING, GET OUT OF THIS LIBRARY AND LOOK AT STRUCTURE!

THE STORYFORM LISTS ALL THE DYNAMIC AND STRUCTURAL PARTS OF YOUR STORY: THE INTRICACIES OF ITS ARGUMENT. IT WON’T SAY HOW TO WRITE IT-- JUST WHAT YOU’LL HAVE TO COVER TO MAKE THE STORY COMPLETE.

THEN YOU’LL COME TO ILLUSTRATING-- SYMBOLIZING YOUR STORYFORM. ILLUSTRATING GETS YOU TO VISUALIZE THE DETAILS OF YOUR STORY.

STORYWEAVING: DECIDING HOW TO PRESENT THOSE DETAILS TO AN AUDIENCE. LIKE, WHAT WILL BE ON PAGE 1? DO YOU START NEAR THE END AND FLASHBACK THROUGH THE STORY, AS IN REMAINS OF THE DAY?


THIS IS WILD! THESE STAGES ARE TAKING ME DEEPER INTO MY STORY THAN I’VE EVER BEEN BEFORE.
THERE'S A PROBLEM AT THE HEART OF YOUR STORY. THAT'S WHERE STRUCTURE COMES FROM. UNTIL YOU SEE IT CLEARLY AS THE AUTHOR, YOUR STORY WILL REMAIN A SNARLED JUNGLE OF IDEAS.


RIGHT. THOSE FOUR PERSPECTIVES ARE THE WAYS TO SEE INTO YOUR STORY. YOUR STORY IDEA GIVES THEM SOMETHING TO LOOK AT.

THE AUDIENCE Follows the four throughlines which explore the problem at the heart of your story. TO GET MEANING OUT OF THEM, THE THROUGHLINES NEED SOMETHING SPECIFIC TO EXPLORE.

STORIES MATCH THEIR FOUR PERSPECTIVES WITH THESE FOUR BROAD CLASSES OF STORY PROBLEMS: FIXED ATTITUDES, MANIPULATION, SITUATIONS, AND ACTIVITIES.

WHAT IS THIS, A VULCAN CROSS-WORD PUZZLE?

THIS IS OUR MAP THROUGH THIS JUNGLE—THE DRAMATICA STRUCTURAL CHART. MARKING ONE OF YOUR STORY’S THROUGHLINES HERE USING DRAMATICA, WILL MAP OUT THE OTHER THREE THROUGHLINES AS WELL.

THE SITUATION CLASS DESCRIBES A STATIC EXTERNAL PROBLEM

THE ACTIVITY CLASS DESCRIBES A CHANGING EXTERNAL PROBLEM

THE MANIPULATION CLASS DESCRIBES A CHANGING INTERNAL PROBLEM

THE FIXED ATTITUDE CLASS DESCRIBES A STATIC INTERNAL PROBLEM
BUT PENN’S STORY DEALS WITH ALL FOUR KINDS OF PROBLEMS. THESE FOUR CLASSES ARE IN EVERY STORY.

THEY ARE MATCHED TO THE FOUR THROUGHLINES IN THE MOST IMPORTANT STRUCTURAL CHOICE AUTHORS FACE IN DRAMATICA.

SURE, TAKE CASABLANCA. ITS OVERALL STORY THROUGHLINE IS AN “ACTIVITY”—WHERE EVERYONE’S TRYING TO OBTAIN “EXIT VISAS” TO ESCAPE GROWING NAZI CONTROL.

CAN I HAVE AN EXAMPLE?

"RICK IS A MAIN CHARACTER WHOSE “FIXED ATTITUDE” IS THAT...”

"BUT HE’S FORCED TO RECONSIDER HIS WAYS BY HIS IMPACT CHARACTER, ILSA, WHOSE IS STUCK IN A “SITUATION”. SHE IS CAUGHT IN CASABLANCA AND MARRIED TO A FREEDOM FIGHTER.

THE MAIN VS. IMPACT STORY EXPLORES THE “MANIPULATIONS” BETWEEN RICK AND ILSA AS THEY MANIPULATE EACH OTHER OVER THEIR LOVES AND LOYALTIES.

THE PROBLEM AT THE HEART OF YOUR STORY IS SOMEWHERE OUT THERE. BY ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT IT, DRAMATICA WILL LEAD US TO SEE EXACTLY WHAT IT IS.

YOUR CHOICE WILL FLAVOR THE STORY YOU TELL. YOUR OVERALL STORY MAY FALL INTO ANY ONE OF THESE CLASSES. LET’S LOOK AT SOME “WAR” STORIES TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM.

THE FIRST STRUCTURAL QUESTION ASKS YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR OVERALL STORY THROUGHLINE.

AN ACTIVITY OVERALL STORY WOULD EMPHASIZE THE ACTIVITIES OF WAR LIKE THE SUNS OF NAVARONE, WHERE EVERYONE’S INFLEXIBLE AGENDAS CREATE MORE TROUBLE THAN THE ENEMY.

A SITUATION OVERALL STORY WOULD DEAL WITH A FIXED STATE OF WAR, SUCH AS THE GREAT ESCAPE, WHERE THESE CHARACTERS ARE IN A PRISON CAMP...

AN OVERALL STORY CENTERED ON FIXED ATTITUDES IS LIKE PATTON, WHERE EVERYONE’S INFLEXIBLE AGENDAS CREATE MORE TROUBLE THAN THE ENEMY.

AN OVERALL STORY CENTERED ON MANIPULATIONS IS LIKE PATHS OF GLORY, WHERE THE OFFICERS MANIPULATIVE “TRIAL” LEADS TO INJUSTICE IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE.

...DEALING WITH THE SAME SITUATION FROM BEGINNING TO END.
WHICH KIND OF PROBLEM BRINGS YOUR OVERALL CHARACTERS TOGETHER?
I DON'T KNOW, I SEE THEM ALL.

I DON'T KNOW, I SEE THEM ALL.

FIRST, IRVING'S RUNNING AROUND ACTING LIKE A WOMAN,...
THE CRUISE IS STUCK IN A HOSTAGE SITUATION,...

...THERE'S CONFLICTING ATTITUDES OVER IRVING'S PEN-NAME, AND THERE'S THE MANIPULATIONS IRVING'S WIFE PUTS HIM THROUGH.

ALL FOUR, THAT'S WHAT I SAID.

THAT WAS GREAT, PENN.
YOU'VE ACTUALLY JUST DESCRIBED ALL FOUR THROUGHLINES IN YOUR STORY.

I SEE. EACH PERSPECTIVE (E.G. OVERALL STORY) GETS MATCHED WITH THE TYPE OF STORY (E.G. SITUATION) THAT IT EXPLORES.

WAIT! WHAT'S THE OVERALL STORY THROUGHLINE OF DIE HARD?

DIE HARD IS AN OVERALL STORY OF A "SITUATION" WHERE ALL THE CHARACTERS DEAL WITH BEING CAUGHT IN A SKYSCRAPER.

"THE OVERALL STORY HAS EVERYONE DEALING WITH THE SITUATION OF BEING HELD HOSTAGE ON A BOAT."

"THE MAIN CHARACTER IS A NAVY SEAL TRYING TO WRITE—A PERSON DEFINED BY HIS ENDEAVOR TO BECOME A WRITER."

"IRVING'S WIFE, THE IMPACT CHARACTER, IMPACTS IRVING THROUGH HER MANIPULATIONS...
...AND THE MAIN VS. IMPACT STORY EXPLORES THE FIXED ATTITUDES IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP—ESPECIALLY REGARDING WHAT IT MEANS TO "BE A MAN.""

AND THE MAIN VS. IMPACT STORY EXPLORES THE FIXED ATTITUDES IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP—ESPECIALLY REGARDING WHAT IT MEANS TO "BE A MAN."

I LIKE IT.
I LIKE IT.

THEN LET'S STEER YOUR OVERALL STORY INTO A "SITUATION"
**THE NEXT QUESTION ABOUT STRUCTURE ASKS: WHAT’S YOUR OVERALL STORY CONCERN?**

WHAT’S MOST IMPORTANT TO THE CHARACTERS IN YOUR STORY? YOUR OVERALL CHARACTERS MAY HAVE DIFFERENT CONCERNS, BUT THEY WILL ALL SHARE THE SAME NATURE.

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**THE VERDICT** HAS AN OVERALL STORY CONCERN AS WELL. **THE VERDICT**’S CONCERN IS “THE FUTURE”...

...THE LAWYER FIGHTS FOR THE FUTURE OF HIS CAREER.

...AND THE TREACHEROUS ASSISTANT IS TRYING TO SECURE HER FUTURE IN THE LEGAL WORLD.

...THE CHURCH IS WORRIED ABOUT ITS FUTURE REPUTATION ONCE IT’S SUED.

...HIS CLIENTS WORRY ABOUT THEIR SISTER’S FUTURE AND WHETHER THEY WILL BE ABLE TO SUPPORT HER.

...ALL THESE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS SHARE THE COMMON THEMATIC CONCERN.

---

PLOT IS STRONGEST IN THIS PART OF DRAMATICA STRUCTURE. THE STORY GOAL IS DESCRIBED BY THE OVERALL STORY CONCERN. THE GOAL CAN BE AN OBJECT, A STATE OF MIND, DEGREE OF KNOWLEDGE, OR A CERTAIN FEELING—ANYTHING SO LONG AS IT’S UNDERSTOOD TO BE THE GOAL. DEFINING THE GOAL CAN HELP YOU PICK THE CONCERN.

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IN FACT, YOU MIGHT CATEGORIZE STORIES QUITE MEANINGFULLY BY THEIR OVERALL STORY CONCERN. KIND OF LIKE HOW THEY CATEGORIZERVIDEOS IN A VIDEO STORE.
WELL NONE OF THESE WORDS CAME TO ME WHEN I MADE UP THE STORY. THE CHARACTERS ARE STUCK ON THE BOAT. THE PRESENT’S A MESS, THEIR FUTURE’S IN JEOPARDY... HOW DO I PICK?

ALL FOUR CHOICES WILL BE IN YOUR OVERALL STORY, BUT WHICH CONTAINS THE ISSUES THEY’RE ALL CONCERNED WITH?

MAYBE IT WILL HELP IF I EXPLAIN TWO THINGS ABOUT DRAMATICA VOCABULARY...

FIRST, ANY TERM CAN BE SEEN IN THE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE SENSE. FOR EXAMPLE, A CONCERN OF “OBTAINING” DEALS WITH GETTING STUFF... 

AND LOSING STUFF.

SECONDLY, VOCABULARY IN DRAMATICA HAS VERY PRECISE DEFINITIONS. FOR AUTHORS TO BE ABLE TO NAME THE THEMATIC PIECES OF THEIR STORIES, NO TWO TERMS CAN MEAN THE SAME THING.

THAT’S MORE GROUND THAN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE USUALLY HAS TO COVER, SO DRAMATICA COMES WITH ITS OWN DICTIONARY.

OF MOST CONCERN TO THESE PEOPLE STUCK ON THE BOAT IS WHAT’S GOING TO HAPPEN. THE CRUISE GUESTS, THE AUTHORITIES, AND EVEN THE TERRORISTS ARE ALL FIGHTING FOR THEIR FUTURE. THAT’S MY OVERALL STORY CONCERN.

BUT IRVING IS ALSO WORRIED ABOUT LOSING HIS MANLINESS. IS THAT MORE LIKE A “MAIN CHARACTER CONCERN?”

YES, ACTUALLY. THE MAIN CHARACTER THROUGHLINE HAS A CONCERN ALSO. EVERY THROUGHLINE HAS A CONCERN. FOR EVERY QUESTION IN THE OVERALL STORY, THE SAME QUESTION EXISTS IN THE OTHER THROUGHLINES. DRAMATICA WILL PROVIDE THE ANSWERS BASED ON HOW YOU ANSWER THE 12 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS.

NOW LET’S START HIKING.

AW, MAN!
INSIDE THE PEAK MARKED "FUTURE..."

**QUESTION 11: OVERALL STORY ISSUE**

WE'RE MUCH CLOSER TO THE PROBLEM NOW. NEXT WE FACE THE CHOICE OF OVERALL STORY ISSUE. YOUR PREVIOUS CHOICES HAVE LED US TO THESE FOUR OPTIONS

WHAT THE HELL IS AN "ISSUE"?

EACH THROUGHLINE HAS A THEMATIC ARGUMENT. THE ISSUE IS THAT ARGUMENT'S TOPIC. EVERY THROUGHLINE HAS ITS OWN ISSUE OR THEME. EXPLORE THE ISSUE THROUGH DIALOGUE, IMAGES, AND OTHER THEMATIC MATERIAL. THE ISSUES OF THE FOUR THROUGHLINES KEEP YOUR THEMES TIED TO YOUR STORY'S MEANING.

"THE FUGITIVE" HAS AN OVERALL STORY ISSUE OF "PRECONCEPTION." EVERYONE'S PROBLEMS ARE DEEPENED BY PRECONCEPTIONS REGARDING DR. KIMBLE'S GUILT OR INNOCENCE.

"FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL" HAS AN OVERALL STORY ISSUE OF "COMMITMENT," EXPLORING THIS THROUGH THE RELATIONSHIPS OF ALL THE CHARACTERS.

"ISSUES FROM ALL FOUR THROUGHLINES CREATE A TAPESTRY OF THEMES, ALL TIED TO THE STRUCTURAL MEANING OF YOUR STORY."

ALL FOUR OF THESE ARE IN MY STORY: THE TERRORISTS' PRECONCEPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN HELP THE WRITER SAVE THE DAY. OPENNESS TO RESISTANCE HELPS THE WOMEN JOIN THE WRITER. BAD CHOICES BY THE CRUISE LINE AND THE TERRORISTS LEAD TO BOTH OF THEIR UNDOING. DELAYS IN THE RESCUE PLANS GIVE THE WRITER AND THE WOMEN TIME TO FREE THEMSELVES.

 WHICH IS YOUR CENTRAL TOPIC? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT THE MOST TO SAY ABOUT? THEMES AREN'T JUST RECURRING IDEAS, BUT PERSPECTIVES. WHAT IS YOUR STORY TRYING TO SAY?

 RIGHT, O.K., PRECONCEPTION IS MY OVERALL STORY ISSUE.

 "THAT'S "PRECONCEPTION" ON THE CHART.

 "THAT CHOICE TAKES US TO THE LAST OF THE 12 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS..."
THESE ELEMENTS ARE THE STRUCTURAL HEART OF YOUR OVERALL STORY. ONE OF THEM IS THE "PROBLEM," THE SOURCE OF ALL THE INEQUITIES TROUBLING YOUR CHARACTERS. ITS OPPOSITE IS THE "SOLUTION."

THERE'S ALSO THE OVERALL STORY SYMPTOM AND OVERALL STORY RESPONSE.

THE PROBLEM IS LIKE A DISEASE IN THE STORY. IF EVERYONE COULD SEE THE PROBLEM CLEARLY, THEY'D SOLVE IT. BUT THEY DON'T BECAUSE THEY'RE BUSY WITH THE SYMPTOMS OF THE PROBLEM—THAT'S THE OVERALL STORY SYMPTOM.

THEY TRY TO TREAT THESE SYMPTOMS WITH THE OVERALL STORY RESPONSE. BUT THIS TREATMENT WON'T CURE THE PROBLEM...

ONLY THE OVERALL STORY SOLUTION CAN DO THAT.

THESE FOUR ELEMENTS ARE CONSTANTLY AT WORK IN YOUR STORY. THEY BRING SPECIFIC SHADING TO THE MOST MINUTE DIFFICULTIES YOUR CHARACTERS FACE.

THE PROBLEM IS FINALLY RECOGNIZED SOME TIME NEAR THE CLIMAX. "SUCCESS" REPLACES THE PROBLEM WITH THE SOLUTION. "FAILURE" DOESN'T.
YOU MEAN THOSE BORING TERMS ARE THE "HEART" OF PENN'S STORY?

DRAMATICA DOESN'T SAY HOW TO FEEL ABOUT THE PROBLEM, JUST WHAT IT IS.

TAKE "TEMPTATION" FOR EXAMPLE. THINK HOW MANY WAYS THIS "BORING" TERM MIGHT BE PROBLEMATIC IN A STORY...

...A SINGLE KIND OF PROBLEM FEELS CONSISTENT. AS MANY WILD THINGS HAPPEN, THEY'LL ALL BE THEMATICALLY LINKED BY THE PROBLEM.

I'VE GOT ABOUT 500 DIFFERENT PROBLEMS MY CHARACTERS DEAL WITH.

DO THEY SHARE ANY COMMON THEME?

WELL, YEAH. YOU COULD SAY MY STORY'S PROBLEM IS "CONTROL," WHICH IS MOST OBVIOUS WHEN THE TERRORISTS REVEAL THEY'VE HAD CONTROL OF THE CRUISE SINCE IT LEFT PORT.

I COULD TAKE THIS FARTHER-- SYSTEMS DESIGNED TO CONTROL SHIPPING TRAFFIC MIGHT MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO SAFELY RESCUE THE HOSTAGES...

AND THE WAY THE HOSTAGES APPEAR TO BE EASILY CONTROLLED KEEPS EVERYONE UNDER WRAPS UNTIL EVENTUALLY THE SOLUTION OF BEHAVING UNCONTROLLED ALLOWS THE WOMEN TO OVERTAKE THE TERRORISTS.

SOUNDS GOOD! CONGRATULATIONS...
...YOU'VE GOT A SINGLE STORYFORM. NOW THIS GETS FUN. THAT ANSWER TOOK DRAMATICA TO A SINGLE STORYFORM, DETAILING ALL FOUR OF YOUR STORY'S THROUGH-LINES IN GREAT DEPTH.

NOW WE'LL SEE HOW TO STRUCTURE THE LOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL PARTS OF YOUR STORY

WE'LL FIND A PLOT OUTLINE IN HERE TOO, OF HOW EACH THROUGH-LINE WILL PROCEED ACT BY ACT

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS TO DEAL WITH THIS INFORMATION IN THE SOFTWARE. ONE WAY IS THROUGH THE REPORTS ABOUT YOUR STORY THAT DRAMATICA IMMEDIATELY COMPOSES WHEN YOU FINISH STORYFORMING.

THE STORY ENGINE SETTINGS REPORT?

THAT REPORT LISTS EVERY SINGLE STORY POINT IN YOUR STORYFORM

IT IS THE SKELETON OF YOUR STORY. EACH THROUGH-LINE HAS A CONCERN, ISSUE, PROBLEM, SOLUTION, SYMPTOM, AND RESPONSE. -- NOW DRAMATICA SHOWS YOU WHAT THOSE ARE.
THE MAIN VS. IMPACT THROUGHLINE IS A CLASH OF FIXED ATTITUDES OVER WHETHER IT'S O.K. TO BE LIKE A WOMAN, HUH? THAT FITS, AND THE CONCERN IN IRVING'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIFE/IMPACT CHARACTER...

IS THEIR "INNERMOST DESIRES" -- WHICH IRVING'S FAME AS A WRITER CAN EITHER MAKE REAL OR POSTPONE FOREVER DEPENDING ON HOW IRVING LOOKS AT IT.

WRITE THOSE DESCRIPTIONS INTO THE "STORY POINTS" WINDOW. HERE YOU WRITE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF HOW THESE POINTS WILL APPEAR IN YOUR STORY.

IT SAYS MY IMPACT CHARACTER ISSUE IS "COMMITMENT." THAT DESCRIBES THE THEMATIC IMPACT OF IRVING'S WIFE THAT WILL HELP CONVINCING IRVING TO CHANGE, RIGHT?

SO IRVING'S WIFE SHOULD SEE HER COMMITMENT TO IRVING AND HIS COMMITMENT TO WRITING AS THE REASONS WHY THEY HAVE TO GO ON THE CRUISE. IN HER OPINION, IRVING SHOULD GET INTO THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING SEEN AS A WOMAN, SO HE CAN FULFILL HIS COMMITMENTS TO HIS READERS AS THE AUTHOR OF THEIR "LOVE COLUMN."

THAT WILL WORK, FOR A START.

I SEE WHAT WAS MISSING IN MY STORY, NOW THAT I'M PUTTING THIS IN HERE. WITHOUT A DEVELOPED IMPACT CHARACTER, IRVING WOULD HAVE NO REASON TO CHANGE.

THIS IS THE SIDE OF THE STORY I WASN'T LOOKING AT BEFORE.

GREAT, NOW ALL WE NEED IS SOME QUIRKY DIALOGUE LIKE RESERVOIR DOGS.
WAIT A MINUTE! I ONLY COUNT TWO CHARACTERS IN THIS "STORYFORM." THE MAIN AND IMPACT CHARACTERS. WHAT ABOUT EVERYONE ELSE? DON'T THEY COUNT?

OH YES! VERY MUCH. THOSE ARE THE OVERALL CHARACTERS AND THEY CAN MAKE OR BREAK A STORY AS EASILY AS ANYTHING ELSE.

LET ME REFRESH YOU ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OVERALL AND MAIN VS. IMPACT CHARACTERS. OVERALL CHARACTERS ARE SEEN BY THEIR FUNCTION IN THE STORY...

OVERALL CHARACTERS

MAIN VS. IMPACT CHARACTERS

...NOT THEIR EMOTIONAL IMPACT, LIKE MAIN VS. IMPACT CHARACTERS.

THE IMPORTANT THING IN DEVELOPING OVERALL CHARACTERS IS THAT THEY SERVE A PURPOSE TO THE STORY. A GOOD WAY TO GET A FEEL FOR THIS IS BY LOOKING AT ARCHETYPES.

EXAMPLES FROM GEORGE LUCAS' STAR WARS WILL DEMONSTRATE THE VARIOUS CHARACTERISTICS THAT MAKE UP ARCHETYPAL CHARACTERS.

THE PROTAGONIST CONSIDERS THE PROBLEM AND PURSUES THE SOLUTION, LIKE LUKE SKYWALKER IN STAR WARS.

THE ANTAGONIST BALANCES HIM WITH "RECONSIDER" AND "AVOID/PREVENT" LIKE THE EVIL EMPIRE.

THE SIDEKICK ARCHETYPE IS FAITHFUL AND SUPPORTIVE -- LIKE THE DROIDS, C3PO AND R2D2.

THE SKEPTIC ARCHETYPE REPRESENTS "OPPOSE" AND "DISBELIEF" LIKE HAN SOLO.

THE REASON ARCHETYPE REPRESENTS "CONTROL" AND "LOGIC" LIKE PRINCESS LEIA.

THE EMOTION ARCHETYPE REPRESENTS "UNCONTROLLED" & "FEELING" LIKE CHEWBACCA.

THE GUARDIAN ARCHETYPE IS "CONSCIENCE" AND "HELP" -- OBI WAN KENOBI IN STAR WARS.

...AND THE CONTAGONIST REPRESENTS "TEMPTATION" AND "HINDER" -- DARTH VADER IN STAR WARS, WHO DEMONSTRATES THE TEMPTATION OF THE "DARK SIDE OF THE FORCE" AND WHO HINDERS BOTH THE REBELS AND, OCCASIONALLY, THE EMPIRE.

THESE ARE THE FUNCTIONS PERFORMED IN STORIES BY THE EIGHT ARCHETYPES. THEIR CHARACTERISTICS LEAD TO A COMPLETE EXPLORATION OF THE OVERALL STORY THROUGHLINE.
IN MY STORY, IRVING IS THE PROTAGONIST AND THE TERRORIST LEADER IS THE ANTAGONIST. THE EMOTION CHARACTER IS THIS TOUGH WOMAN IRVING BEFRIENDS AND THE SIDEKICK IS THAT WOMAN’S HAND-MAID.

WHAT IF SOME OF PENN’S CHARACTERS AREN’T ARCHETYPAL? PENN WRITES REAL CHARACTERS, YOU KNOW, NOT CARDBOARD CUT-OUTS!

ARCHETYPES ARE JUST THE SIMPLEST KIND OF CHARACTERS.

ANY CHARACTER WHO IS NOT ARCHETYPAL IS CALLED “COMPLEX.” BUILDING COMPLEX CHARACTERS IS REALLY WHEN THIS WINDOW BECOMES MOST USEFUL BECAUSE IT PREDICTS RELATIONSHIPS AS WELL AS CHARACTERISTICS.

THESE TWO WORK WITH IRVING AND HIS WIFE THE “GUARDIAN” AS THEY PLOT TO DEFEND THE TERRORISTS.

THE NAY-SAYING AUTHORITIES ARE THE SKEPTICS, AND THE INEFFECTUAL CAPTAIN OF THE SHIP REPRESENTS “REASON.”

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DIAGONALLY OPPOSED CHARACTERS ARE IN CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER.

SIDE-BY-SIDE CHARACTERS ARE COMPATIBLE, BECOMING COMPANIONS.

CHARACTERS STACKED VERTICALLY HAVE QUALITIES THAT COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER, MAKING A TEAM.

THESE RELATIONSHIPS REMAIN CONSTANT, ENSURING THAT CHARACTERS STAY CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT THE STORY.
O.K. THIS STUFF IS USEFUL, BUT HOW DO WE GET FROM HERE TO ACTUALLY WRITING? PENN DOESN'T NEED ANOTHER DISTRACTION, HE NEEDS TO WRITE!

OH DAMIEN! YOU ADMIT THIS MIGHT HELP!

DRAMATICA HELPS YOU STRUCTURE YOUR PLOT IN STORYFORMING.

THEN YOU "ILLUSTRATE" STORY POINTS SUCH AS A MAIN CHARACTER'S "ACTIVITY" INTO SPECIFIC EXAMPLES IN YOUR STORY.

VIOLA! DRAMATICA HAS CREATED A STEP BY STEP OUTLINE READY TO BE HONED INTO A KILLER FIRST DRAFT!

FOR WRITERS WHO ARE UNSURE OF HOW TO CREATE A TREATMENT, STRUCTURE TEMPLATES ARE PROVIDED.

DRAMATICA'S STORYGUIDE WILL HELP YOU WITH THIS.

LASTLY, "WEAVE" TOGETHER THE ORDER IN WHICH YOU WILL REVEAL YOUR STORY TO THE AUDIENCE BY CREATING SCENES OR CHAPTERS.

FOR WRITERS WHO ARE UNSURE OF HOW TO CREATE A TREATMENT, STRUCTURE TEMPLATES ARE PROVIDED.

DRAMATICA'S STORYGUIDE WILL HELP YOU WITH THIS.

JUST OPEN A TEMPLATE FILE TO WRITE A SCREENPLAY, NOVEL, OR SHORT STORY.

NOW YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT TO SAY AND HOW YOU'RE GOING TO SAY IT. ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO POLISH YOUR TREATMENT INTO A FIRST DRAFT.
I USED TO JUST HAVE THIS GUY IN A DRESS FIGHT HIS WAY OFF A SHIP -- NOW HE’S ALSO ON AN EMOTIONAL JOURNEY. MY MAIN CHARACTER IS DRIVEN BY HIS NEED TO CONTROL HIS SELF IMAGE, BUT HIS WIFE SEES THAT IF HE DOESN’T BECOME ONE WITH HIS WRITING PERSONA HE WILL LOSE HIS CHERISHED INTEGRITY. EVERY ACT WILL STRIP AWAY ANOTHER PIECE OF HIS VULNERABLE MACHISMO.

...THIS MAKES HIM RE-THINK HIS WHOLE LIFE AS HE MANEUVERS AROUND THE TERRORISTS UNTIL HE EVENTUALLY REALIZES WHAT HIS WIFE HAS BEEN SAYING...

IT’S ONLY BY LETTING LOOSE AND REALLY EMBRACING HIS UNINHIBITED AND EMOTIONAL SIDE THAT HE CAN TAKE OUT THE BAD GUYS AND KEEP HIS JOB.

AND THAT’S HOW IT ENDS.

THAT WAS SO TOUCHING, PENN. WHERE'D THIS PASSION COME FROM? YOU’VE BEEN HIDING IT. LET’S GET THIS STORY WRITTEN!

THE IMPROVED TREATMENT’S ALREADY DONE! SO YOU FEEL IRVING’S PAIN, AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS WIFE?

OH, IT’S MY FAVORITE PART THEY’RE SO DEVELOPED THAT I WAS INTO THEIR LOVE STORY JUST AS MUCH AS THE ACTION!

SURE, YOU DIDN’T KNOW? YEAH -- I WAS WONDERING, COULD YOU GO OVER THAT “THROUGHLINE” STUFF WITH ME ONE MORE TIME?

OH, DO YOU WRITE?

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT.

I HOPE HE CAN SPARE SOME OF THAT “CHANGE” WHEN HE SELLS THAT SCRIPT, I’VE GOT SOME DEVELOPMENT COSTS OF MY OWN TO PAY.

I’M SORRY ABOUT MY FIRST DRAFT... YOU WERE RIGHT, IT NEEDED WORK.

WELL, LOOK AT THAT. PENN’S A CHANGED MAN, WHETHER HE REALIZES IT OR NOT.

I THINK YOU MAY BE RIGHT.

OH, IT’S MY FA...
"Dramatica is my indispensable tool both in bringing form to my new novels and in the repair and tune-up of stories that I am revisiting. It has added a new, grander dimension to my craft. These are power tools no storyteller should be without."

--Tracy Hickman, novelist
DragonLance (series), Rose of the Prophet (series), Deathgate Cycle (series)

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The Wall Street Journal