Creating a great plot from Scribendi at: <https://www.scribendi.com/advice/goldenrulesforagoodplot.en.html>

***Follow these rules to ensure you have a good plot***

Is it your dream to become a best-selling author? Have you spent countless afternoons daydreaming about selling a million copies? If so, you probably have the motivation it takes to write a great novel. Every great novel has a good plot, full of suspense and endless ups and downs. If you want to hit the big time with your novel, you will need to focus on your [plot structure](https://www.scribendi.com/advice/plotstructuresforbooksinaseries.en.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self). While we can't provide a formula for a guaranteed bestseller, we can offer a few basic plot rules that can ease your journey down that road toward a good plot.

**Plot Rule 1: Create a plot skeleton**

A [plot outline](https://www.scribendi.com/advice/theplotskeleton.en.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) will help you choose a complication and the steps to resolve it. This is the plot. Your character must want or need something and be prevented from getting it. This is the complication. How do they get it? This is the story. Once your character figures out how to get what they want, well, there's your plot. Remember, outlining your plot in advance won't limit your creativity, but rather ensures a good plot—one that doesn't stray too far off topic.

**Plot Rule 2: Flesh out your plot**

Fleshing out your [plot](https://www.scribendi.com/advice/fleshingoutyourplot.en.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) with colorful characters and a vivid setting will enhance your novel and grab your readers' attention. Be sure to spend time on the little details and stay focused; nothing is worse than a good plot idea that grows ever more chaotic as the novel progresses. Stories are about change; each scene should have a turning point, with the character moving from one value to another. Does the character start out sad? They should end up angry, or happy, or downright ebullient. Each scene should push the story toward a final turning point: the resolution.

**Plot Rule 3: Bring your plot to a powerful resolution**

Have you used each scene and story event to guide readers to a [plot resolution](https://www.scribendi.com/advice/bringingyourplottoagoodresolution.en.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self)? Now don't let them down. This is your final turning point; how has your character changed from the beginning of the story? Readers don't want to spend an entire day, or even a week, reading a novel just to have the ending fall flat. Be sure to tie up loose ends. Even if you're writing a book series with an overarching plot, you still have to end the mini-plots within each book.

**Plot Rule 4: End your story at a natural stopping place**

After the climax, wrap up the story as quickly as possible. Don't be tempted to drag it out; your readers won't like it and your plot and characters will suffer. Remember, the end of the story will be the freshest thing in readers' minds once they put the book down.

**Plot Rule 5: Make sure your characters resolve conflicts on their own**

Don't rely on an act of nature or an unknown hero to clean things up at the last minute. Your audience wants to see your [characters](https://www.scribendi.com/advice/creating_believable_characters.en.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_self) solve their own problems. Your readers have grown attached to your characters; a good plot will show how these characters have been transformed by the obstacles they've faced.

**A final note on creating a good plot…**

Creating a good plot isn't as easy as it sounds. It's like telling a cat that racing through the mud, leaping over a fence, pulling off a three-quarter corkscrew, and catching the Frisbee in mid-flight—all to a racy samba tune–will finally gain this feline the respect of the dogs in the park. While this accomplishment will likely set some tails wagging, it will take a long time, and many sessions of trial and error, for the cat to learn such a feat.

The same is true when crafting a good plot. Your first attempt might not be perfect; it will take time and practice to come up with a great storyline—and once you've got it, you still have the hurdles of character and setting to overcome. Add a unique writing style to the mix, and you just might have a great novel. However, if you have a good, solid structure for your plot, you can put it in the hands of characters in any setting and it won't let you down.