

Example:

Project: Standstill

Tense: present

POV: third limited / multi

Genre: horror

Goal word count: 70,000 – 90,000

Premise:

A woman finds herself in the middle of a global invasion with nothing but the clothes on her back and an unwelcome alliance with someone she swore to forget.

Character Notes:

Female main character: Lana, 32, bartender, long black hair, poor survival skills, social

Male main character: Eli, 35, mechanic, buzzed hair, great survival skills, loner

- They had a one-night stand in college (over a decade ago) but the morning after there was a big miscommunication that turned into a massive fight. Though they still have mutual friends to this day, they harbor ill will toward the other and do not speak or hang out. Though, of course, that angst is only self-preservation for the feelings they've harbored all this time.

Worldbuilding:

- Takes places in Nashville, TN and the surrounding rural areas
- After the initial attack, the power grid goes down; it's chaos and every man for themselves
- The extraterrestrials are ghastly beasts that stand twelve feet tall on four limbs; they can't communicate with humans; they came out of the flaming projectiles that cracked open upon impact with the Earth's surface; no one knows where they came from or who sent them; they hunt in packs

Notes:

Though this is a horror novel, there is a romance subplot that provides some light-hearted moments amidst all of the destruction, violence, and danger. As Lana and Eli struggle to survive together, they rekindle old feelings and learn that they're stronger together.

Outline:

| Chapter 1 |

POV: Lana

Objective: introduce the reader to the world, set the stakes

Plot overview: Lana is in line at the grocery store. It's early evening (after 4pm). She's trying to get her grocery shopping done before she has to head into the bar later. She's still tired from last night's shift and all she wants to do is hurry home to make a quick bite to eat and shower before work. The grocery store is packed and she's impatient. The atmosphere in the line around her is much of the same. The man behind Lana is talking on the phone loudly, seemingly arguing with someone about work deadlines. The mother in front of her is balancing her toddler on one hip while arranging all of her items on the conveyor belt. The checker is a bored-looking teenage boy with bangs that hang in front of his eyes and a dangly silver earring. Everything seems normal and almost banal. Just as one customer leaves and the mother with the toddler steps up to the checkout, there's a shuddering roar and, through the window-lined storefront, Lana spots a massive flame of hurtling fire before it strikes the parking lot with a booming crash. Everyone is shocked silent. There's almost a stilted moment where time seems to stop, then true chaos erupts. Five more balls of fire fall from the sky and crash into the earth. There are screams and car alarms but above it all is the discernable sound of fire blazing and the screeching grate of metal slamming into asphalt, then brick and glass as the objects hit neighboring buildings. Before Lana can recover from her shock, the raining debris slams into the roof of the grocery store, tearing through concrete and metal rafters. The last thing she sees is the cashier being buried in rubble before everything goes black.

| Chapter 2 |

POV: Eli

Objective: build tension, further press the inciting incident

Plot overview: A man swerves on the highway, steering his motorcycle out of the way as the two cars in front of him slam into each other. The man (Eli) watches as another of those flaming projectiles descend from the sky and crash into the overhead freeway ramp. He continues to dodge and weave around cars and debris as the chaos continues to rain down on him. He cracks the throttle and tears down an exit ramp. There's just as much destruction and chaos off the highway. There are car alarms, sirens, and screaming everywhere. Though it's softly muffled, he can still hear it all through his helmet. He goes to take a right turn at an intersection but sees a firetruck barreling through. Though, before it can make it, some massive creature jumps out of a mass of smoking debris and slams against it. The firetruck is knocked over and skids across the intersection, sparking and shuddering. Eli just barely has enough time to speed out of the way before it crashes into him. As he flees, he glances in his side view mirror. He catches sight of that same alien beast dragging an injured man from the firetruck. Before he can look away from the horrid sight, Eli sees another monster lunge forward to bite a chuck of flesh from the man's side.