**Chapter Sketch**

Scenes and chapters are character-driven toward a goal that occurs in a particular time and place. A character with a goal should run into opposition which creates conflict that builds to greater suspense through repeated thwarted efforts, until the character succeeds and reaches the goal, or fails.

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| **Chapter Name or Number: /** |
| **Mission:** What is the chapter’s single succinct mission? What new information/revelation is delivered that forwards the plot. What is its relationship to Primary/Secondary Plot. |
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| **Chapter intentions:** the job to be carried out that will give the chapter purpose. What are the character’s immediate desires or intentions? What will they achieve or how will they meet opposition? Does the scenes make sense to the plot? Who will help or oppose your characters? Chapter based intentions such as find shelter, contact a friend. Make it hard: block completion of the intention, throw in a twist, complicate the intention, or create a new intent. |
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| **Character development:** At least one plot situation or new piece of information to which to respond or react. A catalyst or antagonist with whom the protagonist interacts. The protagonist’s intention for the chapter. The protagonist’s personal history. Each situation or interaction should make your plot and it consequences for the antagonist more or less complicated. |
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| **Plot:** Every scene must deliver at least on piece of new information that speaks to who, what, when, where, why or how. Who: Include character information in your narrative. What: the storyline or angle that makes your narrative unique from other plot events. Where: add new details about the place that have an effect on your character. The actions generated by the new information must lead to other plot-related consequences. When: the time at which some important action in your narrative takes place. How: information that ties up the investigation, reveals clues, or explains the seemingly impossible |
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| **Subtext:** depth that links chapter to themes and larger narrative plot and fleshes them out. Utilize thematic imagery or symbols, innuendo, unconscious or uncontrollable behavior such as phobias, or explain subtle messages and emotional layers through actions. |
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| **Dramatic tension:** the *potential* for conflict to happen in the chapter. Thwart your protagonist’s goals, include unexpected changes, shift power back and forth, add plot information that changes your protagonist in some way. Include foreboding, thwart expectation, or make changes without explanation. |
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| **Passing of time:** Are you keeping paying attention to the passing of time? Do your scenes realistically account for time? How much time has elapsed since the character’s last scene? If there’s a time gap, have you shown it? |
| **Chapter’s Scenes**  **Scene 1**  **Setting:** Fully describe environment if the setting is new. Avoid flowery prose. Open the first scene through the POV character’s eyes. Show only what’s important to him and/or to anchor the reader—bring him to the scene. If the reader’s already been here don’t describe it again unless it’s germane to the plot.  **Beginning:**  Enter scenes at the last possible moment, which is?  Relationship to primary/secondary plot:  What is the scene’s intention—the job to be carried out that will give the chapter purpose.  What are the character’s immediate desires or intentions?  What will they achieve or how will they meet opposition?  Does the scenes make sense to the plot?  Who will help or oppose your characters, e.g., find shelter, contact a friend. Make it hard: block completion of the intention, throw in a twist, complicate the intention, or create a new intent |
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| **Middle:** Up the ante. Complicate the character’s lives before the reader’s eyes. Dangle objects of desire just out of reach. Put protagonist or someone he loves in danger. Reveal something to your character he didn’t already know, driving your plot forward. Up the ante with complications. Withhold. Deny. Have unexpected revelations. Intentions/complications/result. |
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| **Ending**: Zoom in with dialogue driven character summaries or revelations, perhaps on a note of surprise or intensity, or a cliffhanger using peril, a twist in perception, or action at a precipice. Zoom out with visual descriptions of the present moment, philosophical musings that explore thematic undercurrents, or with a conclusive ending that concludes something that has happened or to tie up a plot point. END WITH A ZINGER that captures the reader; titillating the reader to want to read on. |
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