

WRITING THE SHORT SYNOPSIS: by Kathy Carmichael

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<http://www.KathyCarmichael.com>

Based on THE COMIC TOOLBOX by John Vorhaus ISBN #: 1-879505-21-5

HERO:

1. Who is the hero? (job or aspiration):

2. Add to that a descriptor:

List 10 adjectives to describe the hero:

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

3. What does the hero want externally (the external plot):

4. What is the hero seeking in his life? What is he lacking inside? What does he need to change? EX: forgiveness, to be complete, acceptance of who is truly is.

5. What deep-seated conclusion or core belief does he have that relates to this, that keeps him from attaining it?

List three events in his past that lead him to this core belief (internal conflict):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

6. Brainstorm a list of possible events that could lead him to change his core belief (think in terms of stages of change/growth): Shoot for 10

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

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HEROINE:

1. Who is the heroine? (job or aspiration):

2. Add to that a descriptor:

List 10 adjectives to describe the heroine:

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

3. What does she want externally (the external plot):

4. What is the heroine seeking in her life? What is she lacking inside? What does she need to change? EX: forgiveness, to be complete, acceptance of who is truly is.

5. What deep-seated conclusion or core belief does she have that relates to this, that keeps her from attaining it?

List three events in her past that lead her to this core belief (internal conflict):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

6. Brainstorm a list of possible events that could lead her to change her core belief (think in terms of stages of change/growth): Shoot for 10

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
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Conflict/Growth:

1. In what areas or beliefs do the Hero and Heroine clash? (conflict)

Hero:

Heroine:

2. In what areas do the heroine and heroine mesh? (attraction)

Hero:

Heroine:

3. How does the hero change?

Core belief at beginning of the book:

Core belief at ending of the book:

3. How does the heroine change?

Core belief at beginning of the book:

Core belief at ending of the book:

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The Inciting Incident: (the door opens):

Often first step in the progression of emotional change, or the precursor to change

The H/H takes control:

Confronted a necessity for change (or a need to react). Based on their current internal conflict, they deal with it with as little internal change as possible. After dealing with it they feel successful.—May involve only one character—or both.

Hero:

Heroine:

A Monkey Wrench is Thrown: (1/4 mark)

Just when char. feels like everything is under control—something goes wrong. A screw up happens, a new threat arises, or a complication develops. Should involve both the Hero and the Heroine—show that initial change was not enough to solve the story dilemma.

Point where character starts to realize a need to change. Pick one growth even from the list above for each the hero and the heroine and brainstorm a scene (external plot) that will put both of their issues (emotional risk) at stake.

Things Fall Apart (middle of the book)

Point where the character actually starts to make a change. Go back to list created in exercise #6. Brainstorm or list three key scenes in which the hero or heroine's (or both) core-beliefs are or will be challenged:

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HERO:

1.

2.

3.

HEROINE:

1.

2.

3.

Now look at the list and see if you can brainstorm scene ideas in which an item from each character's list can come into play in the same scene.

The Hero/Heroine hits bottom

This is the moment that fulfills your character's inner goal—because they have to take the BIG risk or make the Big/Ultimate change. It should relate to the character's core belief being challenged. They must realize that their core belief is wrong. It is the change they've been trying to avoid from the beginning. They are willing to risk everything they thought they wanted in order to gain love, even though they are almost assured of failure. Note: does not have to occur at the same time for the hero and the heroine. There can be two black moments.

Remember, after getting it wrong all through the story, they will finally get it right as a result of facing their black moment.

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Hero's black moment:

Heroine's black moment:

What do the Hero/Heroine get?

What is their reward for facing their inner demons, for changing their core beliefs, for overcoming the external and internal plot obstacles? Don't short cut on this; the reader wants to experience it, too.