

## LESSON 6: Brainstorming Scenes From Your Character's Point of View

Now that you've covered the basics of story structure and thought about what sorts of incidents and high points/low points might appear in your story, now it's time to think about what other sorts of scenes you might want to include in your story.

### Your Character's Traits

You'll want scenes that showcase your character's traits, personality, occupation, and relationships. Scenes that show what this person values and holds dear. Show what this person fears.

Also, consider scenes that show your character's true nature under their flawed exterior. The gruff marine who saves a kitten will be much more endearing to the reader than a grouchy character that appears to have no redeeming qualities at all. Even though your character is flawed at the beginning of the story, you still want to show something "likeable" about the person so that the reader is able to sympathize with his problems and root for him to succeed.

In a romance, it's important to show the hero and heroine are worthy of each other, even if they are really screwed up people at the start of the story, by showing that they have "heroic" qualities inside. You don't want perfect characters (remember, perfect=boring), but you want there to be something positive about them amidst the chaos. You don't want your reader thinking "She/he deserves someone better" as the romance is progressing. :-) Even something as small as showing that a character has good manners can go a long way.

### The GMC

You will need scenes that show the GMC throughout the story--scenes that show the main character wanting something, going after something, why she can't have it and most of all: why it's so important and what will happen if she fails.

If you think of plot as a series of actions and reactions, decisions and failures or successes, then it's easy to see that scenes with that type of information will propel the main character toward the story goal and the end of the novel. You want that forward momentum. It keeps the story pace going.

So you'll need scenes that show the main character making choices, reacting to failures or successes and then reassessing and making new choices.

## Relationships

Your characters do not live in a vacuum, and unless they're marooned on a deserted island, there are other people around that they should interact with. They have family, friends or at the very least co-workers or service people they bump into on a regular basis.

Consider scenes that show your character's relationships with other people. This is a great way to show off your character's traits and personality as well as add new information to the plot.

Don't let your character be a hermit (unless that's part of your plot), because then you get into too many "talking to yourself" situations. Let your character have a friend to discuss things with. Good dialog can really keep the pace of a story going, whereas heavy introspection (too much thinking) tends to slow it down.

That said, if you're stuck and not sure what your character should do next, journal it. Let your character write a letter to a friend and pour out his heart about the situation and see if that gives you some new ideas of where the story should go. Be receptive to what decisions the character is inclined to make and use that to determine the next event in the story.

## Homework

Today's homework will be a bit of a combination between Lesson 5's homework and Lesson 3's journaling work.

Start with some journaling. Ask your character the following questions and write the answers from their perspective in first person.

- 1.) What are you most afraid of?
- 2.) What does success look like to you?
- 3.) The greatest thing I've ever done in my life is...
- 4.) My biggest mistake was...

Now, brainstorm some of the scenes for your novel. **Don't write the scenes themselves** (that's for NaNo!), but do start making lists of the scenes you think should be in the book with a line or two to remind you what you wanted to go into that scene. You may not know the specifics yet, but if you know you want a scene that shows the hero and heroine meeting, then list that as something like "The hero and heroine first meet" (add whatever details you know about it as part of the description).

Look at your main character's GMC. You have the inciting incident where the goal originates (or the decision to act on an earlier goal happens). This inspires your main character to make a plan. **What does that plan look like?** Jot down some scene ideas based on the "actionable steps" your character plans to take to get what she wants.

Look at some of the **obstacles** that could get in your character's way, especially her flaw or fear, and jot down scene ideas that might show that to the reader.

Jot down scene ideas that show what the **failures** along the way might look like.

Jot down scene ideas that show different aspects of your **character's personality**, traits, etc. For example, if you want to show your main character has a love for animals, you need a scene with an animal. If you want to show that family is important to your character, then jot down a scene idea showing your character interacting with his family.

Post to the loop a **brief description of 2 scenes you want to include in the book and what you want the scenes to show the reader.**