



Story Body Example

Envision Your Entire Narrative to Spot
Plot Holes and Validate Story

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PREMISE EXAMPLE

When the murder of a client disrupts an introverted gallery owner's peaceful life in the Texas Hill Country, she uses her art investigative skills to identify the killer and discovers the intriguing odyssey of a priceless painting looted in World War II.

STORY BODY EXAMPLE

Once upon a time there was an art gallery owner who loved her idyllic life in a small town, but while walking her dog, she came across a body—*her newest client*.

Every day, she felt more compelled to find out who killed him. Using her investigative skills honed from years of researching art, she tried to identify the killer, causing friction at home, conflicts with friends, and hindrances from police chief.

But one day, she discovered the intriguing odyssey of a valuable painting looted at the end of World War II—*the same painting her dead client had left for appraisal*.

Unfortunately, Dorothy's fear of losing her idyllic life kept her from immediately investigating. Her internal debate continued until she recalled what her husband had said, "You can't let fear hold you back from what you're called to do."

Because of that encouragement, she began interviewing suspects who had reasons to do away with her client.

In order to take this action, Dorothy decided to visit with each suspect despite the expected resistance from the individuals and police chief.

Unfortunately, Dorothy received threats, fueling her fear of losing the life she loves, which caused delays in the investigation, but she continued interviewing suspects over multiple days. With each individual, she encountered obstacles, causing more conflicts at home, with her best friend, and the police chief.

Since that happened, she encountered even more issues at home, work, and play, forcing her to face the real possibility she might lose her idyllic life if she continued investigating the murder. Instead of letting fear hold her back, she vowed to follow her calling as an amateur sleuth.



Where she once wanted to maintain her idyllic life, she was now aware of her selfless duty to her adopted community, and diligently narrowed the field of suspects while dealing with even more conflicts and obstacles.

But how could she succeed because of the danger she faces from the two remaining suspects?

Filled with fear because of the deadly threats, Dorothy's mixture of faith and resolve helped her muster the courage to continue. She uncovered vital clues and scheduled a meeting with her prime suspect.

As a result of her faith and resolve, she eliminated all suspects, save for one, but as she closed in on the killer's identification, her efforts put Dorothy and her husband in danger. When she confronted the suspect, he denied the allegation, and that set off a series of events that shifted Dorothy's life from idyllic to deadly.

She encountered more setbacks, forcing her to refocus the investigation on one of previously ruled-out suspects. This time, as the threats continued, only a thin thread of faith sustained her.

All she had to do was meet with the suspect, but that required a face off with the man who had threatened her and husband, and that could lead to a deadly outcome.

Relying on her husband's military training, her investigative skills, and her keen awareness of additional evidence, she pulled off the meeting without loss of life, eliminating that suspect and giving her the clues needed to confront the actual killer.

Until finally, Dorothy and her husband faced certain death at the hands of the killer. They tried to escape, and failed twice, but her fearless taunts allowed the police chief to arrive undetected and capture the distracted killer.

And ever since then, she and her husband grew closer, and he encouraged her to continue her calling as the small town's resident amateur sleuth.



STORY BODY STRUCTURE

ACT 1: STABLE WORLD

HOOK: Once upon a time, there was a (Lead Character) who was (Lead Character's major flaw).

SETUP: Every day, (Lead Character's routine; story setting and time).

TRIGGER: But, one day, (problem or event) occurred, and (Lead Character) (tried to solve the problem or deal with the event).

WRANGLE: Unfortunately, (consequences of Lead Character's flaw-driven action occurred).

THRUST INTO 2: Because of that, (Lead Character) decided (on Lead Character's goal) and had to (Lead Character's initial plan to fulfill that goal).

ACT 2A: UNSTABLE WORLD (Part One)

RESPONSE: In order to take this action, Lead Character decided to (act on Lead Character's initial plan).

POWER PLAY 1: Unfortunately, (obstacle) happened,

PREMISE: which caused (complications).

MIDPOINT: Since that happened, (Lead Character) faced (new task or risk).

ACT 2B: UNSTABLE WORLD (Part Two)

ACTION: Where Lead Character once wanted to (i.e., the *want*), Lead Character was now aware of (the *need*), and (pursued new task or faced up to the new risk).

POWER PLAY 2: But how could Lead Character succeed because of (obstacle)?

BATTLE 1: Filled with (emotions because of outcome), Lead Character (took a new action).

ACT 3: CHANGED WORLD

PLUNGE INTO 3: And because of that, (consequences) occurred, leaving Lead Character feeling (emotions at a low point).



PONDER: Lead Character encounters setbacks, reflects on the consequences, and that helped (come up with problem solution).

FACE OFF: All Lead Character had to do was (take action), but that required a face off with (the obstacle).

BATTLE 2: Using (Lead Character's/other character's abilities), (Lead Character's skills), and (Lead Character's discoveries), Lead Character was able to (overcome the obstacle).

CLIMAX: Unfortunately, (a reversal of fortune occurred—failures, setting up the CLIMAX for Lead Character's third and final battle). This battle continued until finally, (Lead Character applied the lesson learned—mentor's advice).

RESOLUTION: And, ever since then, (the change that has occurred), which (the meaning of the change to Lead Character, other characters, and audience).

STORY BODY EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

Who plays the primary POV (lead character) role in your story?

What are the inner issues that influence lead character's choices?

What does lead character typically do each day?

Where does the story take place?

When does the story happen?

What is the lead character's object of desire (i.e., the want)?

What life lesson must lead character learn that supersedes the want?

What is the crucial challenge faced by the lead character?

What qualifies lead character to deal with the story's problem or event?

What causes lead character to choose to deal with the problem or event?

What is the lead character's strategy to achieve the goal?

What or who makes solving the problem or addressing the event difficult?

What's at stake if the problem is not solved, or event is not addressed?

How does an obstacle make things worse for lead character?

What are lead character's new actions or stakes because of obstacle?



How does the lead character feel about the problem or event?
What is the lead character's response to the problem or event?
What's the cause/effect of problem or event on lead character's choice?
Who else is in the story?
How does lead character respond to other characters?
Which characters have the most influence on lead character?
How do crucial characters contribute to the story's outcome?
Which relationships will be established or dissolved by story end?
How did lead character's flaw cause an action?
How did lead character's action make matters worse?
What other findings influence lead character's choices?
What happens because of lead character's discoveries?
What other crucial occurrences take place before story's end?
Which hidden truths (secrets) will be revealed by story end?
What will shock, hurt, surprise, or delight lead character by story end?
What prompted lead character to look for the discoveries?
Who made lead character aware of potential discoveries?
What motivated a character to tell lead character about discoveries?
Which events caused a character to tell lead character about discoveries?
What has to take place before lead character can solve the problem?
To fix lead character's flaw and overcome obstacle, what must happen?
How does lead character finally overcome the obstacle?
How does the story's ending show change within characters? Audience?

