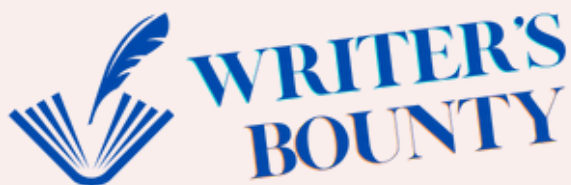




Plotting a Novel: Printable Resources

By: Jenifer Ruth



COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2022 by Jenifer Ruth All rights reserved.

You are welcome to print a copy of this document for your personal use. Other than that, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the author. Requests to the author and publisher for permission should be addressed to the following email: jenifer@writersbounty.com

Limitation of liability/disclaimer of warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this guide, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this document and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives, promoters, or written sales materials.

The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

Due to the dynamic nature of the Internet, certain links and website information contained in this publication may have changed. The author and publisher make no representations to the current accuracy of the web information shared.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|---------|
| Hero's Journey | page 4 |
| Hero's Journey Quick Reference Page | page 5 |
| Hero's Journey Organizer | page 6 |
| 3 Act Structure | page 9 |
| 3 Act Structure Quick Reference Page | page 10 |
| 3 Act Structure Organizer | page 11 |
| Snowflake Method | page 15 |
| Snowflake Method Quick Reference Page | page 16 |
| Snowflake Method Organizer | page 17 |
| Fichtean Curve | page 25 |
| Fichtean Curve Quick Reference Page | page 26 |
| Fichtean Curve Organizer | page 27 |
| Dan Harmon's Story Circle | page 28 |
| Dan Harmon's Story Circle Quick Reference | page 29 |
| Dan Harmon's Story Circle Organizer | page 30 |
| Final Inspiration | page 31 |



A hero is someone who, in spite of weakness, doubt or not always knowing the answers, goes ahead and overcomes anyway.

~Christopher Reeves

HERO'S JOURNEY

This is my personal go-to plotting method. I break it into three sections for planning purposes. As I write, things change. So I tend to go back to my original plan and make changes (the pencil is my friend). I'll use what is left at the end to help write my synopsis for publishers.

If you like this method I highly recommend getting Chris Vogler's book, *The Writer's Journey*.

HERO'S JOURNEY QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

- **The Call to Adventure:** The hero is presented with a challenge or quest.
- **The Refusal of the Call:** The hero refuses the call, usually out of fear.
- **The Meeting with the Mentor:** The hero meets someone who helps them prepare for the journey ahead.
- **The Crossing of the First Threshold:** The hero enters unknown territory and faces challenges for the first time.
- **The Road of Trials:** The hero faces many challenges and obstacles, each more difficult than the last. These challenges test the hero's resolve and help them grow as a person. If they are successful, they will be transformed by the experience.
- **The Approach to the Inmost Cave:** The hero prepares to face the final challenge. This step is usually the darkest moment in the story, where everything seems lost.
- **The Ordeal:** The hero faces the final challenge and triumphs. This step is the climax of the story.
- **The Reward:** The hero is rewarded for their bravery with treasures, power, or knowledge.
- **The Return:** The hero returns home, transformed by their journey. They may have to face challenges on the way back, but they are now better equipped to deal with them.

HERO'S JOURNEY ORGANIZER PART 1

**Call to
Adventure**

**Refusal of
the Call**

**Meeting the
Mentor**

HERO'S JOURNEY ORGANIZER PART 2

**Crossing the
Threshold**

**Road of
Trials**

This box is
bigger, as
there should
be multiple
trials.

HERO'S JOURNEY ORGANIZER PART 3

| | |
|---|--|
| Approach to the Innermost Cave | |
| The Ordeal Remember this is the climax. | |
| The Reward | |
| The Return | |



All the world's a
stage, and all the
men and women
merely players.

~William Shakespeare

3 ACTS STRUCTURE

I have several writer friends who swear by this structure, especially those who started as screenwriters. I've used it on occasion, particularly for my shorter works (I love it for novellas).

If you like this method I highly recommend Chike Camara's book, *Three-Act Structure: Classified: Mastering the 3-Act Structure in Screenwriting*.

3 ACTS STRUCTURE

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE



- **Act One: The Setup.** This is where we meet the characters and learn about the world they live in. The inciting incident happens in this act and sets the story in motion.
- **Act Two: The Conflict.** This is where the main conflict of the story plays out. The stakes are raised and the character faces challenges they must overcome.
- **Act Three: The Resolution.** This is where the conflict is resolved and loose ends are tied up. The character has changed by the end of this act and is ready to face the challenges of the new world they live in.

ACT 1 STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Beginning | |
| Inciting Incident | |
| Second Thoughts | |
| Act One Climax | |

ACT 2, PART 1

STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Obstacle 1 with Result | |
| Obstacle 1 with Result | |
| Midpoint (Plot Twist) | |

ACT 2, PART 2

STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Obstacle with Result | |
| Crisis | |
| Disaster | |

ACT 3 STRUCTURE ORGANIZER

| | |
|---|--|
| Climax | |
| Falling Action and/or Obstacle | |
| Wrap-up | |



Lives are snowflakes
- forming patterns
we have seen before,
as like one another
as peas in a pod, but
still unique.

~Neil Gaiman

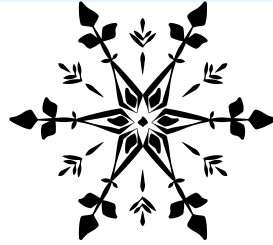
SNOWFLAKE METHOD

Okay, I admit that I haven't used this one personally at all. But I know several writers that swear by the Snowflake Method. They say it helps them from over-plotting and getting stuck wading in a sea of details.

If you want to try this method but could use more support, I highly recommend Randy Ingermanson's book, *How to Write a Novel Using the Snowflake Method*. He's the guru of the method and goes into much deeper details than I do here. I'm putting organizers here that makes sense to me visually.

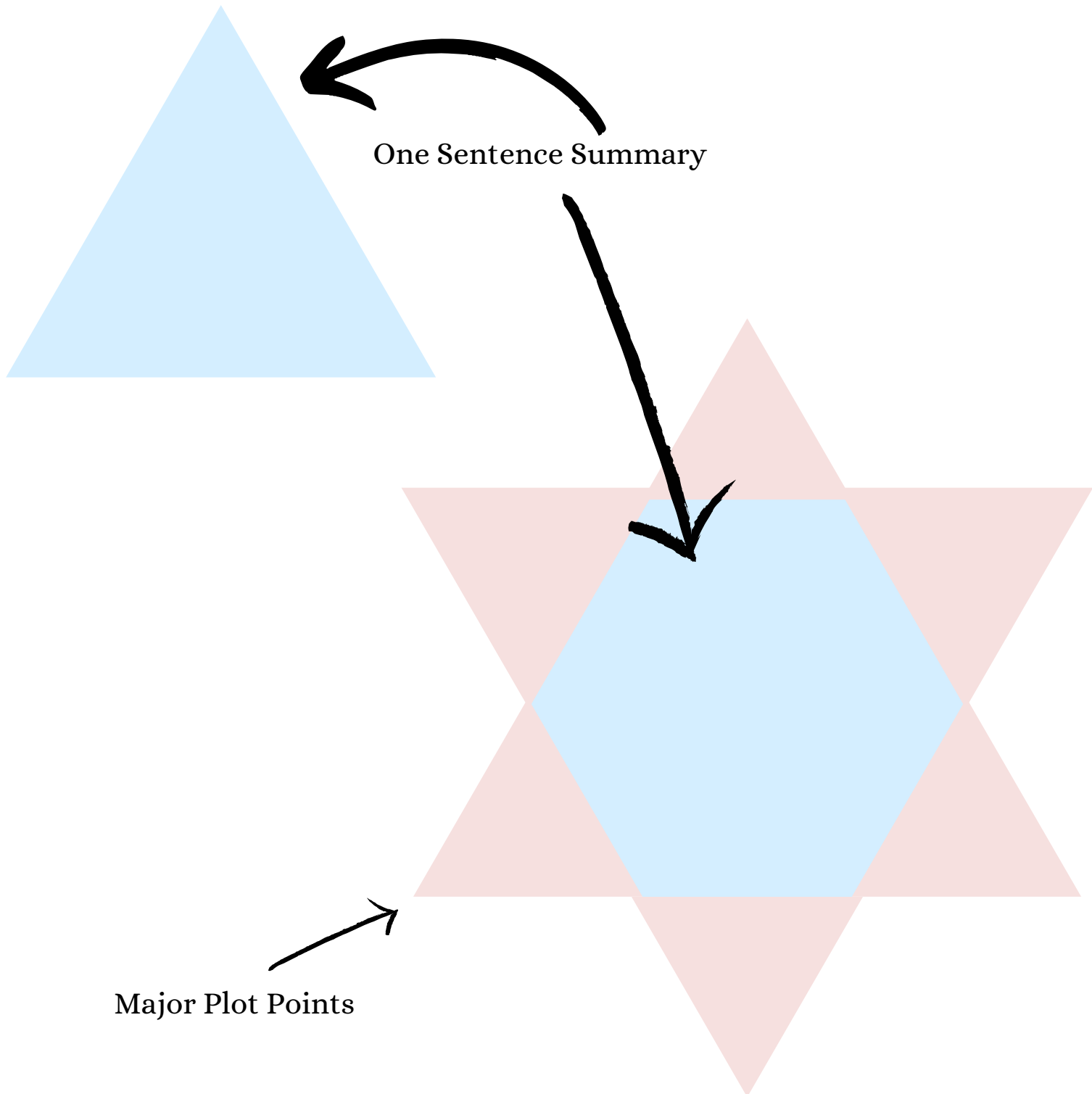
SNOWFLAKE METHOD

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE



- **Steps 1 and 2: Focus on the Plot** Write a single sentence summary. Then, add five more sentences describing your major plot points.
- **Step 3: Focus on Characters** With the basic plot in mind, begin developing characters. Include their goals, their conflicts (internal and external), and how they overcome their conflicts.
- **Step 4: Summary Expansion.** Here, I no longer use the snowflake visual (too messy for me). But each sentence from the plot snowflake now becomes a paragraph. In the end, you should have a page.
- **Step 5: Character Expansion.** Again, I abandon the visual. Here, so a complete character breakdown as well as a paragraph describing what happens to them in the story.
- **Step 6: Summary Mega Expansion.** Now, take each paragraph summary that you wrote and expand them into full pages. Consider your characters and their journeys as you do so.

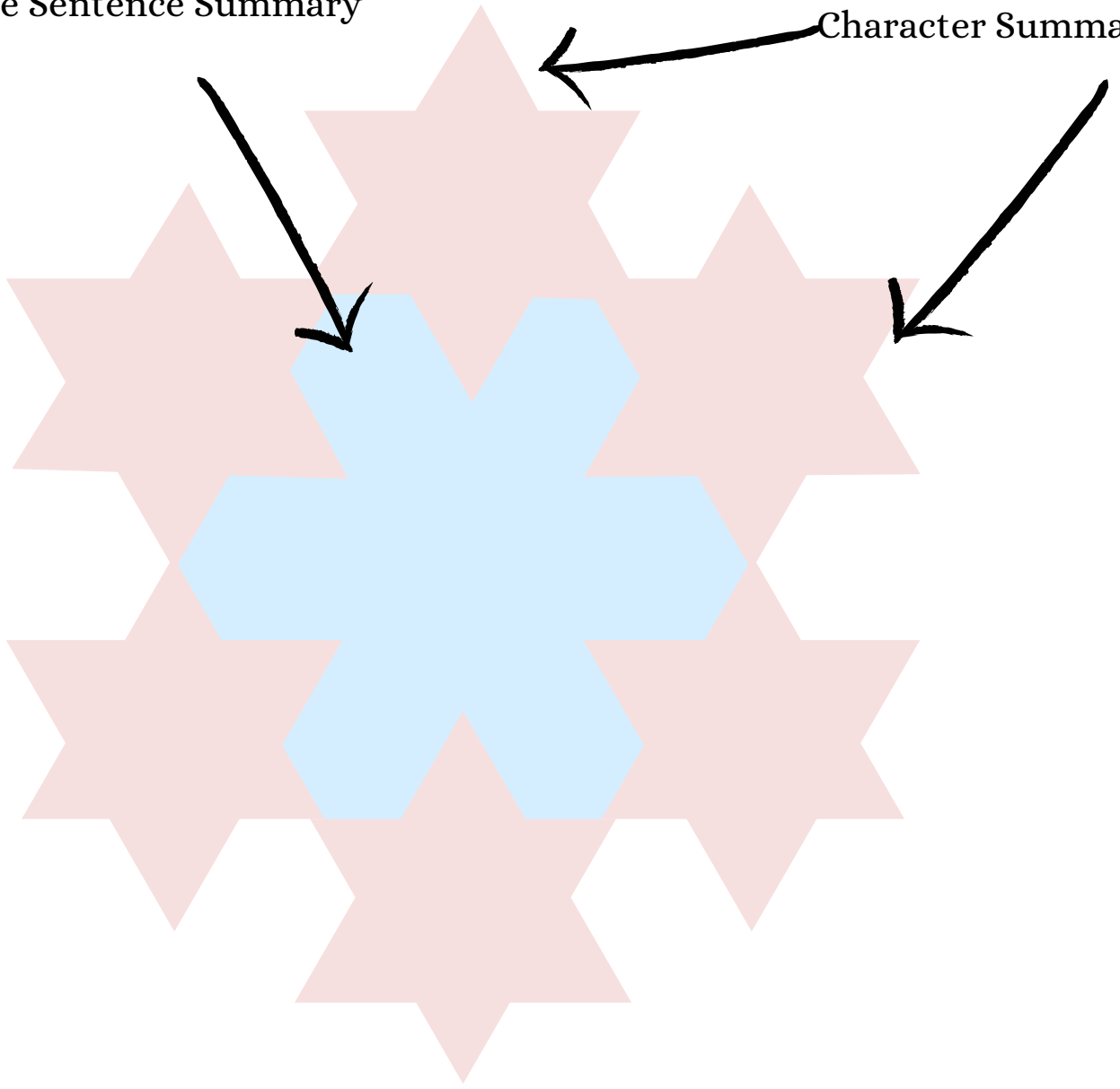
STEPS 1 AND 2 - PLOT



STEP 3 - CHARACTERS

One Sentence Summary

Character Summaries



STEP 4 - SUMMARY EXPANSION

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |

STEP 4 - SUMMARY EXPANSION

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |

STEP 5 - CHARACTER EXPANSION (COMPLETE FOR EACH CHARACTER)

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Character's First and Last Name | |
| Nickname and why (optional) | |

Personality and Traits

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Good Character Traits | |
| Character Flaws | |
| Optimist or Pessimist and why? | |
| Introvert or Extravert and why? | |
| Talents or Skills | |
| How does s/he feel about self? | |
| Greatest Strength | |
| Greatest Weakness | |
| Soft Spot | |
| Pet Peeve | |
| Habits (good or bad) | |
| Hobbies | |

STEP 5 - CHARACTER EXPANSION (COMPLETE FOR EACH CHARACTER)

Physical Appearance

| | |
|--|--|
| Age | |
| Height | |
| Build | |
| Eye Color and (glasses, contacts, or none) | |
| Distinguishing marks like: freckles, moles, scars, tattoos, etc. | |
| Do they resemble anyone famous? | |

Background

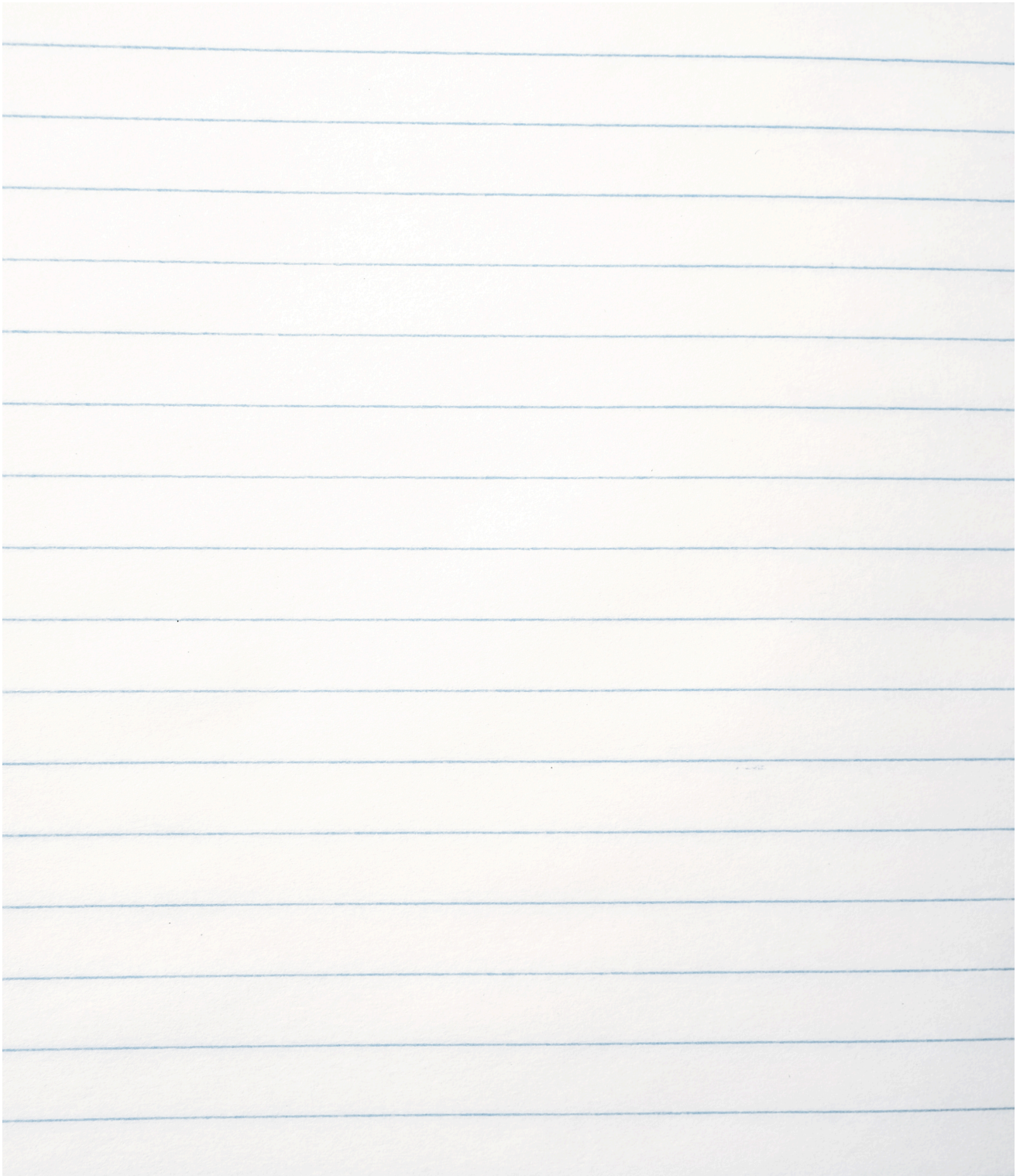
| | |
|--|--|
| Hometown (city or small town?) | |
| Type of childhood (good/bad?) | |
| Family description such as: number of siblings, parents together or not, are they close or not, why? | |
| Darkest Secret: Does anyone know? | |


STEP 5 - CHARACTER EXPANSION (COMPLETE FOR EACH CHARACTER)

What Happens to this Character in the Story

STEP 6 - SUMMARY MEGA EXPANSION

Plot Paragraph to a Page





There's almost
always a point in a
book where
something happens
that triggers the rest
of the plot.

~Jonathan Carroll

FICHTEAN CURVE

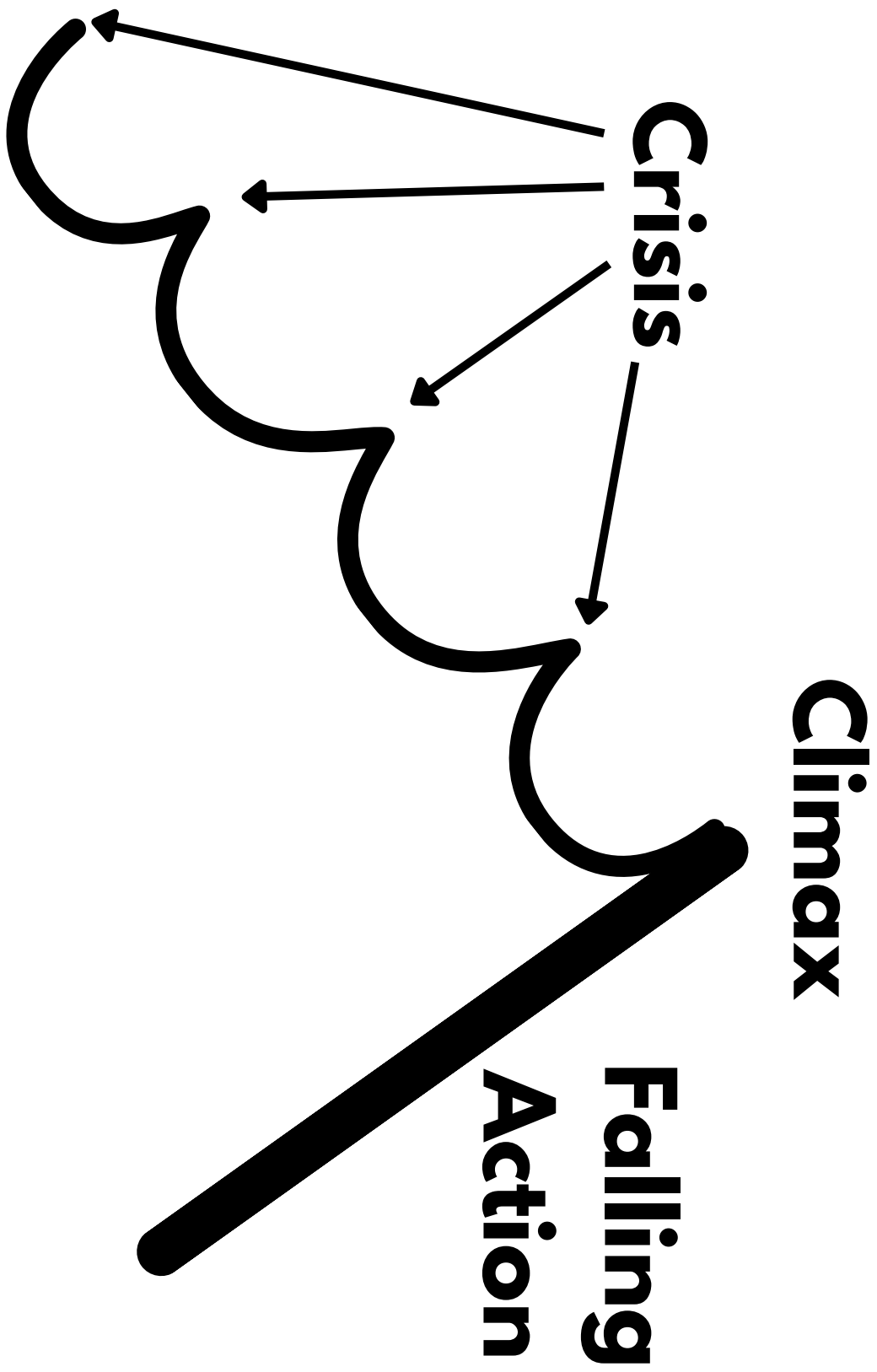
Have you ever looked at a generic plot diagram and wondered how on Earth an actual novel could fit on it? The Fichtean Curve uses that concept but tries to make it more useful. If you're writing a character-based story, or maybe something more episodic, the Fichtean curve may be just what you're looking for.

Check out these sites and blogs for more info on the Fichtean Curve:
<https://blog.reedsy.com/guide/story-structure/fichtean-curve/>
<https://www.dabblewriter.com/writing-with-the-fichtean-curve/>

FICHTEAN CURVE QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

- **The Goal:** What does your character want? This is the starting point of their journey.
- **The Reason:** Why does your character want this? What motivates them to take action?
- **The Obstacle:** What is preventing your character from achieving their goal? This is the main conflict of the story.
- **The Plan:** How does your character plan to overcome the obstacle and achieve their goal?
- **The Attempt:** Your character tries to execute their plan, but it doesn't go as expected.
- **The Crisis:** The situation reaches a breaking point and your character must make a decision.
- **The Resolution:** Your character either achieves their goal or learns something important about themselves. Either way, they are changed by the end of the story.

FICHTEAN CURVE PLOT DIAGRAM





There's almost always a point in a book where something happens that triggers the rest of the plot.

~Jonathan Carroll

DAN HARMON'S STORY CIRCLE

I have used this one before. I think of it as a more direct spin of the Hero's Journey. As a cycle, I've repeated the cycle for both stories and series.

There are several different books and sites dedicated to Harmon's Story Circle. I suggest reading up on it more before jumping in.

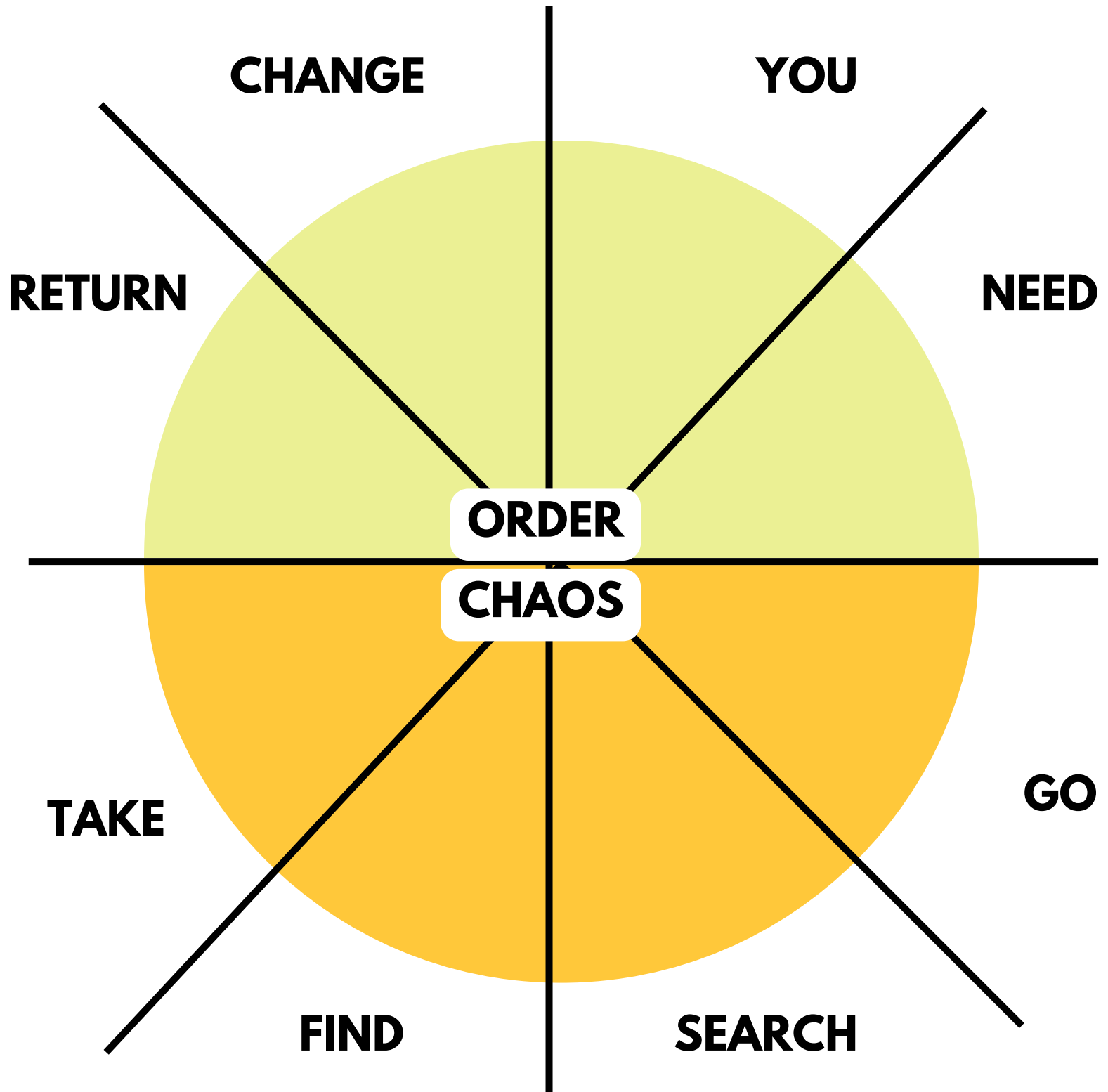
DAN HARMON'S STORY CIRCLE

QUICK REFERENCE PAGE

Mark Harmon, creator of Rick and Morty along with other popular shows, set out 8 parts for a protagonist to move through.

- **You** - Establish your protagonist and what is normal for them (like the Ordinary World in a Hero's Journey)
- **Need** - What is it that your character needs? Introduce the conflict and goals.
- **Go** - Now the action starts and the world begins to change. This is where the story really starts moving.
- **Search** - This can be a literal search, but covers obstacles that the protagonist overcomes along the way.
- **Find** - The character finds what was needed, but the story is only a little more than half over. Things get complicate. Maybe what they thought they needed isn't really what they need.
- **Take** - They found their need, now they have to take it and escape. The key here is to remember that there should be losses involved in the acquisition.
- **Return** - This is the falling action, or the homestretch. They make their way back to the normal world with whatever it was that they found.
- **Change** - The resolution of the story should involve a change of some kind. You're character has learned something and is now different from the person who started the journey.

DAN HARMON'S STORY CIRCLE





**YOU CAN'T FAIL IF
YOU DON'T QUIT.**

**YOU CAN'T
SUCCEED IF YOU
DON'T START.**

~MICHAEL HYATT