

# 5 Types of Plot



## The Quest

The quest follows the idea that the protagonist must leave home to search for a place, an item, or a person. This type of plot is the most likely to have a group of main than just one main hero who completes the task. There are 4 elements to this type of plot:

- The Call - this sets the plot in motion by giving the hero a mission to accomplish
- The Journey - this is when the hero travels from home, meeting obstacles and temptations (broken by periods of rest when he recharges and makes plans)
- Arrival and Frustration- the hero arrives at his destination only to find he has to do something else to complete the quest that can be completed only by the hero(s). Escaping death is often part of the Ordeals.
- Goal - The quest is complete and the day is won.

## Overcoming the Monster

The protagonist, usually an underdog, sets out to destroy some kind of evil in the Overcoming the Monster plotline. It usually depicts the hero finding unknown reserves of courage and strength. There are 5 elements to this type of plot:

- Anticipation Stage and Call - this is where the reader learns about the monster and its evildoing and the hero accepts the call to fight it
- Dream Stage- this stage shows the hero preparing to defeat the monster while the distance between the two slowly decreases.
- Frustration Stage - yeah, this is when the hero comes face to face with the monster and realizes he's in over his head. Retreat!
- Nightmare Stage - Oh, it's on, you evildoing monster. This stage has our hero getting the stuff beat straight out of him, but we know he has something up his sleeve, so the tables are about to turn...
- Escape from Death and Death of the Monster - the monster is defeated and the hero receives his rewards. Hopefully they're good ones.

## Revenge

Just what it sounds like, the Revenge Plot finds our hero seeking vengeance for a real or imagined slight. It has 4 elements:

- The Crime - the hero and his/her loved ones are established then blown to smithereens by some heinous (heinously imagined) crime. The hero is either not present to prevent the crime or is the victim or has been detained in some way and made to watch the crime. The hero may try to get justice from other sources that just don't pan out.
- The Revenge - this is the planning and preparing stage, with a little pursuit thrown in sometimes to heighten the action. The hero may meet resistance in the form of friends or strangers who try to redirect his path.
- Confrontation - this is where the hero finally comes face-to-face with the perpetrator. The punishment fits the crime, so violence may or not be involved.

- Justice - Justice is served and the perpetrator has paid for his crime. The hero can move on with his life.

## Rags to Riches

This plot type shows a low-born protagonist finding a better life. There are 5 elements to this type of plot:

- Restlessness at Home and the Call- here's where we learn about the poverty and squalor of the protagonist's life.
- Out in the World/Initial Success - the protagonist is out in the world away from the terrible conditions he started in, but even though he may meet with circumstances that can solve all his problems, he hasn't learned enough yet and isn't ready for them. His victories are short-lived and he's thrust back into some bad stuff.
- The Central Crisis - all small victories are stripped away and the hero is at his lowest point in the story. It could be that someone from his past returns to stir up trouble or he lands right back where he started or a totally new circumstance brings him low.
- Independence and the final Ordeal - the protagonist must rely on his own strengths to pull himself back up. He realizes his independence and works to prove to himself and others that he is worthy of a better life. He has one final confrontation with the obstacle standing between him and his goal, but he surpasses it swimmingly and moves on toward
- Final Union, Completion, Fulfillment - the protagonist wins for real and is rewarded with the things that will improve his life.

## Rebirth

These stories tend to focus on a bad guy protagonist who does bad guy stuff until he meets someone (a child, a mate, a really cool old dude) who reminds him what compassion is. Generally there's some totally understandable reason our hero is a bad guy who does bad stuff, which helps us relate to and root for him. It has 4 elements:

- The Shadow - the protagonist comes under the influence of a dark shadow or power.
- Recession - for a while, the protagonist seems to be doing okay, maybe it even seems like the shadow has been vanquished.
- State of Living Death - the shadow approaches again in full force to the point where the protagonist seems to have embraced it and is living within it.
- Miraculous Redemption - the imprisoned figure defeats the shadow and becomes a hero.



# My Book's Plot



Complete this worksheet about the book you just read. Plot types include The Quest, Overcoming the Monster, Revenge, Rags to Riches, and Rebirth.

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Book Title

Plot type

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Elements that prove the plot type

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