

20 Scenes with a Layered Subplot

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#1 – Setup. Introduce protagonist in her world. Establish her core need. Set the stage, begin building the world, bring key characters on stage.

#11 – introduction of subplot. Set up the situation between the characters to show the existing tension and attitudes that is causing conflict.

#2 – Turning Point #1 (10%): inciting incident.

#12 – Show how the inciting incident affects the subplot. It may trigger it, bring it to the forefront. Have something initially happen with the subplot to bring in problems and complications.

#3 – Pinch Point #1 (33% roughly): Give a glimpse of the opposition's power, need, and goal as well as the stakes.

#13 – New subplot development that mirrors or is opposite of the main plot. In other words, show what key opposition your protagonist is facing and how she feels about it (a mirroring pinch point, in essence).

#4 – Twist #1: Something new happens: a new ally, a friend becomes a foe. New info reveals a serious complication to reaching the goal. Protagonist must adjust to change with this setback.

#14 – Progress with the subplot. Similar to the main plot, the character is trying to deal with the subplot issues, complications, and setbacks. Tension builds as things are getting more difficult or problematic.

#5 – The midpoint (50%): No turning back. Important event that propels the story forward and solidifies the protagonist's determination to reach her goal.

#15 – Things start coming to a head and creating high tension with the subplot. Now that the protagonist is committed to going all-in after her goal, the subplot adds stress to her load.

#6 – Pinch Point #2 (62% roughly): The opposition comes full force. Time to buckle down and fight through it.

#16 – Developments with the subplot reach critical mass. Things are falling apart, looking hopeless.

#7 – Twist 2: An unexpected surprise giving (false?) hope. The goal now looks within reach. A mentor gives encouragement, a secret weapon, an important clue.

#17 – Subplot feels at a standstill. Protagonist has no time to deal with it and so this creates more tension. Or something in the subplot could provide the help, insight, clue the protagonist needs to push harder to the goal.

#8 – Turning Point #4 (75%): Major setback. All is lost and hopeless. Time for final push.

#18 – Same issues with the subplot. Seems unresolvable. Something happens that closes doors. Or the subplot might be resolved outwardly, but the desired emotional state is illusive.

#9 – Turning Point #5 (76-99%): The climax in which the goal is either reached or not; the two MDQs are answered.

#19 – The key scene that resolves the subplot in a completely satisfying, full way. The character has achieved the emotional resolution she's wanted from the start.

#10 – The aftermath (90-99%): The wrap-up at the end. Denouement, resolution, tie it all in a pretty knot.

#20 – A final, parting shot of the happy result of the subplot wrapped up. This could be included in the last scene (above) as the two plot elements merge together, or they might be separate scenes within the final chapter(s).