

# Plotting & Synopsis Point by Point

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This is the basic format I use both when plotting a book and writing a synopsis. For me they are one and the same. The basic Hero's Journey course is shown in black numerals, the **romance in purple**. In most romances you have both (if using a hero's journey type of format--there are others). Like all things, I have tweaked this for my own use so the definitions of each plot point may not exactly match what you have read before--but this works for me.

To use this when plotting your own book or writing a synopsis, replace the bulleted points with scenes that fit under that plot point. Add romance plot points as needed and rearrange plot points as needed. For a synopsis, you would add to this an introduction of your major characters including any pertinent back story, goals and motivations. Also might include definitions of unusual terms or places--to save having to break away mid story once in the meat of your synopsis.

The twelve basic plot points in this plan are based on points taken from the *The Hero's Journey* by Joseph Campbell and the *The Writer's Journey* by Christopher Vogler. If you want more details, both books are suggested.

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## 1.) Ordinary World:

- This is how your characters' world is before the real action of the book starts. In modern genre fiction this should be short to nonexistent. In my *Nocturnes*, I start with plot point 2 the Inciting Incident. May weave bits of past ordinary world in first few chapters as you go along.

## 2.) Inciting Incident/Opening scene:

- If skipping Ordinary World, this would be your opening scene. It kicks off one of the major story lines in the book--sleuth finds dead body, lovers meet, woman discovers husband in her lingerie...

### 1A.) Meet :

- If writing a romance, the hero and heroine meeting is a key plot point in that plot line. Frequently comes in first chapter--but may not.

### **3.) External Conflict Rises:**

- After the inciting incident things change in the characters life. List as many scenes as you can think of that would happen at this point showing those changes and your character trying to deal with them. Include scenes for all plot lines.

### **4.) Intensify Conflict:**

- The stakes continue to climb. The protagonist is reacting to the antagonist and even though she/he seems to be making good choices, her/his actions force the antagonist to react too. In other words things just keep getting tougher. Again include scenes for all plot lines.

### **2A.) First Kiss:**

- Another important plot line for a romance. This may happen anywhere, but normally in the first quarter of the book. Describe the scene. This should also change something in your hero/heroine's outlook, or make something else harder for them. Describe what that is.

### **5.) Protagonist Engages:**

- In reaction to the antagonist's increased actions, the protagonist jumps of the cliff and fully engages in the battle. You have to give him/her a motivation to do this. Example: in a mystery, the sleuth is herself accused of the crime. He/she has to fully commit to defend him/herself.

### **3A.) Sex scene:**

- Not required in a romance, but common plot point and if a sex scene or scenes occur--do include them in the synopsis. Also remember, sex like the first kiss should change something. Do the characters see each other differently? Themselves? Does the physical act push them to do something else? Include these changes in the synopsis.

## **6.) Antagonist fights back:**

- At this point the antagonist actively begins working against the protagonist. Think of it as a battle, the antagonist can see the protagonist is trying to win--so the antagonist puts his/her all into stopping the protagonist.

## **3A.) Sex scene:**

- Just a reminder to include all your sex scenes in the synopsis--may have more than one.

## **7.) Reversal:**

- This is optional. At this point something happens that causes the protagonist to completely flip in their beliefs.

## **8.) Point of no return:**

- Something happens that keeps your protagonists from backing out--has to commit 110%. Life will never be the same no matter what he/she does. Returning to the ordinary world is no longer an option.

## **4A.) Realize love each other:**

- If it's a romance at some point the hero and heroine have to realize they love each other. This may happen at different points for the two characters and they may or may not tell the other at the time they realize this. But do include the realization in the synopsis and anything this changes about the character.

## **5A.) Tell loves each other:**

- May not happen until the very end of the book, or only be implied. Or may happen early and have repercussions.

## **9.) Crisis:**

- The low point in your protagonist's journey. Thinks there is no way out. Sees no good solution. Which leads to dark moment.

## **10.) Dark Moment: / 6A.) Sacrifices All**

- These two may or may not happen at the same time--but same basic idea for both plot lines, and chance for bigger impact if do happen together. Characters make a rational choice to give up something they have held in great value for a greater good (or what they see as a greater good). The throwing him/herself on the sword moment. Appears that all is lost.

## **11.) Climax: / 7A.) Come Together**

- Again may happen at same time or not, but it is best to tie up smaller plot lines first and keep major one open until the end. In a romance this means, resolving the romance last, if possible.
- The protagonist appeared to have been beaten, but somehow he/she comes back to the fight. Best if there is a direct contact and defeat of the antagonist at this point. The protagonist should show growth and use skills he/she learned throughout the book. The protagonist could not have won this battle if it occurred at the beginning of book.

## **12.) Resolution:**

- Happy days. Shows all internal conflict has been resolved, show changes that happened within book--new ordinary world.

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Lori Devoti is the author of two romantic comedies and a number of dark paranormal romances. Her most recent series is with the Silhouette Nocturne line and is available from most online sellers in addition to local bookstores and major discount chains.

To learn more about Lori and her books, visit her on the web at <http://www.loridevoti.com>

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