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# STORY

PLANNING WORKBOOK

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#### Introduction & How-to

In my quest to become a plotter instead of a panster, I've read and tried many, many outlining and plotting methods. None worked for me in their entirety. None.

So, here I am, cobbling together bits and pieces that I've learned through reading and research, into something that *does* work for me. What I hope you take from that is: this may not work for you in its entirety, or at all. That's okay. Take what works and use it, and please credit it accordingly if you share or reproduce it. Ignore what doesn't work. If it's not for you, it's not for you.

In general, please fill these sections out as you see fit or as you feel. This is not a chronological layout, nor is it meant to be. I would expect that you flip back and forth and move around the workbook, filling in what you know, working through what you don't know, and adjusting each section to suit. Additionally, feel free to duplicate pages as needed. For example, you might have more scenes for your plot or subplot than I've provided space for. Don't hesitate to copy that page and insert the extras as needed. On the other hand, if you have few characters or scenes than laid out, just ignore the extra space.

This workbook is my future template for plotting and planning my stories. I've even given it mirrored margins so that I can staple or bind along the long edge, and flip it like a book. The catch is, despite writing series almost exclusively, I do *not* think this workbook is appropriate to use for planning a series. You can use it for one book at a time within a series, but it's not designed with multiple arcs or nested arcs in mind. That said, if you use it for a series, let me know! (Please).

I built this workbook with the hope that it would be intuitive. In the event that it's not – and to make sure you know where to look when you want more information – I've detailed my thought process, intention and inspiration/sources for each section. If something confuses you or you want to know where to find more about a thing, find the sub-heading for the section in question and take a read.

Lastly, my goal is to write successful commercial fiction. If that's not what you're aiming for, please feel free to use this anyway. Just keep in mind that this workbook isn't designed to develop or plan a literary or non-fiction story.

#### Antag & Protag Logic, Supporting Cast

I created "Protag Logic" first because this is the person that readers will connect to. We need to know who they are and how they change, to understand why readers connect with them. I am particularly proud of creating the flowchart portion of this section since it's like nothing I've seen in outlining before. It also helped me to figure out not just who my character was, but how to *show* that to the reader.

One thing that I've learned – and everyone emphasizes – is that your story is only as strong as your villain. The antagonist has the key function of being the force behind our protag's developmental change. That's why there's a whole section dedicated to development of the Antag and their goals and aspirations. Similarly, you should know and understand the core of your supporting cast.

While these sections are my own brainchild, they are grounded in lessons from <u>Mary Buckham's Mastery Classes</u> (particularly those on Archetypes) and from <u>the Snowflake Method by Randy Ingermanson</u>.

In "Protag Logic," you'll notice some red letters in circles, like the purple letters in circles in "Antag Logic," and green letters for "Supporting Cast." Don't worry about these yet. You'll use them in the Main and Sub-Plot sections.

Otherwise, you simply fill in the blanks accordingly. For values and fears, try to put them in order. Note that these are not necessarily their only values or fears, but the top three that will help to create your drive/motivation and ambition/goal. When I did this, I used values to help me figure out fears. For example, if my character values integrity, she likely fears being seen as a thief or a liar.

Next, you will identify the characters' archetype at the beginning, middle and end of your story. I've found that if you want your character to develop from A to X convincingly, then they need to be archetype A with traits of archetype X. While your character may slowly be changing from A to X, they may not become X by the end of your story, particularly if you're writing a series. That's okay. X is who your character is becoming or growing toward, just not who they are yet.

The rest is straightforward. Answer the questions, and follow the flowchart. For the parts that ask, "What scenes, instances or moments demonstrate...?" try to be as specific as possible. For example, if my character values integrity, I can demonstrate this by showing that she finds a wallet with \$100 and an ID, and returns it with both ID and money. If you can figure out ways to do this that are specific enough to be relevant to your story or a particular scene, even better!

But Keir, there's nowhere to describe what my characters look like! Yes. I know. I'm sorry. This is just never something I've needed. I'm one of those who has always managed to be consistent in my characters' physical appearance and don't generally change the color of their eyes or hair etc. from page to page. If you are not like this, there's no shame in that. Feel free to insert a page with this information if you prefer it.

#### Main Plot & Sub-Plot Points

The "Main Plot Points" section was put together by referencing beat sheets that I got from <u>Jami Gold's Worksheets for Writers</u>. Specifically, I used the <u>Save the Cat sheet (Blake Snyder)</u> and the <u>Story Engineering sheet (Larry Brooks)</u>. You'll notice that I left out the beats. That is because, while they are extremely important, they were not essential to me at this stage. Beats and where mine lie are something I will figure out at the end of the manuscript, when I have a word count. For the planning stage, all it does is make me nervous.

The "Sub-Plot" was something I came up with by making an abbreviated version of the longer, main story plot points. I don't know if this is right, or if there is a "right" for this. Everywhere I looked gave me advice on how to weave or work sub-plots into the story but nowhere could explain to me how to create a sub-plot or what the key parts of the sub-plot were. I assumed that it's basically the same as the main plot, but less complicated and with lower stakes. Thus, this version was born. You'll notice it only has 8 parts instead of 15, but it still has an inciting incident, Murphy's Law moments and so on.

There's also a section for "Sub-Plot (Romance)" which I referenced <u>Jami Gold's Romance Beat Sheet</u> to put together. This is because many, many successful commercial fiction novels include the romance element. In a series, the romance sub-plot may be spread out over multiple books. Also, the romance story uses slightly different language to account for its specific plot points. I wanted to include this as a separate section so that I could use some of that language to clearly spell out what was needed for the romance sub-plot to work.

For the "Main Plot Points" section, you'll notice there are red circles with red letters that match the ones from your "Protag Logic" section. That's because what you described in the "Protag Logic" section should be shown or represented in the matching plot point of your main plot. These bigger red circles from plot points 6 through 13 are empty. These should generally have one or more of elements D, E, H, and/or X and Y. I left these blank so that I (or you) could fill in accordingly what is needed from "Protag Logic" to make that plot point work.

Along the left side there's a little stack of circles, one each in green, purple and red. The green and purple coincide with "Supporting Cast" and "Antag Logic" accordingly. These descriptors and traits as developed in your character sections may be shown at different times compared to your Protag. Therefore, these circles are for you to fill in as you see fit based on what you want to demonstrate of your Antag and Supporting Cast, and when. Use the numbers 1, 2, 3, and so on to differentiate between characters from the same category (supporting, antag, etc.). The red circles are for you to put I, J or K as needed, as a reminder for where your Sub-plots tie in.

There is a similar stack of circles for both sub-plot sections. Here you will fill in A through H and/or X and Y from your character sections. This is to help keep track of who is developing and how through your sub-plots, and to remind you what you might need to show. You'll notice that these sections also emphasize at the beginning and end how they support your main plot. That's because if the sub-plot doesn't support your main plot, it's pointless. Take it out of this story and put it somewhere else, please.

#### Scenes & Sequels

As a writer, I first learned about Scenes and Sequels through Mary Buckham's Mastery Classes. Later, the Snowflake Method by Randy Ingermanson explained these to me as Reactive and Proactive scenes. Each scene and each sequel (or reactive and proactive scene) has 3 key elements, which are laid out in the table. I wrote this section after taking the Mastery Classes and reading up on "Scenes and Sequels," so that's the wording I used. Coincidentally, this is just like the Snowflake Method's Step 8, which I read after putting together the table, and it has the same intention: to jog your memory of what happens in this scene and to double check that this was accomplished. However, you'll notice that there's no spreadsheet or word counter, no column for POV, or any other stuff. This is for a few reasons. Firstly, at this stage, I'm only writing from one character's POV. Secondly, as I mentioned re: beats and beat sheets, the word count stuff makes me nervous. This is my planning book, and I don't want to give myself a number that I will then feel obligated to fit my scene into. I will say that I am likely to use the beat sheet later to check the placement of my story parts, but I don't know if I'll use a spreadsheet like Snowflake Step 8 yet.

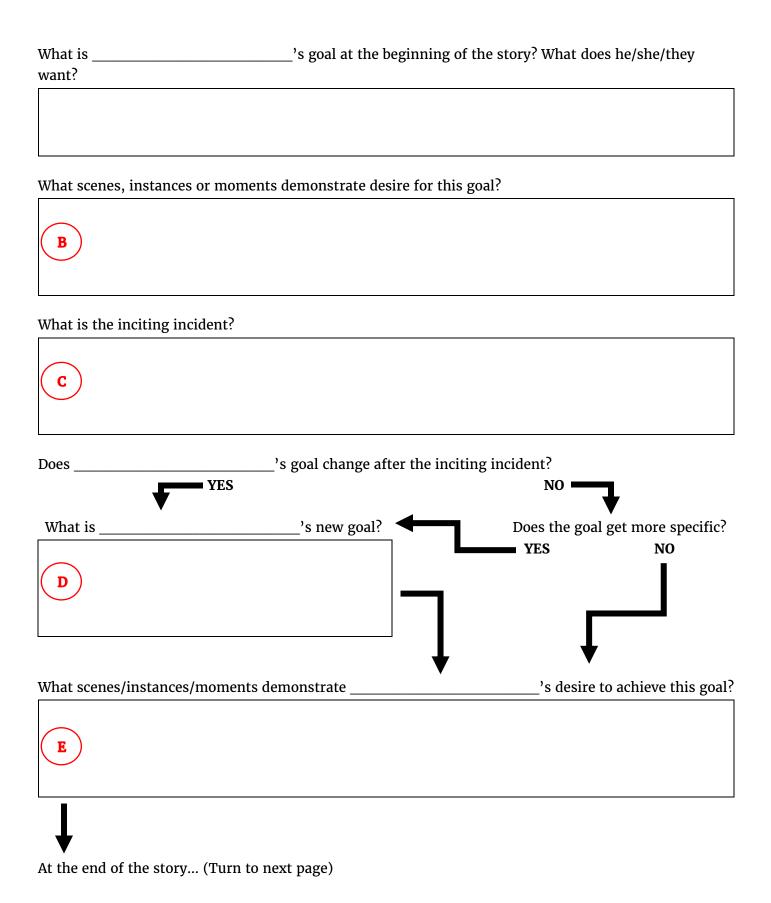
For this section, the "Plot Point" column is blank because sometimes you need more than one scene/sequel for each plot point, so put that number in as needed. Then, use a single line or sentence for each element of the scene/sequel. If there are more rows than you need, just ignore them. If there isn't enough, feel free to copy the pages and insert the extras. The same instructions apply to your sub-plot scenes/sequels. Keep in mind that even though you may plan, or even write all the scenes/sequels needed to complete your sub-plot, they may not all be necessary to read for your story and might have to come out of your final draft. This might apply to some main plot scenes as well. That's okay. Write it anyway!

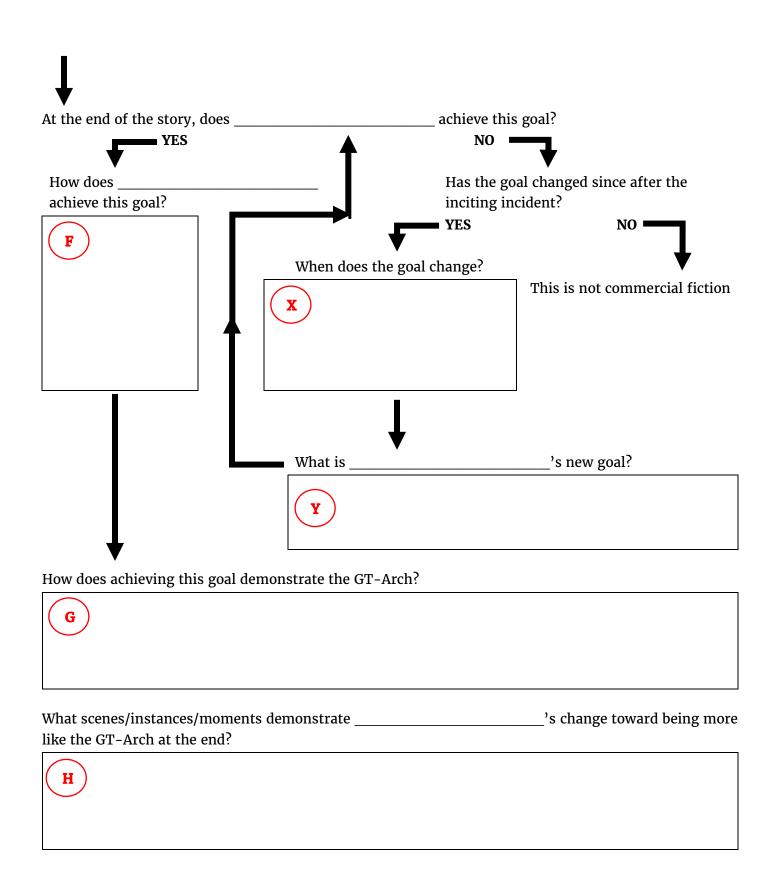
#### Questions/Comments

Whew! That's it for how to use this book. If you have questions or comments, or just want to contact me, please use <a href="mailto:contact@keiralekseii.com">contact@keiralekseii.com</a>. Thanks for reading, and I hope this book is useful to you!

# Protag Logic

Who is		?	
	_values:	1)	
		2)	
		3)	
	fears:	1)	
		2)	
		3)	
Archetype at		ype	Archetype
Beginning (B-Arch):	is grov	ving toward/becoming (GT-Arch)	at end (E-Arch):
With elements of:			With elements of:
What is		_'s Ordinary World (OW)?	
What scenes, instances or n	oments d	lemonstrate B-Arch while in the OV	Λ,
A			

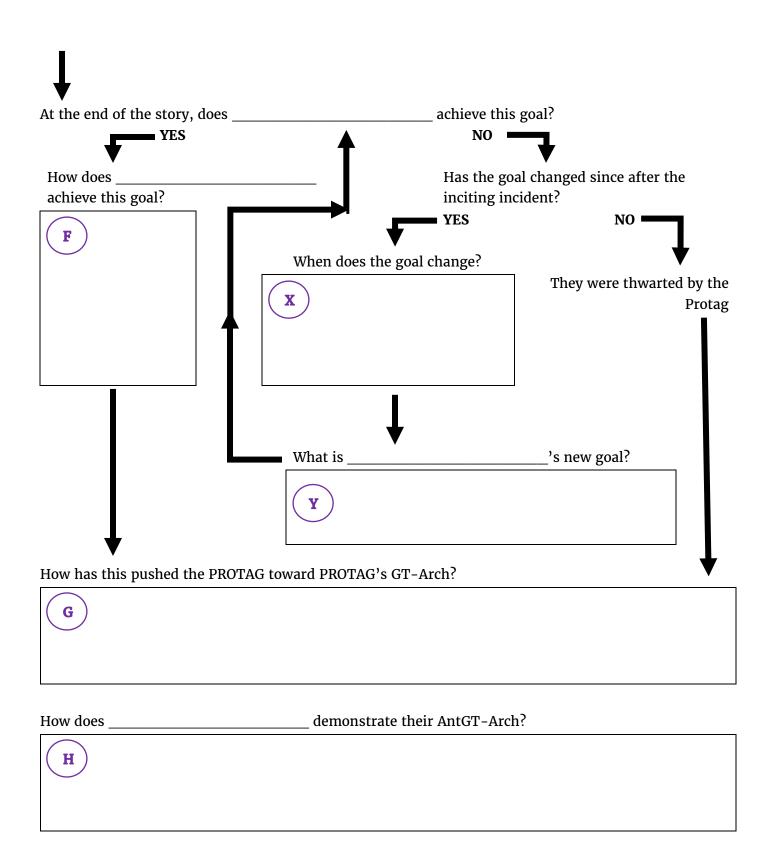




# Antag Logic 1

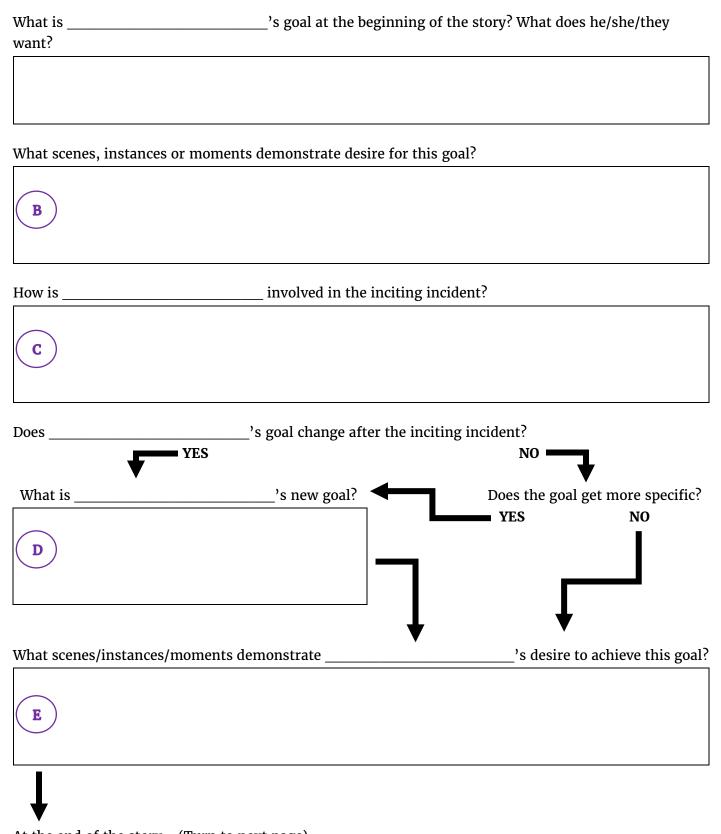
Who is		?		
	_values:	1)		
		2)		
		3)		
	fears:	1)		
		2)		
		3)		
Archetype at Beginning (AntB-Arch):		typeoming (AntGT-Arch)	at end (/	Archetype AntE-Arch):
With elements of:			With elements of:	
What is		_'s Ordinary World (OW)?		
What scenes, instances or m	oments (	demonstrate AntB-Arch while in the	e OW?	
A				

What is want?	's goal at the beginning of the story? What does he/she/they		
want.			
What scenes, instances	or moments demonstrate desire for t	this goal?	
В			
How is	involved in the inciting	g incident?	
С			
	's goal change after the i		
▼	■ YES	NO	
What is	's new goal?	Does the goal get more specific?  YES  NO	
What scenes/instances/i	moments demonstrate	's desire to achieve this goal?	
E			
At the end of the story	(Turn to next page)		

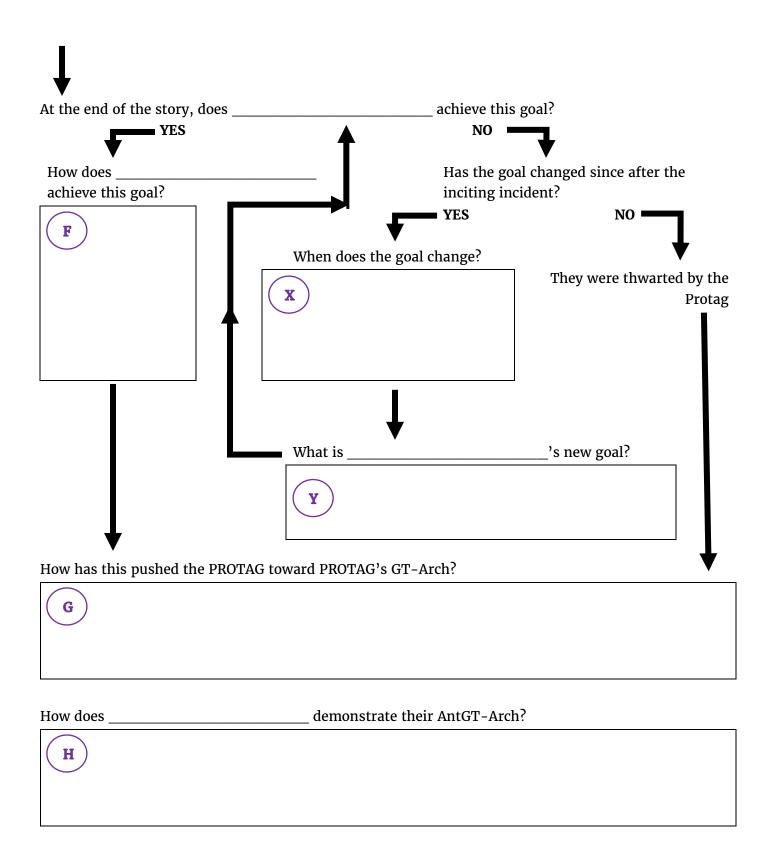


# Antag Logic 2

	?		
_values:	1)		
	2)		
	3)		
fears:	1)		
	2)		
	3)		
			Archetype l (AntE-Arch):
	· ·		
		TTT's land and a second	. (
		with elements	01:
	_'s Ordinary World (OW)?	ı	
oments d	lemonstrate AntB-Arch while in th	e OW?	
	fears:	2)	2)

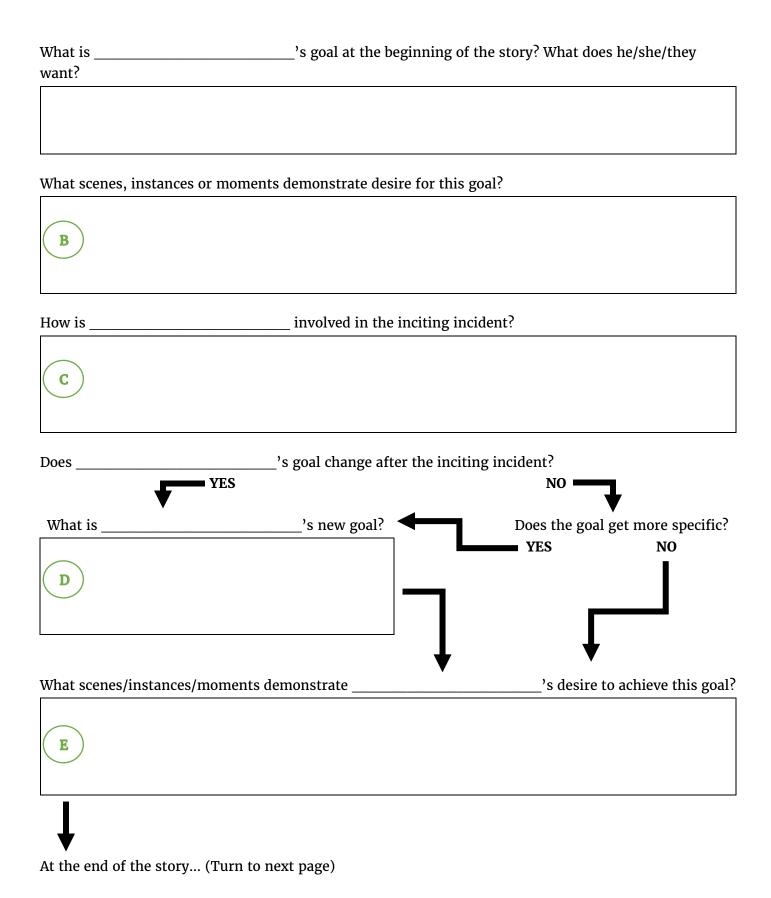


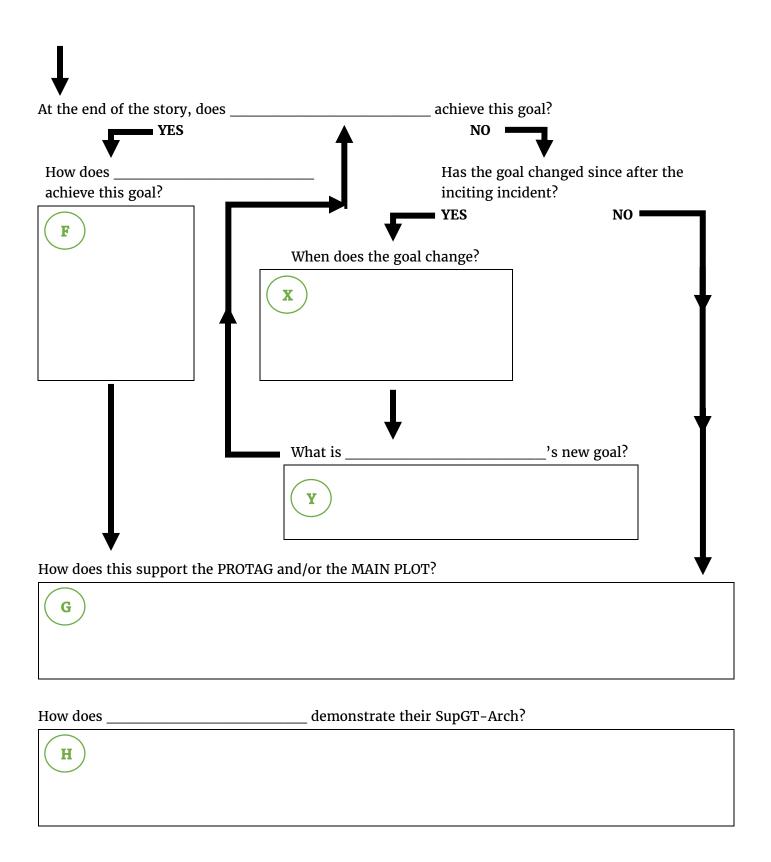
At the end of the story... (Turn to next page)



# Supporting Cast 1

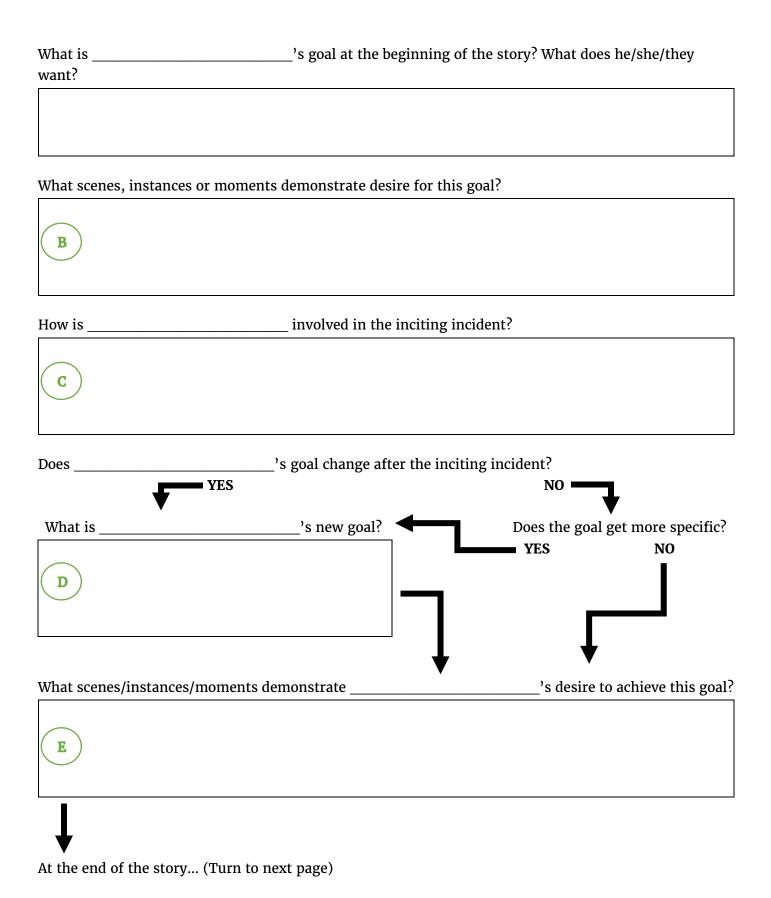
Who is		?	
	_values:	1)	
		2)	
		3)	
	_fears:	1)	
		2)	
		3)	
Archetype at Beginning (SupB-Arch):		ypeoming (SupGT-Arch)	Archetype
beginning (Supb-Arcii).	18 Decc	oning (SupG1-Arch)	at end (SupE-Arch):
With elements of:			With elements of:
What is		_'s Ordinary World (OW)?	
_			
What scenes, instances or m	oments o	lemonstrate SupB-Arch while in th	e OW?
A			

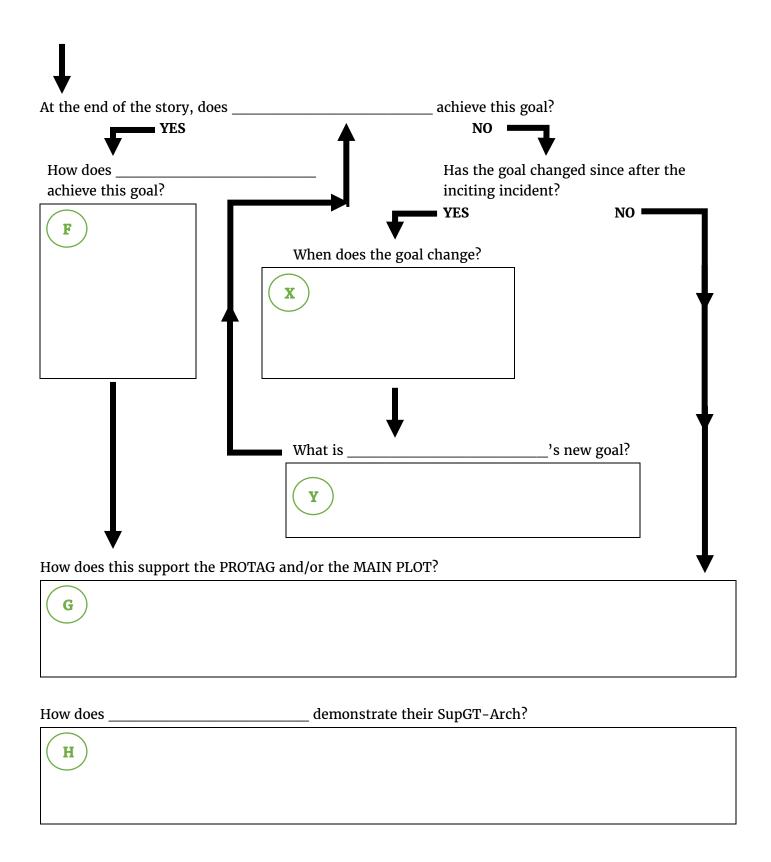




# Supporting Cast 2

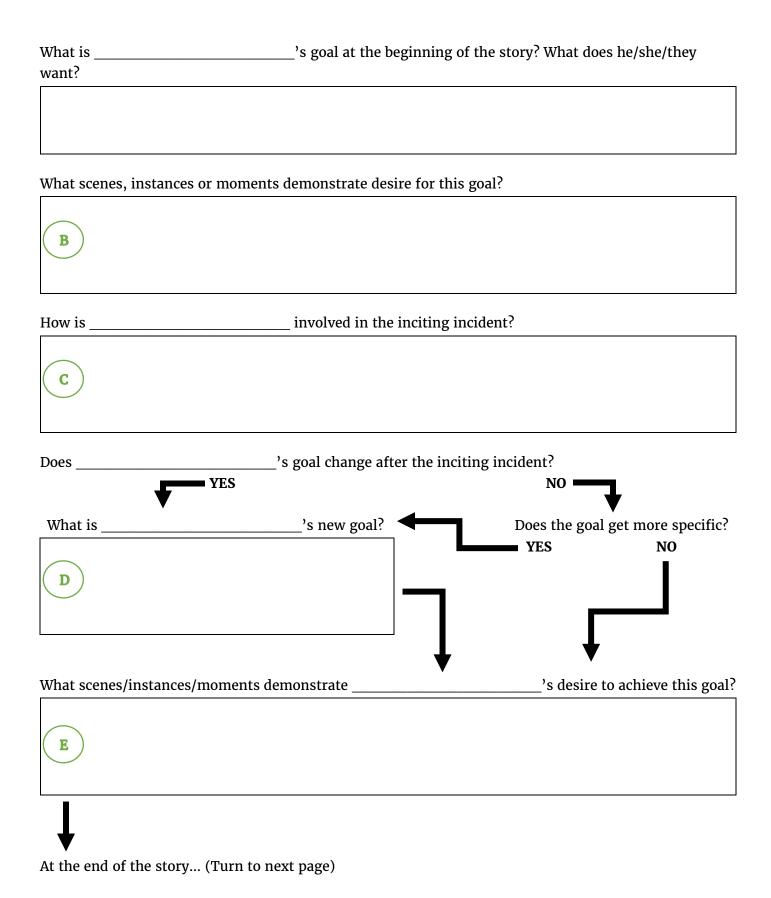
Who is				
	_values:	1)		
		2)		
		3)		
	_fears:	1)		
		2)		
		3)		
Auch oterno at	A wala ak			Auchotumo
Archetype at Beginning (SupB-Arch):		cypeoming (SupGT-Arch)	at end	Archetype (SupE-Arch):
With elements of:			With elements o	of:
What is		_'s Ordinary World (OW)?		
What scenes, instances or m	oments d	lemonstrate SupB-Arch while in the	e OW?	
A				

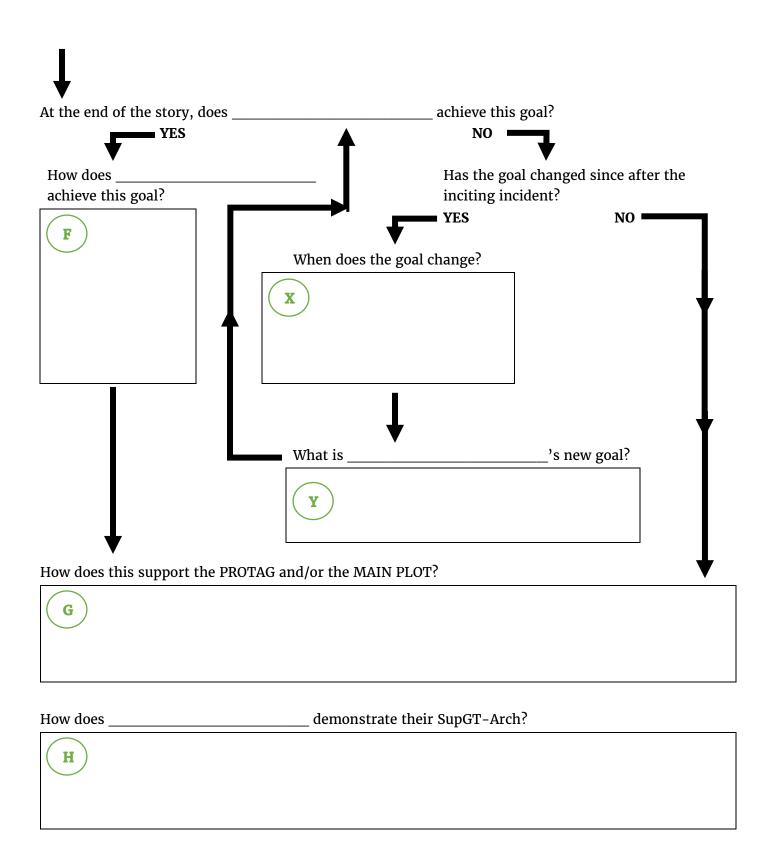




# Supporting Cast 3

Who is		?	
	_values:	1)	
		2)	
		3)	
	fears:	1)	
		2)	
		3)	
Archetype at	Archo	vino.	Archetype
Archetype at Beginning (SupB-Arch):		typeoming (SupGT-Arch)	at end (SupE-Arch):
With elements of:			With elements of:
What is		_'s Ordinary World (OW)?	
What scenes, instances or m	oments (	demonstrate SupB-Arch while in th	e OW?
A			





#### Main Plot Points

1	Opening scenes, set-up. Show archetype, goal  A B
2	Inciting Incident C
3	Choices appear and makes a decision that leads to and begins to demonstrate the GT-Arch (just a glimmer!)
4	Murphy Strikes #1. Something logical goes wrong to prevent achievement of
$\bigcirc\bigcirc\bigcirc\bigcirc$	
5	New information arises to reinforce the desire to achieve goal but a complication also arises is forced forward and closer to the GT-Arch.

If it hasn't happened already then $\mathbf{x}$ occurs during following events (6 – 12)				
After	this, your goal becomes Y			
6	is empowered and takes action that demonstrates GT-Arch characteristics			
7	Murphy Strikes #2			
8	A crisis occurs causing to lose all hope (major setback).			
9	New information arises, leading to a new plan			
10	rallies supporters			

11	Mission impossible:	and company execute the plan	
12	False win		
13	Pursuit		
14	Final Battle (Climax) <b>F G</b>		
15	Wrap-up G H		

## Main Plot Scenes & Sequels

What events	happen to bring	closer to the GT-Arch?
What does _	do to show a ch	ange toward becoming more like GT-Arch?
Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:

Complication (disaster):

Decision:

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
What events	have happened to bring	closer to the GT-Arch?
What has Arch?	done to demonst	rate a change toward becoming more like GT-

#### Sub-Plot 1

Purpose of this sub-plot relative to the main plot (What happens in the sub-plot that influences the main plot?):

I	
What l	happens to achieve I ?
1	Opening scenes, set-up
2	Inciting Incident
$\bigcirc$	
3	Choices appear and decision is made
()	

4	Murphy Strikes #1. Something logical goes wrong
5	Action is taken
6	Murphy Strikes #2
$\bigcirc$	
7	Action taken
8	Resolution
$\bigcirc$	
How h	ave these events influenced the main plot?
	*

## Sub-Plot 1 Scenes & Sequels

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

<u>Keep in mind:</u> What has happened to influence the main plot? What was the end result of this influence?

#### Sub-Plot 2

Purpose of this sub-plot relative to the main plot (What happens in the sub-plot that influences the main plot?):

What l	nappens to achieve J ?
1	Opening scenes, set-up
$\sim$	
$\geq$	
2	Inciting Incident
$\times$	
$\searrow$	
3	Choices appear and decision is made
$\times$	

4	Murphy Strikes #1. Something logical goes wrong
$\overline{\bigcirc}$	
5	Action is taken
$\times$	
$\geq$	
$\bigcirc$	
6	Murphy Strikes #2
7	Action taken
$\overline{\bigcirc}$	
8	Resolution
$\times$	
$\geq$	
$\bigcup$	
How h	ave these events influenced the main plot?

## Sub-Plot 2 Scenes & Sequels

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

<u>Keep in mind:</u> What has happened to influence the main plot? What was the end result of this influence?

#### Sub-Plot (Romance)

Purpose of this sub-plot relative to the main plot (What happens in the sub-plot that influences the main plot?):

•	
K	
What l	nappens to achieve R ?
1	Opening scene (Introduce protagonists, hook reader, and setup romance conflict with foreshadowing, establishing stakes, etc.)
2	Inciting Incident: glimpse of how right the characters could be for each other
3	Something happens to force the characters to spend time together. Characters make decisions that reflects their desire for each other

,	Murphy's Law #1 (Visible sign of commitment to each other but a conflict shows they are
4	doomed to fail)
5	Murphy's Law #2 (Triggers fear about their relationship and realization the relationship can't succeed)
6	Climax: Fear threatens the potential relationship one last time + Characters prove they don't want to continue without the other. (Grand gestures)
7	Resolution: the characters are together and perfect for each other
How h	ave these events influenced the main plot?

### Sub-Plot (Romance) Scenes

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

Plot Point	Scene	Sequel
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:
	Goal:	Reaction:
	Conflict:	Dilemma:
	Complication (disaster):	Decision:

<u>Keep in mind:</u> What has happened to influence the main plot? What was the end result of this influence?

## Additional Notes