ELEMENTS OF DRAMATIC STORYTELLING
What every dramatic story should have
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Who is the Protagonist?
What does he want?
Who/What stops him?

Act 1 – The Beginning

1. A **Protagonist or Protagonists (Hero)** – who is the story about? The story begins by introducing the everyday life of the protagonist(s), which represents a balance for him.

2. The **Inciting Incident (I.I.)** - the event that disrupts the everyday life of the protagonist. What happens near the beginning of the story that creates a problem that must be resolved? The protagonist wants his life to be balanced again.

3. The protagonist's **Main Goal** (created after the I.I.), that he pursues to end of story to reach his goal (to resolve his problem)

4. An **Antagonist or Antagonistic Forces** to create outer conflicts and problems, making it difficult for the protagonist to reach his goal (CONFLICT = DRAMA)

Act 2 – The Middle

5. The **Central Conflict** of the story - that the protagonist struggles to overcome throughout the story until the end. This can be an outer conflict and/or inner conflict.

6. An **ACTIVE Protagonist**. One who actively overcomes every conflict to reach his goal. This means he can receive help but ultimately he must resolve his conflicts. Avoid Deux es Machina (or “Superman Syndrome”, where another character comes to save the day) endings

7. **Increasing obstacles. Increasing complications. Rising stakes.** The stakes for the Hero must rise with each obstacle provided by the Antagonist(s). How much does the Hero have to lose if he doesn’t overcome? What does he have to lose if he does? Creating stakes on both sides of his choices makes the Hero’s decisions more difficult and harder to predict. **Rising Action:** creating stakes along the way creates suspense and helps push the action forward

Act 3 – The Ending

8. **The Final Crises**: the event where the Hero faces his biggest challenge, putting him at the most risk of losing everything he values. **The Climax:** here the Protagonist and
Antagonist face off for their final battle to resolve the Central Conflict. The Resolution: here the outcome of the climax reveals whether the protagonist has reached his goal and reached a balance in life. The balance should not be the same as the beginning of the story. The Protagonist’s life should change or evolve by the end. This evolution reflects the THEME OF STORY and the CHARACTER ARC (how he’s changed by the end and who he really is as a person)