

THE STORY GRID GUILD
Writing Sprint for the week of May 18, 2020

Scene Assignment Type: A “One on One Physical Fight” scene with third person omniscient narration.

The Example is from *Cool Hand Luke* based on the novel Donn Pearce, screenplay by Donn Pearce and Frank Pierson.

Character Number One: Your protagonist insults a more powerful figure. And now that powerful figure has called them out and your protagonist must physically confront them.

Character Number Two: This is the powerful figure. They are absolutely confident in their ability to beat down character number one into submission. They do not show mercy.

THE GREEK CHORUS: This is a set of character from across multiple levels of the setting’s society who witness the confrontation.

Analyzing the Scene:

You may find the prompt is enough to get you writing without having to sweat the story grid structural details.

But you may find it easier to flow into the writing process by outlining the scene before you start scribbling.

Whatever the case, follow this simple process.

If you are energized by the prompt...just start writing and follow whatever pops into your mind without any hesitation or second guessing.

If you are befuddled and need to think through an outline, head on down to the “analyzing the scene” and “five commandments” prompts below.

Answering these questions should start poking ideas out of you. Once you get excited about a particular idea...start writing. You don’t have to answer all of the questions before you begin. Just use as many as you need to generate some sentences.

You may get stuck before you complete a first draft of the scene. If that’s the case, go back to the questions below and work through them as long as it takes to get you writing again. Don’t revise the previous material until you’ve put together a first draft. So, if you decide to change the inciting incident in order to solve the crisis, change it later after you’ve created the rest of the scene.

The key element here is to only outline and edit when you find yourself stuck. And when you're writing, don't break to outline or edit until you absolutely have to.

Here are our SG scene tools.

A STORY EVENT is an active change of life value for one or more characters as a result of conflict (one character's desires clash with another's).

A WORKING SCENE contains at least one Story Event. To determine a Scene's Story Event, answer the following four questions:

- 1. What are the characters doing?** Two characters are fighting inside of a ring which is formed by a Greek chorus of onlookers.
- 2. What is the essential action of what the characters are doing in this scene?** One person is "taking someone down a peg" while the other is "fighting for their life."
- 3. What life value has changed for one or more of the characters in the scene?** Someone is going to "win" the scene. And someone will lose. That means that someone will get what they set out to achieve. The other will fail to get what they want. Does the powerful figure win? Or does the inferior fighter win?
- 4. Which life value should I highlight on my Story Grid Spreadsheet?** Clearly considering the win/lose dynamics in a scene will home in on conflict. What's amazing about this scene is the literal playing out of the AGENT in the ARENA applying AGENCY. Death to Life, Bottom to Top, One among many to Alone... There are multiple universal human values at stake.

HOW THE SCENE ABIDES BY THE FIVE COMMANDMENTS OF STORYTELLING

Inciting Incident:

Choose an unexpected event to drop into the scene that will require the protagonist to challenge the power figure. In this case, the protagonist tells the tough guy to stop riling all of the men up about their seeing a woman wash a car that day.

Progressive Complication: After the unexpected event drops in, have at least two complications that threaten or encourages the goals of the protagonist. After multiple knock out blows to the protagonist, the Greek chorus is getting uncomfortable. "Stay down Luke." Eventually one of them is so overwhelmed by the discomfort of watching someone being beaten to death that they say "somebody ought to stop this thing."

Turning Point Progressive Complication:

“You’re going to have to kill me” What’s brilliant is that now we see the fight from the POV of the powerful figure. The value has shifted from “satisfaction” to “dissatisfaction” at the very least.

Crisis: Does the powerful figure continue to beat the lesser fighter or disengage?

Climax: The powerful figure leaves the fight.

Resolution: The “weaker” one has now proven “stronger,” but the result of that evidence is that he’s just cast himself out of the group.