

**THE STORY GRID GUILD**  
**Writing Sprint for the week of June 1, 2020**

**Scene Assignment Type:** A “Lovers Meet” scene with third person omniscient narration.

**The Example is from *Terms of Endearment*, novel by Larry McMurtry, screenplay by James L. Brooks.**

**Character Number One:** Your protagonist is either the dominant or submissive player. Ideally, like in this scene, the roles reverse back and forth.

**Character Number Two:** As above.

**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.**

## • ANALYZING THE SCENE •

A STORY EVENT is an active change of a universal human value for one or more characters as a result of conflict (one character's desires clash with another's, or an environmental shift changes the value positively or negatively).

A WORKING SCENE contains at least one Story Event.

It's often difficult to identify the Story Event in a scene, so STORY GRID has a set of Four Socratic Questions to help us with the process. Throughout this podcast, we'll ask these questions about every scene, and you'll get better and better at answering them.

The questions are:

- 1. What are the characters in the scene literally doing—that is, what are their Micro on-the-ground actions?**

One character reaches out to another character for a connection and is rewarded with interest.

- 2. What is the essential tactic of the characters—that is, what Macro behaviors are they employing that are linked to a Universal Human Value?**

This scene is a master class in acting. Shirley Maclaine and Jack Nicholson are such masters at the art that their tactics change moment by moment. But what's incredible is that they both want the same thing...a connection...and their masks prevent them from attaining it together.

- 3. What Universal Human Values have changed for one or more characters in the scene? Which one of those value changes is most important and should be recorded in our STORY GRID SPREADSHEET?**

Success to Failure.

- 4. What is the Story Event that sums up the scene's on-the-ground actions, essential tactics, and value change? We will enter that event in the STORY GRID SPREADSHEET.**

Two neighbors, demonstrably attracted to one another, fail to connect.

## HOW THE SCENE ABIDES BY THE FIVE COMMANDMENTS OF STORYTELLING

### **Inciting Incident:**

Jack Nicholson announces his presence.

**Progressive Complication:** After the unexpected event drops in, have at least two complications that threaten or encourages the goals of the protagonist.

### **Turning Point Progressive Complication:**

Nicholson crudely boils down seduction to a physical act and asks to skip the getting to know one another part.

**Crisis:** Does Shirley Maclaine accept the invitation or does she reject it?

**Climax:** She rejects the overture.

**Resolution:** Nicholson berates himself for his stupidity.