

## REVISION

- › Knowing the sacrifice is knowing the heart of the story - what a character won't live with and what they won't live without should inform every scene
- › Choose the best POV. The main character is not always the POV character.
- › Scene order doesn't always have to be Situation, Complication, Crisis, and Climax - experiment with telling the story out of order
- › Explore metaphor, theme, and resonance

## Workflow

- › Brainstorm and fast draft through ideas to arrive at the dramatic situation
- › Dig deeper into your story material with subsequent focused discovery drafts
- › Write a first draft in linear order covering the Situation, Complication, Crisis/Climax, and Resolution
- › Revise using Point-of-view, scene order, theme, and description

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# Dramatic Dilemma

## A QUICK GUIDE

### WHAT IS A DILEMMA-BASED STORY?

THE BARE BONES - A main character in a desperate situation must choose between two paths and as a result she must sacrifice something of great value in order to gain something else of great value.

## Build an Idea into a Dramatic Situation

What is a dramatic situation? - A situation, in a narrative or dramatic work, in which people are engaged in conflicts that solicit the audience's empathic involvement in their predicament.

In our case we want a few key elements:

### Dramatic Situation Recipe:

- › A main character
- › her greatest source of joy
- › and her greatest source of shame
- › and both her greatest source of joy and shame are under the control of her forces of antagonism

## A Check List

- › Main character in a desperate situation
- › Greatest source of joy and shame related to the same events, people, and objects
- › Forces of antagonism hold the keys to the main character's happiness and/or special knowledge about their shame
- › Sets up the dilemma
- › Should be easy to state as a short dramatic statement

## DISCOVERY WRITING FOR EVERYONE

### Discovery - dilemma/revelation

- › Character experiences life in two worlds - one represents their greatest joy, the other their greatest shame
- › Forces of antagonism threaten the main character with their shame or threaten their joy in order to force the main character to leave one world for the other.
- › Main character confronts both worlds and finds their moral choice between the two with the help of their greatest source of joy - This is often called the "mirror moment" in screenwriting. It's the moment where the main character clearly sees their flaws and/or a truth they've denied.

### Discovery - Decision

- › Must, must, must be their decision. They must come to this decision with the full understanding of what they are sacrificing.
- › This decision must be irreversible. Once they cross this line, they will never be able to go back to the story world they are leaving

behind.

- › The decision and the consequences of the decision must be clear to the reader.

### Discovery - Sacrifice

- › Choosing one world over the other will naturally require the main character to make a sacrifice. What choice she makes is what imparts meaning to the reader. Consider the sacrifice in Casablanca. What if Rick had made different choices? What would that have said to the audience?

What does your sacrifice mean? What is the heart of the story you're telling?

## DRAFTING THE STORY

### The situation - Explore...

- › ... The dramatic situation

### Complication - Explore...

- › ... the first world of the dilemma (Joy)
- › ... the second world of the dilemma (Shame)
- › ... the main character's revelation.

### Crisis/Climax - Explore...

- › ... the main character's decision
- › ... the sacrifice

### Resolution - Write a...

- › ... short narrative showing the main character in their new story world