Cadette Screenwriter Badge

Five Parts of a Plot

Most movie scripts are fewer than 130 pages. That translates into approximately an hour and a half of screen time. If you're telling your story in a 12-minute film, write a 12-page script! You might want to pace it like this:

1. Background Info: We meet the protagonist, and find out her general circumstances and goals.

EXAMPLE: The understudy who's painfully shy and doesn't want to go onstage.

My Plot Notes: _____

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2. The Kickoff Incident: Our hero is launched into her story whether she likes it or not.

EXAMPLE: The lead actor gets the flu; the understudy must take over the starring role.

My Plot Notes: _____

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3. The Lead-up: Most of your action happens here as your plot twists unfold, your characters develop, and your story moves toward the climax.

EXAMPLE: The understudy develops a stutter and keeps messing up her lines—until the stage manager (whom she has a crush on) starts helping her.

My Plot Notes: _____

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4. The Climax: The moment when the hero shows the world—and herself— what she's got.

EXAMPLE: On opening night, the stage manager is sick. But against all odds, the show must go on!

My Plot Notes: _____

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5. The Wrap-up: The tying up of loose ends.

EXAMPLE: The show gets terrible reviews, but our hero and the stage manager find happiness together.

My Plot Notes: _____