

THE WISE SLOTH FORMULA PLOT TEMPLATE: VERSION 2.0

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Every story has a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning introduces the characters, setting and the catalyst for the central conflict of the story. The middle sees the conflict played out and neutralized. The end shows the resolution or outcome of the conflict. The beginning of the story is called Act 1, the middle is Act 2, and the end is act 3. Every good story follows the same formula.

Everyone writer knows this, but as true and valuable as this formula is, by itself it won't help you write a complete story. The secret to understanding the rest of the formula is that each Act can be divided into 3 parts: the beginning, middle and end. The sub-parts of each act also follow the same "Introduction, Conflict, Conclusion" pattern. Those parts can be further divided into 3 scenes, which follow the same "Introduction, Conflict, Conclusion" pattern.. Each scene can be divided into 3 clips that follow the same "Introduction, Conflict, Conclusion" pattern as well. The longer you want your story to be the more times you divide each unit into 3 more holons.

Every story doesn't have to follow this pattern exactly. In fact, every story shouldn't. However, it takes skill to successfully stray from the formula, and the only way to build skill is to master the cut-and-dry basics.

Using the basic story plot formula, every unit in the story expands on its parent unit. Since stories work this way, the most efficient way to successfully plot a story is to begin by summarizing the 3 Acts. Fill out the 3 blank boxes below with a short summary of each Act in your story. This may seem overly constrictive. It may feel like it forces you to leave out vital details in the story. Do it anyway. The details come later, but in order to make sure that those details fit logically into the story you have to make sure the fundamentals are solid. By simplifying your story into 3 paragraphs or 3 pictures you'll set yourself to create a linear, logical story.

Once you've summarized the 3 Acts of your story it's time to expand them. Fill in the blank panels of the 9 Panel comic strip with paragraphs or pictures summarizing the 3 Parts of each Act. Continue to build on your summaries by filling out the 27 panel comic strip and finally the 81 panel comic strip. By the time you're done you'll have the backbone of a story.

3 PANEL COMIC STRIP

Introduction/Catalyst	Conflict/Drama	Conclusion/Resolution

9 PANEL COMIC STRIP

ACT I

PART 1	PART 2	PART 3
The protagonist and the setting are introduced.	The antagonist introduces a problem into the protagonist's life. He threatens or takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist.	The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

ACT II

PART 4	PART 5	PART 6
Protagonist finds a solution to the problem	The protagonist applies the solution to the problem.	The protagonist's solution neutralizes the antagonist thus neutralizing the problem.

ACT III

PART 7	PART 8	PART 9
The protagonist gets the thing he wanted.	The protagonist does what he wants with the thing he got.	We see the consequences of the protagonist's actions.

27 PANEL COMIC STRIP

ACT 1

PART 1- The protagonist and the setting are introduced.

SCENE 1	SCENE 2	SCENE 3
We see an epitomizing snapshot of a day in the life of the protagonist	We see a snapshot of the kind of conflict that epitomizes the protagonist's character	We see the consequences of his actions.

ACT 1

PART 2- The antagonist introduces a problem into the protagonist's life. He threatens or takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist.

SCENE 4	SCENE 5	SCENE 6
An event instigated by the antagonist knocks the protagonist's life off course.	The protagonist suffers because of the event.	The protagonist comprehends the reality of the situation.

ACT 1

PART 3- The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

SCENE 7	SCENE 8	SCENE 9
The protagonist states the problem before him.	The protagonist weighs his options.	The protagonist decides to confront the problem.

ACT 2

PART 4- Protagonist finds a solution to the problem

SCENE 10	SCENE 11	SCENE 12
The protagonist identifies a clue or path from the cataclysmic event that helps him identify the source of the problem.	The protagonist follows that clue or path.	The path leads to a dead end that he is not strong enough, skilled enough or has the resources to overcome.

ACT 2

PART 5- The protagonist applies the solution to the problem.

SCENE 13	SCENE 14	SCENE 15
Having been confronted with his own weakness, the protagonist identifies what he needs to overcome his weakness.	The protagonist pursues that source of strength.	The protagonist attains that source of strength.

ACT 2-

PART 6- The protagonist's solution neutralizes the antagonist thus neutralizing the problem

SCENE 16	SCENE 17	SCENE 18
With his new found strength the protagonist crosses the barrier/s in his path and confronts the source of the problem (the antagonist) directly.	The protagonist and the antagonist engage each other directly.	The protagonist's strength trumps the antagonist's weakness and neutralizes the antagonist completely.

ACT 3

PART 7- The protagonist gets the thing he wanted.

SCENE 19	SCENE 20	SCENE 21
The protagonist emerges from the battle.	The protagonist reaches for the prize. The prize is the thing the antagonist held that has the power to shape the protagonist's life.	The protagonist attains the prize.

ACT 3

PART 8- The protagonist does what he wants with the thing he got.

SCENE 22	SCENE 23	SCENE 24
The protagonist identifies the wrongs left over from the conflict that need to be set right.	The protagonist goes about using the prize to set those things right.	We see the consequences of using the prize on the problems.

ACT 3

PART 9- We see the consequences of the protagonist's actions.

SCENE 25	SCENE 26	SCENE 27
The protagonist identifies his personal plans for the future.	The protagonist steps into the "sunset."	The protagonist disappears into the "sunset."

81 PANEL COMIC STRIP

ACT 1

PART 1-The protagonist and the setting are introduced.

SCENE 1- We see an epitomizing snapshot of a day in the life of the protagonist

CLIP 1	CLIP 2	CLIP 3
We see the protagonist in his natural setting.	We see something that defines where he's at in life.	We see something that defines where he's going in life.

ACT 1

PART 1-The protagonist and the setting are introduced.

SCENE 2- We see a snapshot of the kind of conflict that epitomizes the protagonist's character

CLIP 4	CLIP 5	CLIP 6
The protagonist is hit with a problem that is typical of his life and the place he lives.	The protagonist reacts to the problem as is normal for him.	The protagonist succeeds or fails as is normal for him..

ACT 1

PART 1-The protagonist and the setting are introduced.

SCENE 3- We see the consequences of his actions

CLIP 7	CLIP 8	CLIP 9
We see the immediate aftermath of his success or failure.	We see how he deals with his typical success or failure.	We see how this success or failure affects his long term plans/outlook.

ACT 1

PART 2- The antagonist introduces a problem into the protagonist's life. He threatens or takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist.

SCENE 4- An event instigated by the antagonist knocks the protagonist's life off course.

CLIP 10	CLIP 11	CLIP 12
Something completely unexpected happens that will prevent the protagonist from continuing life according to his normal plans.	The protagonist willingly investigates the event or is swept away by it unwillingly.	We see how this event <i>will</i> prevent the protagonist from continuing life as normal.

ACT 1

PART 2 -The antagonist introduces a problem into the protagonist's life. He threatens or takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist.

Scene 5- The protagonist suffers because of the event.

CLIP 13	CLIP 14	CLIP 15
The consequences of the event have now prevented the protagonist from continuing life as normal.	The protagonist reacts emotionally to his life turning upside down.	We see <i>how</i> this prevents the protagonist from continuing life as normal.

ACT 1

PART 2- The antagonist introduces a problem into the protagonist's life. He threatens or takes away that which is most dear to the protagonist.

SCENE 6- The protagonist comprehends the reality of the situation.

CLIP 16	CLIP 17	CLIP 18
The protagonist acknowledges the reality of the situation.	The protagonist reacts emotionally to the fact that he has acknowledged the reality of the situation.	The protagonist acknowledges that he has to do something.

ACT 1

PART 3- The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

SCENE 7- The protagonist states the problem before him.

CLIP 19	CLIP 20	CLIP 21
The protagonist asks himself what he can do to address the conflict.	The protagonist weighs his options.	The protagonist states his conclusion.

ACT 1

PART 3- The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

SCENE 8- The protagonist weighs his options.

CLIP 22	CLIP 23	CLIP 24
The protagonist focuses on his conclusion and asks what its chances of success are.	The protagonist does the cost/benefit analysis.	The protagonist comes to a conclusion.

ACT 1

PART 3- The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

SCENE 9- The protagonist makes an irrevocable decision to confront the problem.

CLIP 25	CLIP 26	CLIP 27
The protagonist steps up to the point of no return.	The protagonist crosses the point of no return.	The protagonist comes out on the other side of the point of no return.

ACT 2

PART 4- Protagonist finds a solution to the problem

SCENE 10- The protagonist identifies a clue or path from the cataclysmic event that helps him identify the source of the problem.

CLIP 29	CLIP 29	CLIP 30
The protagonist identifies a clue.	The protagonist analyses the clue.	The protagonist gleans some insight from it.

ACT 2

PART 4- Protagonist finds a solution to the problem

SCENE 11- The protagonist follows that clue or path.

CLIP 31	CLIP 32	CLIP 33
The protagonist decides to follow the trail the clue showed him.	The protagonist follows the trail.	The protagonist reaches the end of the trail, which ends at another obstacle.

ACT 2

PART 4- Protagonist finds a solution to the problem

SCENE 12- The path leads to a dead end that he is not strong enough, skilled enough or has the resouces to overcome.

CLIP 34	CLIP 35	CLIP 36
The protagonist approaches the obstacle.	The protagonist engages the obstacle.	The protagonist fails to overcome the obstacle.

ACT 2

PART 5- The protagonist applies the solution to the problem.

SCENE 13- Having been confronted with his own weakness, the protagonist identifies what he needs to overcome his weakness.

CLIP 37	CLIP 38	CLIP 39
The protagonist asks why he was unable to overcome the obstacle.	The protagonist explores the question.	The protagonist comes to a conclusion.

ACT 2

PART 5- The protagonist applies the solution to the problem.

SCENE 14- The protagonist pursues that source of strength.

CLIP 40	CLIP 41	CLIP 42
The protagonist identifies what he needs to do to proceed with his quest.	The protagonist pursues the source of strength that will help him.	The protagonist finds the source of strength.

ACT 2

PART 5- The protagonist applies the solution to the problem.

SCENE 15- The protagonist attains that source of strength.

CLIP 43	CLIP 44	CLIP 45
The protagonist approaches the source of strength.	The protagonist reaches for the source of strength.	The protagonist attains the source of strength.

ACT 2

PART 6- The protagonist's solution neutralizes the antagonist thus neutralizing the problem

SCENE 16- With his new found strength the protagonist crosses the barrier/s in his path and confronts the source of the problem (the antagonist) directly.

CLIP 46	CLIP 47	CLIP 48
The protagonist approaches the obstacle before him.	The protagonist engages the obstacle.	The protagonist overcomes the obstacle.

ACT 2

PART 6- The protagonist's solution neutralizes the antagonist thus neutralizing the problem

SCENE 17- The protagonist and the antagonist engage each other directly.

CLIP 49	CLIP 50	CLIP 51
Having cleared the obstacle, the protagonist approaches the antagonist.	The protagonist engages the antagonist directly.	The antagonist's strength trumps the protagonist's weakness.

ACT 2

PART 6- The protagonist's solution neutralizes the antagonist thus neutralizing the problem

SCENE 18- The protagonist's strength trumps the antagonist's weakness and neutralizes the antagonist completely.

CLIP 52	CLIP 53	CLIP 54
At the verge of defeat the protagonist decides to make one final attempt to defeat the antagonist.	The protagonist employs his signature strength against the antagonist's signature weakness.	The protagonist's strength trumps the antagonist's weakness and neutralizes the antagonist completely.

ACT 3

PART 7- The protagonist gets the thing he wanted.

SCENE 19- The protagonist emerges from the battle.

CLIP 55	CLIP 56	CLIP 57
The protagonist rises from the battlefield.	The protagonist reacts emotionally to the battle.	The protagonist steps off the battlefield.

ACT 3

PART 7- The protagonist gets the thing he wanted.

SCENE 20- The protagonist reaches for the prize. The prize is the thing the antagonist held that has the power to shape the protagonist's life.

CLIP 58	CLIP 59	CLIP 60
The protagonist identifies the prize.	The protagonist reacts emotionally to the prize.	The protagonist reaches for the prize.

ACT 3

PART 7- The protagonist gets the thing he wanted.

SCENE 21- The protagonist attains the prize.

CLIP 61	CLIP 62	CLIP 63
The protagonist takes the prize.	The protagonist absorbs its power.	The protagonist is transformed by the prize.

ACT 3

PART 8- The protagonist does what he wants with the thing he got.

SCENE 22- The protagonist identifies the wrongs left over from the conflict that need to be set right.

CLIP 64	CLIP 65	CLIP 66
The protagonist asks what wrongs are left over from the conflict that need to be set right.	The protagonist analyzes the question.	The protagonist comes to a conclusion.

ACT 3

PART 8- The protagonist does what he wants with the thing he got.

SCENE 23- The protagonist goes about using the prize to set those things right.

CLIP 67	CLIP 68	CLIP 69
The protagonist focuses his attention on the thing/s that need to be set right.	The protagonist uses his power to neutralize those problems.	The protagonist finishes neutralizing them.

ACT 3

PART 8- The protagonist does what he wants with the thing he got.

SCENE 24- We see the consequences of using the prize on the problems.

CLIP 70	CLIP 71	CLIP 72
We see the consequences of using the prize to neutralize the problem/s.	The protagonist reacts emotionally to neutralizing the problem.	The protagonist turns his attention to the future.

ACT 3

PART 9- We see the consequences of the protagonist's actions.

SCENE 25- The protagonist identifies his personal plans for the future.

CLIP 73	CLIP 74	CLIP 75
The protagonist asks what he's going to do in the future.	The protagonist analyzes the problem.	The protagonist comes to a conclusion.

ACT 3

PART 9- We see the consequences of the protagonist's actions.

SCENE 26- The protagonist steps into the "sunset."

CLIP 76	CLIP 77	CLIP 78
The protagonist asks what he needs to do to implement his plan.	The protagonist analyzes the problem.	The protagonist comes to a conclusion.

ACT 3

PART 9- We see the consequences of the protagonist's actions.

SCENE 27- The protagonist disappears into the "sunset."

CLIP 79	CLIP 80	CLIP 81
The protagonist steps towards the point of no return.	The protagonist steps across the point of no return.	The protagonist emerges on the other side of the point of no return.