

## Creative Writing

Generate beat-by-beat story breakdowns using classic three-act structure — including emotional requirements, scene suggestions, and common pitfalls for each structural beat.

Difficulty: Beginner → Intermediate

Model: GPT-4 / Claude / Gemini

Use Case: Novel Planning, Screenwriting, Story Outlining

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Why This Prompt Exists

Most story outlines fail because they list events instead of emotional arcs.

You get:

- a sequence of “and then” without causality
- no understanding of what each beat must accomplish
- a sagging middle with no midpoint energy shift
- a climax that arrives without sufficient setup
- no mirror between opening and closing images

But structure is not a formula.

It is a promise to the reader about emotional progression.

- Every beat has a job — do it or cut it
- The midpoint flips the protagonist from reactive to active
- The dark night of the soul must feel earned, not manufactured
- The final image must contradict the opening image

Without structural awareness, stories wander instead of build.

This framework forces AI to think like a screenwriting professor, not a plot generator.

## The Prompt

Assume the role of a narrative architect and screenwriting instructor specializing in three-act structure (Save the Cat / Story Grid framework).

Your task is to generate a complete structural breakdown for a story idea.

Before generating, analyze:

- the emotional arc the protagonist must travel
- the causal chain between beats (no "and then")
- where the energy must rise and fall
- what the opening and closing images reveal

Then generate:

### ACT I – SETUP (0-25%)

- Ordinary World: what the protagonist is missing
- Inciting Incident: what disrupts the status quo
- Debate: should they go or stay?
- Break into Act II: the choice that can't be undone

### ACT II – RISING ACTION (25-75%)

- Fun and Games: the promise of the premise
- Midpoint Twist: stakes rise, protagonist shifts from reactive to active
- Bad Guys Close In: everything starts falling apart
- Dark Night of the Soul: the lowest point

### ACT III – RESOLUTION (75-100%)

- Break into Act III: the realization
- Climax: the final confrontation
- Resolution: tying emotional threads
- Final Image: mirroring the opening image

For each beat, provide:

- What must happen emotionally
- One specific scene suggestion
- Common pitfalls to avoid

End with a one-sentence "spine" of the story.

### INPUTS:

Story Logline or Concept:

[ONE TO TWO SENTENCES]

Protagonist's Flaw (what they must overcome):

[INSERT FLAW OR "UNKNOWN"]

Genre:

[DRAMA / COMEDY / THRILLER / ROMANCE / HORROR / OTHER]

Target Length:

[SHORT STORY / NOVELLA / NOVEL / SCREENPLAY]

### RULES:

- Every beat must have a clear emotional job

- The midpoint must change something fundamental
- Dark night must come from character flaw, not external bad luck
- Final image must contradict opening image
- The spine must be one sentence, not a paragraph

### How To Use It

- Run this before writing anything — structure is scaffolding, not prison.
- The midline (25%, 50%, 75%) are the most useful; they prevent wandering.
- If a beat feels forced, ask “what would this character actually do here?”
- The “spine” is your pitch; if it’s weak, the structure won’t save it.
- Use the pitfalls section as a revision checklist after your first draft.

### Example Input

**Story Logline or Concept:** A retired assassin living quietly as a small-town baker is forced back into the life when her estranged daughter is kidnapped by the crime family she betrayed years ago.

**Protagonist’s Flaw:** She believes violence is the only solution she’s good at, even when it’s destroying the peaceful life she built.

**Genre:** Thriller

**Target Length:** Novel

### Why It Works

Most story structures fail because they are checklists without emotional logic.

This framework improves outcomes by forcing:

- emotional requirements for every beat
- causal connection between events

- midpoint as active/passive switch
- dark night as character-generated
- opening/closing image mirroring

Great structure doesn't constrain creativity — it gives it somewhere to land.

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