

The Power of the Story Setup



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What is a Story?



Suspense, Anticipation, Mystery?

MC

- A main character we can get behind

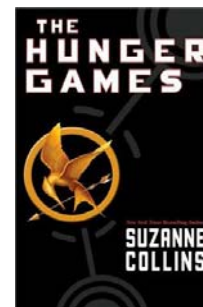
MOTHR

- **M**ystery, **O**pportunity, **T**hreat, **H**ardship, **R**elationship
- Big obstacle: opposition, underdog

CAR

- Concrete Goal
- Action (struggle)
- Resolution

MC MOTHR CAR



The Setup Sets Your Course

Trouble

- Main character we can get behind
- **MOTHR** (obstacle, underdog)
- Reason can't or won't walk away, concrete goal

Struggle

- Plans and successes
- Failures, set backs, surprises, black moment
- What locks MC into final attempt

Resolution

- Climax
- Yes or no?
- Aftermath

The Setup Statement

1. Background

2. When . . .

- Event occurs
- Main character
- Pursues this goal

3. But will he/she . . .

- Antagonist provides opposition
- Threatens some disaster

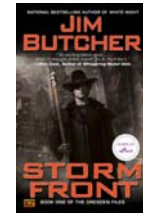
High Noon

When a blood thirsty killer gets off on a technicality, he heads back to meet his gang and get revenge on the sheriff who tried to put him away. **But will** the sheriff be able to save himself when nobody in town will help him?



Storm Front

When a series of grisly supernatural murders tears through Chicago, wizard Harry Dresden sets out to find the killer. **But will he succeed** when he finds himself pitted against a dark wizard, a Warden of the White Council, a vicious gang war, and the Chicago Police Department?



The Incredibles

Bob is a frustrated retired superhero, living a boring life as an insurance claim processor. **When** he gets an offer to do illegal superhero work on the sly, he decides to take it and pursue a double life, even though he's forced to lie to his wife about it. But his dream job employer is actually trying to settle an old score and kill him. **Will he lose** his family when he's drawn into a showdown with a super villain that has him outmatched?



Jurassic Park

A group of scientists and family members gets a sneak peek at a park of dinosaurs. **When** the electrical grid fails, the fences allow the dinosaurs to get out of their areas. **Will the group** be able to get out alive when the T-rex and velociraptors begin to hunt them?



Ender's Game

When Ender Wiggins is assessed, he's selected to train in the battle school to save earth from the Formics. **But will he** be able to survive school to fight the enemy when the teachers begin pitting him against other boys bent on killing him?



Curse

Argoth is trying to build up an army of sleth that can free mankind. **When** the Mother of Mokad sends her armies to exterminate every last one of them, Argoth has to prepare for war with the few dreadmen and fell maidens he has. **But will he** be able to defeat Mokad's army of forty-thousand, especially when Mokad's Guardian has infiltrated his ranks?



Curse

When Sugar sneaks behind enemy lines to retrieve some items her mother left for her, she's given the opportunity to learn a powerful lore and use it to scout for Argoth's army in the world of the dead. But each time she uses it, she comes closer and closer to death herself. **Will she** be able to survive as she's asked to serve in more and more dangerous situations?



The Process

Develop the 5 parts Put into Setup Form

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Main Character 2. Change (MOTHR) 3. Goal 4. Opposition 5. Stakes | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background 2. When . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event occurs • Main character • Pursues this goal 3. But will he/she . . . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antagonist provides opposition • Threatens some disaster |
|---|--|



Genres

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monster • Superhero • SciFi • Fantasy • Urban Fantasy • Western | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary Romance • Historical romance • YA • Mystery—Lady's club (old gals) • Police |
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