SCENE PLANNER



Goal → Conflict → Change → Consequence

A strong scene has movement on two levels: what the character is trying to accomplish externally and what they are trying to deal with internally.

Use this planner to build scenes that move both the plot and the character forward.

QUICK START

Scene: _____

POV Character: _____

External Goal: What do they want to achieve or get in this scene?

Internal Goal: What do they emotionally need, protect, prove, avoid, or understand?

Conflict: What gets in their way?

Change: What is different by the end?

Consequence: What happens because of this scene?

01. SCENE SETUP

Chapter: _____

Scene Number: _____

Location: _____

Date / Time: _____

POV Character: _____

Who else is present?

What happened immediately before this scene?

02. THE EXTERNAL GOAL

What does the character want to accomplish?

This is the visible goal — something the character can actively pursue.

Examples:

- **Get information**
- **Convince someone**
- **Escape**
- **Find something**
- **Win an argument**
- **Make a deal**
- **Protect someone**

• Reach a location

• Hide something

• Get permission

What does the character want to achieve?

Why does it matter right now?

What will happen if they fail?

What are they willing to do to get it?

Complete the sentence:

"In this scene, my character is trying to..."

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03. THE INTERNAL GOAL

What is happening underneath the visible goal?

The internal goal is what the character is trying to **feel, prove, protect, avoid, accept, or understand.**

They may not even realise they are pursuing it.

What does the character emotionally need from this scene?

What are they trying to prove?

What are they trying to avoid feeling?

What are they afraid this scene will reveal about them?

What do they secretly want from the other character?

Complete the sentence:

"Deep down, my character needs to..."

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04. EXTERNAL VS. INTERNAL

Put the two goals side by side.

External Goal

What they want to DO / GET

•

•

Internal Goal

What they want to FEEL / PROVE / AVOID

•

•

Do these goals support each other?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ They are in conflict

If they conflict, how?

This tension can create some of your strongest scenes.

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05. THE CONFLICT

Something needs to stand in the way.

Who or what blocks the external goal?

Who or what challenges the internal goal?

What does the opposing character want?

What are they unwilling to give up?

What is at stake?

06. THE TENSION

How does the scene begin?

What makes things harder?

What is the turning point?

What is the most emotionally charged moment?

What does the character almost say or do — but doesn't?

07. WHAT ISN'T BEING SAID?

Especially useful for dialogue scenes.

What does the character say?

What do they actually mean?

What are they hiding?

What does the other person misunderstand?

What truth is sitting underneath the conversation?

08. THE EXTERNAL CHANGE

What changes in the plot?

At the beginning, the situation is:

At the end, the situation is:

What has the character gained or lost?

What decision has been made?

09. THE INTERNAL CHANGE

What changes inside the character?

At the beginning, they believe:

By the end, they realise:

What emotion changes?

What do they now understand about themselves or someone else?

Have they changed their mind, even slightly?

□ Yes

□ No

□ Not yet

10. THE CONSEQUENCE

The scene should create something that matters after it ends.

What happens immediately because of this scene?

What new problem is created?

What future scene does this set up?

What can no longer happen because of what happened here?

11. THE EMOTIONAL ARC

Starting emotion:

↓

Pressure / conflict:

↓

Emotional turning point:

↓

Ending emotion:

What should the reader feel when the scene ends?

12. SCENE DETAILS

One visual detail:

One sound:

One physical sensation:

One meaningful object:

One detail that reveals character:

13. THE SCENE TEST

Before you draft:

□ There is a clear external goal.

□ There is a clear internal goal.

□ The two goals connect or clash.

□ Something gets in the character's way.

□ The character has something to lose.

□ There is emotional tension.

□ Something changes externally.

□ Something changes internally.

□ The scene creates a consequence.

□ The scene moves the larger story forward.

THE SCENE IN 5 LINES

EXTERNAL GOAL:

INTERNAL GOAL:

CONFLICT:

CHANGE:

CONSEQUENCE:

THE CUT TEST

If you removed this scene completely:

What would the story lose?

What would the reader no longer know?

What character development would disappear?

What future event would no longer make sense?

If the answer is nothing important, the scene needs a stronger purpose.

REMEMBER

The external goal moves the plot.

The internal goal moves the character.

The strongest scenes make them collide.