



Four-Part Structure.

*structure as
engineering.*

A complete working guide to Larry Brooks's four-part story structure: four parts with four distinct missions, the five milestones that separate them, a worked example carried from hook to denouement, the mistakes that collapse a middle, and a printable beat sheet to plan your own.

How to use this guide.

read it once for the shape, then keep it open while you plan.

Four-part story structure was laid out by novelist and writing teacher **Larry Brooks** in *Story Engineering* (2011) and expanded across his craft books and the Storyfix blog. Brooks's argument is that a novel is built, not stumbled into: four parts, each assigning the protagonist a different mission, separated by a handful of milestones that belong at specific load-bearing positions. Where screenwriters had long mapped three acts, Brooks gave novelists a blueprint with the same rigor and the vocabulary to match.

This guide is One More Draft's independent walkthrough of that blueprint. It is not affiliated with or endorsed by Larry Brooks. We cover what each of the twelve beats is for, how to write it, where drafts go wrong, and a running example so you can watch the machine run. One orientation note. Brooks's four parts are not four equal boxes to fill. They are four different jobs for one character, and the milestones between them are where the job changes. Learn the missions and the middle stops sagging.

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Structure is engineering, not accident.

the milestones belong at load points, placed by design.

Brooks's central claim is in his title. A story is engineered. His blueprint is four parts, each a distinct mission for one protagonist, the **Orphan**, the **Wanderer**, the **Warrior**, and the **Martyr**, separated by five milestones that carry the structure's weight. Those milestones are not decorations found in revision. They are load-bearing elements placed on purpose. A bridge has piers where the span needs support, not wherever the builder felt inspired. A novel has its plot points and its context shift at fixed marks for the same reason.

This is a liberating idea, not a cage. Knowing where the milestones go frees you to invent wildly in between, because the structure is holding the weight. Brooks separates the fixed from the free. **Fixed:** four missions in order, five milestones near their marks. **Free:** everything else, the characters, the world, the scenes, the voice, the surprises. The frame tells you where the walls must stand. It says nothing about the house you build, and it will not write a single sentence of it for you.

THE ONE-SENTENCE VERSION

An orphan in an ordinary world is called to a goal, wanders in response until a revelation turns them to attack, gathers the last piece they need, and becomes the martyr who resolves it through their own costly action.

The engine: four missions, one character.

the protagonist's job changes four times, and that is the point.

Most structures give the protagonist one job: pursue the goal. Brooks's engine is subtler. He gives them four jobs in sequence, and the milestones are the moments the job changes. In part one the mission is to exist and be cared about. In part two it is to respond, to react and survive while overmatched. In part three it is to attack, to go on offense with new understanding. In part four it is to resolve, to become the catalyst who ends it. Same person, four missions.

This is why the four-part frame cures the sagging middle that plagues looser models. The dreaded middle is not one long featureless stretch here. It is two different missions with a hard turn between them: the Wanderer reacting, then the Warrior attacking, hinged at the context shift. Each half has its own posture, its own momentum, its own kind of scene. When you know which mission a scene belongs to, you know what it must accomplish, and drift becomes almost impossible.

BUILD THE SPINE IN FOUR LINES

- **Concept + protagonist:** the premise as a what-if, and the person it lands hardest on.
- **Opposing force:** the antagonist strong enough to demand all four missions.
- **Core dramatic question:** the yes-or-no the climax will answer.
- **Stakes that climb:** what losing costs, rising part by part.

THE RUNNING EXAMPLE • MEET JUNO

Throughout this guide we follow one invented story, working title **Fracture Line**. Juno Ferreira forecasts avalanches at Ambler Pass, a one-road ski town that lives on its winter race. She reads snowpack better than people, and a bad call two winters ago still shadows her. Core question: will she force the pass closed before the slope above the race village fails? Watch the frame carry her from Orphan to Martyr.

Four parts, twelve beats.

four missions, five milestones, one running clock.

The twelve beats below are the working skeleton of Brooks's model: four part-missions and, threaded between them, the five milestones Brooks treats as fixed, the first plot point, the two pinch points, the context-shift midpoint, and the second plot point. The percentages are targets, not laws. What matters is the order and the logic. Each beat exists because the mission it serves demands it, and each milestone lands where a reader's attention needs a hinge.

PART 1 • THE ORPHAN

01	Hook	~2%
02	Part 1 - Setup	~10%
03	Inciting Incident	~15%
04	First Plot Point	~25%

PART 2 • THE WANDERER

05	Part 2 - Response	~32%
06	First Pinch Point	~37%
07	Midpoint (Context Shift)	~50%

PART 3 • THE WARRIOR

08	Part 3 - Attack	~58%
09	Second Pinch Point	~62%
10	Second Plot Point	~75%

PART 4 • THE MARTYR

11	Part 4 - Resolution	~88%
12	Climax & Denouement	100%

Read the shape down the page and the design shows itself. The two plot points guard the borders near a quarter and three-quarters. The context shift splits the long middle into a reacting half and an attacking half. The pinch points apply pressure at the center of each middle part. Nothing here is ornamental. Every milestone is a load-bearing pier, and part four is where the whole span finally carries its weight.

BEAT 01

TARGET ~2%

Hook.

the first pages, and the promise they make.

The hook is the story's opening bid for attention, placed in the first pages before the reader has any reason to stay. Brooks treats it as a structural obligation, not a flourish. Something must reach off the page fast: a question, an image, a voice, a flash of stakes. The hook does not have to explain the story. It only has to make stopping feel like a loss. Everything the setup then builds is borrowed against this first moment of interest.

A good hook is specific and unresolved. It hands the reader a small mystery and withholds the answer, so the pull is forward. It need not be loud. A quiet, precise oddity can hook as hard as an explosion, provided the reader senses meaning behind it. Aim the hook at your actual story, not at a generic thrill grafted on top. A promise the book cannot keep buys attention now and refunds it, with interest, the moment the reader feels the switch.

ON THE PAGE

- Open in motion or mystery, never on weather, backstory, or the alarm clock ringing.
- Plant a question the reader needs answered, then make them wait for it.
- Match the hook's promise to the book you are actually writing.

WATCH OUT

The bait-and-switch hook. A shocking opener with no line to the real story buys attention you then betray. Hook with a genuine thread of your story, not a borrowed one.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Dawn, a snow-study slope above Ambler Pass. Juno jumps on the test block and the whole buried layer collapses at once, a hollow drum-boom rolling out under her skis. She kneels, marks the fracture line in her notebook, and looks down at the sleeping town. No one else heard it.

BEAT 02

TARGET ~10%

Part 1 - Setup (the Orphan).

the ordinary world, and the person worth the trouble.

Part one is the Orphan. Before the plot can matter, the reader has to meet a protagonist stranded in an ordinary world and start to care what happens to them. Brooks is blunt about the mission here: establish who this person is, what they want, and what stands in the way, all while the reader falls under their spell. The Orphan label is a mood as much as a role. The protagonist has not yet been called to anything. They are living, wanting, and waiting.

The setup's real job is to load the milestones to come. Every value you will threaten, every relationship you will test, every flaw you will punish should be planted here in miniature. Show the protagonist's normal life with enough texture that its disruption will sting. And keep it moving. Part one is exposition, but exposition delivered through want and action, never through a stationary tour of the furniture. The reader should feel the world tightening before it breaks.

ON THE PAGE

- Give the protagonist a concrete want the reader can picture them chasing.
- Plant every value, bond, and flaw the later milestones will test.
- Deliver backstory through want and action, not a stationary tour.

WATCH OUT

The long orphanage. Part one is a quarter of the book, not half. If the first plot point has not arrived near the twenty-five percent mark, the reader is still waiting for the story to start.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Ambler Pass, one road in, living on its winter race. Juno forecasts its avalanches, reading snowpack better than she reads people. Two winters ago she missed a call and a skier was buried, then dug out alive; the town has not quite forgiven her, and neither has she. She wants the pass safe and her judgment trusted again.

BEAT 03

TARGET ~15%

Inciting Incident.

the first tremor, felt before it is understood.

The inciting incident is the first real disturbance, the early event that foreshadows the coming conflict without yet committing the protagonist to it. Brooks places it inside part one on purpose. It is a tremor, not the earthquake. Something intrudes on the ordinary world and hints at the trouble ahead, giving the reader a taste of the story's true subject while the protagonist can still, for now, treat it as someone else's problem or a passing fluke.

Think of it as the story clearing its throat. The incident raises the central conflict in preview form and starts the clock quietly ticking. The protagonist reacts, but has not yet chosen. That gap is deliberate. The distance between this first tremor and the full call at the first plot point is where the reader watches a person sense that their world is shifting before they are willing to admit it. Do not rush to close that gap.

ON THE PAGE

- Stage it in scene, with the protagonist present to feel the tremor.
- Preview the true conflict without yet forcing the protagonist to commit.
- Let the reaction expose the flaw the whole story will press on.

WATCH OUT

Collapsing the tremor into the call. If the incident already forces the decision, you have skipped a beat and lost part one's best tension: a person feeling the ground move before they will name it.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

The season's first big storm loads the start-zone above the access road and the race village. Juno's morning profile shows a buried weak layer holding a slab that is quietly growing. She flags the danger moderate-to-considerable and recommends control work. Hollis Crane, running resort operations, waves it off. The forecast says clearing. The slope, he tells her, always talks.

BEAT 04

TARGET ~25%

First Plot Point.

the true call. part one locks shut behind it.

The first plot point is, in Brooks's system, the single most important moment in the book. It is the true call to action, the moment the protagonist's world and goal snap into focus and the real story begins. Everything before this was setup, a runway. Here the runway ends. The protagonist takes on a need, a quest, an obstacle they cannot walk away from, and the four missions that follow all answer to this beat. Miss its placement and the whole structure lists.

Brooks is strict about position: near the twenty-five percent mark, no later. A first plot point that drifts to page one hundred leaves a bloated, aimless part one behind it. The beat should hit like a door closing. It reframes what the story is about, gives the protagonist a clear objective for part two, and introduces or sharpens the antagonistic force. After this, the question can no longer be dissolved by retreat. It can only be answered.

ON THE PAGE

- Land it near the quarter mark, an act of commitment the reader can name.
- Give the protagonist a concrete goal to carry into part two.
- Introduce or sharpen the opposing force in the same scene.

WATCH OUT

The drifting plot point. If part one runs past a third of the book with no true call, the reader is stranded in setup. Find the door and close it near twenty-five percent.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Crane orders the pass kept open for race setup and files Juno's advisory in a drawer. So she chooses. She posts the danger rating to the regional avalanche center herself, over his head, under her own name, where he cannot bury it. The quiet, trusted forecaster is gone. From this morning she is the woman crying wolf above a town that needs the wolf to be wrong.

BEAT 05

TARGET ~32%

Part 2 - Response (the Wanderer).

reacting, running, trying, and not yet winning.

Part two is the Wanderer. Newly committed and badly outmatched, the protagonist responds to the changed situation the only way they can at first: reacting. They run, hide, flail, test solutions that fail, and generally get shown how unequipped they are for what the first plot point handed them. Brooks insists this is a mission of response, not attack. The protagonist should not yet have the tools, the knowledge, or the standing to take the fight to the opposing force.

The danger in part two is aimless wandering, so give the response direction even while it fails. The protagonist should be actively trying, with each attempt teaching something and each failure raising the cost. Let the reader feel them gathering what they lack. Every dead end here is tuition, and the education is what the Warrior in part three will eventually spend. Wandering is not the same as stalling. The protagonist moves. The world simply keeps moving faster.

ON THE PAGE

- Keep the protagonist reacting, not yet strong enough to attack.
- Make each failed attempt teach something the later attack will use.
- Raise the cost with every dead end, so response never reads as drift.

WATCH OUT

The passive Wanderer. Reacting is not the same as doing nothing. A protagonist who only absorbs blows for a quarter of the book goes limp. Keep them trying and failing, not merely enduring.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Juno builds her case the only way she knows: more pits, more data, emails to the county. She is outranked at every turn. Crane reframes her as unstable, still rattled by the burial two winters back, and sponsors keep arriving. At midnight she is alone on the slope digging test columns by headlamp, gathering proof no one with power has agreed to read.

BEAT 06

TARGET ~37%

First Pinch Point.

the opposing force, shown plainly and without mercy.

The first pinch point is a clear, unfiltered reminder of the antagonistic force and everything at stake. Where much of part two filters the opposition through the protagonist's flailing, the pinch point pulls the filter away and lets the reader see the threat directly. Brooks positions it near the three-eighths mark for a reason. The middle needs a jolt of pressure here, a scene that says, plainly, this is what you are up against, and this is what losing will cost.

The pinch works best when the protagonist is nearly a bystander to it. The force acts, reveals its scale, and does not need the hero's participation to be frightening. That is what makes it unfiltered. It also refuels stakes that part two's failures may have dulled. A reader who has watched the protagonist lose a few rounds can start to forget why winning matters. The pinch point reminds them, then hands the tension straight to the midpoint.

ON THE PAGE

- Show the opposing force directly, not filtered through the hero's struggle.
- Make the threat's power and the cost of losing vivid and concrete.
- Let the force act without needing the protagonist to trigger it.

WATCH OUT

The muffled pinch. If the reader only hears about the threat secondhand, it stops scaring them. Put the antagonistic force on the page doing something the protagonist cannot answer yet.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

A natural slide lets go on the next aspect over. It is small and empty, but it fails on exactly the layer Juno warned about. Proof, she thinks. Instead Crane spins it to the board as the mountain cleaning itself out, harmless, routine, over. They believe him. Juno watches her strongest evidence become his best argument, and learns how little data weighs against a payroll.

BEAT 07

TARGET ~50%

Midpoint (Context Shift).

new sight, and the turn from reaction to action.

The midpoint is Brooks's great gear-shift, the Context Shift that ends the Wanderer and begins the Warrior. New information reaches the protagonist and changes everything about how they see the problem. What looked unwinnable now looks merely hard. The scales fall. Armed with this new sight, the protagonist stops reacting and starts acting, moving from running away to moving toward the fight. It is the exact center of the book and the hinge the whole four-part shape turns on.

The shift is one of context, not just plot. The same facts now mean something different, and the protagonist reads the whole situation with new eyes. Brooks warns against a soft, gradual midpoint. It should be a scene the reader can point to, the biggest turn since the first plot point. Convert the revelation into a decision on the page. A midpoint that changes what the protagonist knows but not what they do has failed at its one structural job.

ON THE PAGE

- Deliver real new information, not a slow dawning the reader cannot locate.
- Turn the protagonist from reacting to acting inside the scene itself.
- Shift the meaning of what came before, not only the plot ahead.

WATCH OUT

The missing midpoint. A story with no center turn sags exactly at fifty percent, the famous flabby middle. If part two drags, install the context shift first and rebuild both halves around it.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Juno drills a deep pit at the race start-zone and reads the wall. The weak layer is not a patch. It is a continuous sheet across the entire face, primed and spreading wider by the day. The picture flips. She stops arguing about a danger rating and starts planning an evacuation. The Wanderer who kept asking to be believed becomes something harder and more useful.

BEAT 08

TARGET ~58%

Part 3 - Attack (the Warrior).

proactive at last, and still meeting resistance.

Part three is the Warrior. Carrying what the midpoint revealed, the protagonist now pursues the goal proactively, on offense for the first time in the book. This is the mission of attack. They make plans, take initiative, and force the action instead of absorbing it. The change in posture should be palpable on the page. The reader has watched this person get knocked down for a quarter of the story, and now watches them start swinging back with intent and a strategy.

Attacking is not the same as winning. Brooks keeps the resistance high through part three. The opposing force pushes back harder precisely because the protagonist has become a real threat, and the Warrior still lacks the final piece that only the second plot point will deliver. So the protagonist advances against friction, gaining ground and paying for it. Progress here should feel earned and costly, a fighter winning rounds while taking damage, not a montage of easy victories.

ON THE PAGE

- Put the protagonist on offense, making plans and forcing the action.
- Keep resistance high, so advancing costs something every scene.
- Withhold the final piece; the Warrior is not yet fully equipped.

WATCH OUT

The easy attack. If part three becomes a winning streak, tension drains. The protagonist is stronger now, not unstoppable. Every gain should draw a harder counter from the opposing force.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Juno goes on offense. She recruits two patrollers, drafts a control-and-evacuation plan, and wakes the county sheriff at dawn. She walks the race director through the shear test frame by frame until he stops looking away. Doors still slam. But she is advancing now, forcing the question into rooms with the authority to close the mountain, instead of digging pits alone in the dark.

BEAT 09

TARGET ~62%

Second Pinch Point.

the force again, larger, the cost made real.

The second pinch point echoes the first, but louder. It is another forceful reminder of the antagonist's strength, now with higher stakes and a cost that has grown vivid. The protagonist has been attacking, so the opposing force answers with its full weight, showing that becoming a Warrior has not made the enemy any smaller. Brooks uses this beat to press down hard just before the final turn, reminding the reader that victory is still far from certain and expensive besides.

Where the first pinch introduced the threat, the second demonstrates its reach. It often strikes something the protagonist has come to value during the fight, an ally, a standing, a fragile hope, so that the stakes are no longer abstract. This is the last big application of pressure before the second plot point hands over the final piece. Its job is to make the coming climax feel as dangerous as it should, and to leave the protagonist almost nowhere to stand.

ON THE PAGE

- Hit harder than the first pinch, with stakes visibly raised.
- Strike something the protagonist gained during the attack.
- Leave the reader sure the outcome is still in real doubt.

WATCH OUT

The repeated pinch. The second pinch must escalate, not restate. If it merely reruns the first threat at the same size, the pressure flattens. Raise the stakes or the reach, ideally both.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Crane pulls Juno's credentials and bars her from the mountain, citing the old burial as proof she cannot be trusted near a slope. Overnight a second storm stacks another foot onto the slab. Race morning is locked in. From the lodge window she watches the village fill with families, banners, children in helmets, all gathering in the runout of a start-zone she is no longer allowed to touch.

BEAT 10

TARGET ~75%

Second Plot Point.

the last piece in. now the race to the end.

The second plot point is the final injection of new information, the last piece the protagonist needs to reach the climax. After this beat, Brooks allows no new facts, no fresh clues, no rescuing revelations. Everything required to resolve the story is now on the table, and the protagonist has it. The beat ends the Warrior's gathering and launches the sprint to the confrontation. It marks the border between part three and part four, the point where preparation stops and execution begins.

Because it forbids new information afterward, the second plot point puts the outcome squarely on the protagonist's shoulders. No cavalry is coming. What they do with what they now know is the whole of part four. Often the beat also starts or tightens a clock, converting the last quarter into a genuine race. Place it near seventy-five percent and let it accelerate everything. From here the story should feel like a held breath, all inhale spent, only the exhale left.

ON THE PAGE

- Deliver the last piece, then bar all new information after it.
- Put the resolution entirely in the protagonist's hands, no rescue.
- Start or tighten a clock, turning the final quarter into a race.

WATCH OUT

The late revelation. Any crucial fact introduced after this beat reads as a cheat. If the climax needs it, plant it here or earlier. Part four executes; it does not discover.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

A patroller smuggles Juno the dawn stability test. The column fails clean on the first tap and propagates end to end across the block. There is nothing left to learn. The slope will release today, and thousands are gathering directly beneath it. She checks the schedule. The starting horn is ninety minutes out. Every fact she will ever have, she has now.

BEAT 11

TARGET ~88%

Part 4 - Resolution (the Martyr).

the protagonist becomes the one who acts.

Part four is the Martyr. The protagonist stops being a person things happen to and becomes the catalyst, the one who steps up and resolves the conflict through their own action, courage, and sacrifice. Brooks means Martyr in the older sense: not necessarily death, but a willingness to pay. The protagonist gives something real, safety, standing, a cherished belief, in order to force the ending. Whatever the four parts have been building toward, this is the mission where they finally do it themselves.

The change is the point. The person who acts here could not have acted in part one; the missions between made them capable. Part four should show that transformation cashing out under maximum pressure, choice made with everything on the line and no guarantee it works. Keep the resolution active and personal. Allies may stand alongside, but the decisive move belongs to the protagonist alone, and its cost must be paid on the page, not waived at the last moment.

ON THE PAGE

- Put the decisive action in the protagonist's own hands, cost included.
- Show a choice only the changed protagonist could make.
- Pay the sacrifice on the page; do not waive it at the end.

WATCH OUT

The rescued ending. If someone else saves the day, the protagonist is a spectator at their own climax. Restructure until only they can act, and only at a price they actually pay.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

Barred, discredited, and out of time, Juno takes a snowmobile up the closed road. She trips the evacuation siren herself, then climbs onto the loaded start-zone and cuts the cornice to bring the slab down on empty snow while she is standing on it. Her career is finished the moment she crosses the rope. Maybe more than her career. Below, the siren scatters the village toward high ground.

BEAT 12

TARGET 100%

Climax & Denouement.

the question answered, and the world it leaves.

The climax is the final confrontation, the moment the story question gets its definitive answer through the protagonist's own decisive act. Everything the four parts assembled converges here. Brooks asks that the outcome flow directly from who the protagonist has become, so the ending feels inevitable in hindsight and earned in the moment. Win or lose, the confrontation must be theirs to resolve, the culmination of the Orphan, the Wanderer, and the Warrior arriving at last as the Martyr.

Then the denouement, the brief aftermath that shows what the answer cost and what the world looks like now. Keep it short and concrete. The emotional peak has passed, so a few precise images do more than pages of tidying. Distribute the consequences, honor the price the climax charged, and let the protagonist stand, changed, in a world their transformation reshaped. End soon after the echo lands. The reader measures the ending against the beginning, so give them the beginning, transformed.

ON THE PAGE

- Resolve the story question through the protagonist's own decisive act.
- Make the outcome flow from who they have become.
- Keep the denouement brief, concrete, and honest about the cost.

WATCH OUT

The refunded price. A denouement that quietly undoes the climax's cost cheapens the sacrifice that earned it. Whatever part four charged, keep the scar and show the changed world plainly.

FRACTURE LINE • JUNO

The ski cut releases the whole face. It roars down the cleared chute and stops, silent, where the village stood an hour earlier. Empty snow, no names in it. Aftermath: Crane resigns, the pass gets a real control program, and Juno is grounded pending review yet believed at last. The mountain kept the promise it made her at dawn. This time, so did she.

Adapting the frame.

every length, every genre, and the middle that scares people.

LENGTH AND GENRE

The proportions travel. In a 90,000-word novel the first plot point lands near 22,000 words, the context shift near 45,000, the second plot point near 67,000. In a leaner thriller the same milestones arrive faster and hit harder. Brooks built the model for novelists, and it flexes to any of them. Literary fiction can stretch the Orphan for immersion, a mystery can load the pinch points with the antagonist's unseen moves, a romance can run both leads through all four missions at once. The frame cares about the marks, not the container.

THE MIDDLE THAT DOES NOT SAG

The four-part frame's best gift is a middle built not to droop. Two rules keep it taut. First, honor the missions: part two reacts, part three attacks, and the context shift is the hard turn between them. If a middle scene fits neither posture, it belongs to neither part. Second, use the milestones as checkpoints. Pinch point near thirty-seven percent, context shift at fifty, second pinch near sixty-two. If those beats are vague or missing, the sag is already forming. Install them first, then write the scenes between.

RELATION TO OTHER FRAMEWORKS

Brooks's model rhymes with every structure at these marks. Its first plot point sits where Save the Cat breaks into two and where the Hero's Journey crosses the threshold. Its context shift is the classic midpoint. Its second plot point matches the all-is-lost turn into a final act. Draft with whatever framework speaks your genre. But when a story stalls, Brooks's five milestones are a fast diagnostic: name the one that is missing or misplaced, and you have usually found the break.

Seven ways drafts go wrong.

read this list again at the end of every draft.

- **1. The long orphan.** Part one sprawls past a quarter of the book with no true call. Fix: land the first plot point near twenty-five percent, and cut setup to what the milestones will actually test.
- **2. The buried plot point.** The call to action is soft, offstage, or unnamed. Fix: stage a clear moment of commitment near the quarter mark, a door the reader can hear close behind the protagonist.
- **3. The passive Wanderer.** Part two absorbs blows without trying anything. Fix: give the response direction, a string of active attempts that fail forward, each teaching what part three will spend.
- **4. The muffled pinch points.** The threat is only reported, never shown. Fix: put the opposing force on the page at both pinch points, acting at a scale the protagonist cannot yet answer.
- **5. The missing context shift.** Fifty percent arrives with no turn from reaction to attack. Fix: install the midpoint revelation first, then rebuild both halves of the middle around the new sight it delivers.
- **6. The discovering fourth part.** New information arrives after the second plot point to save the day. Fix: plant every needed fact by seventy-five percent; part four executes what the protagonist already knows.
- **7. The rescued climax.** Someone or something other than the protagonist resolves it. Fix: restructure until only the changed protagonist can act, and make them pay the Martyr's price on the page.

THE MASTER DIAGNOSTIC

For any beat that feels wrong, ask which mission it serves: introduce, respond, attack, or resolve. A beat that fits no mission, or the wrong one for its position, is where the structure is failing. Name the mission, then fix the scene.

Your beat sheet.

print this page. one line per beat is enough to start.

CORE DRAMATIC QUESTION

06 FIRST PINCH POINT

37%

OPPOSING FORCE / STAKES

07 CONTEXT SHIFT (MIDPOINT)

50%

01 HOOK

2%

08 ATTACK (WARRIOR)

58%

02 SETUP (ORPHAN)

10%

09 SECOND PINCH POINT

62%

03 INCITING INCIDENT

15%

10 SECOND PLOT POINT

75%

04 FIRST PLOT POINT

25%

11 RESOLUTION (MARTYR)

88%

05 RESPONSE (WANDERER)

32%

12 CLIMAX & DENOUEMENT

100%

Keep going.

the paper version ends here. the fill-in version doesn't.

This entire beat sheet exists as a **free interactive planner** at One More Draft, with the same twelve beats and a text box under each one that saves as you type. Read the beat, draft your story's version of it right on the page, and walk away with a full four-part outline in an afternoon.

onemoredraft.com/guides/brooks-four-part

One More Draft is a complete workshop for writers: a distraction-free manuscript editor, industry-standard screenplay formatting, story planning tools for characters, beats, and worlds, and Quill, our resident writing partner, when you want a second pair of eyes. The editor is free, and there is a free desktop app for Windows.

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- Kishōtenketsu · four acts without conflict
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ONE MORE DRAFT

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