FIND YOUR

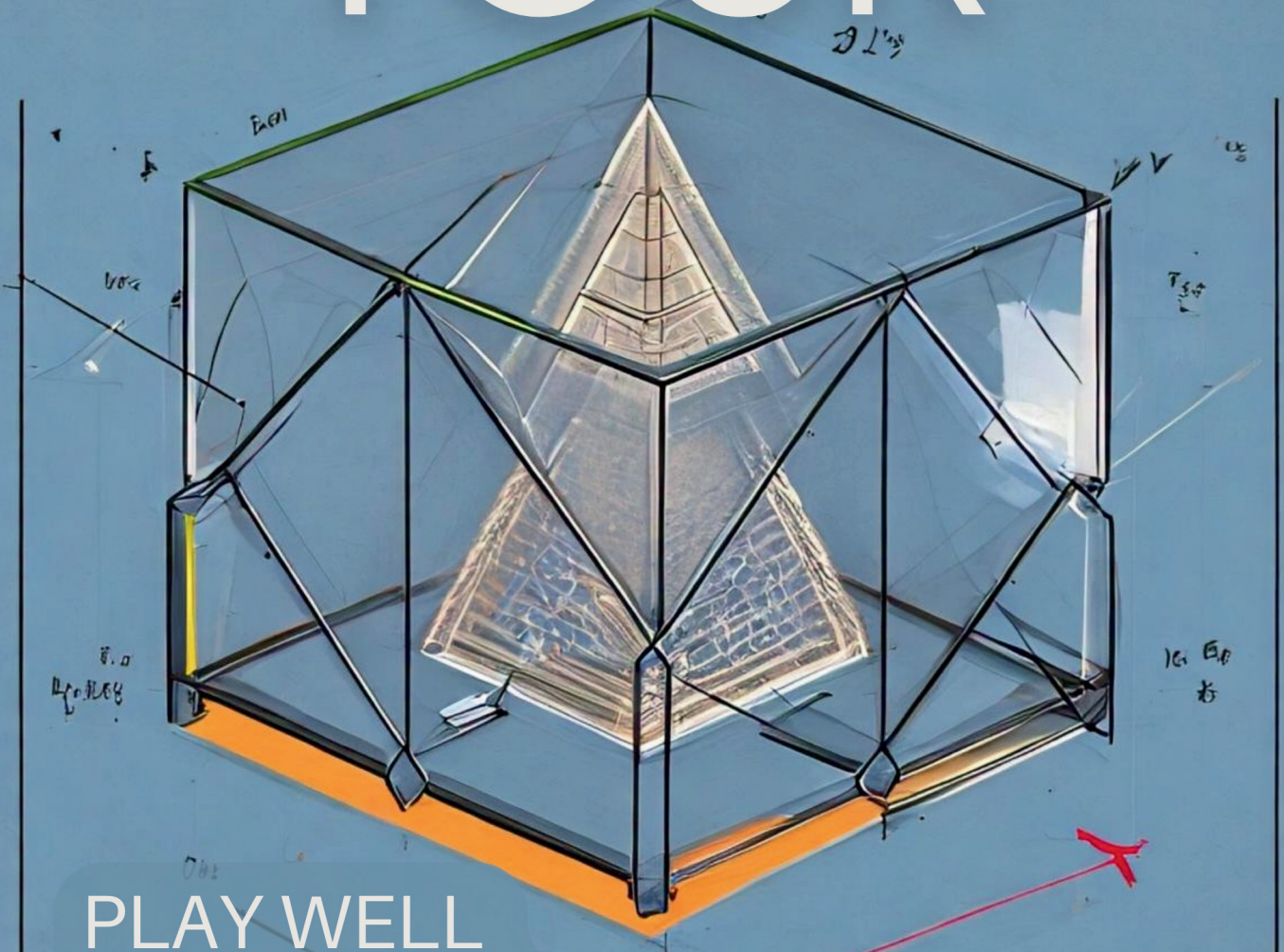## YOUR

TELL YOUR STORY

PLAY WELL
WITH OTHERS

VOICE

DEVELOPED BY
CALEB MORAZI

Making the Moment

Introducing George:
A Story Calculator for Smaller Fictions

developed by Caleb Morazi

The completion of this work was only possible due to Emily's unmerited generosity.

Lesson 0
The Grammar and the Goal

The Legacy of Longform[1]

Everyone has a story to tell but not everyone knows how to tell a story.

The act of improvisation is as ancient as language itself. A child has something to say, they don't even have words for what they've seen but they need to tell someone.

Language is our historical record of improvising to express our range of emotions.

Modern improv starts with Viola Spolin in the 1940s. Fueled by children's aptitude for creativity, she provided structure for them to express it. Later, Paul Sills, Del Close and the Compass players built off those ideas, allowing them to create as a group.

Del discovers Harold at the Committee in '67, when they began playing with rules for structure. They were amazed! Together they had created real people and worlds.

Sadly, everyone but Del abandoned Harold because it was too unpredictable to charge people. Why study something you couldn't guarantee would draw an audience?

It's true, Harold isn't a sure thing but Del had found something. A story needs to come directly from the audience suggestion and everything is intertwined at the end. How this is done is left up to the player's instincts and their familiarity with each other.

The success of a Harold rests solely on the interaction of the player's personalities.

A big misconception in that era of art was that art is simply about self-expression. However great art has always been the expression of the familiar human experience.

Del's influence on 40 years of media allowed me to see what he was aiming for: the Story Calculator.

TL;DR

A Story Calculator increases the Harold's success rate by training writers and teams to recognize the Moment's 11 elements:

- style
- position in the show
- the character focused on
- the character's focus
- the moment's length

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[1]Longform is an improvised theater style which presents characters and scenes as one complete story

- basics of human communication
- a positive or negative outcome
- the sphere of influence
- the dramatic or peace-making method
- the degree of change null, minor or Major
- the position in the universal story

Hey, Writers![2] I didn't forget about you

While you'll see this book is geared toward the performing improviser, I want you to notice that Spolin and Del interested in fostering *creativity* and how to express it. As a writer myself, I find that putting words on the page and performing onstage use the same muscle - you just play all the characters yourself. This method is actually easier to use as a writer because you can take all the time you need to get the moment perfect.

I haven't delved as deeply into the creative writing community but I understand that there are two schools of thought:[3] world builders and "pantsers". The first likes to meticulously create back stories, societies, maps, etc before writing their stories and the second likes to start writing to discover all of those things along the way. There are pros and cons to both schools of thought so, fortunately, the Story Calculator serves both; the pantsers are given structure they'll find they need to finish and world builders are given points to affix their creativity to not drown in their details.

Writers face a challenge that most performers will never struggle with: losing focus of the original idea over the weeks, months or years it takes to finish a work. The Story Calculator lets you bottle the idea from its inception and then build on it moment-by-moment <— make sure you're reading "at your own pace". Also, they're all crafted to make sure you get the page length you want. They let you know where the middle is, how far you are from the end, which are the most chapters, scenes and moments are the most impactful.

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[2]and all other types of storytellers
[3]at the time of this writing

THEME

a thing doing something to another thing

a dog chewing on the slippers

zzzZɪᴘzzzZɪᴘzzzZɪᴘzzzZɪᴘzzz*

*(ʀᴇᴡɪɴᴅɪɴɢ sᴏᴜɴᴅ ᴇꜰꜰᴇᴄᴛs)

We need to back up a little bit, because *Theme* is a word that's lost meaning.

Is it a big bucket the story is thrown in? Writers/critics will say, "The movie's theme is friendship." or "The book is about the struggle between good and evil." If you're feeling offended that I called out your favorite story just look back at how non-specific those themes are. Now think about the number of books and shows through history that can be summed up that way. Are they all the same plot? Characters? Obstacles?

Q: Why not?

A: They don't have the same theme [4]

Remember, stories are so simple kids tell them. "Somthin' changed somthin' else."

The rewind wasn't to offend your intelligence but the *Theme* isn't a moral or goal, it's intended to be present in every scene, moment and character. So, how?

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You don't have to read these sections below the lines to understand this concept as they're just further thoughts on the topic. These section may be more helpful to you if you've played with the ideas for a while and then are coming back for more clarification.

I'm hoping the second to last sentence above the line shook you to your bones as it did me when I first came to understand it. If not, go back a read it again. Imagine the last line of that paragraph as a man in the rain, on his knees screaming the question up at the storm above and you'll have a good analogy of what my last decade looked like.

"*1.21 jigowatts!* Emmett, how could I have been so careless?" Now, using your top-down, writer brain - the audience perspective on your work - you can imagine how **hard** and **ugly** this idea is. A story where a dog only announces that they're a dog sounds like a terrible idea. No one wants to write that story and no one wants to read that story.

What I didn't realize when I started the journey is that Story Calculators are designed to run beneath the surface. The audience should suspect that they're there but they should never see them. The Calculators are mechanisms for us storytellers to fully explore our ideas, putting them exactly where they should go and giving them they attention they deserve without getting monotonous or overwhelmed. So now the dog doesn't ever have to *say* they're a dog, they demonstrate it in every action they take. This is the "show don't tell" rule used by both writers and performers. Suddenly, every

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[4] among other things we're about to get into

character living the theme in every moment makes sense. Why would you want the dog to be anything but a dog unless you're intentionally subverting the trope.[5]

Unlike icebergs, humans are 80% below the surface and have only 20% showing to the world. Physically, in the way we cover ourselves, but also psychologically in that each of us has a hidden set of experiences and assumptions that we've made about ourselves and the world where our motivations spring from.

The journey to uncover the perfect storytelling method began from this place: how do we create in our fiction a world and people that feel so real yet all of them express our idea so clearly that no matter what excerpt you take from the story, the readers still find it?

Boiling the entire big idea down to its bare bones can be both humbling and exhilarating. Humbling because we all like to think our ideas are so unique and complex, nothing that anyone has ever thought before but we find they're simple and regular. Exhilarating because ideas that we weren't sure if we could complete are now manageable. As a storyteller, you will oscillate between these two poles at various points during your creative process.[6] A Story Calculator is a lifeline in both instances by rooting you in the simple story you're trying to tell. There are a million places that a dog can be a dog but your Theme informs you as to why you need to put the dog in the place that they need to be so that they can experience the thing demonstrating your ideas.

See exercises in
Lesson 1: The Opening - Suggestion Into a Theme

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[5]playing against a usual archetype or stereotype
[6]and lifetime

ANTI–THEME

the opposite of the thing the opposite of something

the opposite of the other thing

a man letting go of the collar

{ Untitled }

To make you consider what makes for an adequate title

The human mind finds it easiest to see what something <u>is</u> by comparing it to what it <u>is not</u> so a Story Calculator takes the idea developed from a suggestion and inverts it. This makes the story's conflict center around the character's defining traits.

You know this: people love drama. And, things of high contrast tickle the brain.

Having an anti-theme ensures that the whole idea is explored as the players focus on the thing, its actions and effects, and its opposition with its actions and effects.

It is as simple as the theme just the opposite on every level: noun, verb, object. The opposition can either be literal or creative, further apart means higher contrast.

I'm going on and on about *Theme,* but what's important about this vague word?

In order to not turn the story into a heavy allegory[7] but still have the theme and anti-theme run through every moment, character, scene, story and series it is <u>shown not told</u> through the every character's actions. *Who they are* makes them *do what they do*.

If you don't know this about magic tricks, I'm sorry to be the one who spoils it for you. There's only a couple of different types of magic tricks, some of which are misdirection and forcing the audience to choose the thing you want. There are others and combinations of the two but these two are important for what we're talking about.

Whether you're writing or performing, you're doing a magic trick along with your audience. When they walk into the theatre or they pick up a book, they want to be fooled by you. It's been called the "willing suspension of disbelief." The audience wants to see and hear stories that take them away from their ordinary worlds but which are still close enough to their experiences so they can understand them. For me, that pressure was too much to try to think about while trying to being creative as either a performer or writer so I explored the Story Calculators.

Misdirection is key to a trick because you don't want them to see what you're actually doing. What you're actually doing during a trick is mundane. So, so boring. A lady's not being sawed in half, there's actually two ladies wearing the same costume. The hardest part of learning how to write is learning how much of the act isn't magic and unicorns, it's putting in the hard work of moving a whole world and it's inhabitants.

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[7]unless that's what you're going for

9

Performers split the load but, at best, it's 8 billion divided by 8.[8] This method isn't intended to give you a heavy load to toil under but a way for you and/or your team to appear to performing magic. You and the performers that use this method form a groupmind[9] because you've intentionally trained a groupmind. The misdirection comes in when, after all that hard work, they watch you roll around on the stage like a dog because you know your role so well.

My misdirection in this subsection was talking about magic so I could tie this idea in out of the blue: an anti-theme is both your and your teams way to turn the story's direction <u>any way you want</u>. You're giving the audience a chance to have some input on the show but the height of their creativity can sometimes only reach "spatula!" or "toilet paper!"[10],[11] So, the other five pieces are for the team to turn it into something brilliant. By working together you've incorporated a suggestion, no matter how mundane, into something you can use which validates the audience. Your brilliance transfers to the suggester and, by extension, everyone else. You've now forced their idea to now "play at the top of it's intelligence"[12] treating the audience as "poets, artists and geniuses"[13] so that the story can become more than the sum of its' parts.

This should be a huge encouragement for writers, as well. What's "writer's block" when you can stimulate an idea from any subject, verb or object. Again, we want to think it's more difficult than this but it's not. It's the continued practice of the mundane that makes it look like effortless magic.

See exercises in
Lesson 1: The Opening - Inverting a Theme

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[8]this was intended to make you laugh. if it didn't don't sweat it

[9]cohesion in a team who've learned each other's behaviors so they appear to read each other's minds

[10]I wish this wasn't true, kids, but it is

[11]it's usually followed by a laugh from the person giving suggestion so you'd hate to spoil their fun

[12]Del's encouragement to all of his players

[13]another encouragement from Del

MAIN CHARACTERS

A — the dog

D — a man

letting.go of

chewing on

C — the collar
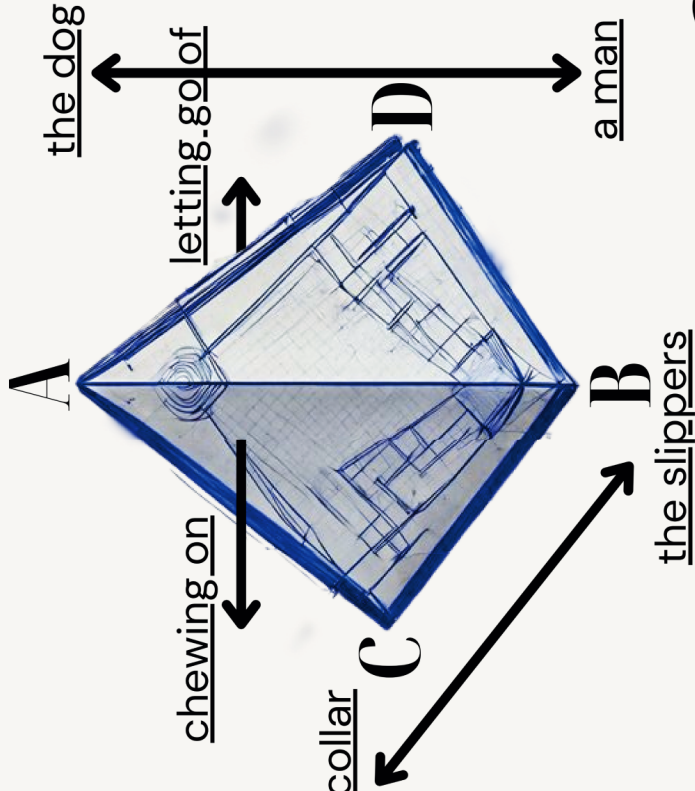
B — the slippers

A: the dog
chewing on and letting.go of
the slippers and the collar

D: a man
letting.go of
the slippers and collar

B: a man
chewing and letting.go of
the slippers

C: the man
chewing and letting.go of
the collar

Irony

The opposite of wrinkly

By balancing the original idea against itself we define the main characters so they exist in a world of allies and enemies who are also struggling with their complex selves.

Real people around us - the main characters of our lives - aren't just one way.

In order to improvise realistic characters they need complexities within a range.

The Story Calculator makes sure that the most important character stands out from the other main characters in one clear way (a dog)[14] and are the most complex character.

Complexity in characters make them real to us. We know someone like that."

Main characters overlap and contrast each other, giving them the opportunities to team up and still be distinct. In our example, there are different kinds of men and dogs. Some let go of their collars and some chew on them; our main character is conflicted.

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cracks knuckles I'm not sure if you want to hear this part of the story or not. It goes it mystical origins of the shape that you find yourself looking at in the images entitled *Main Characters* and *Side Characters*. I wish I could say that I invented this idea but it's inception was weirder than that. I'm literally only stalling the story's progerssion to give you a chance to back out. Seriously, this going to be a couple page detour that you may want to skip if you're just trying to learn the idea. We're about to delve more into historical oddity than anything else.

The goal of the Story Calculator has always been to tell a story in the most natural way possible. What that meant to me at the time was one that felt the same as gossip or a historical fact. "Here are how the events unfolded as implausible as they seem and here is the outcomes of those events". Like most people in this era, we consume a lot of media which means that we're constantly absorbing mostly constructed narratives and the thing that bothers me about them is that they smack of created things.

You know what I mean? Like it's just too convenient how things work or how the plot suddenly wraps up with "it was all a dream" or "they've been dead the entire time". Not those contrivances in particular but unsupported character movements and missing story conclusions. I was entertained but I leave the book or theater feeling dissatisfied. We were willing suspending our disbelief in there but now that your logic is back, the story is starting to unwind. "These can't be real people because they unravel under scrutiny." And they unravel because you realize that the characters only exist to

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[14]note the first underlined traits of A, B, C & D in the image entitled *Main Characters*

serve the plot of the story. Remember, we listen to people's stories and watch or read fictions because we want to learn about our worlds. We learned language so we could gain experiences from each other. Now you've wasted my time because your character doesn't hold up in the real world.

With the shoe on the other foot, as a performer or writer you've betrayed the trust of your audience. Maybe you've made them laugh[15] but what experience did you impart to them? They may enjoy the laughter but it's nothing more unless you give them something more. This thought weighed heavily on me in 2011. I had learned about Mandelbrot's formula for fractals[16] is incredibly simple yet it makes complex and intricate designs. Further, he said that it came from studying the shape of the world that we exist in - it was the shape of nature!

If I was going to write or perform stories that had that shape it would have to be simple yet feedback into itself. It had to create forces that pushed against each other in directly opposing ways. Of course! It was the way that physics worked and the ways that buildings were made. I picked up an engineering book and found the opening advice that is so common that it's ubiquitous: every building is the interaction of three basic shapes, the circle, the square and the triangle.[17]

Now we get into the unusual part of the story. At the end of 2011, I had been in Chicago studying and performing improv but I was disillusioned. No one seemed have the answer I was looking for and didn't seem to be looking for it themselves. Now, I admit to having done a great deal of psychedelics but this moment didn't occur while I was tripping. [18] I was thinking about where I was in my life, jokingly the threat of the end of the world was there for the umpteenth time in my life with 2012 being around the corner, and I hear a voice say - and I swear this is the truth - "Be on the west coast at the beginning of the year[19] because an idea is going to hit there that you need to catch."

This book is the first time that I've mentioned it to more than close friends because I'm aware of how it sounds. F-n crazy. But I didn't have anything else going on in my life and I had a little bit of money to hitch a ride which got me to San Francisco right after the first of the year. I'm sure my editor and publicists will want to have this part of the text edited out for "clarity" or something because it does bring into question the Story Calculator's credibility but listen to this:

I woke up in the place I was staying from a deep, deep sleep. I had been having

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[15] or *feel* something if comedy isn't your goal

[16] $\int d = d^2 + C - 1$

[17] there's some mystical thought around all those shapes too but we're going to ignore that for the sake of this discussion

[18] even though it would make more sense if it had

[19] meaning the roll over between winter and spring, iykyk

a dream about the shape you see in the images entitled *Main Characters* and *Side Characters*. It wasn't just the shape though it was the understanding of how to build the "house" around the characters you want by making them put pressure on each other. I stumbled out into the street and drew the interacting shapes for the first time on a yellow concrete pillar used for blocking through-traffic on the street.

In the film version of this story, there's a montage here because the next part takes years with a lot of rough living punctuated by meeting some of the greatest people on the planet because although I understood the concept in the dream, knowing how to do something and doing it intentionally are very different things. First I explored how the cast fell into a 3D opposition to each other along the Theme axes then discovering how the inner triangle behaved differently than the outer square. Main characters suddenly became fascinating to deal with because they are just one thing, they have their own inner struggles. The A character additionally became like a unicorn; complex in two ways?! Insanity!!!

I haven't done a "measurement" of human complexity [20] but exaggeration at the end of the last paragraph was for humor because I'm positive that a level 2 of complexity isn't high for a real person. But it gives a fictional character a level of depth that I had never seen in my own work. Now, I'm sure that there are great writers out there that are doing something like this. They may not be using these words or this reasoning for doing it. They are probably good imitators of human behavior or have a good understanding of a person's personality limits - skills I don't possess myself.

Under the streetlight in San Francisco, I tried to explain to a friend staying there how the shapes interacted and what they were for. Together we developed the first theme involving cats and the t.gondii virus [21] that we had just found out about. He challenged me to write that story and it became the graphic novel *P.O.U.N.C.E. - People Organized Under the New Cat Empire*. The story was difficult to write, simply because it's difficult to commit yourself to doing something every day when no one is making you doing it. But I had to know if it worked. I had to see if the shapes that I had seen in my dream was the sort of simplicity that made "real" fractal-like shapes.

And it worked! Sort of. I finished the P.O.U.N.C.E. script and it was surprising, profound even. The story and the following two issues of the comic are definitely rough but the characters did things I hadn't expected and it ends in a place that wraps everything up at the length that I wanted it to be. I didn't have to force it. The structure allowed me finally to sit back and create. There were some major problems that I hadn't seen coming, however; while I had used a mirrored structure to give the whole thing

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[20] holding two opposing statuses or viewpoints (i.e. a man who is both a father and a son)

[21] modifying human behavior in 80% of the population in some parts of the world

its aesthetic beauty, I didn't know how the fractal idea needed mirrors applied at every level of the scene, the beat and the moment.

Ok, so I only missed one thing.[22] Back to the drawing board and begin again right, Edison? If I knew how many other additions had to be made to the device before it was ready to be shown to the world I may have felt overwhelmed. But you don't know what you don't know, so I began playing with the concept and structure until the Brent was discovered. Brent[23], didn't actually have a name until it was nearly complete. It was the only Story Calculator that I knew of at the time and so it was simply called that as I ran many different scripts and stories through it.

I was surprised every time, although I was getting what I was aiming for: completed stories in the length I wanted, exploring the subject I wanted. I wrote short poems. They worked. I wrote interlocking micro fiction. It worked. I wrote screenplays. They worked. I took all the characters out and replaced them with new characters. Still worked. I converted the tabletop game campaign I wrote for Emily into a novel. It worked. I'm converting that novel into a 13-book series. It's working. This shape, kids, it amplifies creativity.

See exercises in

Lesson 1: The Opening - Main Characters Declare Their Portion of the Theme

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[22]lol

[23]named for actor to play the character of Data on *Star Trek: TNG*

SIDE CHARACTERS

E: a man chewing on the slippers
F: a man chewing on the collar
G: the dog chewing on the collar
H: the dog chewing on the slippers
I: a man letting.go of the slippers
J: a man letting.go of the collar
K: the dog letting.go of the collar
L: the dog letting.go of the slippers

All side characters are non-ironic

the collar

the slippers

the dog

a man

letting.go of

chewing on
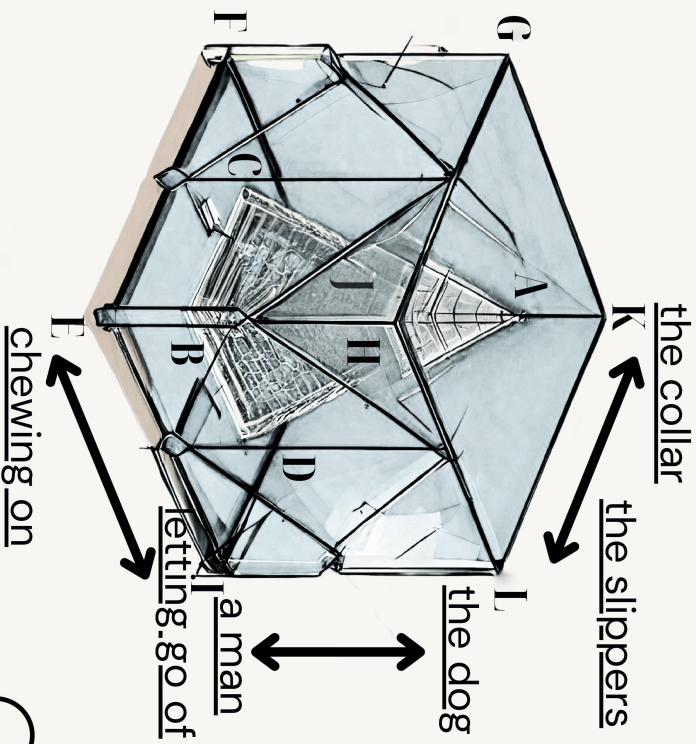
Would You Like A World With That?

I knew studying theatre would pay off *{successkid.png}*

Side characters are beautiful simplicity. In a George[24] they have two defined actions but are still important because they orient the audience in the main characters' world.

Story Calculators position side characters to change things and introduce style.[25]

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My dad,[26] said the above section is a tease because it doesn't tell you how the side characters are supposed to function. It's a fair observation; he has years of experience building physical things while consuming books and movies for fun. He has a broad taste in many types of fiction and nonfiction. I say all that to say he's an expert audience member. They say it takes 10,000 hours[27] to achieve mastery and in his lifetime he's logged the hours in observing narratives. He can tell you if something's broken because he has the experience with observing things that work but he can't tell you how to fix it because that's not his expertise.

I've also observed thousands of houses in various stages of construction throughout my life but it unfortunately hasn't made me a master carpenter. That, observation doesn't equal mastery is a hard lesson to work through for any artist, even if you have the best tools. I felt convinced that this set of interacting shapes held the answers but I still had many questions that I'm sure you're going to come across when you begin working through this idea

1. What does a "non-complex" character even mean?
2. Where do Side Characters go so they don't become Main Characters?[28]
3. If B & C are "sidekicks" of D,[29] are E & F their "sidekicks"?
4. If the corners' lettering is arbitrary,[30] then what are we doing with this shape?

Knowing that something is broken is incredibly useful skill however, many of us have trouble creating because when we look at our work all we can see is what's broken. My dad's experience as an audience member creates more difficulty for himself as a creator because he can tell how much he's not measuring up to the type of entertainment he wants to see. He's observed masters and their masterwork, if he's just starting it's not

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[24]a Story Calculator designed for smaller fictions, read more in *Making the Moment* by Caleb Morazi
[25]see image *George 2* for examples
[26]who is a friend and an editor on these projects
[27]I believe that this is viewed anecdotally, in that, it's not a literal time frame
[28]legit problem while writing without a Calculator but made worse with incorrect placement in one
[29]seeing as they're all opposing A in the same way, Men instead of Dogs in our example
[30]it is

possible for him to intentionally and consistently do that type work. Having a simple rule set which is a series of small, achievable goals makes it possible to put the critical part of our mind to good use so that instead of fighting us, it has something do.

Side Characters let our brain be critical of our fiction *within the context of the story*. The Main Characters are where the dramatic incidents[31] are unfolding and the Side Characters let us go "meanwhile, back on the farm" allowing us to justify the events of the inner triangle because - look, audience! - this is the world that they live in. The fractal, mirrored structure extends into every concept because it's basically this: the cause and it's effects or, if you're feeling mysterious, the effect and it's causes. So this applies to the Side Characters, as well. We see complex people create drama and it's effect on the world or we see the effects of the world's drama on complex people.[32]

While the names of the corners are arbitrary, the positions aren't. I asked my dad, the craftsman, to build various models of the Story Calculator out of wood so that the letters would stay in the same place as I analyzed their positions in relation to each other. You see, E could actually have any letter or number assigned to it but a position that is "the anti-theme's 1st part, the theme's 2nd part and the theme's 3rd part"[33] is constant and so is its' relationship to the more complex character we call B.

The purpose of contrast is to highlight the difference between two things. Being "in a mirrored fractal formation" means opposition works on every level. Two characters, like B and E, are remarkably similar but different from each other in one particular way in order to highlight that difference. This is why in a Story Calculator you'll see those two characters in the same scenes together.[34] It's no accident, either. In George's first scene, H reminds us of A's contrast between D, B and E while they all exist to show their contrast to each other.[35]

See exercises in
Lesson 2: The Moment - BoHC PEaT PaNO

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[31]read The STORY
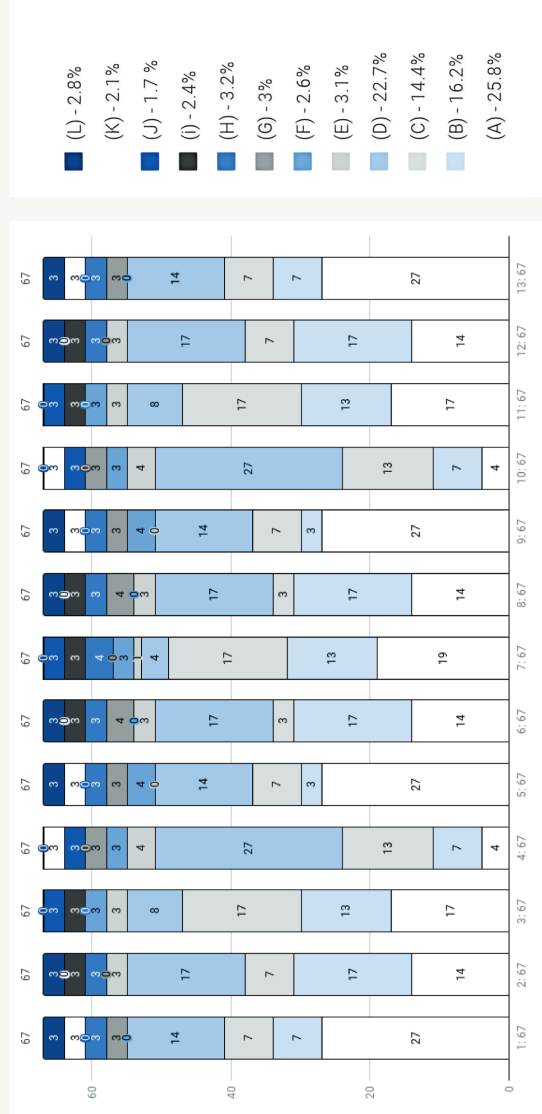
[32]and generally the interplay between the two

[33]which describes E's location

[34]in the images entitled *Exploring a Theme* and *George 2*

[35]D vs B, B vs E

CHARACTER VALUE
WHAT MAKES CHARACTERS <u>MAIN</u>?

Legend:
- (L) - 2.8%
- (K) - 2.1%
- (J) - 1.7%
- (I) - 2.4%
- (H) - 3.2%
- (G) - 3%
- (F) - 2.6%
- (E) - 3.1%
- (D) - 22.7%
- (C) - 14.4%
- (B) - 16.2%
- (A) - 25.8%

Who Are The Friends in *Friends*

Determining the main characters

The image entitled Character Value is a graph of the amount of time spent on each character in the series *She Came from Nowhere.* Who are the main characters, in your opinion? If you look at the table A & D have a higher percentage than even the other.

Q: Why talk about the main characters if we've moved on to side characters?

A: Main characters don't have to appear onstage influence the story being told.

A Story Calculator keeps the focus on the story no matter who's telling it.

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Having a lot of experience being an audience member can be a really good asset if you know how to use it. As you begin to experiment with various forms of the Story Calculator you already have a sense of what "works". Even though you don't know what the story of my series is, if I told you that the Main Characters don't have the highest value[36] then, even if you're a novice, you'd have to scratch your head. When my dad saw that, he went, "Ahh…"

The question of how to maintain focus on the Main Character drove me to construct the Story Calculators. Whether your style is pantser or world builder, how do you ensure that over the weeks or months of writing, you don't lose sight of Rachel, Chandler, Monica and Ross?[37] Or for the performer, as the stage's adrenaline kicks in and the audience's laughs become intoxicating, how do you remember what you and your team were even talking about?

This is the distinction between between observation and mastery. In house building it's knowing in which sequence events need to occur in order to accomplish the goal[38] without having to backtrack and using a Story Calculator it lets you have very interesting and supporting Side Characters that don't bring you don't rabbit holes for pages that add nothing to the plot - ultimately having to be edited out.

See exercises in
Lesson 2: The Moment - BoHC PEaT PaNO

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[36] as seen in the image entitled *Character Value*
[37] and peripherally, Joey and Phoebe
[38] building a house

EXPLORING A THEME

letting.go of
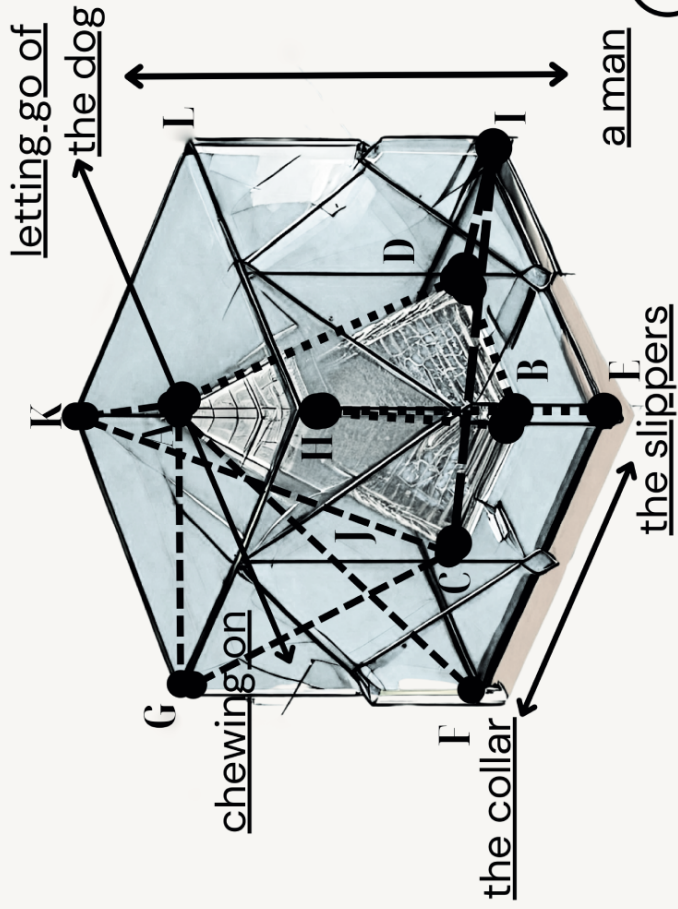the dog

a man

the slippers

the collar

chewing on

Scene 1:
A / D
B / H
E / E
H / B
D / A

Scene 2:
C / I
D / D
I / C

Scene 3:
F / A
A / G
C / K
A / A
A / A
K / C
G / A
A / F

Relevant Paths

Balancing a Story

Exploring A Theme is one example of a near infinite number of stories that can be done with this theme. Story Calculators are designed to make connections between relevant characters to compare and contrast, George fits the given time frame.

Understand, a Story Calculator isn't about a formula or a gimmick for your show, it's about giving players enough time to show the audience who the characters are.

Spolin wanted everyone to knows the goal so they have the ability to work together.

I was a young improviser once, too. I wanted absolute freedom onstage. But no one lives like that. Like it or not, we're in a world full of people and their rules. Symphonies and the majestic halls aren't created by throwing off rules. Rather, its the structure caused from making opposing forces harmonize that makes them amazing. I believe that's what improv wants to be and what it can be if we put in the work.

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Regardless of how much content you start with, whether you're a Tolkien with your epic histories and languages or you're on an empty stage on a Friday night waiting for the music to come down, a Story Calculator helps you cut a path. One truth you have to face with any story medium is that you have time constraints.

A person may take years to read or write a book but there's a limit to its size. In publishing, the cost goes up with the number of pages within a certain range. On the stage, a live audience only has a limited attention span.[39] Network shows needs specific time slots. Although with digital media a large written work doesn't necessarily equal greater cost and streaming can be any length you want it to be, there still seems to be logical limits to the size of the story.

One thing that turned me off to consuming a lot of media was that most storytellers don't objectively go far enough with their ideas or don't have enough content for the length of the story they're telling. Everything that you bring to your audience has to be relevant information, that continues to progress the story with new information or old information used in new ways.

This is more true with media but if you want to see a common example just listen to somebody ramble: they came over to you with something to tell you but now they've forgotten what it was and they're throwing in this, that and the kitchen sink. So much "writing" to me just feels like the author typing, sweating, just trying to make a word or

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[39] 2.5 hours before intermission in Shakespeare's time but with our common distractions, an hour?

page count. Or, alternately, unable to stop themselves from manically churning out pages, muttering, "I'll sort it out in editing."

You're better than that. I believe in the ability of each and every single one of you. I know you have great ideas, you're funny and smart and have experiences that need to be shared. I want you to tell those stories with intention, placing every word to build up to the greater meaning so that you surprise yourself - as I have - with your profundity. Story Calculators set you up to make use of every scene and moment.

I hope that you're reading these portions of the text to discover way to build your own Story Calculator. When I said that there's a near infinite number of these stories, I'm serious. However, constructing your own means understanding that character placement is the balance of time and contrast. The fastest way to tell your story is by contrasting elements against each other and you want to do that in a pace that accomplishes the task but not too quickly. If you see this, you are beginning to see the need to not just leave that to chance.

See exercises in
Lesson 2: The Moment - BoHC PEaT PaNO

PACING
LONG VS SHORT
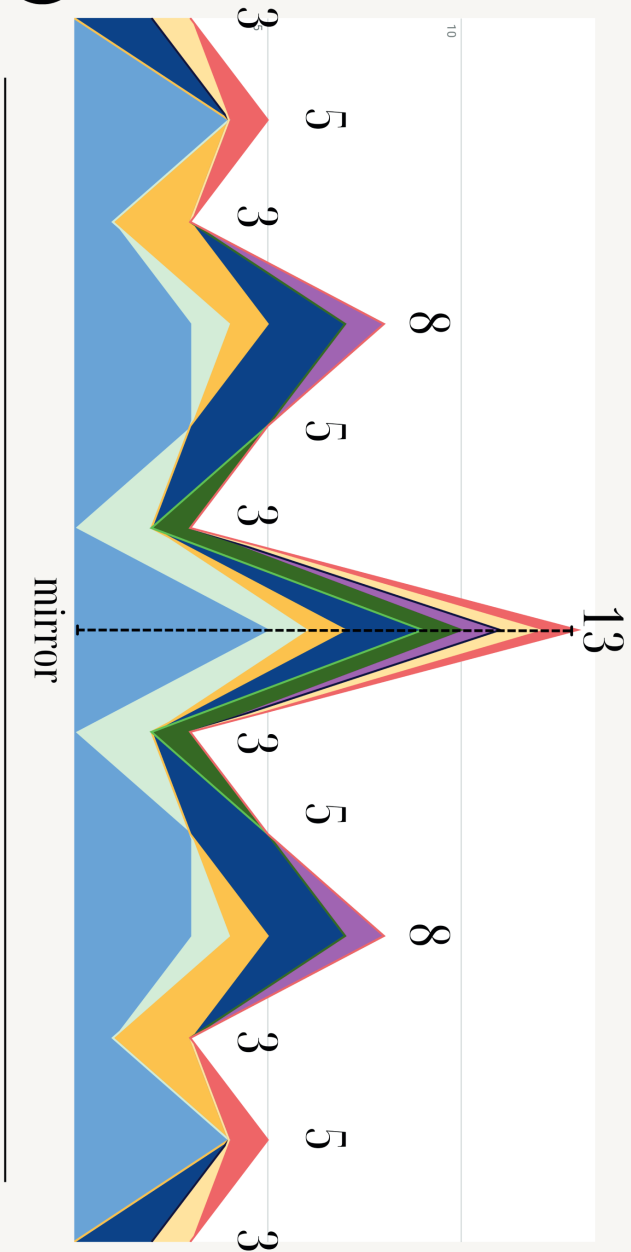
The Big Picture

I can see my house from here

I'm sure you're thinking, there must be more than what I'm describing.

The image in *Pacing* isn't George but Brent. Brents are good for larger stories likes screenplays, novels and series. They're all named similarly to Harold as an homage.

What all storytellers are trying to achieve with improv or any art is aesthetic beauty. The Greeks said it could be obtained through **balance, proportion** and **harmony.** With that idea, short scenes are placed next to longer ones to create dynamic pacing.

Nature follows a Fibonacci sequence[40] so its used to create a standard length.

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So much has been said about the Fibonacci sequence that it has begun to be considered a bit of a joke simply because it can be applied to many things. Not surprisingly, everything fits a universal constant so you can understand how it could be applied as glibly as you want. Silliness aside, there's no reason in particular that the Story Calculators use the numbers from the sequence. They're just convenient and the fact that they add up into each other keeps them aesthetically pleasing.

The thing that you have to understand is that scenes with length 3 makes their internal moments proportionally shorter the same way that ones with length 8 have longer internal moments. What you trying to say, Skip? In a George, an 8-length beat in a 3-beat scene is 45 seconds while an 8-length beat in an a 8-beat scene is 52 seconds. Not incredibly noticeably in a George but it continues to keep things in proportion to each other. In a larger Story Calculator like Brent, the length of the longest moment in a 3-sized chapter is the same length as the shortest moment in a 13-sized chapter.

This kind of pacing can't be achieved accidentally and, if you don't want it, totally fine, we're just vibing here.[41] It started with wanting to make sure that all of the events culminated directly in the center of the story. It just seems like a really good place for everything to smash together, you know? It allows everything to fall to their conclusion from there. Hard to do if you're not doing it on purpose.

A popular style of storytelling is to have the climax[42] right before pulling everything together.[43] It's a fine place to do it. It resolves the story but it often doesn't give us the

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[40]a sequence that is the sum of the previous two items starting with the number 1
[41]to quote my girl, Hailey Elizabeth
[42]the culmination of events or final showdown
[43]the *denouement* if you want to be all literary about it

vicarious catharsis[44] we're looking for. What was accidentally discovered by applying the fractal mirrored structure for aesthetic purposes was the amount of extra story existed after the culmination. You may have experienced this type of story before, some authors have been able to achieve it through some method that they've kept hidden from me but it's the thing that is often missing from romantic comedies. Okay, so boy meets girl and all sorts of hijinks ensue but finally the get together. Whew. But then what? I've just experienced a story that tells me how to get a girl[45] but anyone who has been in a relationship knows that meeting is a very small portion of the experience.

"What kind of relationship do those two have?" I always wonder. Consider the manic pixie dream girl.[46] Okay, so she gave him a new outlook on life but can you imagine trying to keep up with that bipolar disaster? Not disparaging those with the disorder but the "dream girl" often seems to have some undiagnosed issues. The same question arises when you consider pursuing a relationship with the adrenaline-chasing hero who laughs in the face of danger. Not boyfriend material. Yet these characters are presented as the Main Characters over and over again. How more interesting it would be to see the resolution to those characters?

I wish that I could take credit it for this but it was so incidental to setting up the mirrors in the beats, scenes and structures. I will tell you that exploring what happens to the characters when they push past the story that you envisioned for them is terrifying. Your creations are on the loose but, when you trust the process, it shows you how it's possible for the hero and his manic girl make it work together. It's happened every with every story I've run through a Story Calculator; I'm continually astounded.

Before you think I love repping myself, I'm probably the biggest critic of my own work. All the way up to the final line I'm like, "Yeah, we're probably going to scrap this one." But then the stories arrive back at the beginning again, recalling the first moments through the eyes of everything we've come to understand. And they can be dumb[47] but still somehow they'd become beautiful.

It's for this reason that I offer this highly structured process to you. It takes your idea beyond where you'd give up on yourself. Pacing, like we're talking about here, alone is absolute game changer. I don't know if you've noticed it but I have. By way of example, in every section of this chapter I paced out all the text above the lines and have "free wrote" the sections below the line. You and me, we're just chilling here, so you don't mind if I let it all hang out, do you?

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[44]releasing our emotions by experiencing them through others

[45]accurately or inaccurately

[46]a quirky romantic interest to the protagonist

[47]if that was the style I was going for

I hope that when you read the end of that last paragraph you went back and checked. Do you see the difference? Pacing gives you this elegant, sometimes frustrating, ebb and flow. I refer to my typical style as "brown paper bag". They clearly present all the information in standard size packages one right after the other. It's assembly line writing. I'm sure it's the type of thing that teachers across the country see all day every day. You poor things. Kids were told in 3rd grade that a paragraph consists of 3-4 sentences[48] and that's how we all have been presenting information ever since.

I'm sorry. It's monotonous. Even as I look back over the pages, I'm aware there's information in there intended to be helpful but I'm afraid you'll never find it because of the overwhelming blocky-ness of the text. Assembly line writing is very brutalist.[49] It's fully functional but lacks grace. Let me ask you though as a storyteller, is that something you want to be focusing on while you're trying to write?

Are you going to be able to break years of trained habits while trying imagine how characters behave? You don't have to use a George or a Brent, hopefully after studying the concepts in this book you'll be able to design one of your own that's even better than the ones I use, but you have to set up some kind of standard for your pacing or you'll be doing your own version of the brown paper gag.[50]

Let me tell you, too, it's a huge relief if you're not a writer with all the time in the world[51] because you're not sitting down to write a book or a page or even a paragraph,[52] you're sitting down to write one or two lines. After that maybe two or three more depending on your pacing. They all have clearly defined "rules"[53] which you set up and evaluate for yourself; the whole time you know how long you get to spend on that thought so you only create as much as you need and no more.

See exercises in
Lesson 2: The Moment - DatSoi

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[48]between 6-8 written lines for me

[49]a post WWII style that showcases structural elements and building materials over decor

[50]it was a typo but lol

[51]most of us, I imagine

[52]all of which can feel overwhelming on some days

[53]that we're about to get into

ENGINES
THEY GO VROOM

BOHC

Who
Relationship
Wants
Expectations

MAKE PEACE (X)

Speaking the truth
Maintaining self control
Being good
Showing understanding
Practicing patience
Bringing joy
Creating peace
Being content
Being kind
Learning from the wise
Regaining strength
Persevering

MAKE WAR (M)

Telling lies
Being controlled
Being evil
Not caring
Being impatient
Causing sorrow
Causing conflict
Coveting
Being mean
Believing your own lies
Being worked into a frenzy
Giving up

My Secret Agenda

Just because you're not up to anything doesn't mean they should think you're not up to anything

Del said he put coleslaw in his underwear to give his performances extra oomph.

These *Engines* are that extra oomph for storytellers. It allows the players to know what type of moment they're in, like two musicians in the same key. Peace (x) and War (m/M) allow characters to destroy their worlds in the same way they create them.

The BoHC[54] is so obvious, I was amazed when it was discovered that people only have four topics of conversation: **Who, Relationships, Wants** and **Expectations.**

I was skeptical too but listen to conversations around you and classify them.

Engines are an angle to explore the character's theme in each moment and creates a common language. Players can agree even if their characters are at odds. The engines take a step forward for every moment of the same type.[55] Well-versed players then can join and know - from the first moment of the story - when a person is exploring the *Who*, everyone's exploring the *Who* and *Relationships* will be everyone's next moment.[56]

Players focusing on Theme and BoHC is intended to make stories less boring.

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I feel it echoing back through time and space to the moment I wrote these words.

$$(((((\text{ The Groan. })))))$$

You didn't sign up for rules! "And who says these 'Engines' even work, old man?! Why should I add something to my process when I'm already burdened by something that I started doing for fun?"[57]

My friend, first all of let me say that I love that you love your imagination and want more than anything to show your personality to the world. To me, creation and expression of our unique inner universe is a human's highest purpose. These extra rules aren't to burden you but are intended to give you a game to play while you work on the story you really want to tell.

Seems weird, right? But our brains love to receive little rewards[58] for achieving goals. Actually, a lot of pay-to-play gaming models are built around this concept. You get a

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[54] Basics of Human Communication

[55] X or M

[56] along with the other engines

[57] if you're not here yet, you will be because you'll yearn to master the craft

[58] dopamine, I think

prize for checking in every day, for unlocking a certain number of puzzles or winning within a certain time frame. By gamifying[59] a process that is already supposed to be fun it's a win-win. I say "supposed to be fun" but come on, if you're reading this because you've been thinking about giving up it's because you're not enjoying it.

When I was a kid my dad built us a tree house in the backyard. It was beast. There was a ground level club house, a tire swing, a deck way up in the upper branches. My two brothers and I had such wild adventures out there. We didn't even know what "Yes &"[60] was we just knew that not agreeing (i.e. arguing about the number of bad guys who died) was pointless. It was fifty. The swamp we had to swing over to escape had alligators. And sharks. We barely escaped onto our houseboat as we sailed away.

That was the reason that I started creating stories. They were so much fun. My dad used to read to us at dinner or as we fell asleep and those adventures became fuel for our next day's adventures. So many that we forgot most of them but I wanted to make stories for other kids to live and relive. But not having "the coleslaw"[61] made for very flat characters and plots. They were one note, unable to reach the sublime.

Onstage and on paper, I wanted to experience that level of fun but as I've matured I also have come to understand that my fun has to be more than self-serving. Even the jesters have a responsibility to the community. Entertainment can be vapid time wasters. There's definitely room for that in the scope of why people turn to media. Sometimes we just want something on but…what if it was something with a deeper meaning that could still be passively enjoyed? What if the coleslaw could help us create characters we love to hate or hate to love.

These engines are directly tied to pacing, you may notice. Every moment that passes is another step forward so *Who* leads to *Relationships*, *Relationships* to *Wants*, etc. The same goes with the X/M engines: players speak the truth, maintain self control and then are good. Remember, this is all happening at the same time that the storytellers are exploring the different characters' perspective of the theme. So now you're not just writing or playing a character, you're playing a game where H is exploring their relationship with A while being a good dog and do they get to do that for 18 seconds.[62]

In the same way that pacing helps creators avoid brown paper bags, these engines give your characters something to cry about. Here's the truth, a creative "accent" is just your garden-variety cognitive bias,[63] unless we're very careful we leave our psychological

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[59]turning something into a game
[60]a Del-ism for building on the previous idea instead of introducing a new idea
[61]as mentioned above the line
[62]onstage, that is, the writer's equivalent is 15 lines
[63]individuals creating their own subjective reality from their perception

fingerprints on everything we do. We have a "play style" which may work for one story or series but once you and your audience get used to your gimmicks, they better be really good gimmicks to keep them coming back.

There are some authors that I just absolutely loved when I first read their work. Funny, poignant, fresh characters. Then I read another book by them only to find the same fresh characters with different faces, who are funny and poignant in the same way. Unfortunately, it's the same with actors, directors, improvisers and musicians. I'm not dogging on creative expression but if you want to avoid making the same content over and over again you need to incorporate something that runs beneath the surface, ensuring the characters will keep taking new actions. You need to give them something that makes sure they're not all just replicas of you.

Some people have great personalities. You don't mind if they play the same characters or tell the same types of stories over and over again. No matter what they do, it's entertaining so you'll buy it. Not a big deal from the audience perspective but consider this: you, the author or performer, will be there for every painstaking moment of the story's creation. You will know if the story has similarities to something else you've created, you will be aware of every one of your acts of cannibalism.[64]

I'm not trying to be offensive but I am hoping to shock you out of a mindset that will eventually paint you into a creative corner and leave you feeling frustrated. I'm a character actor so I get great joy in playing other people because it's like taking a vacation from yourself. However, no matter how far I get from myself, my only point of reference is still just my own experiences so who I am seeps into the character's point of view. It's going to happen anyway so applying the engines just lets you do it intentionally.

There are emotions that we're uncomfortable with or don't often experience in our day-to-day lives. Some families and cultures don't behave in certain ways but our characters aren't us, they give us the freedom to explore things we don't usually get to. The BoHC engines are there to make sure we express the completeness of the story and the X/M engines let our characters experience the full range of emotions. They can start anywhere, dramatic or not-dramatic, and they ensure that even you - the creator - are surprised by their actions.

See exercises in
Lesson 3: The Beat - Don't Make Me Repeat It

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[64]exaggeration for humor's sake

CREATING DRAMA

SCENES BY WEIGHT

The Snausage

Diced and sliced

Story Calculators have mirrored fractal structures; each moment, beat, scene and story repeats in reverse from the center and the scale is the same at every level.

The fractal structure ensures nothing is forgotten. The story's first action and what the first and last scene of the story are about are the same.[65] Like a good Harold, everything introduced is explored and resolved.

Unlike PEaT,[66] linked engines BoHC and X/M continue even through the mirror.

Story Calculators introduce drama at regularly irregular intervals to keep the audience on their toes as they pop up throughout the scene and story. It also helps the players themselves know how to behave because they have an agreement that, while they were just building their worlds and relationships, it's now time to break them. For you improv nerds: this allows players to "Yes &" each other while not having to play nice.

Life isn't just war or peace, the 3rd, 5th, or 8th switches from X to M or vice versa.

There's one little wrinkle to be noticed. George has 5 scenes, making the 3rd and 5th ones inverted. If the story is non-dramatic, those scenes are dramatic and vice versa.

The stories shared below the line throughout this book span my entire life which I'm sure is quite a bit to take in all at once if you thought you were just here to learn how to write or perform better. You should be relieved to note that the idea in this section is relatively new. As in, just weeks previous to sitting down and writing this text.[67] Creating George helped me see all the Story Calculators in a different light. Every time I think that I've got a handle on <u>everything</u> there's a new thing I hadn't realized. I imagine it will keep happening.

"There's one little wrinkle," you see. I roll my eyes at my glibness but since this may be your first exposure to this structure you may not understand why it's such an understatement. Since the traits[68] are mirrored within scenes and across the whole story,[69] things that don't seem like a big deal in beginning of the show[70] end up being a part of a Major change at the end of the scene and also part of the Major change at the

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[65] also, the first and last scene's conclusion

[66] structures controlling Pacing and Exploring the Theme

[67] as opposed to some of these thoughts that are decades or more old

[68] the expression of a character's Theme

[69] see image entitled *George 2* for reference

[70] A's first action in our example

beginning of the last scene.[71]

"What bizarre oddity," you may say. Again, I studied these shapes for 12 years before noticing this so I'm telling you it's not particularly obvious.[72,73] Not every moment in a show carries the same weight because it is used over and over again. A's first action is a perfect example because its the reason that everything changes at the end of the scene and leads us into the next scene, the team[74] resolve it at the climax of the show and the characters return to it again after this resolution. The reason for spending so much time finding the perfect way to tell a story was so that, going forward, stories can have <u>no</u> <u>wasted</u> <u>moments</u>.

Here's the other "little wrinkle" that you won't notice until you start creating a number of stories with this design: the pacing of every scene[75] is also running mirrored but don't always have the same degree of effect. In our example, B's first action is 8-length moment over and over again but in the last scene that last action creates a minor change. So even though it's done in the same amount of time, it doesn't carry the same "weight" because it has a bigger impact on the story.

See exercises in
Lesson 3: The Beat - Don't Make Me Repeat It

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[71]and part of the minor change in the second half of the climax
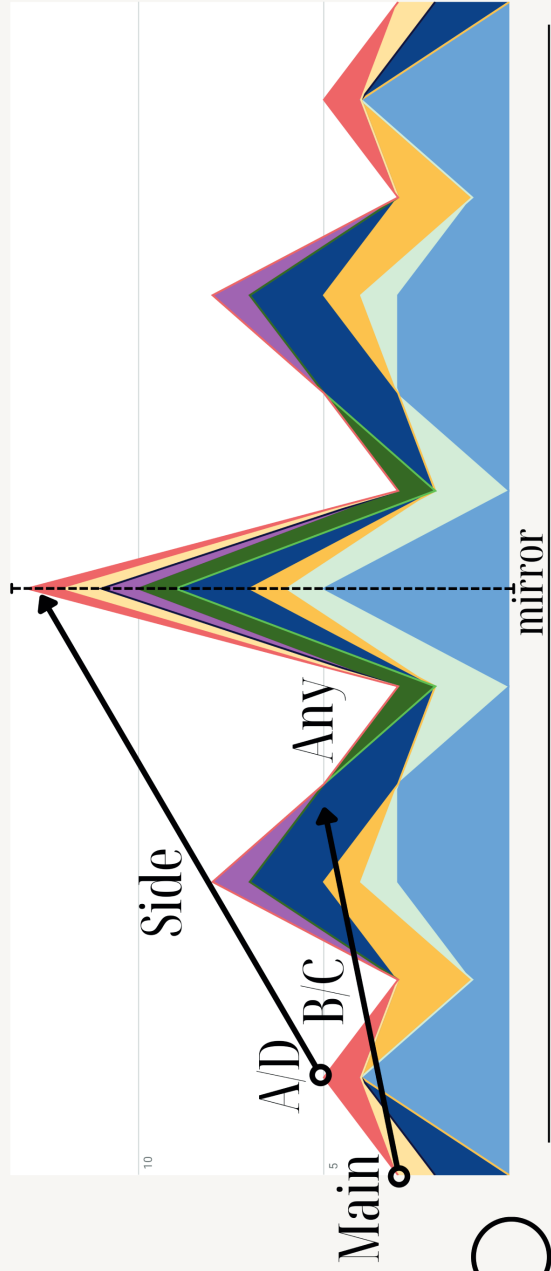[72]or I'm not particularly bright about some things
[73]take your pick
[74]or author
[75]whether it's a 3, 5, or 8 in a George

CHARACTER VALUE 2:
GIVING EACH CHARACTER THEIR DUE

Front & Center

Keeping the Main Thing the main thing

Del had hoped that Truth would unlock Harold but truth is slippery. The reason Harold is good but not dependable is because it lacks specificity and can have a lot of ambiguity. Theatres charge for Spolin-like games[76] because the players have clear goals.

A Story Calculator focuses the story by placing main characters at key moments.

Main characters are complex and have the most "mileage". Weak storytelling fails to introduce and revisit characters in contexts that show their contrasting sides.

Hoping to accidentally discover structure through truth is why most improv fails.

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I feel that some people will think that I think I'm smarter than Del or something. That couldn't be further from the truth. I became so obsessed with his idea that I wanted to make it work. Now, I believe in humanity's collective brilliance that appears - unexpectedly - in every individual I have ever met. Maybe I'm the common denominator, I bring the creativity out it people but I doubt it. I see that it's as common as life on this planet seeming to spring from every living thing.

Now, that being said, no Rolex has ever built itself, the pyramids didn't just appear perfectly formed in the desert[77] and no human achievement that leverages physics to its advantage was ever perfected without intention. Centuries ago people developed a language for music but so far it doesn't seem we've developed a language for stories. I don't know if it didn't seem necessary because everyone tells stories or if writing has been a mostly solo activity until recently.

Whenever I've brought even the idea of structure up to any creative writer they cringe and squirm. Literally even some times like they're doing the pee-pee dance. Stories are a part of us, we've been telling them since we were kids, surely we know how to tell them correctly? My niece, who's two, sings to herself all the time[78] and I love singing my favorite songs as often as possible but that doesn't make us ready for the stage, does it? In some ways fiction has historically has been longer works, loaded with descriptions that, at the time, were more important than the overall narrative.[79]

Perhaps it's only because of the rise of television and movies with their approximate 24- and 90-page limits that we've been able to see clearly what doesn't work. I'll tell

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[76] shortform to you nerds

[77] "…or did they?" conspiracy theorist will ask

[78] my mom says in her daily updates

[79] I'm speculating from this: people had time and didn't want to be bored for as long as possible

you from my own personal experience that writing within those time frames certainly pointed out my own flaws as I tested different version of the Brent. That's how I found how which type of characters should be talked about in which scenes.[80]

Some of it was obvious, like making sure that you introduce the main character's first so that we know who or what the story circles around. Then alternating the point of view to the other major opposing force of the story before moving on to another leg of the triangle to give us contrast. But what about the 4th scene? We haven't really gotten into this but according to numerology,[81] that is the "homemaking" scene which is why the Side Characters[82] go there, even though it's the longest scene. Using the example of the circle, scene 4 is the furthest you can get out before heading toward the climax in the scene 7.

The mirror then forces your hand in some way which is always incredibly interesting and scary. What is essentially happening is that you're picking the traits and making decisions for the characters in the first part of the story but then they face the consequences of their actions. You better have chosen well. For instance, scene 10 is numerologically the "dual completion" scene being that its twice 5[83] BUT... it's also mirrors all the actions from scene 4. So it has the characters dealing with choices they made while they were homemaking and uses them to show how it completes the opposing sides of the world.

I feel like you want to address this so lets address it. Numerology has a lot of mystic woo-woo around it but this[84] seems to make sense when trying to get down to the most "natural" way to tell a story. Stripping away the woo-woo, you have the way that humans thought about themselves in the larger world. Storytelling with numbers. You have to understand, they don't even have symbols for numbers at this point. The storytelling started as they counted out on their hands:

> "Big thumb, that's me. Thumb and first finger, that's me and her.
> These first three, that's me, her and baby."[85]

Is that all speculation? Yes. Does it makes sense though? I agree that it's not good science so please don't take any of that as fact. I'm just saying people have always been using anything they can to tell themselves a story that helps them make sense of their world: rocks with symbols, cards, the stars, you name it. I don't personally think there's

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[80]as demonstrated in the image entitled *Character Value 2*

[81]does the system predict future events? I have no idea. Is it useful for thinking about the dynamics of different-sized groups? Definitely.

[82]who make up the world

[83]where the pinkie and thumb touch each other to form the first counting circle

[84]and some other early systems humans have used to categorize their worlds

[85]the twist that creates a new dynamic

anything "magical" about these systems but I do think they tell us a whole lot about the stories we've been telling about the experiences humans have been having that transcend era and culture.

We're at a brand new era in history that I was fortunate enough to get to witness the transition of[86] but will seem mind-blowing to every generation after this one. The reason that I was able to build these Calculators at all is because I have access to more information that any previous decade. If you've made it this far into this book, you'll have noticed that it ties in many, many ideas in order to get down to what a story "is". I'm not smarter than Del but for Del to do what I've done in his era means he has to come in contact with a groups of intelligent people from many walks of life: mathematicians, architects, writers and comedians, mystics and historians. Maybe over the course of his life he was able to do that but it would mean that he wouldn't start his work until the end.[87] For the last 20 years I've had access to all of those people just by googling.
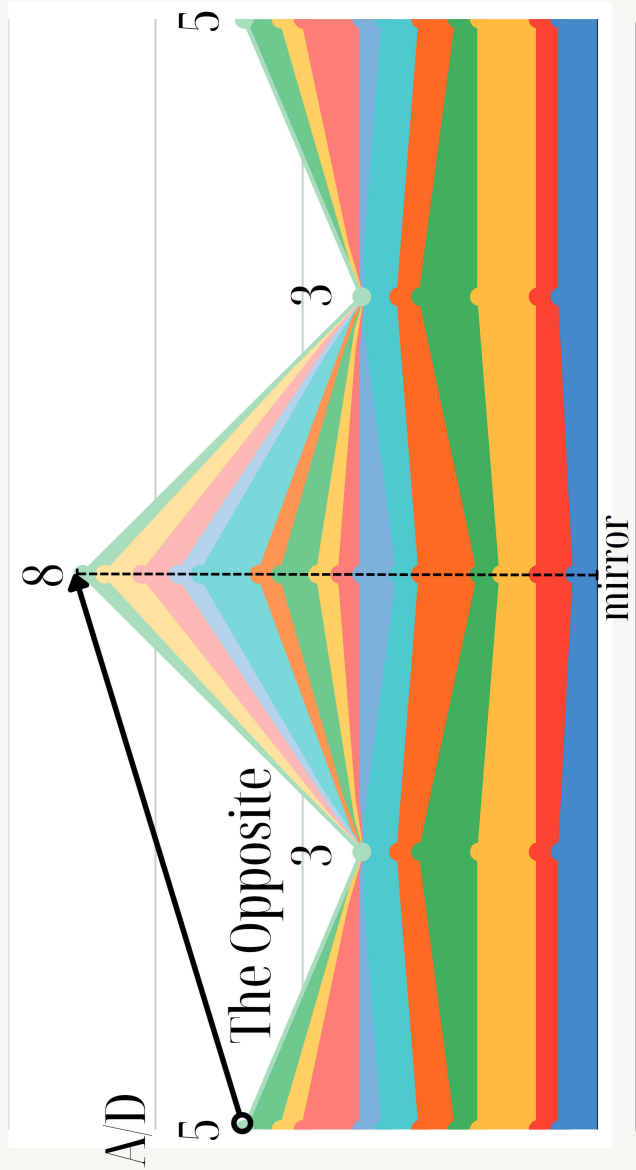
See exercises in
Lesson 4: The Scene - Couplings

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[86]being a "elder" millennial
[87]obviously too late

GEORGE
SHORT LONGFORM

A/D

5

8

5

The Opposite

3

3

5

mirror

Introducing George

The First Story Calculator Intentionally Designed for Longform™

The Brent is too large for sitcom-sized comedy shows so George has only 5 scenes.

For it's time window, George then focuses closely on A & D, the two most complex characters. Like all Story Calculators, the moments are mirrored in reverse and fractal.

George leaves out two minor characters. The characters will still be in the story, just no moment is "theirs". Any action they take will always be about another character.

Unlike Brent, the pacing pattern ends and begins in the middle of the 3rd scene.[88]

You should be pretty excited. If you are reading this book in the year 2024, you're learning about a brand new idea. You see the George wasn't even a "twinkle"[89] until I began turning my attention to teaching a Story Calculator as an improvised form. It's been a question percolating in the back of my mind for a while. I've even tried to write some sitcoms using the Brent but the pacing is insane. Like, some moments can only be a $^1/_4$ of a line. Since you're likely just reading about this idea for the first time, remember that a moment has 11 elements that have to be covered within that space[90] Obviously that wasn't going to work.

There were some things that I did know to be true from all the investigation that was done with the Brent. Mirrors were essential, pacing was key. I knew that changing the size meant that the largest scene had to be smaller than Brent's largest scene which gave us the 8; logically it needed to be straddled by 3s and since it was only 5 scenes long and I needed more variation the first and last scenes became 5s. It's an interesting change from the Brent which begins with the smallest unit, the 3s, to get the ball rolling.

The thing that I've found interesting about the George that I wasn't suspecting was the internal scene pacing which can only be described as perfect. I wish that I could take credit for this but it's actually due to the Calculator's mirrored fractal structure[91] which is used to imitate nature. But enough talking, look at the pacing of scene 1:

$$\text{(5/3) (8/3) m\textbackslash(5/5)\textbackslash (3/8) M(3/5)}$$

That might need a little explanation since you're not quite familiar with the code yet.[92]

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[88] for this example, see the middle of the middle column in the image entitled *George 2*

[89] as my dad used to say about us kids

[90] if you want to look at an example, flip to the back of the book and take any one of those lines. Imagine trying to cover everything in $^1/_4$ of a line

[91] "yeah, yeah," you say, "heard it before, yada yada"

[92] don't sweat, you'll get it

There's 5 beats in the first scene represented by the "( )" and since it's fractal it runs through the entire sequence of the show in the first half of the scene.[93] That right there is cool because it sets the audience up for the show's tempo: mid-short-long-short-mid but then it hits the mirror which is represented by the "\" so then they get experience the pace of the show again.

This is what I mean by perfect. Classical Greek theater uses a tool called the chorus that cues the audience into the type of show they're about to see and Shigeru Miyamoto, who invented the Mario Bros. franchise, demonstrated how you can introduce the cue *into* the form by using the game to teach the audience. Like I said, the structure of the George was incidental does exactly what you'd want to do on purpose. Here's another one: the minor change in the 3rd beat is where the pattern both begins and ends. Sit on it for a second. While the whole rest of the scene has this even pacing,[94] the scene's climax "stutters" before going back to the even pacing. The stutter then indicates the climax to the audience, even if they're not aware it.

Now I'm about to introduce another controversial topic. I may or may not be correct so take from my opinions what you will. There's going to be some people who debate whether or not you can subconsciously introduce an idea to your audience. And, if you can, then how effective is it? Can you turn them into Manchurian Candidates or Inception them? I mean, I wish[95] but - I've got to point out - the whole Story Calculator concept is based off introducing an idea below the audience's awareness in order to invoke meaning from your characters and story.

Pacing follows along this same idea. It gives the author(s) a lifeline to hold onto so they don't give up on themselves too early and they don't infodump[96] on their audience since there's a point that they have to stop at. None of that matters from the audience's perspective though, which is why its so cool that the structure has self-creating indicators. We've established scene 1's dual cycles but look at scene 2:

$$(5/3) \backslash(8/8)\backslash \ m(3/5)$$

It doesn't complete the pattern because the mirror cuts it off. Again, in itself cool because the scene 2's climax is proportionate to the climax scene[97] but, given that they've seen the pattern repeated twice, audiences should suspect something is missing.

Then we arrive at the climax scene, the longest of them all. Notice that there's

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[93] 5-3-8-3-5, see image entitled *George*

[94] mid-short-long

[95] I'd try to get people to think less of themselves and care more for others

[96] giving an excessive amount of information on one topic

[97] an 8

something else that we have leftover from scene 2:[98] there was no Major change. Now, you also may recall[99] that scene 3 and scene 5 are inverted so check this out:

$$\textbf{M(3/5) m(5/3) (8/3) \textbackslash M(5/5) (5/5)\textbackslash{} m(3/8) M(3/5) (5/3)}$$

Scene 3 is unique[100] in that there are actually 3 climaxes, 2 minor ones and one big one for the scene/show. It picks up the Major change from scene 2 in it's first beat and then there's the stutter between beats 1 & 2 which also happens to be a minor change. Remember, we've cued the audience to find climaxes with the stutter? But the scene's not over; meet their expectations then exceed them. I mentioned this above the line too but it's definitely worth repeating because it's sooooo[101]ooooooo cool. 8-sized scenes are already unusual because you'll notice they have a mirror that stretches over the middle two beats.[102] This makes fact that it's picking up the pacing from scene very interesting. It begins and ends a pattern in beat 4 that is then mirrored in beat 5, the first is a Major change and the second works to make peace *using the same actions that created a Major change.*

Don't hear me saying "appreciate what I've *created*", I'd rather have you appreciate what's been *discovered*. I'm telling you, as much as those rules were intentionally set in place, the result far exceeded my expectations. Look at beats 4 & 5 again before we move forward. See how the repeated 5 creates a double climax in the middle of the entire thing? Consider it from the audience's perspective: you're seeing the long/short pattern, you've learned that climaxes have this stutter to them and then the grand pause[103] of stutters occurs. This could happen accidentally, I suppose, but I doubt it.

Without the author(s) or team intentionally setting out to do this, it's just unlikely you're going to achieve it. Listen, I've seen amazing improvisers[104] do things that absolutely blew my mind. They were funny, their scenes and characters were moving, they called back a couple thoughts at the end. But a Story Calculator not only lets us recognize what type of moments the climax will be but also allows us to put the traits we want there. Once I noticed where the pattern broke, it was a no-brainer. The action that starts the show[105] also has to be last action before the mirror, putting it in the very center of the show. The grand pause of 5's in the middle of the show only serves to highlight that necessity.

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[98] besides the rest of it's pacing pattern
[99] or be finding out right now, idk
[100] beyond its length and inversion
[101] I'm nerding out here and it's okay for you to not be as excited about this
[102] the other scene sizes are odd: 3, 5, 13
[103] in music, the composer will put in a moment where everything stops for dramatic effect
[104] duos and teams
[105] whether it's A's or D's

The George may be new and untested but it's built on a solid foundation. I've been working steadily with the Brent for over a decade. I may not be the best writer but I've been able to get it to do what I want and completed works which was one of the Calculator's big goals. Beyond that though, Brent's foundations go back even further into Del's Harold and Spolin's work. Using those two pioneers as guideposts, the Story Calculator's go even further, seeking to capture creativity and turn it into something greater than you expected. This isn't the end but, congratulations, if you "get" what's going on up to this point you've passed a major milestone.

See exercises in
Lesson 5: The Show - Wheels Up!

ENGINES 2:
THE UNIVERSAL STORY

Nothing, the void
Starry eyed wonder
The many senses of self
Meeting an untouchable companion
Interacting with a benevolent ruler
Interacting with a willful ruler
The value of possessions
The value of companionship
The value of having a home
What it means to have or be a guest
Defining opposites
Understanding luck's fickleness

Understanding justice
Seeing the repercussions of your actions
Understanding death
Obtaining long-term goals
Discovering your own hidden universe
Lightning striking out of nowhere
Helping or being helped in time of need
The irony of being a young old person
A blinding epiphany
Facing the judgement of others
Understanding what it means to sonder
Understanding entropy

It's The Circle of Liiiiiiiiiiiiife

One day, everything the light touches will be yours

This one is the most controversial. I wouldn't be surprised if it changes over time.

The Universal Story directs the players to explore the reason people watch stories: we want to find meaning in our lives by eavesdropping on others' experiences.

History repeats itself because Life is a story repeating endlessly all around us forever.

Joseph Campbell noticed it in 1949. His had 12 steps and was called the *Hero's Journey*. There's a monomyth,[106] that we re-tell to understand the journey. In modern media, Dan Harmon is using something similar, 8 steps called the *Harmon Circle*.

My dad said to me casually as we played cards, "Did you know that *Bambi* and *The Lion King* are the same movie?" It was on in the other room for my niece and my mind just broke. I had never noticed because he's not exactly right and I'm almost positive the Disney people did it on purpose so they were clever about it. Simba's story is Bambi's but inverted. The animals gather at a baby's birth,[107] it's a coming of age story that features the death of a parent, they have a friend who stinks and one that's part of a burrowing community, love brings them into a conflict where they're evenly matched, they become king in the end. Understanding the preceding and following sections let's you do that to any story.

Yeah, I'm going to let that sink in for a sec.[108] Understanding everything within a moment allows to make the adjustments that you want. Let me tell you, I've seen some amazingly told stories that I'm just waiting to get the chance to skin and rewrite.[109] I can even tell you what they are because once I reinterpret the characters, they serve the purposes that I have for them and be unrecognizable from the source material. Or, if you'd rather, you can covert the story that you want from one medium to another. You can't take everything from the book for the movie and you can't watch every moment of a person's life. But once you identify the story you want to tell using their life[110] you can easily pick out which moments are relevant and which aren't.

The Universal Story is an interpretation of very old fortune telling systems. If you know any of them you may see some familiar elements. I had dabbled at using different types of oracles so when I was finally introduced to the *Hero's Journey*, I just

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[106] an underlying story beneath all stories
[107] we know Simba is the prince but we don't find out that Bambi is until later
[108] because kitchen fixtures always look so cold on the front lawn
[109] to tip my hand: *Changing Lanes (2002)* and *Cactus Flower (1969)*
[110] the *Theme*

laughed. There's some marked similarities but the these older systems seem to have more increments between the steps. I mention Dan Harmon's work because you can see he took what he found useful from Joseph Campbell but, more importantly, look at the proportion. The *HJ* has 12 and the *HC* has 8 vs the 24 steps in the *US*; that is, 3 times the number of increments than the *HC* has and twice as many as the *HJ*. Is this simply a case of "turning it up to 11"[III] All I have is my personal experience to offer you and the encouragement for you try it to see if you get the same results but the extra steps in the Universal Story seem to add the increments of change imitate the subtly of the passage of time.

See exercises in
Lesson 5: The Show - Extra Credit

[III]Spinal Tap character that wanted on amp because it went higher than 10 with no extra output

GEORGE 2

Scene 1: A1-x (+) - x *[5]*.

A1-x (+) *[5]* • D1-x (+) *[3]*

{s1} B1-x (1 & 2) (+) *[8]* • H1-x (+) *[3]*

- {s2} E1-m (3) (+) *[5]* • {s2} E1-m (3) (-) *[5]* -

H1-x (-) *[3]* • {s1} B1-x (1 & 2) (-) (8)

D1-M (-) *[3]* • A1-M (-) *[5]*

Scene 2: D1-x (+) - x [3]

{s3} C1-x (4) (-) [5] • i1-x (-) [3]

- {s4} D2-x (5) (-) [8] • {s4} D2-x (5) (+) [8] -

i1-m (+) [3] • {s3} C1-m (4) (+) [5]

Scene 3: {s1} B1-x (1 & 2)(+) - m *[8]*.

F1-M (+) [3] •

A2-M (+) [5]

{s1} A3-m (1 & 2) (+) [5] •

G1-m (+) [3]

{s2} C2-x (3)(+) [8] •

K1-x (+) [3]

- A4-M (+) [5] •

{s3} A1-M (4) (+) [5]

{s3} A1-x (4) (-) [5] •

A4-x (-) [5] -

K1-m (-) [3] •

{s2} C2-m (3) (-) [8]

G1-M (-) [3] •

{s1} A3-M (1 & 2)(-) [5]

A2-x (-) [5] •

F1-x (-) [3]

Scene 4: D1-x (-) - x [3]

{s3} C1-x (4) (-) [5] • i1-x (-) [3]

- {s4} D1-x (5) (-) [8] • {s4} D1-x (5) (+) [8] -

i1-m (+) [3] • {s3} C1-m (4) (+) [5]

Scene 5: A1-x (-) - M *[5]*.

A1-M (+) *[5]* • D1-M (+) *[3]*

{s1} B1-m (1 & 2) (+) *[8]* • H1-m (+) *[3]*

- {s2} E1-x (3) (+) *[5]* • {s2} E1-x (3) (-) *[5]* -

H1-M (-) *[3]* • {s1} B1-M (1 & 2) (-) *[8]*

D1-x (-) *[3]* • A1-x (-) *[5]*

The Piece de La Resistance

How to make your style mind without losing yours

This discovery is my favorite because it's entirely superfluous but answers the question of applying your favorite styles without doing a tired imitation of them.

Similar to X/M engines, tropes[112] are placed at regularly irregular places in the story.

This example of a George - one of a near infinite number - is to demonstrate how it measures the moments 11 elements so that they don't become overwhelming to the players. Pacing and callbacks are built into the Story Calculators. In a George there are:

- 4 different style points introduced by 5 different players in 22 different locations

- 3 of them are repeated in scene 3 and are also the whole style of scene 3

No one's "tied" to this, its intended as a standard to train the player's inner ear.

———————

Let's start with that last thought and work backwards from there, shall we? I go into this more when we get into the exercises but having a conductor that calls the moment's 11 elements, the moment's midpoint and the scene's mirror for every scene is definitely different than anything that currently exists. I know a lot of improvisers are probably worried about this putting them "in their head"[113] which is definitely the exact opposite of what I'm hoping to do. Here's the big difference between what I'm think you're imagining and what I intend: this isn't sidecoaching[114] which is why I've begun referring to the person's role as the *conductor*.

Like with an orchestra the role of an improv conductor would be to keep all the actors in time with each other. They call out the starting point, when to work towards the moment's conclusion, if there's a style injection, a major or minor change and when to switch to the next moment, beat and scene. That's it. Not *what* to do or *how* to be better[115] but the tempo, trait and tools to explore it.

I'll repeat this again at the end because I have a feeling that it's something that people will want to throw out within my lifetime and as soon as I'm dead, too. The reason that they're going to want to do it is the same reason that I want to, it's going to be safer to have a conductor calling the show when the actor's go live. Long and short. If you're a producer, that's your first thought. If you're an improviser trained in this style,

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[112] learn more at tvtropes.org

[113] making someone think about how they're doing what they're doing instead of just being in the moment

[114] where an off-stage coach comments on a scene while it's happening

[115] whatever that means

you're going to want the net below you. If you're a promoter that wants to <u>guarantee</u> the show is going to work, you're going to ask why they train with a conductor but don't use them for the shows. Believe it or not, I'm a purist. I want to see people armed with just their wits create magic that the audience won't forget. The thrill - on stage and in the audience - is exhilarating.

In wrestling the coach will have the team start in different positions so that when they get put in those positions in a match they know how to maneuver through them or so that they'll learn how to get to the position they want to get to. I believe the purpose of form isn't so that your show "has" something[116] but so that it makes your players recognize the various positions people play from so they can help progress the story. Training with a conductor is intended to make a player's[117] kneejerk reactions to be ones that progress the story in a useful direction. From this perspective, I hope that you can see how having a conductor during a show is the same as having a coach on the sidelines. I don't know, maybe them yelling does help.

Del, Spolin and I all have the same goal: create a structure that prompts the player's innate creativity. I want the players to have as much input into the creation of their stories as I can possibly give them. Now, that doesn't come without training but after 9 months to a year, any team[118] should have noticeable results. Simply understanding mirrored pacing and how to consistently do callbacks will put a team head and shoulders over any other young team. Then, having the ability to consistently tell *meaningful* stories will be the thing that makes them stand out and that's before we've even gotten into this next thing. Dude, it's so cool. Hang onto your shorts.

Listen, maybe you're one of the cool kids that has known about tvtropes.org since it started in 2004 but I was around cool kids who were into nerdy stuff like the internet, wikis and creating content during that time and I didn't here about it until 2014. So if this is your first time hearing about it, I'm really glad to show you one of my favorite parts of the Story Calculator. If you don't know, tvtropes is a wiki so interneditors[119] work together to find a general consensus on common elements the define genres. It's really fun because every trope is also tied to:

- the way the perception of the trope has changed over time
- what the trope *is not*[120]
- subversions, inversions, lampshading, subtropes and examples

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[116] I'm not sure what it's like now but when I was in the scene they would basically just put the word "prov" behind any word and call it a new form

[117] or author's, to a lesser extent since they have so much time to perfect their moments

[118] under the direction of a trained conductor

[119] editors on the internet

[120] which can actually be really helpful for understanding what it is

Plus the community that keeps the wiki is pretty tongue-in-cheek and fun since I imagine they're story nerds, too.

Let me show you some snippets so that you can see what I'm talking about. The first book of the series I'm currently working on has style points from both Marvel movies and the classic James Bond where they overlap with the Jason Bourne books. Again, I'm not talking about taking elements from those films and books. I'm talking about going to the same inspiration those stories use and intentionally use them too. Check it out some of these cliffnotes for ya, nerds.[121]

- Alien invasion
  - one of the oldest stories in speculative fiction
  - the ways it could occur
  - possible the goals of the aliens
  - the allegories tied to the trope
  - the trope's history
  - how it's currently being used
  - related tropes
  - list of examples in a variety of media
- Lensman Arms Race
  - two sides trying to "build a bigger stick" than the other side
  - the Cold War is the obvious influence for this type of story in the west
  - list of divergent examples and related tropes
  - list of examples in a variety of media
- Lights! Camera! Action!
  - walking away and the thing explodes behind them, the epic sword fight, sliding into the base at the last second
  - I forgot that I made this one up so you won't find it on tvtropes.org. I'm sure they have something like it but I couldn't find it so I was just like, "Yeah, I want things to occasionally go boom."
  - Definitely could have edited it out but then I realized you may need to know that you can just make them up[122] if you want
  - maybe a bunch of people will tell me what it's actually called and I can put it in the second edition
- Those two guys
  - minor side characters who provide in-universe commentary
  - usually having a sharp contrast to each other
  - their general reception

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[121] summaries of entries found tvtropes.org and used under the creative commons license

[122] as a team or author/writer group

- examples of different types
- list of examples in a variety of media
- Take Over the World
  - the goal of any good villain which causes conflict with the hero
  - what happens if/when the villain actually succeeds
  - why the villains do what they do
  - a list of fictional overlords who've tried[123]
  - the subtropes associated with it
  - list of examples in a variety of media

Do you recognize a Marvel story or a high action spy franchise? Why did I choose those? Not because they tell Marvel's story but because those are elements that help tell my story. Tropes are accents that you put on in order to give ordinary[124] scenework to give it a little flair.

See exercises in
Lesson 5: The Show - Extra Credit

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[123]and their tactics
[124]please read "quality storytelling" as the default at this point

Where We Are Now

""Specificity kills ambiguity." - Susan Messing" - Caleb Morazi

I hope you understand that this is a furtherance of everything that came before.

I hope you see that Story Calculators were born from the desire to support what Viola Spolin, Del Close and Susan Messing have taught, offering even closer study.

I spent years exploring this idea because I don't have an improviser's instincts.

Onstage I was overwhelmed by amount of options. I'm sure many people approaching the art feel the same. There's something about finding a safe place to express yourself with fellow weirdos. After that wears off, you realize you want to be **good** at improv.

Defining "good" can be difficult, beyond a few tips. Yet other crafts have things professionals know. I don't fault the artform, it's only been around less than a century.

How to tell any story is a big thought and even bigger is how to get a group of people to do it. I found this only because I became obsessed with it over everything.

The following conducted exercises aren't intended to be the show. The purpose of George is to drill players on show in familiar formations, reminding them of each moment's 11 elements and how they interact with the story so it'll become instinctual.

I'm no genius. I've just consumed more of my predecessors' media than them.

I offer this now to the world not as the end of a conversation but the beginning of one for the greater community to explore. I expect to be surpassed by my students.

Lesson 1
The Opening

Suggestion Into A Theme

Have half the class on stage as players, everyone else is the audience. They give players the suggestion of a noun, verb or object. The players then build the theme, one player at a time.

Run the exercise a few times, switching half the player with the audience at a time. Continue until the class is trusting their gut.

Focus:

This exercise is intended to get the class to start being creative together.

Inverting a Theme

Switch the players with the audience and run the previous exercise with the players continuing on to create the anti-theme. No player should speak twice during the exercise.

Run the exercise a few times, switching out the players on stage half at a time with the ones in the audience until players smoothly transition between the theme and anti-theme.

Focus:

Since Theme defines the characters and the world the team is creating, they should have a good handle on this idea.

This exercise is a good warm-up in early classes to get the team working together and focusing on the theme.

Main Characters Declare Their Portion of the Theme

The above title is slightly shorter than the one I had planned originally which, believe me, was even longer

Before every run, the conductor assigns the players alphabetically: A-L.

Once the players form the theme and anti-theme, the player assigned to A declares

the part of the theme that is non-ironic, listing the other two portions ironically.[125]

Player D declares the opposite part of A's non-ironic theme. One of the other two portions is also non-ironic leaving the last ironic.

Then either B or C declares the opposite part of A's non-ironic theme. The part of D's declaration that is non-ironic, they declare as ironic and D's ironic portion they declare as non-ironic.

Focus:

The players knowing and remembering where they fit in the theme is key to them creating a trait that define their characters.

This exercise is technically more strict than it needs to be since you only need one A or D & B or C to declare in order to define the axis but it makes them take more time thinking about it.

This is a technically advanced technique for a one-off class. In that case, this and the following lessons should be done with the conductor graphing their positions for them. You'll either see some people really get it at this point or be showing them something that will intrigue them enough to see the challenge.

This is a warm-up exercise the conductor should drill with a 8-, 12-week classes or a team until they're easily finding themselves in the shape.

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[125]see image entitled *Main Characters* for examples

Lesson 2
The Moment

BoHC PEaT PaNO

The Basics of Human Communication, Pacing, Exploring a Theme, Positive & Negative Outcomes

As before, the conductor assigns the players a letter, A-L. The players create their theme and anti-theme, the main characters declare their positions in the theme and the side characters declare their positions.

Then, At the same time, from their own locations on the stage, each player begins to explore one portion of their theme using the part of BoHC called out by the conductor with positive or negative outcomes. The conductor will let them run for various lengths of time corresponding to moment size in scenes. **3's = 18 seconds, 5's = 30 seconds and 8's = 48 seconds.**

For example the conductor may call:

A - 5 - Relationships - (+)

which means players use the *Relationship* to explore the first portion of their theme, the noun, for 30 seconds and the outcome will be positive. Run the players through the exercise four times so the theme loops back but they explore it with a different BoHC type than before.

So that the players will get an understanding of their moment's own internal climax, the conductor will call out when they reach the midpoint[126] of the moment so they can move to the moment's positive or negative resolution.

Focus:

The purpose of this exercise is to let the team experience judgment of others - by being creative onstage - while giving them their own, non-critiqued space. It's important for the conductor to not give any feedback during this exercise and just call out calling out the mode, the theme portion, time frame and outcome.

This is an exercise the conductor will want to use as a warm up in when working with teams that are still forming their stage habits. It provides the feeling of standard moment lengths and using this tool to mine their theme.

Variation:

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[126] 3's midpoint is at 9 seconds, 5's midpoint is at 15 seconds, 8's midpoint is at 24 seconds

After the first few classes, the conductor may have just one player come forward and do a solo scene in the same way that they have been doing in the group. The conductor calls the mode, theme, time, outcome, sphere & x/m type. The critiques of the scenes should be a discussion among all the players, starting with the one who did the scene, about what they experienced. Remember, this critique is not about correction since each of these elements is about the player's own interpretation but it is about observation; what was observed in the scene and what was experienced by the audience so players can begin to understand how they appear versus how they think they appear. A group discussion is intended to help players give and take criticisms in a way that doesn't devalue their experiences, allowing their voice to be one of many.

DatSoi[127]

Drama and the Spheres of Influence

This exercise is a variation on BoHC PEaT PaNO and should be added on once the class is comfortable expressing themselves the previous exercise.

After being assigned A-L, the players find their theme and anti-theme and the main characters declare their positions in the theme.

The biggest difference in this exercise is that it is done as two-person scenes so the conductor calls out: the character, the mode, theme portion, time and outcome adding the sphere of influence: Social, Mental or Physical and the x/m type.

For example the conductor may call:

D - letting go - 3 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Showing understanding

and any two players come forward using their character's theme to explore why D wants to letting go for 18 seconds. The outcome will be positive and they will mentally influencing the world and showing understanding. As before the conductor calls out the midpoint of the moment so that the players know when to work back towards the designated outcome.

The players will do this exercise 6 times so that they will get to experience a 3-beat scene without necessarily being aware of it. The conductor may start at any position they desire and then progress the BoHC PEaT PaNO as it goes through the mirror. Example below:

B1 - the slippers - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Physical - Being kind
F1 - Man - 3 - Who - (-) - Physical - Learning from the wise

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[127] shid waddup

56

A1 - chewing on letting go of - 8 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Taking time to rest

A1 - chewing on letting go of - 8 - Wants - (+) - Social - Persevering

m - F1 - Man - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Causing conflict

m - B1 - the slippers - 5 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Coveting

Focus:

The purpose of the exercise is to promote teamwork, it puts everyone on the same page and it gives everyone the same goals. "Yes &" becomes easy when the players understand *why* they're doing what they're doing.

This can be a very heady exercise so the conductor should be doing as much as the heaving lifting as possible. Having the character's themes up somewhere visible so the players can reference them and having the conductor call out the character's theme along with the portion of the theme the scene is focusing on, is a great way to allow the call out to be an inspiration rather than a burden. A call out is intended to give the players a topic and the tools to explore together.

Note:

To create scene variations remember they need to:

- combine two Main Characters with a Side Character on the same plane[128]
- progress through the theme portions until they reach the mirror, then reverse
- have the BoHC and X/M engines progress for every moment of the same type and switch X&M during Major and minor changes
- have the SOI change at the mirror and every Major or minor change before it
- the outcome (+) or (-) is consistent until it reverses at the mirror
- Pacing reverses at the mirror

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[128] see image *Exploring a Theme* for an example

Lesson 3
The Beat

Don't Make Me Repeat It

But Do Because Callbacks are Rad™

As usual, the conductor assigns the players A-L and they set up their theme and anti-theme, 3 main characters announcing their portions of the theme.

The conductor then calls out a sequence of moments that introduce the interaction between A & D that sets off the sequence of events in the same way as has been done in previous exercises. It may look something like this:

A1 - Dog - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Mental - Being good
D1 - letting go - 3 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Showing understanding
B1 - letting go of - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Practicing patience
H1 - Dog - 3 - Who - (+) - Mental - Bringing joy
m /mirror - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Being evil
m mirror/ - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Not caring
H1 - Dog - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Mental - Creating peace
B1 - the slippers - 8 - Wants - (-) - Mental - Being content
M - D1 - letting go - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Being impatient
M - A1 - Dog - 5 - Who - (-) - Mental - Causing sorrow

Focus:

The point of this exercise is for the players to experience the weight given to a Main Character so that they can tell which character it is in a more freeform improvisational setting.

There's a near infinite number of 5-beat variations so a conductor shouldn't feel that they have to repeatedly do the above example. The guidelines for successful 5-beat scene are the same as the note at the end of Lesson 1 and the reference image *Exploring a Theme*.

This exercise is the first actual introduction to George as it explores the 5-beat scene which is both the opening and conclusion scene. The biggest difference between this exercise and the previous one is noticing how one moment influences the moment after it, creating **a beat**. The players should also be directed to notice that beats, like moments, influence each other. Any good scene is essentially a demonstration of cause and effect.

Players should be reminded that it's a 5-beat scene so there are only 5 unique actions that the characters will make and every action will be revisited in reverse order to circle back to the beginning. Getting good at this type of scene work means getting good at creating a mental summary a moment for reference later.

The goal is that the players get to experience the joy of creating a brand new world together. If this exercise makes players fear the drudgery of the next few steps, go back to the first few lessons and drill theme creation/inversion, BoHC PEaT PaNO and DatSoi focusing on solo scenes so that the class can disucss their experiences.

Lesson 4
The Scene

Couplings

Tying two things together

As usual, the conductor assigns the players A-L and they set up their theme and anti-theme, A & D or B & C announcing their portions of the theme.

The conductor then calls out a sequence of moments that introduce the interaction between A & D that sets off the sequence of events[129], adding a related one after[130].

The thing to note is that the conductor additionally calls the title of scene 2 to remind us of D's first action in scene 1. Like so:

Scene 2: D1 - letting go - 3 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Showing understanding

There's a near infinite number of 5-beat 3-beat variations so a conductor shouldn't feel that they have to repeatedly do the above example. The guidelines for running the players through a successful connecting two scene are as follows:

- If scene 1 starts with A's action, D should take the climax of scene 2 and vice versa
- If scene 1 skews toward B, C should starts scene 2 and vice versa
- Scene 2, moment 1 is a logical progression from the first side character in scene 1, moment 4
- Continue progressing the theme, starting at the mirror of scene 1
- Continue the pacing pattern created by scene 1, starting at the mirror of scene 1
- Continue progress through BoHC, starting at the last moment of the same type (either x or m/M) so that scene 2, moment 1 follows scene 1, moment 8 & scene 2, moment 5 follows scene 1, moment 10[131]
- Scene 2, moment 1's outcome is the same as scene 1, moment 10
- The Soi in scene 2 start at the same place as is found at the mirror of scene 1 and the progresses from there
- Scene 2 will have the same x & m/M structure as scene 1 so if scene 1 starts with M, scene 2 would start with M and follow the same pattern

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[129]similar to the scene outlined in lesson 3

[130]similar to the scene outlined in lesson 2

[131]x and m/M are two separate engines so they always pick up where they left off when they are brought back in to play

Focus:

Recognizing the direct "cause and effect" influence of two adjacent scenes help to hone players to incorporate callbacks by habit, even without the help of a conductor.

This exercise is to tie the first 5-beat scene into the second 3-beat scene, recognizing the direct influences of the first scene on the second and how they contrast each other. As the conductor moves through the teaching of this form and the players get nervous about the "the big 3rd scene", remind them that scene 1 & 2 are the same length as scene 3 so if they can handle that they can handle the third.

Additionally, if the players are having trouble handling this lesson or if they're getting rusty or sloppy, go back and drill The Moment and The Beat so they can begin applying the concept of the mirror into their moments and the idea of coupling into their beats.

Having the team discuss in a group what the Soi, BoHC, PaNO or the x & m/M tables mean to the individual and team will help each other come to a more general consensus of what those things mean to them. While there is definite meaning behind each term, there is no "correct" way to interpret them since it's all based on the moments that are being explored and how the call the player has been given pertains to their character's perspective of the character the moment is about. For instance, Character H appearing in scene 1, moment 1 has The dog chewing on the slippers focusing on Character A, a dog chewing on and letting go of the slippers and the collar exploring their relationship for 30 seconds in a mental way. They're being good and the outcome is positive. While anyone reading that sentence can come up with a valid and usable interpretation of its meaning since no two people have ever had the exact same paths of experiences. Differences should be explored and discussed in the same way that an idea is onstage.

Lesson 5
The Show

Wheels Up!

The payoff

As usual, the conductor assigns the players A-L and they set up their theme and anti-theme, 3 main characters announcing their portions of the theme.

The conductor then calls out a sequence of moments that introduce the interaction between A & D that sets off the sequence of events in the same way as has been done in previous exercises. For the sake of this exercise, the conductor will skip the first two portions of the show and instead do just the third scene until they get used to it. The following example is what the rest of the show described in that exercise could look like:

minor - Scene 3
B1 - letting go of - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Practicing patience

F1 - the collar - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Speaking the truth

A2 - Dog - 5 - Who - (+) - Social - Maintaining self control

A3 - chewing on & letting go of - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Social - Being good

G1 - the collar - 3 - Wants - (+) - Social - Showing understanding

M - C2 - Man - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Being mean

M - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Who - (+) - Mental - Trusting your own limited understanding

/mirror - A4 - the slippers & the collar - 5 - Expectations - (+) - Physical - Practicing patience

A1 - Dog - 5 - Who - (+) - Physical - Bringing joy

m - A1 - Dog - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Working yourself into a frenzy

m mirror/ - A4 - the slippers & the collar - 5 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Giving up

- K1 - letting go of - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Mental - Creating peace

C2 - Man - 8 - Wants - (-) - Mental - Being content

G1 - the collar - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Being kind

- A3 - chewing on & letting go of - 5 - Who - (-) - Social - Learning from those that know

M - A2 - Dog - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Telling lies

M - F1 - the collar - 3 - Who - (-) - Social - Letting outside forces control you

There's a near infinite number of 8-beat variations so a conductor shouldn't feel that they have to repeatedly do the above example. The guidelines for running the

players through to the story's mirror are as follows:

- Scene 1, moment 3 is scene 1's direct influence on scene 3; it is the topic and throughline of the entire scene

- Scene 3 is the minor change scene and the climax so the Soi changes along with the BoHC and X/M engines

- The character who is the focus of scene 1, moment 1 should also be the focus of scene 3, moments 2, 3 & 7 - 10 along with their mirrored counterparts

- If scene 1 skews toward B, C should be the focus of scene 3, moment 5 and vice versa

- Scene 3, moment 1 is a progression from the second side character in scene 1, moment 5 & 6

- Scene 3, moment 4 is a progression from the third side character, above in scene 3, moment 1

- Scene 3, moment 6 is the fourth side character that skews the direction of the character in scene 2, moment 1 that shows contrast to the character found in scene 3, moment 4

- Progress through the portions of the theme in a logical way, starting at the mirror of scene 2

- Continue the pacing pattern created by scene 1

- Given that the pattern wasn't completed in the scene 2, there's an ending and beginning of the cycle in the first 2 beats of scene 3 that may feel like an error but helps to add to the feeling that, in this scene, there's something unexpected going on

- It also creates an "odd" moment at the climax where there are 4 moments in a row that are 30 seconds long and, while it breaks the pattern, its location make the moments more distinctive

- Progress logically through BoHC, starting at the last moment of the same type (either x or m/M) so that scene 3, moment 1 follows scene 2, moment 6 scene 3, moment 5 follows scene 2, moment 4

- X/M are two separate engines so they always pick up where they left off when they are brought back in to play

- Scene 3, moment 1's outcome is the same as scene 2, moment 6

- The Soi in scene 3 start at the same place as is found at the mirror of scene 2 and progresses logically from there, changing at every m/M before the mirror and the climax

- Scene 3 has an inverted X/M structure as scene 1 so if scene 1 starts with M, scene 3 would start with x and follow the same pattern: m/M where x was, alternating between the two, and vice versa

- Scene 3, beat 1 continues the m/M pattern from the scene 2, beat 3; scene 2 ends with an m, then scene 3 starts with an M and vice versa

- Since scene 3 is an 8-beat scene it has an unusual mirror that expands over moments 7 - 10

Focus:

This is it. The whole enchilada. Understanding the calls, what they mean to the player and their team is to get to this point.

This exercise can be difficult and shouldn't be ventured into until the conductor is sure the team is on the same page and really understanding the conductor's calls. Additionally since it can be practiced without the previous two scenes, the idea of callbacks isn't as relevant. When an 8-beat scene is done solo, the players should focus on mirroring their moments and coupling beats as they normally would.

The conductor should make sure the team is comfortable managing both the 5-beat & 3-beat transition and 8-beat scenes separately before putting the pieces together. The team should further solidify what it feels like going through those 3 scenes before the conductor guides them through the all 5 scenes since dealing with the callbacks after the mirror, in scene 5 in particular with its inverted pattern, can be tricky.

Ultimately, the conductor's goal is to act as a tuning fork for the team, drilling them on the elements they're weakest on to pull them in harmony with each other. The conductor shouldn't be necessary during shows if the team has been trained properly. The goal is to make it not a thought process for the player's to go through but a reaction they have to seeing different types of moves and timeframes.

Extra Credit

As usual, the conductor assigns the players A-L and they set up their theme and anti-theme, A or D & B or C announce their portions of the theme.

The conductor then calls out a sequence of moments that introduce the interaction between A & D that sets off the sequence of events in the same way as has been done in previous exercises.

However, this time the conductor includes an element from the universal story and calls out when styles should be included. The following example of what an entire show could look like:

Scene 1:
A1 - Dog - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Mental - Being good - Your hidden universe

A1 - Dog - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Mental - Being good - Your hidden universe

D1 - letting go - 3 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Showing understanding - Lightning striking from nowhere

Style 1 & 2 - B1 - the slippers - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Practicing patience - Helping or being helped

H1 - Dog - 3 - Who - (+) - Mental - Bringing joy - Being a young old person

m mirror/ - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Being evil - Your hidden universe

m /mirror - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Not caring - Lightning from nowhere

H1 - Dog - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Mental - Creating peace - A blinding epiphany

Style 1 & 2 - B1 - the slippers - 8 - Wants - (-) - Mental - Being content - Facing judgment

M - D1 - letting go - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Being impatient - Helping or being helped

M - A1 - Dog - 5 - Who - (-) - Mental - Causing sorrow - Being a young old person

Scene 2:
D1 - letting go - 3 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Showing understanding - Lightning from nowhere

Style 3 - C1 - the collar - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Physical - Being kind - Sondering

i1 - Man - 3 - Who - (-) - Physical - Learning from the wise - Entropy

Style 4 - mirror/ - D2 - letting go of - 8 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Regaining strength - Nothing, the void

Style 4 - /mirror - D2 - letting go of - 8 - Wants - (+) - Social - Persevering - Starry eyed wonder

m - ii - Man - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Causing conflict - A blinding epiphany

m - Style 3 - C1 - the collar - 5 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Coveting - Facing judgment

Scene 3:
minor - Style 1 & 2
B1 - letting go - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Practicing patience

F1 - the collar - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Speaking the truth - The many senses of self

A2 - Dog 5 - Who - (+) - Social - Maintaining self control - An untouchable companion

Style 1 & 2 - A3 - chewing on & letting go of - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Social - Being good - A benevolent ruler

G1 - the collar - 3 - Wants - (+) - Social - Showing understanding - A willful ruler

M - Style 3 - C2 - Man - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Being mean - Sondering

M - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Who - (+) - Mental - Being foolish - Entropy

mirror/ - A4 - the slippers & the collar - 5 - Expectations - (+) - Physical - Practicing patience - Having possessions

Style 4 - A1 - Dog - 5 - Who - (+) - Physical - Bringing joy - Having companionship

m - Style 4 - A1 - Dog - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Worked into a frenzy - Nothing, the void

m /mirror - A4 - the slippers & the collar - 5 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Giving up - Starry eyed wonder

K1 - letting go of - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Mental - Creating peace - Having a home

Style 3 - C2 - Man - 8 - Wants - (-) - Mental - Being content - Having or being a guest

G1 - the collar - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Being kind - Defining opposites

Style 1 & 2 - A3 - chewing on & letting go of - 5 - Who - (-) - Social - Learning from the wise - Luck's fickleness

M - A2 - Dog - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Telling lies - The many senses of self

M - F1 - the collar - 3 - Who - (-) - Social - Being controlled - An untouchable companion

Scene 4:
D1 - letting go - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Being impatient - Helping or being helped

Style 3 - C1 - the collar - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Regaining strength - Getting justice

ii - Man - 3 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Persevering - The repercussions of your actions

Style 4 - mirror/ D2 - letting go of - 8 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Speaking the truth - Understanding death

Style 4 /mirror - D2 letting go of 8 Who (+) Social Maintaining self control Obtaining long-term goals

m - ɪɪ - Man - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Being evil - A benevolent ruler
m - Style 3 - Cɪ - the collar - 5 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Not caring - A willful ruler

Scene 5:
Major
Aɪ - Dog - 5 - Who - (-) - Mental - Causing sorrow - Being a young old person

M - Aɪ - Dog - 5 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Being impatient - Having possessions
M - Dɪ - letting go of - 3 - Who - (+) - Mental - Causing sorrow - Having companionship
m - Style 1 & 2 - Bɪ - the slippers - 8 - Relationships - (+) - Mental - Causing conflict - Having a home
m - Hɪ - Dog - 3 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Coveting - Having or being a guest
mirror/ - Eɪ - chewing on - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Being good - Your hidden universe
/mirror - Eɪ - chewing on - 5 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Showing understanding - Lightning from nowhere
M - Hɪ - Dog - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Being mean - Defining opposites
M - Style 1 & 2 - Bɪ - the slippers - 8 - Who - (-) - Mental - Being foolish - Luck's fickleness
Dɪ - letting go of - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Practicing patience - Helping or being helped
Aɪ - Dog - 5 - Who - (-) - Mental - Bringing joy - Being a young old person

This last lesson is only for improv uberdorks. If that title doesn't apply to you,

KEEP OUT!! THIS MEANS YOU!!!

I'm playing but understanding these last two concepts gives a team the ability to intentionally achieve the styles they want and keep their place in the universal story. Again, non-essential but really cool for those who want a higher level of customization and understanding. Everything before this point will enhance the player's ability to tell stories but these really are just for extra credit.

A Dramatic D-focused Story

The following example is provided to let you compare with the one above in case you wanted to create your own George-like form from scratch.

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Scene 1:

1a - D1 - Man - 5 - Wants - (+) - Social - Being mean - Luck's fickleness

1a - D1 - Man - 5 - Wants - (+) - Social - Being mean - Luck's fickleness

1b - A1 - chewing on & letting go of - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Being foolish - Getting justice

2a: Style 1 & 2 - B1 - the slippers - 8 - Who - (+) - Mental - Worked into a frenzy - The repercussions of your actions

2b - H1 - Dog - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Mental - Giving up - Understanding death

mirror/ 3a - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Being kind - Luck's fickleness

3b /mirror - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Physical - Learning from the wise - Getting justice

4a - H1 - Dog - 3 - Wants - (-) - Mental - Telling lies - Obtaining long-term goals

4b: Style 1 & 2 - B1 - the slippers - 8 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Being controlled - Your hidden universe

5a - A1 - chewing on & letting go of - 3 - Who - (-) - Social - Regaining strength - The repercussions of your actions

5b - D1 - Man - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Persevering - Understanding death

Scene 2:

A1 - chewing on & letting go of - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Being foolish - Getting justice

1a: Style 3 - C1 - the collar - 5 - Who - (-) - Social - Being evil - Lightning from nowhere

1b - ii - Man - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Not caring - Helping or being helped

mirror/ 2a: Style 4 - A2 - chewing on letting go of - 8 - Wants - (-) - Mental - Being impatient - Being a young old person

2b: Style 4 /mirror - A2 - chewing on letting go of - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Causing sorrow - A blinding epiphany

3a - ii - Man - 3 - Wants - (+) - Social - Speaking the truth - Obtaining long-term goals

3b: Style 3 - C1 - the collar - 5 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Maintaining self control - Your hidden universe

Scene 3:

minor - Style 1 & 2

B1 - the slippers - 8 - Who - (+) - Mental - Worked into a frenzy - The repercussions of your actions

1a - F1 - the collar - 3 - Who - (+) - Physical - Causing conflict - Facing judgment

1b - D2 - Man - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Coveting - Sondering

2a: Style 1 2 - D3 - letting go of - 5 - Wants - (+) - Social - Being mean - Entropy

2b - G1 - the collar - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Being foolish - Nothing, the void

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3a: Style 3 - C2 - Man - 8 - Who - (+) - Social - Being good - Lightning from nowhere

3b - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Social - Showing understanding - Helping or being helped

mirror/ 4a - D4 - the slippers the collar - 5 - Who - (+) - Mental - Worked into a frenzy - Starry eyed wonder

4b: Style 4 - D1 - Man - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Mental - Giving up - The many senses of self

5a: Style 4 - D1 - Man - 5 - Wants - (-) - Mental - Practicing patience - Being a young old person

5b /mirror - D4 - the slippers the collar - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Bringing joy - A blinding epiphany

6a - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Wants - (-) - Social - Telling lies - An untouchable companion

6b: Style 3 - C2 - Man - 8 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Being controlled - A benevolent ruler

7a - G1 - the collar - 3 - Who - (-) - Social - Being evil - A willful ruler

7b: Style 1 2 - D3 - letting go of - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Not caring - Having possessions

8a - D2 - Man - 5 - Who - (-) - Physical - Creating peace - Facing judgment

8b - F1 - the collar - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Being content - Sondering

Scene 4:
A1 - chewing on & letting go of - 3 - Who - (-) - Social - Regaining strength - The repercussions of your actions

1a: Style 3 - C1 - the collar - 5 - Wants - (-) - Social - Being impatient - Having companionship

1b - i1 - Man - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Causing sorrow - Having a home

mirror/ 2a: Style 4 - A2 - chewing on letting go of - 8 - Who - (-) - Mental - Causing conflict - Having or being a guest

2b: Style 4 /mirror - A2 - chewing on letting go of - 8 - Relationships - (+) - Mental - Coveting - Defining opposites

3a - i1 - Man - 3 - Wants - (+) - Social - Being kind - Entropy

3b: Style 3 - C1 - the collar - 5 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Learning from the wise - Nothing, the void

Scene 5:
Major
D1 - Man - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Persevering - Understanding death

1a - D1 - Man - 5 - Who - (+) - Social - Regaining strength - Starry eyed wonder

1b - A1 - chewing on letting go of - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Social - Persevering - The many senses of self

2a: Style 1 2 - B1 - the slippers - 8 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Speaking the truth - An untouchable companion

2b - H1 - Dog - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Maintaining self control - A benevolent ruler

mirror/ 3a - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Being mean - Luck's fickleness

3b /mirror - E1 - chewing on - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Physical - Being foolish - Getting justice

4a - H1 - Dog - 3 - Who - (-) - Mental - Being good - A willful ruler

4b: Style 1 2 - B1 - the slippers - 8 - Relationships - (-) - Mental - Showing understanding - Having possessions

5a - A1 - chewing on letting go of - 3 - Who - (-) - Social - Worked into a frenzy - The repercussions of your actions

5b - D1 - Man - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Giving up - Understanding death

A Bizarro Dogman Story: A-Focused, dramatic, a happy ending

Scene 1:

A1 - letting go of - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Being evil - Your hidden universe

1a - A1 - letting go of - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Being evil - Your hidden universe

1b - D1 - the collar - 3 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Not caring - Lightning from nowhere

2a: Style 1 2 - C1 - Man - 8 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Being impatient - Helping or being helped

2b - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Who - (-) - Social - Causing sorrow - Being a young old person

mirror/ 3a - J1 - the collar - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Mental - Being good - Your hidden universe

3b /mirror - J1 - the collar - 5 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Showing understanding - Lightning from nowhere

4a - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Social - Causing conflict - A blinding epiphany

4b: Style 1 & 2 - C1 - Man - 8 - Wants - (+) - Social - Coveting - Facing judgment

5a - D1 - the collar - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Physical - Practicing patience - Helping or being helped

5b - A1 - letting go of - 5 - Who - (+) - Physical - Bringing joy - Being a young old person

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Scene 2:

D1 - the collar - 3 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Not caring - Lightning from nowhere

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1a: Style 3 - B1 - Dog - 5 - Expectations - (+) - Physical - Being mean - Sondering

1b - F1 - chewing on - 3 - Who - (+) - Physical - Being foolish - Entropy

mirror/ 2a: Style 4 - D2 - the collar - 8 - Relationships - (+) - Social - Worked into a frenzy - Nothing, the void

2b: Style 4 /mirror - D2 - the collar - 8 - Wants - (-) - Social - Giving up - Starry eyed wonder

3a - F1 - chewing on - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Creating peace - A blinding epiphany

3b: Style 3 - B1 - Dog - 5 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Being content - Facing the judgment

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Scene 3:

minor - Style 1 2

C1 - Man - 8 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Being impatient - Helping or being helped

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1a - I1 - Dog - 3 - Expectations - (-) - Mental - Telling lies - The many senses of self

1b - A2 - letting go of - 5 - Who - (-) - Mental - Being controlled - An untouchable companion

2a: Style 1 2 - A3 - the slippers the collar - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Being evil - A benevolent ruler

2b - L1 - Dog - 3 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Not caring - A willful ruler

3a: Style 3 - B2 - chewing on - 8 - Expectations - (-) - Physical - Being kind - Sondering

3b - H1 - the slippers - 3 - Who - (-) - Physical - Learning from the wise - Entropy

mirror/ 4a - A4 - Dog Man - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Social - Being impatient - Having possessions

4b: Style 4 - A1 - letting go of - 5 - Who - (-) - Social - Causing sorrow - Having companionship

5a: Style 4 - A1 - letting go of - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Social - Regaining strength - Nothing, the void

5b /mirror - A4 - Dog Man - 5 - Wants - (+) - Social - Persevering - Starry eyed wonder

6a - H1 - the slippers - 3 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Causing conflict - Having a home

6b: Style 3 - B2 - chewing on - 8 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Coveting - Having or being a guest

7a - L1 - Dog - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Physical - Being mean - Defining opposites

7b: Style 1 2 - A3 - the slippers the collar - 5 - Who - (+) - Physical - Being foolish - Luck's fickleness

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8a - A2 - letting go of - 5 - Expectations - (+) - Mental - Speaking the truth - The many senses of self

8b - I1 - Dog - 3 - Who - (+) - Mental - Maintaining self control - An untouchable companion

Scene 4:
D1 - the collar - 3 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Not caring - Lightning from nowhere

1a: Style 3 - B1 - Dog - 5 - Relationships - (+) - Physical - Worked into a frenzy - Getting justice

1b - F1 - chewing on - 3 - Wants - (+) - Physical - Giving up - The repercussions of your actions

mirror/ 2a: Style 4 - D2 - the collar - 8 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Telling lies - Understanding death

2b: Style 4 /mirror - D2 - the collar - 8 - Who - (-) - Social - Being controlled - Obtaining long-term goals

3a - F1 - chewing on - 3 - Relationships - (-) - Physical - Being good - A benevolent ruler

3b: Style 3 - B1 - Dog - 5 - Wants - (-) - Physical - Showing understanding - A willful ruler

Scene 5:
Major
A1 - letting go of - 5 - Who - (+) - Physical - Bringing joy - Being a young old person

1a - A1 - letting go of - 5 - Expectations - (-) - Physical - Practicing patience - Having possessions

1b - D1 - the collar - 3 - Who - (-) - Physical - Bringing joy - Having companionship

2a: Style 1 2 - C1 - Man - 8 - Relationships - (-) - Social - Creating peace - Having a home

2b - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Wants - (-) - Social - Being content - Having or being a guest

mirror/ 3a - J1 - the collar - 5 - Relationships - (-) - Mental - Being evil - Your hidden universe

3b /mirror - J1 - the collar - 5 - Wants - (+) - Mental - Not caring - Lightning from nowhere

4a - K1 - letting go of - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Social - Being kind - Defining opposites

4b: Style 1 2 - C1 - Man - 8 - Who - (+) - Social - Learning from the wise - Luck's fickleness

5a - D1 - the collar - 3 - Expectations - (+) - Physical - Being impatient - Helping or being helped

5b - A1 - letting go of - 5 - Who - (+) - Physical - Causing sorrow - Being a young old person

For the Writers

I know that looking at all these exercises for performers it can feel that I've made it so that you're going to have to look for help elsewhere. Do not fret. That you've made it here says a lot about how much you're looking for something to take the frustration out of your process. I feel you, believe me. The reason that I haven't gotten to you as quickly - and I don't mean offense - but take comfort in this: between you and an improviser you have the easier job.

All of this theory and lessons apply to both groups though because you're doing the same task but the performer has to do it with adrenaline coursing through their veins in a roomful of people who expects you to have fun for them. They also have the difficulty of trying to get seven[132] other people all on the same page, right now, no time to meet or plan. Now, I know that as you sit there with your pen in hand or fingers hovering over the keyboard, the pressure feels the same. All of yours doubts and fears being amplified by all of future history looking back and judging you. Organizing your own thoughts with even just being one person is difficult because there's not one of you, all of your characters need to have their own point of view, too.

As a writer, you can run all the conducted exercises listed in the Extra Credit section if you just need stimulus to flex your creative muscle. It's a good experiment, you can test your own abilities with them. However, I know you, you already have a billion ideas that you're trying to pull off and there's another set of stories behind that one.[133] Or you have one BIG story that needs to be told and you have been trying in vain to get it out for years.[134] With that in mind, I'm going to detail my writing setup below. Please refer to Lesson 0 with questions pertaining to definitions and the thought process behind it.

Remember that the George was developed for smaller fictions so it can probably handle 60 pages/minutes[135] on the outside. Writing a screenplay, novel or series with this form is going to feel very uncomfortable because you only have five scenes. If you don't feel like using a Brent,[136] you could create your own 25 scene structure[137] once you understand the principles at play in a Story Calculator.[138] That's just a suggestion for the adventurous. Let's begin.

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[132] give or take

[133] much love to my writer friends

[134] that's how it was for me, anyhow

[135] there is an approximate correlation between these two measurements with the correct formatting

[136] you would have to speculate about anyway since no manual for that form exist as of this publication

[137] if you using George's scene structure as an act structure instead and run five Georges inside

[138] namely, you guessed it, the mirrored fractal structure and character placement

MAKING THE MOMENT

Theme. I can't stress this enough. Set it up. Make it simple. Three words, if possible. No more than six. "Why????" I can hear say. "I have 826 pages[139] to write! Certainly, I need a theme of more than three words!!" My friend, less is more. I guarantee you will get more mileage with less because it will fit more readily into more situations. Scouts honor.[140] I thought the same as you and have been wonderfully surprised when I find a simple theme sprouting up like weeds between the pavement cracks of my characters. Try it and see for yourself.

Anti-theme has the same idea. Think opposite and if you're stuck, get creative. There are no wrong answers. You will get something interesting to explore any route you go. Plus, since you're using an intentional design, you can see where it's going to end up and make any adjustments - before you start writing! Or, if you're the type that likes to explore, just start writing and you'll see if it works or not. You can always go back, restructure and start again. One of the great anxieties of being a creator[141] is that you have to protect this idea at ALL COSTS!! because it's the only idea we have. A Story Calculator shows you that any idea you have is one of an infinite number of ideas that you could have. If you didn't capture it well, you can go back and make it exactly what you want.

Here's where things are going to slightly diverge for you as a writer vs the performer. Performers get their timeframes in terms on seconds but you get yours in terms of word count or lines.[142] For a story that is 60 pages, **3s = 143 words or 19 lines**[143], **5s = 238 words or 32 lines**[144], **8s = 380 words or 51 lines.**[145] All's I'm saying is that at that size you're going to have a lot of room to fill in as much as you want. I assure you, hitting those 8s will be both liberating and terrifying. You'll need something to write about in those two pages. Don't cheat yourself on the pacing. Moments that are too long tend to wander and moments that are too short is because you're a big chicken. Bu-Gawk!

The next divergence you're going to run into as a writer using this form: while performers have to develop their moments in real time, you get to plan ahead.[146] So you get to define your characters beyond their own personal themes. *Scooby Doo goes huh?* In our example H is a Dog Chewing on The Slippers[147] and the trait we're focusing on

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[139] the average book length in Jordan's *Wheel of Time* series

[140] I was never in the Scouts, I'm just using it as an expression

[141] when you don't have something like a Story Calculator to fall back on

[142] lines for stories meant to be read and words for stories meant to be performed

[143] $3/4$ of a page

[144] 1 & $1/4$ of a page

[145] 2 pages

[146] which I'm sure is a relief for you since that's one of our favorite things

[147] see image entitled *Side Characters*

in scenes 1 and 5 is their Dog-ness.[148] That, the Engines and the timeframe is all that performers have as they continue to tell the story of A & D's interaction. As a writer, you get to take it a step further by defining the Dog aspect before writing the moment. We see, for instance, that it's a Mental trait that Brings joy and defines Who the Dog is.[149] If I was writing the story, I may sum up all those ideas with one word or phrase like, *Protector*. This step is useful when calling it back at the end of the scene and when using it again at the end of the story since this trait now can have a positive or negative outcome and be a part of a Major or minor change if it needs to. Are you beginning to see the versatility of small ideas?

Now, this can be done for the characters all at once before you start writing the story, before you start writing the scene or moment-by-moment depending on your own process. I personally like to lay them out scene-by-scene so I can get a good idea about what's about to go down but to each their own. There is an extra step that I take at this point which you don't have to do but I find it helpful. After defining the traits for each character in the scene, I write a short summary of what's about to go down. Now the first scene is the hardest to do this with because that scene is defined by the first moment so if you haven't done that you have what you call a circular dependency[150] but once you get the first moment defined you're gold, Ponyboy. The second scene is defined by the second moment, 3rd, 3rd etc. The summary for a scene can be as long or short as you want here's some examples of mine. *"Griffin was sovereignly placed in a position where he can help Connie to escape from Melthious in Brandswank", "Dying, Panem reaches out to his creator and Serton responds"*[151]

Obviously the Engines need to be set up before you can begin writing in earnest. You get to pick your starting point on each of them[152] and then just have them take a step forward for any moment of the same type[153] remembering that they continue through the mirror. The other Engine types[154] behave under their own rules and, while they can be altered should be understood before changing them. By following the exercise outlines in this book,[155] you should be able to see where to place the Style choices, see how the PaNO changes at the mirror and SoI only changes at climax beats and ones that are dramatic.[156] Then you get to write the scenes, moment-by-moment (being careful of the Major or minor changes.

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[148] see example in the beginning of Lesson 3: The Beat

[149] again from the example in Lesson 3: The Beat

[150] where two things are counting on each other in order to exist

[151] from *She Came From Nowhere, OoE-1: Secret Agents* chapter 1, scene 6 and chapter 3, scene 6

[152] BoHC, X/M and the Universal Story

[153] as discussed in *Lesson 0: My Secret Agenda*

[154] Style, SoI and PaNO

[155] see examples in *Extra Credit*

[156] ones that are on the M track of dramatic engine regardless of it being a Major or minor change

One final piece of advice: don't cheat. I know it's just you and whatever you're using to write your thoughts. No one's going to catch you and no one's going to know. But you will. And you'll be subverting the reason you're using this method at all. If you wanted to freewrite, you would have just kept doing it. You want something you can depend on, so use the method as much as you possibly can. This is doubly true as you reach the mirrors - in the moments and scenes and more so at the big one at the climax - passing these points can be terrifying. Also, wrestling to get your thoughts to fit within the pacing can seem tedious at times. Both of these features force you to give up absolute control so that you can reach for an arguably higher goal: Beauty. Try to satisfy each of the 11 elements as fully as you can. I personally have found deep richness from rising to the challenge.

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None of you know the strain that my dad and I have experienced through the decades of my life. He worked hard to give a good life to me and my 5 siblings so he wasn't there as much as either of us wanted. Fortunately, he is still around and we've been able to spend more time together since his retirement. Having a mature and intelligent person to talk plans and ideas through with has been a huge benefit to me and I'm thankful he and my family are still in my life.

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