

The Mother of All Cheat Sheets

Plots and subplots

<p>Inner (man vs. self) What's worth living for? Dying for? <i>freedom vs love / family vs career</i> <i>peace vs violence / ethics vs results</i> <i>discipline vs temptation</i></p>	<p>Personal (man vs. man) Enemy unknown; why = more imp't than who <i>underdog vs superior (worker vs boss, man vs supernatural)</i> <i>Rivalry of equals (spy vs spy)</i></p>	<p>Epic (man vs. society or nature) Enemy is outside and known <i>nature / group (gang, family, KKK) / technology / institution (gov't, church, corporation, evil empire)</i></p>
<p>Love ↗ Romantic love ↗ Friendship or buddy salvation ↗ Curse cured by love</p>	<p>Mystery (whydunit) ↗ master detective ↗ police procedural ↗ amateur detective ↗ victim ↗ newspaper reporter ↗ courtroom / lawyer ↗ accused / prison inmate ↗ film noir (hero = half-criminal, half-detective; femme fatale) ↗ spy</p>	<p>Action ↗ Quest (hero's journey) Quest for person, place or thing (MacGuffin) ↗ Adventure ↗ Disaster / survival (man vs. nature) ↘ Apocalypse</p> <p>War (military or econ) ↗ Pro-war ↗ Revolution ↘ Anti-war</p>
<p>Redemption ↗ Temptation resisted</p> <p>↗ Discovery - stage of life brings wisdom - the search for knowledge (science, philosophy, etc)</p> <p>↗ Education / coming of age (worldview changes from negative to positive)</p> <p>↗ Rise to the top</p> <p>↗ Redemption (evil turns good and is rewarded)</p> <p>↗ Sacrifice</p>	<p>Thriller Thrillers = can it be stopped? Most thrillers are about betrayal</p> <p>Caper ↗ master criminal ↗ industrial espionage</p> <p>↗ Hunt ↗ Escape ↗ Rescue ↗ Revenge</p> <p>Rivalry ↗ Underdog ↗ Equals</p> <p>↘ Horror Monster = hero, punishing sins (scientists gone amok, teenagers having sex) – all die in end except monster - uncanny (rational horror) - supernatural (ghosts, demons) - super-uncanny (unknown)</p>	<p>Comedy “Even in the best of circumstances, people find ways to screw it up.”</p> <p>Villain = institution, and hero can't win except by accident - Marriage - Suburbia & middle class - H.S. or college - Military - Church - Government - Office</p> <p>Drama “Even in the worst circumstances, the human spirit is magnificent.”</p> <p>Villain = institution - family – suburbs - woman's story (career v family, lover v kids) - medicine - psycho-drama (mental illness) - political corruption - eco-drama - education - prison - courts - military</p>
<p>Tragedy ↘ Wretched excess / obsession</p> <p>↘ Disillusionment (worldview goes from positive to negative)</p> <p>↘ Punishment / fall to the bottom (hero goes from good to bad and is punished)</p> <p>↘ Forbidden love - adultery - incest - pedophilia - perversity</p> <p>↘ Breakup - lovers - friends to enemies - family - group</p>	<p>Three possible endings (for any plot or subplot)</p> <p>↗ Idealistic — Life as it should be. The hopes and dreams of man. Sacrifice, optimism, hope, good choices.</p> <p>↗↘ Ironic / mixed — Life at its most complex and realistic, but NOT ambiguous.</p> <p>↘ Pessimistic — Life as we dread it to be. Cynicism, loss & misfortune. Destruction, hubris, greed, violence & evil.</p>	<p>Flat stories vs deep stories Flat = just one type of conflict Deep = multiple levels of conflict</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All inner conflict = monologue 2) All personal conflict = soap opera 3) All epic conflict = cardboard characters in action movie or farce