

# The Fantasy **Story**

## **Compass**

### Does This Sound Familiar?

You have a brilliant concept for a fantasy novel living in your head. But every time you try to turn that vision into a finished story, you hit a wall.

Maybe you write 20,000 words, only to lose momentum and stall out in the "saggy middle." Or maybe you actually finish a draft, only to realize it feels like a disjointed mess of scenes with no emotional weight.

If you are nodding your head, please know this: You do *not* have a talent problem. You *do* have a clarity problem.

Writing is a craft, not a mystery. And in a single sitting, this Compass will provide you with the three frameworks needed to find your True North.



# Step 1: The Spark

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Grab a pen, or open a blank document. Before we build the structure, we must capture the lightning in the bottle. Don't overthink this section. Trust your gut instincts and write down the fragments that feel the most alive right now.



## I. The Core Image

Close your eyes. What is the single, vivid image that defines this story? What do you see, hear, or smell? If multiple images pop out, note them, but let it come naturally and instantly.

*(e.g., An old warrior carrying someone across the battlefield, arrows flying over his head.)*



## II. Character's Voice

Let your main character speak for a moment. What are they saying, and who are they saying it to?

Write one line of dialogue—or a few if they're talkative right now—that capture(s) their current state of mind or what occupies their thoughts the most.



## III. Thematic Questions

Every great story wrestles with difficult dilemmas. What profound "What If?" questions does your narrative explore?

*(e.g., What is the true cost of power? Can you be a good person after abandoning your sacred vows? When should we embrace sacrifice, even if it hurts?)*

**Your True Spark:** Review what you just wrote. Circle the *one* element—an image, a phrase, a question—that gives you the biggest jolt of energy. *This* is the seed from which your entire novel will grow.

# Step 2: The Story Promise

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The Story Promise is the soul of your entire novel. It is a single, powerful sentence articulating the central emotional transformation at the heart of your story. It is not about what *happens*; it is about what it *means*.

## 1. Emotional Impact

Identify the core internal struggle your protagonist faces. Ask yourself what they stand to lose or gain on a deeply personal level. (e.g., *Protecting an heir with illegal magic forces a royal guard to break his vows, creating a crisis of conscience.*)

## 2. Universal Truth






Determine the larger message about life or human nature revealed through their specific struggle. (e.g., *True honor is not found in blind obedience to the rules, but in the courage to do what is right.*)

**The Formula:** Combine your insights into a single sentence. This is the lens through which every scene will be judged. **"This is a story about [Universal Truth revealed through Emotional Impact].."**

# Step 3: The Logline

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With the soul defined, we build the skeleton. Your Logline is the ultimate weapon against the "saggy middle." It distills your plot into five essential components, always guiding you back to the main path.

-  **The Protagonist:** Who is the story about? Be specific without names. (e.g. 'A veteran royal guard')
-  **The Inciting Incident:** What event shatters their normal world? (e.g., A violent coup shatters the capital)
-  **The Objective:** What is their clear, tangible goal? (e.g., Smuggle the kingdom's young heir to safety)
-  **The Stakes:** What terrible thing will happen if they fail? (e.g., The royal bloodline will be extinguished)
-  **The Obstacle:** What primary force (external or internal) stands in their way? (e.g., His strict obedience to the law prevents him from trusting the underground rebels whose help they need)

**When** [Inciting Incident] **happens to** [Protagonist], **they must** [Objective] **or else** [Stakes], **but** [Obstacle] **stands in their way.**

e.g. "When a violent coup shatters the capital, a veteran royal guard must smuggle the kingdom's young heir to safety or else the royal bloodline will be extinguished, but his strict obedience to the law prevents him from trusting the underground rebels whose help they need."

# Your Next Steps

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**Congratulations!** Take a look at your completed Story Promise and Logline.

You have just achieved more clarity than most aspiring authors achieve in years of aimless drafting.

You now have your True North. You know exactly *what* your story is about, and *why* it matters.

However, a compass alone cannot sail the ocean. It requires a sturdy ship to carry it toward the final destination.

That is exactly why I will be dropping into your inbox over the next few days.

Now that you have your True North, we need to make sure you avoid the hidden traps that sink most fantasy drafts before they even gain momentum.

Keep a close eye on your inbox tomorrow. Your story deeply deserves to be told. And together, we can finally make that happen.

Stay magical,

Sascha - *The Tale Tinkerer*

