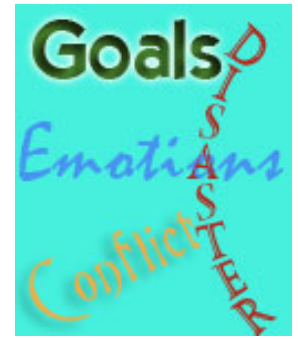




# Creating Realistic Scenes - Part 2: Scene vs. Sequel



by  
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Now that you have read Part I of scene development, I give you Part II. There is more to creating realistic scenes than just physical description. Additionally, there are two types of scenes: the scene and the sequel. Scene versus sequel? It's not what you're thinking. A sequel is not just Part Two of something. Scenes and sequels are writing terms, and both are types of scenes. Confused yet? You won't be.

Let's start with a scene. Scenes are the part of your story where the action is, where the conflict occurs, where all the excitement is. A scene is always a fight, be it physical or verbal, and always external, meaning it is shown through the characters acting it out. Internal conflicts are not scenes. Scenes have patterns: goal, conflict, disaster. The only scene that should not end in disaster is the final one of the story.

A scene begins when your character, Charlie, sets out with a short-term goal, something that if he accomplishes it, will bring him closer to realizing his long-term one. Perhaps Charlie has a goal of getting a better job. To attain that long-term goal, he must first accomplish the short term, to get the Want Ads. Will Charlie get the Want Ads? Now we have the question to create the scene. Your scene must always have a short-term question for the reader to worry about, regardless of whether or not the reader realizes s/he is worrying. This question must always deal with can or can't, will or won't, and the question must always be able to be answered with a yes or no.

However, although you now have the scene question, you do not have a scene. Scenes don't happen until you have conflict. This is the heart of your scene. Conflict provides the action of the story, it grabs the reader's attention and keeps the interest. What could be the conflict surrounding Charlie's need for the Want Ads? Maybe he doesn't have enough money to pay for the paper and gets into an argument with the vendor? Granted it's weak, but it is conflict that can be dramatized through action.

Okay, so we have the goal, to get the Want Ads, and the conflict, not enough money to buy the newspaper, but what about the scene ending? Your scene must end with the answer to the scene question, yes; no; yes, but; no, and furthermore, and it must end in disaster. Why? It's the only way to further the story. If your first scene ends with success, what's the point of reading, or writing, more? Of the four offered answers, only three will work for a scene end: no, yes, but, and no, and furthermore are the only options. Yes ends the story.

Okay, so you've created set the goal, had the conflict and created the disaster. What happens to Charlie next? This is where the sequel comes in.

So what is the sequel? These are your passive times, places to insert emotions, logic, internal conflicts. An example of a sequel would be Charlie wonders what else he can do with no money to buy a paper and then

realizes he can walk down the street and pick up a free publication. Ah, you say, that's a scene. Well, no it's not. Sure, it has a goal and an end, but the conflict is within Charlie. It's a sequel after all. Of course, based on the previous article, there should be much more description, but that is a sequel in a nutshell. And now that Charlie has chosen a new short term goal, to get the free publication, you are ready to create your next scene.

Scenes cause sequels, which in turn lead to new scenes and, of course, to new sequels. It's a vicious circle, and not one to break out of, that always leads to story creation. Each scene and sequel supports the other, before and after. Through these two, you control the pace of your story. Scenes are quick and exciting, sequels slow things down and give Charlie, and your reader a chance to breathe.

Your construction and handling of the scenes and sequels are the keys to strong plot. There are no restrictions on scene and sequel writing; at least no more than any other art form. Play with the presentation. A scene does not always have to follow a sequel and vice versa. Just make sure to put a breather in every once in a while to avoid tiring your reader.



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