

The 36 Dramatic Situations by Georges Polti **With Sub-Headings and definition Hyperlinks**

I'm sure you've seen these before but maybe dismissed them... Or, you looked at them and thought, WTF? And THEN dismissed them. LOL.

Now let's go back to them...

Georges Polti's 36 Dramatic Situations...

Remember these? No? Well here they are:

1. **SUPPLICATION**

(The dynamic elements technically necessary are: a [Persecutor](#); a [Suppliant](#); and a Power in authority, whose decision is doubtful)

- A.
 - (1) [Fugitives](#) imploring the powerful for help against their enemies.
 - (2) [Assistance implored](#) for the performance of a [pious](#) duty which has been forbidden.
 - (3) Appeals for a [refuge](#) in which to die.

- B.
 - (1) [Hospitality besought](#) by the [shipwrecked](#).
 - (2) [Charity entreated](#) by those cast off by their own people, whom they have [disgraced](#).
 - (3) [Expiation](#): The seeking of pardon, healing or [deliverance](#).
 - (4) The surrender of a [corpse](#), or of a [relic](#), [solicited](#).

- C.
 - (1) Supplication of the powerful for those dear to the suppliant.
 - (2) Supplication to a relative in behalf of another relative.
 - (3) Supplication to a mother's lover, in her behalf.

2. DELIVERANCE

(Elements: an [Unfortunate](#), a [Threatener](#), a [Rescuer](#))

- A.
 - (1) Appearance of a rescuer to the [condemned](#).
- B.
 - (1) A parent replaced upon a [throne](#) by his children.
 - (2) Rescue by friends, or by strangers grateful for benefits or hospitality.

3. CRIME PURSUED BY **VENGEANCE**

(Elements: an Avenger and a Criminal)

- A.
 - (1) The [avenging](#) of a slain parent or ancestor.
 - (2) The avenging of a slain child or [descendant](#).
 - (3) Vengeance for a child [dishonored](#).
 - (4) The avenging of a slain wife or husband.
 - (5) Vengeance for the dishonor, or attempted dishonoring, of a wife.
 - (6) Vengeance for a mistress slain.
 - (7) Vengeance for a slain or injured friend.
 - (8) Vengeance for a sister [seduced](#).
- B.
 - (1) Vengeance for intentional injury or spoliation.
 - (2) Vengeance for having been [despoiled](#) during absence.
 - (3) Revenge for an attempted slaying.
 - (4) Revenge for a false accusation.
 - (5) Vengeance for [violation](#).
 - (6) Vengeance for having been robbed of one's own.
 - (7) Revenge upon a whole sex for a [deception](#) by one.
- C.
 - (1) Professional [pursuit](#) of criminals.

4. VENGEANCE TAKEN FOR **KINDRED** UPON KINDRED

(Elements: Avenging Kinsman; Guilty Kinsman; Remembrance of the Victim, a Relative of Both)

- A.
 - (1) A father's death avenged upon a mother.
 - (2) A mother's death avenged upon a father.
- B.
 - (1) A brother's death avenged upon a son.
- C.
 - (1) A father's death avenged upon a husband.
- D.
 - (1) A husband's death avenged upon a father.

5. **PURSUIT**

(Elements: Punishment and Fugitive)

- A.
 - (1) Fugitives from justice pursued for [brigandage](#), [political offenses](#), etc.
- B.
 - (1) Pursued for a fault of love.
- C.
 - (1) A hero struggling against a power.
- D.
 - (1) A [pseudo-madman](#) struggling against an [Iago](#)-like alienist.

6. **DISASTER**

(Elements: a [Vanquished Power](#); a [Victorious Enemy](#) or a [Messenger](#))

- A.
 - (1) [Defeat suffered](#).

- (2) A [fatherland](#) destroyed.
- (3) The fall of [humanity](#).
- (4) A [natural catastrophe](#).

- B.
 - (1) A [monarch overthrown](#).

- C.
 - (1) [Ingratitude](#) suffered.
 - (2) The suffering of unjust punishment or [enmity](#).
 - (3) An [outrage](#) suffered.

- D.
 - (1) [Abandonment](#) by a lover or a husband.
 - (2) Children lost by their parents.

7. **FALLING PREY TO CRUELTY OR MISFORTUNE**

(Elements: an Unfortunate; a Master or a Misfortune)

- A.
 - (1) The innocent made the victim of ambitious [intrigue](#).

- B.
 - (1) The innocent despoiled by those who should protect.

- C.
 - (1) The powerful [dispossessed](#) and [wretched](#).
 - (2) A favorite or an [intimate](#) finds himself [forgotten](#).

- D.
 - (1) The unfortunate robbed of their only hope.

8. **REVOLT**

(Elements: [Tyrant](#) and [Conspirator](#))

- A.
 - (1) A [conspiracy](#) chiefly of one individual.
 - (2) A conspiracy of several.

- B.
 - (1) Revolt of one individual, who [influences](#) and involves others.
 - (2) A [revolt](#) of many.

9. **DARING ENTERPRISE**

(Elements: a Bold Leader; an Object; an [Adversary](#))

- A.
 - (1) Preparations for war.
- B.
 - (1) War.
 - (2) A combat.
- C.
 - (1) Carrying off a desired person or object.
 - (2) [Recapture](#) of a desired object.
- D.
 - (1) [Adventurous expeditions](#).
 - (2) Adventure [undertaken](#) for the purpose of obtaining a beloved woman.

10. **ABDUCTION**

(Elements: the [Abductor](#); the [Abducted](#); the [Guardian](#))

- A.
 - (1) Abduction of an unwilling woman.
- B.
 - (1) Abduction of a [consenting](#) woman.
- C.
 - (1) [Recapture](#) of the woman without the slaying of the abductor.
 - (2) The same case, with the slaying of the [ravisher](#).

- D.
 - (1) Rescue of a [captive](#) friend.
 - (2) Of a child.
 - (3) Of a soul in [captivity](#) to [error](#).

11. **THE ENIGMA**

(Elements: [Interrogator](#), [Seeker](#) and Problem)

- A.
 - (1) Search for a person who must be found on pain of death.
- B.
 - (1) A riddle to be solved on pain of death.
 - (2) The same case, in which the riddle is proposed by the coveted woman.
- C.
 - (1) [Temptations](#) offered with the object of discovering his name.
 - (2) Temptations offered with the object of [ascertaining](#) the sex.
 - (3) Tests for the purpose of ascertaining the mental condition.

12. **OBTAINING**

(Elements: a [Solicitor](#) and an [Adversary](#) Who is Refusing, or an [Arbitrator](#) and Opposing Parties)

- A.
 - (1) Efforts to obtain an object by [ruse](#) or force.
- B.
 - (1) [Endeavor](#) by means of [persuasive eloquence](#) alone.
- C.
 - (1) Eloquence with an arbitrator.

13. **ENMITY OF KINSMEN**

(Elements: a Malevolent Kinsman; a Hatred or Reciprocally Hating Kinsman)

- A.
 - (1) Hatred of brothers -- one brother hated by several.
 - (2) Reciprocal hatred.
 - (3) Hatred between relatives for reasons of self-interest.
- B.
 - (1) Hatred of father and son -- of the son for the father.
 - (2) Mutual hatred.
 - (3) Hatred of daughter for father.
- C.
 - (1) Hatred of grandfather for grandson.
- D.
 - (1) Hatred of father-in-law for son-in-law.
- E.
 - (1) Hatred of mother-in-law for daughter-in-law.
- F.
 - (1) Infanticide.

14. **RIVALRY OF KINSMEN**

(Elements: the Preferred Kinsman; the Rejected Kinsman; the Object)

- A.
 - (1) Malicious rivalry of a brother.
 - (2) Malicious rivalry of two brothers.
 - (3) Rivalry of two brothers, with adultery on the part of one.
 - (4) Rivalry of sisters.
- B.

- (1) Rivalry of father and son, for an unmarried woman.
- (2) Rivalry of father and son, for a married woman.
- (3) Case similar to the two foregoing, but in which the object is already the wife of the father.
- (4) Rivalry of mother and daughter.

- C.
 - (1) Rivalry of cousins.

- D.
 - (1) Rivalry of friends.

15. **MURDEROUS ADULTERY**

(Elements: Two Adulterers; a Betrayed Husband or Wife)

- A.
 - (1) The slaying of a husband by, or for, a [paramour](#).
 - (2) The slaying of a trusting lover.

- B.
 - (1) Slaying of a wife for a paramour, and in self-interest.

16. **MADNESS**

(Elements: Madman and Victim)

- A.
 - (1) Kinsmen slain in madness.
 - (2) Lover slain in madness.
 - (3) Slaying or injuring of a person not hated.

- B.
 - (1) Disgrace brought upon oneself through madness.

- C.
 - (1) Loss of loved ones brought about by madness.

- D.
 - (1) Madness brought on by fear of [hereditary insanity](#).

17. **FATAL IMPRUDENCE**

(Elements: The Imprudent; the Victim or the Object Lost)

- A.
 - (1) Imprudence the cause of one's own [misfortune](#).
 - (2) Imprudence the cause of one's own dishonor.
- B.
 - (1) Curiosity the cause of one's own misfortune.
 - (2) Loss of the [possession](#) of a loved one, through curiosity.
- C.
 - (1) Curiosity the cause of death or misfortune to others.
 - (2) Imprudence the cause of a relative's death.
 - (3) Imprudence the cause of a lover's death.
 - (4) [Credulity](#) the cause of kinsmen's deaths.

18. **INVOLUNTARY CRIMES OF LOVE**

(Elements: the Lover, the Beloved; the [Revealer](#))

- A.
 - (1) Discovery that one has married one's mother.
 - (2) Discovery that one has had a sister as mistress.
- B.
 - (1) Discovery that one has married one's sister.
 - (2) The same case, in which the crime has been [villainously](#) planned by a third person.
 - (3) Being upon the point of taking a sister, unknowingly, as mistress.
- C.
 - (1) Being upon the point of violating, unknowingly, a daughter.
- D.
 - (1) Being upon the point of committing an adultery

- unknowingly.
- (2) Adultery committed unknowingly.

19. **SLAYING OF A KINSMAN UNRECOGNIZED**

(Elements: the Slayer, the Unrecognized Victim)

- A.
 - (1) Being upon the point of slaying a daughter unknowingly, by command of a [divinity](#) or an [oracle](#).
 - (2) Through political necessity.
 - (3) Through a rivalry in love.
 - (4) Through hatred of the lover of the unrecognized daughter.
- B.
 - (1) Being upon the point of killing a son unknowingly.
 - (2) The same case, strengthened by [Machiavellian instigations](#).
- C.
 - (1) Being upon the point of slaying a brother unknowingly.
- D.
 - (1) Slaying of a mother unrecognized.
- E.
 - (1) A father slain unknowingly, through Machiavellian advice.
- F.
 - (1) A grandfather slain unknowingly, in vengeance and through instigation.
- G.
 - (1) Involuntary killing of a loved woman.
 - (2) Being upon the point of killing a lover unrecognized.
 - (3) Failure to rescue an unrecognized son.

20. **SELF-SACRIFICING FOR AN IDEAL**

(Elements: the Hero; the Ideal; the 'Creditor' or the Person or Thing Sacrificed)

- A.
 - (1) Sacrifice of life for the sake of one's word.
 - (2) Life sacrifice for the success of one's people.
 - (3) Life sacrificed in [filial piety](#).
 - (4) Life sacrificed for the sake of one's faith.

- B.
 - (1) Both love and life sacrificed for one's faith, or a cause.
 - (2) Love sacrificed to the interests of state.

- C.
 - (1) Sacrifice of well-being to duty.

- D.
 - (1) The ideal of 'honor' sacrificed to the ideal of 'faith.'

21. **SELF-SACRIFICE FOR KINDRED**

(Elements: the Hero; the Kinsman; the '[Creditor](#)' or the Person or Thing Sacrificed)

- A.
 - (1) Life sacrificed for that of a relative or a loved one.
 - (2) Life sacrificed for the happiness of a relative or a loved one.

- B.
 - (1) [Ambition](#) sacrificed for the happiness of a parent.
 - (2) Ambition sacrificed for the life of a parent.

- C.
 - (1) Love sacrificed for the sake of a parent's life.
 - (2) For the happiness of one's child.
 - (3) The same sacrifice as 2, but caused by unjust laws.

- D.
 - (1) Life and honor sacrificed for the life of a parent or loved one.
 - (2) Modesty sacrificed for the life of a relative or a loved one.

22. **ALL SACRIFICED FOR A PASSION**

(Elements: the Lover, the Object of the Fatal Passion; the Person or Thing Sacrificed)

- A.
 - (1) Religious vows of chastity broken for a passion.
 - (2) Respect for a priest destroyed.
 - (3) A future ruined by passion.
 - (4) Power ruined by passion.
 - (5) Ruin of mind, health, and life.
 - (6) Ruin of fortunes, lives, and honors.
- B.
 - (1) Temptations destroying the sense of duty, of piety, etc.
- C.
 - (1) Destruction of honor, fortune, and life by erotic vice.
 - (2) The same effect produced by any other vice.

23. **NECESSITY OF SACRIFICING LOVED ONES**

(Elements: the Hero; the Beloved Victim; the Necessity for the Sacrifice)

- A.
 - (1) Necessity for sacrificing a daughter in the public interest.
 - (2) Duty of sacrificing her in fulfillment of a vow to God.
 - (3) Duty of sacrificing benefactors or loved ones to one's faith.
- B.
 - (1) Duty of sacrificing one's child, unknown to others, under

- the pressure of necessity.
- (2) Duty of sacrificing, under the same [circumstances](#), one's father or husband.
- (3) Duty of sacrificing a son-in-law for the public good.
- (4) Duty of contending with a brother-in-law for the public good.
- (5) Duty of contending with a friend.

24. RIVALRY OF SUPERIOR AND INFERIOR

(Elements: the Superior [Rival](#); the [Inferior](#) Rival; the Object)

- A.
 - (1) [Masculine](#) rivalries; of a mortal and an immortal.
 - (2) Of a [magician](#) and an ordinary man.
 - (3) Of [conqueror](#) and [conquered](#).
 - (4) Of a [king](#) and a [noble](#).
 - (5) Of a powerful person and an upstart.
 - (6) Of rich and poor.
 - (7) Of an honored man and a suspected one.
 - (8) Rivalry of two who are almost equal.
 - (9) Of the two [successive](#) husbands of a [divorcée](#).
- B.
 - (1) Feminine rivalries; of a [sorceress](#) and an ordinary woman.
 - (2) Of [victor](#) and [prisoner](#).
 - (3) Of queen and subject.
 - (4) Of lady and servant.
 - (5) Rivalry between memory or an ideal (that of a superior woman) and a [vassal](#) of her own.
- C.
 - (1) Double rivalry (A loves B, who loves C, who loves D).

25. ADULTERY

(Elements: a Deceived Husband or Wife; Two Adulterers)

- A.

- (1) A mistress betrayed, for a young woman.
- (2) For a young wife.
- B.
 - (1) A wife betrayed, for a slave who does not love in return.
 - (2) For [debauchery](#).
 - (3) For a married woman.
 - (4) With the [intention](#) of [bigamy](#).
 - (5) For a young girl, who does not love in return.
 - (6) A wife envied by a young girl who is in love with her husband.
 - (7) By a [courtesan](#).
- C.
 - (1) An [antagonistic](#) husband sacrificed for a [congenial](#) lover.
 - (2) A husband, believed to be lost, forgotten for a rival.
 - (3) A commonplace husband sacrificed for a [sympathetic](#) lover.
 - (4) A good husband betrayed for an inferior rival.
 - (5) For a [grotesque](#) rival.
 - (6) For a [commonplace](#) rival, by a [perverse](#) wife.
 - (7) For a rival less handsome, but useful.
- D.
 - (1) Vengeance of a deceived husband.
 - (2) Jealousy sacrificed for the sake of a cause.
 - (3) Husband [persecuted](#) by a rejected rival.

26. **CRIMES OF LOVE**

(Elements: The Lover, the Beloved)

A.

- (1) A mother in love with her son.
- (2) A daughter in love with her father.
- (3) [Violation](#) of a daughter by a father.

B.

- (1) A woman [enamored](#) of her stepson.

- (2) A woman and her stepson enamored of each other.
- (3) A woman being the mistress, at the same time, of a father and son, both of whom accept the situation.
- C.
 - (1) A man becomes the lover of his sister-in-law.
 - (2) A brother and sister in love with each other.
- D.
 - (1) A man [enamored](#) of another man, who [yields](#).
- E.
 - (1) A woman enamored of a [beast](#).

27. **DISCOVERY OF THE DISHONOR OF A LOVED ONE**

(Elements: the Discoverer; the Guilty One)

- A.
 - (1) Discovery of a mother's [shame](#).
 - (2) Discovery of a father's shame.
 - (3) Discovery of a daughter's [dishonor](#).
- B.
 - (1) Discovery of dishonor in the family of one's [fiancée](#).
 - (2) Discovery that one's wife has been [violated](#) before marriage, or since the marriage.
 - (3) That she has previously committed a fault.
 - (4) Discovery that one's wife has formerly been a [prostitute](#).
 - (5) Discovery that one's mistress, formerly a prostitute, has returned to her old life.
 - (6) Discovery that one's lover is a [scoundrel](#), or that one's mistress is a woman of bad character.
 - (7) The same discovery concerning one's wife.
- C.
 - (1) Duty of punishing a son who is a [traitor](#) to country.
 - (2) Duty of punishing a son [condemned](#) under a law which

the father has made.

- (3) Duty of punishing one's mother to [avenge](#) one's father.

28. OBSTACLES TO LOVE

(Elements: Two Lovers, an [Obstacle](#))

- A.
 - (1) Marriage prevented by [inequality](#) of [rank](#).
 - (2) Inequality of fortune an [impediment](#) to marriage.
- B.
 - (1) Marriage prevented by enemies and [contingent](#) obstacles.
- C.
 - (1) Marriage [forbidden](#) on account of the young woman's previous [betrothal](#) to another.
- D.
 - (1) A free [union impeded](#) by the [opposition](#) of relatives.
- E.
 - (1) By the [incompatibility](#) of [temper](#) of the lovers.

29. AN ENEMY LOVED

(Elements: The [Beloved](#) Enemy; the Lover; the Hater)

- A.
 - (1) The loved one hated by [kinsmen](#) of the lover.
 - (2) The lover [pursued](#) by the brothers of his beloved.
 - (3) The lover hated by the family of his beloved.
 - (4) The beloved is an enemy of the party of the woman who loves him.
- B.
 - (1) The beloved is the [slayer](#) of a [kinsman](#) of the woman who loves him.

30. **AMBITION**

(Elements: an [Ambitious](#) Person; a Thing [Coveted](#); an [Adversary](#))

- A.
 - (1) Ambition watched and guarded against by a kinsman, or by a person under [obligation](#).
- B.
 - (1) [Rebellious](#) ambition.
- C.
 - (1) Ambition and [covetousness heaping](#) crime upon crime.

31. **CONFLICT WITH A GOD**

(Elements: a Mortal, an [Immortal](#))

- A.
 - (1) Struggle against a [deity](#).
 - (2) Strife with the believers in a God.
- B.
 - (1) Controversy with a deity.
 - (2) Punishment for [contempt](#) of a God.
 - (3) Punishment for pride before a God.

32. **MISTAKEN JEALOUSY**

(Elements: the Jealous One; the Object of Whose Possession He is [Jealous](#); the Supposed [Accomplice](#); the Cause or the Author of the Mistake)

- A.
 - (1) The mistake originates in the [suspicious](#) mind of the jealous one.
 - (2) [Mistaken](#) jealousy aroused by fatal chance.
 - (3) Mistaken jealousy of a love which is purely [platonic](#).
 - (4) Baseless jealousy aroused by [malicious](#) rumors.
- B.

- (1) Jealousy suggested by a [traitor](#) who is moved by hatred, or [self-interest](#).
- C.
 - (1) [Reciprocal](#) jealousy suggested to husband and wife by a rival.

33. **ERRONEOUS JUDGMENT**

(Elements: The Mistaken One; the Victim of the Mistake; the Cause or Author of the Mistake; the Guilty Person)

- A.
 - (1) False [suspicion](#) where faith is necessary.
 - (2) False suspicion of a mistress.
 - (3) False suspicion aroused by a [misunderstood attitude](#) of a loved one.
- B.
 - (1) False suspicions drawn upon oneself to save a friend.
 - (2) They fall upon the innocent.
 - (3) The same case as 2, but in which the innocent had a guilty [intention](#), or believes himself [guilty](#).
 - (4) A witness to the crime, in the interest of a loved one, lets [accusation](#) fall upon the [innocent](#).
- C.
 - (1) The accusation is allowed to fall upon an enemy.
 - (2) The error is [provoked](#) by an enemy.
- D.
 - (1) False suspicion thrown by the real [culprit](#) upon one of his enemies.
 - (2) Thrown by the real culprit upon the second victim against whom he has [plotted](#) from the beginning.

34. **REMORSE**

(Elements: the Culprit; the [Victim](#) or the [Sin](#); the [Interrogator](#))

- A.
 - (1) Remorse for an unknown crime.
 - (2) Remorse for a [parricide](#).
 - (3) Remorse for an [assassination](#).
- B.
 - (1) Remorse for a fault of love.
 - (2) Remorse for an [adultery](#).

35. **RECOVERY OF A LOST ONE**

(The Seeker; the One Found)

- A.
 - (1) A child stolen.
- B.
 - (1) Unjust [imprisonment](#).
- C.
 - (1) A child searches to discover his father.

36. **LOSS OF LOVED ONES**

(A Kinsman [Slain](#); a Kinsman [Spectator](#); an [Executioner](#))

- A.
 - (1) Witnessing the slaying of kinsmen while powerless to prevent it.
 - (2) Helping to bring misfortune upon one's people through professional secrecy.
- B.
 - (1) Divining the death of a loved one.
- C.
 - (1) Learning of the death of a kinsman or ally, and [lapsing](#) into [despair](#).

Thanks Unk... Now what the hell do I do with them?

Glad you asked.

First of all, you must learn to look at each one of these **36 Dramatic Situations** within the context of YOUR STORY. Hard at first I know but you just have to GUT IT OUT.

There are NO rules here... Don't worry about acts or structure... Just get out a pen, pencil, paper, or for those of you less manually inclined, whatever computer program you use to write notes with and take a COLD HARD LOOK at every one of these situations to see if it just might fit within the confines of your story.

These 36 Dramatic Situations should simply start making your synapses SNAP, CRACKLE, and POP with brainstorming ideas... FREE ASSOCIATION! No need to worry if LOSS OF A LOVED ONE FITS in your story right now but go with it... Ask yourself, "What if?"

What if your Protagonist lost a loved one? What would happen? Could that drive the main plot? Could it be a subplot? What about other main characters? What if THEY lost a loved one? See where this takes you...

What I like to do is simply get a nice black roller ball pen and take 36 pieces of paper and write out ONE dramatic situation at the top of each page...

Then start brainstorming this situation within the context of your story... Don't worry about what you come up with!

JUST DO IT!

Okay, okay... Now I'll get email about how to brainstorm... Let's cut to the chase... I'm old school... I learned out to outline in high school (I even graduated!) and have since developed my own hybrid way of outlining that might not work for anyone else.

How do you take notes? Do you outline? Use that method. Do you

draw little balloons with lines to other little balloons? Cool. Use that method. Do you just JOT DOWN WORDS? Cool, use THAT method!

Again, there are no rules... The idea is to PURGE your BRAIN of all that fucking STORY ACTIVITY that is going on up there! GET IT OUT and GET IT DOWN!

Remember... **WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR STORY!** Not my story. Not some story you saw at the theater. Not some movie you love. YOUR STORY!

Go through all 36 Dramatic Situations with 36 pieces of paper... I highly recommend putting pen to paper for this exercise because I believe until we are born with a computer to do our coloring at the age of one, this exercise will work out much better for you.

Once you do this for all 36 situations, it's time to relax! You should be mentally exhausted so put this shit away till tomorrow.

Is it tomorrow yet? Good.

Now some of your 36 situations are going to be a lot heavier than others i.e., MORE INFORMATION. Start browsing through one piece of paper at a time and start organizing all your notes... By now, there should be some very interesting plot developments that should be fucking SCREAMING AT YOU!

Get those down... Don't worry about order... Just pick the ones you like best! Get them all down on yet another piece of paper or yes... You guessed it... Your favorite word processing program. Don't worry about how many you like and put down. Don't worry about order. Just make the list!

***NOTE:** Don't throw any of this stuff away... In fact, why don't you have a nice folder with the name of your screenplay labeled on it to put all this stuff into?

Back to your list...

Based on pure numbers alone, by the time you've completed your list, you should have, AT THE VERY LEAST, 36 notes i.e., one for each dramatic situation. But you're a writer, RIGHT? If so, you should have MORE.

My average list of notes is usually over a hundred... Remember, a screenplay can have anywhere from 40 to over 65 scenes, hint hint.

You guessed it... Take your list and start narrowing that bugged down to yet another list... By now, you should be real familiar with looking at THIS LIST within the context of YOUR STORY so be sure to have more pen and paper standing by should any new ideas be snap, crackling, and popping at you while you narrow down your list.

Again, don't worry about order... Just find the situations, plot twists, etc. that you FEEL really will fit within the confines of YOUR STORY.

When I do this, I normally scrounge this list down to somewhere between 40 and 65 different situations. Almost one situation per scene, right?

WRONG.

Well by now, your head should be literally spinning with new ideas for plot and plot twists...

So... Where did we leave off? Oh yeah... You should have created a list with at least 40 to 65 dramatic situations for your screenplay.

Right?

So now it's time to REALLY ORGANIZE... So even if you're not quite sure what the actual order of these dramatic situations should be in, go ahead and give it a try...

IF IT FEELS GOOD, DO IT!

That's right, based on WHATEVER structure you personally use, go ahead and try putting your list of dramatic situations in some kind of STORY ORDER according to the structure you use for writing screenplays.

Now, having said this, please don't ask me whether or not you should be able to completely plot out your entire screenplay... It's definitely possible but not probable and definitely NOT the point of this post.

The point being to simply give you a springboard if you will... A jumping off spot to plotting out your story.

Questions to ask yourself while making your list...

- Does your Protagonist fit into any of these situations?
- Could any of these dramatic situations be used to create undeserved misfortune for your Protagonist so that we feel both empathy and sympathy for him or her?
- Could any of these dramatic situations be used to help create mood, scope, style, and tone of your story?
- Could any of these dramatic situations be used to show us your Protagonist's ordinary world?
- Could any of these dramatic situations be used to give us a glimpse of your Antagonist or one of his or her victims?
- Could one of these dramatic situations make a good inciting incident for your story?
- Could one of these dramatic situations help you out with your theme?
- Could one of these dramatic situations be used to create a DILEMMA for your Protagonist.

- Could any of these dramatic situations be used to create one or more subplots?
- Can any of these dramatic situations be combined to create a reversal for your story?
- Can any of these dramatic situations be used to create your midpoint?
- Can any of these dramatic situations be used to simply create some fucking cool scenes for your story?
- Can any of these dramatic situations be used to create one or two major setbacks for your Protagonist?

Tips to consider while making your list...

- **Know your major characters** before brainstorming with the 36 dramatic situations.
- Substitute the characters mentioned in the 36 dramatic situations for your own major characters in your story.
- Read each dramatic situation and reverse it, tweak it, magnify it. Make it bigger, make it smaller.
- Combine two or more dramatic situations to create a plot twist.
- Use a digital recorder and record your brainstorming session(s).

Remember, you're not really trying to figure out your ENTIRE story and plot with this exercise... If you do, GREAT but you're simply trying to brainstorm some outstanding plot points and plot twists that you can incorporate into your story.

Once your list is complete, you need to start thinking about **CAUSE AND EFFECT**. In other words, once you have as many outstanding plot points and plot twists as you can make up from

brainstorming the 36 dramatic situations, you can now start going IN BETWEEN... Kind of like [TWEENING](#) that animators do with their animation cells... Figuring out what goes in between certain cells to give the animation the best looking flow of image...

So you've brainstormed a plot point or plot twist (yeah, they're pretty much the same thing) from one or more of the 36 dramatic situations and you know where it goes but you DON'T know what comes after... This is where you use CAUSE AND EFFECT to figure out what happens next.

Figure out what happens next... Don't worry if what you come up with is cliché... Go ahead and come up with it and then tweak the cliché so it is no longer cliché.

This exercise SHOULD get you well on your way to coming up with some pretty good plot points, subplots, etc. Again, don't expect to figure out your entire story but you should be able to come up with quite a bit to work with.

The most important thing to remember is to brainstorm these 36 dramatic situations **WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR STORY AND CHARACTERS.**

[Unk](#)

*NOTE: Please feel free to share this with other screenwriters if you think they would benefit from reading it. Distribute it any way you like as long as you leave it intact and do not charge money for it.