

Plot Your Novel!
(a worksheet to make it easy)

Step 1

In the space below, answer the question: **What is this story about?** Write it down in a few sentences. Don't be afraid to be as unsophisticated and wordy as you want.

Step 2

At the top of your page, write out that 2-3 sentence theme. The "what is this story all about" statement.

Sister Agatha investigates the murder of a young reporter found dead on the beach. All the while she is dealing with the aging of her beloved pony, the odd behavior of Reverend Mother, and the fast-approaching Christmas season at the Anglican convent.

Then under that theme statement, write this:

- Once upon a time there was a _____.
- And every day, she. _____
- Then one day _____

Step 3

Before you go another step, you must write out how the murder happened. Who did it and how they did it. This can be simple, but you have to articulate it early.

Describe how it happened by filling in these blanks:

- The bad guy was_____.
- They killed the victim because _____.
- They killed the victim by _____.
- After they killed the victim, they_____.

Step 4

Next describe the entire crime scene in as much detail as possible. Here are some prompts.

The dead body was _____.

Next to the body was a _____.

In addition, there was/were _____.

The detective thought it was strange that there was a _____.

Missing from the scene was a _____

Step 5

Name five possible suspects. One of them was the actual killer.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Step 6 Subplots

Think of three things/events that could happen alongside the murder story arc.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Here are three examples from my own writing:

1. Sister Agatha gets involved with the library fund-raising effort and discovers something dishonest.
2. Reverend Mother insists that all the sisters take Father Selwyn's yoga for Seniors class for their Lenten commitment.
3. Sister Gwenydd is called back to London for a family emergency. The sisters rotate the cooking for the convent. Disaster prevails.

Step 7

Time to start writing!

With these worksheet notes in front of you, go to your computer, yellow legal pad, Royal Manual Typewriter and set the timer for 3 minutes. Now write as fast as you can.

- Snack, set timer, write again for 3 minutes.
- When the time dings, stop writing and do not read. Do not leave your desk. Eat chocolate. Drink coffee.
- Do this ten times and I promise that you will have a nice plot, lots of ideas circulating, and an addiction to chocolate. But you had one anyway, right?

Congratulate yourself on a great start to plotting your novel!!