Creative Writing Workshop

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The Story Mix

EVOCATION

GRIPPING

ENTERTAINING

A GOOD STORY

POETIC/TIGHT PROSE

OUT OF THE BOX

STRUCTURE

MESSAGE

FICTION

NON-FICITON

CREATIVE NON-FICTION

-Fabricated
-Based on author's imagination
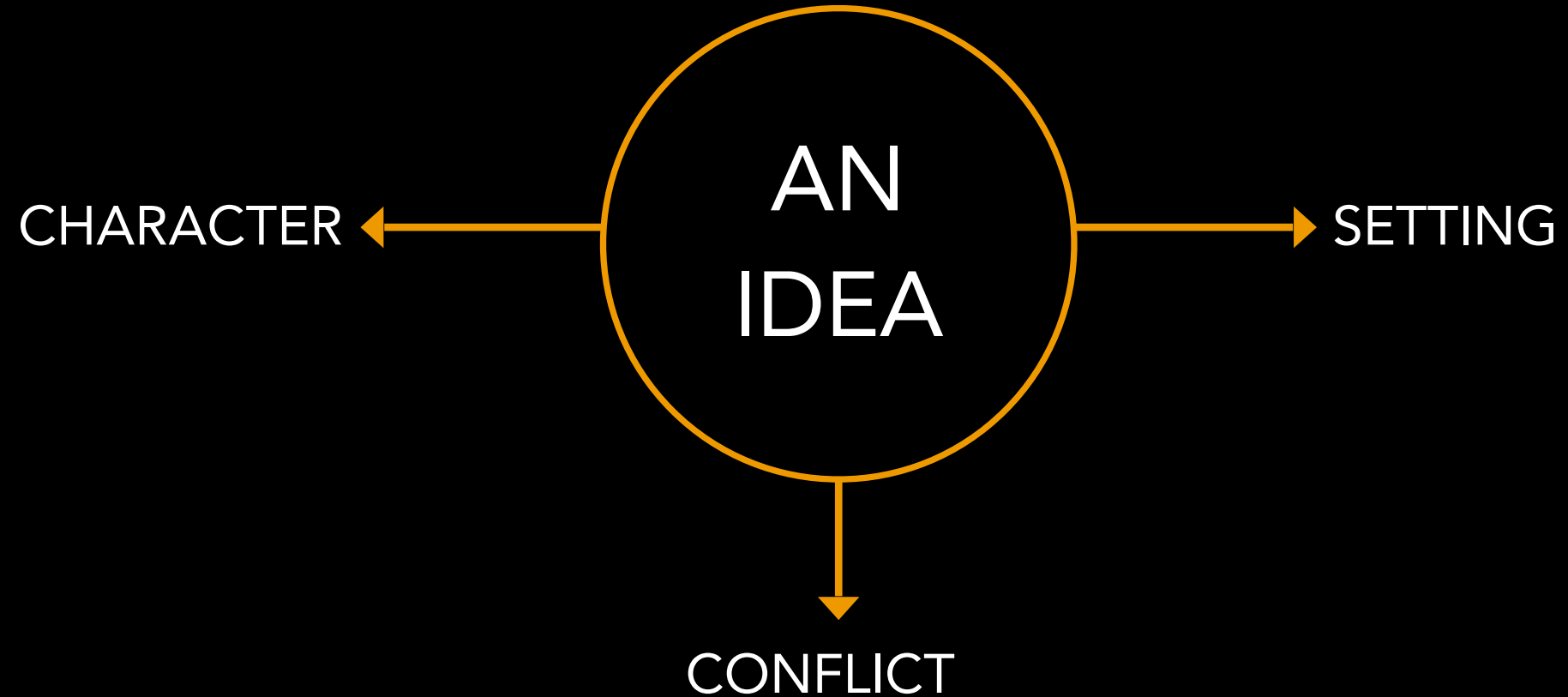
-Factual
-Based on true events

-True stories well told

Commercial:
-Action oriented
-Things happen to the character from the outside

Literary:
-Plot is leisurely paced
-Usually more about the inner life of a character than it's about fast paced action

PLOT

A sequence of events that make up the main part of a story. These events relate to each other in a pattern.

PLOT IN ONE LINE

Po, a bumbling Panda who wishes to become a Kung-Fu master, defeats an evil snow leopard, Tai Lung, to bring peace to the valley.

Plot Made Simple

Know the story – as much of the story as you can possibly know, If not the whole story – before you commit yourself to the first paragraph. If you don't know the story before you begin the story, what kind of a story teller are you?

-John Irving

L_{ead}

O_{bjective}

L.O.C.K
SYSTEM

K_{nockout}

C_{onfrontation}
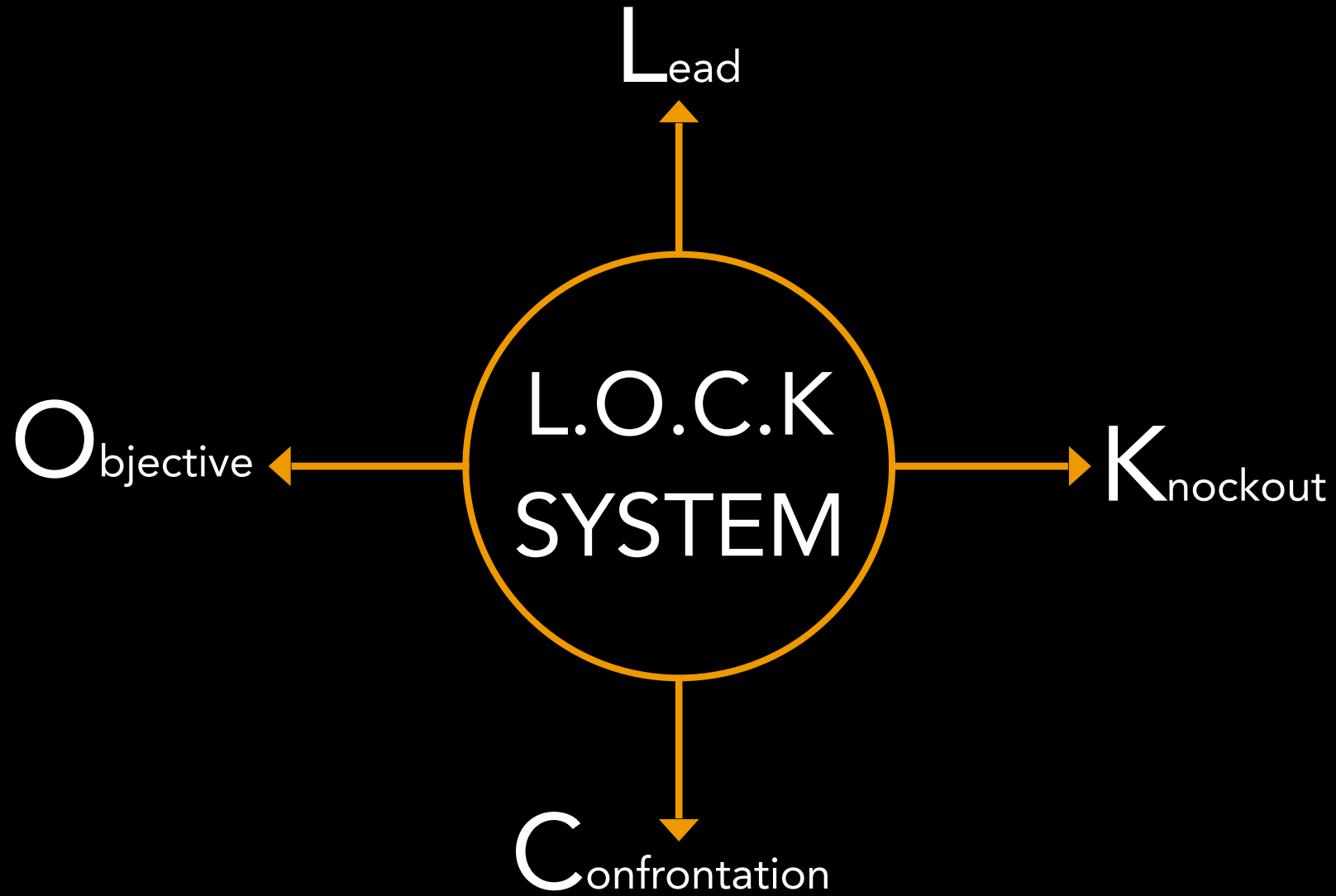
LEAD [L]

- Strong plot has interesting lead
- Compelling
- Reader starts to care for the lead

OBJECTIVE [O]

- A goal. A wish. A driving force.
- O makes the lead move his butt
- O is either getting something or getting away from something
- O; will the lead realise his "O"?
- Classic "O"; threat of death
- O needs to be essential for L well being

CONFRONTATION [C]

- stir things up
- opposition from other characters:
- forces = makes readers <u>fret</u>
- emotional attachment
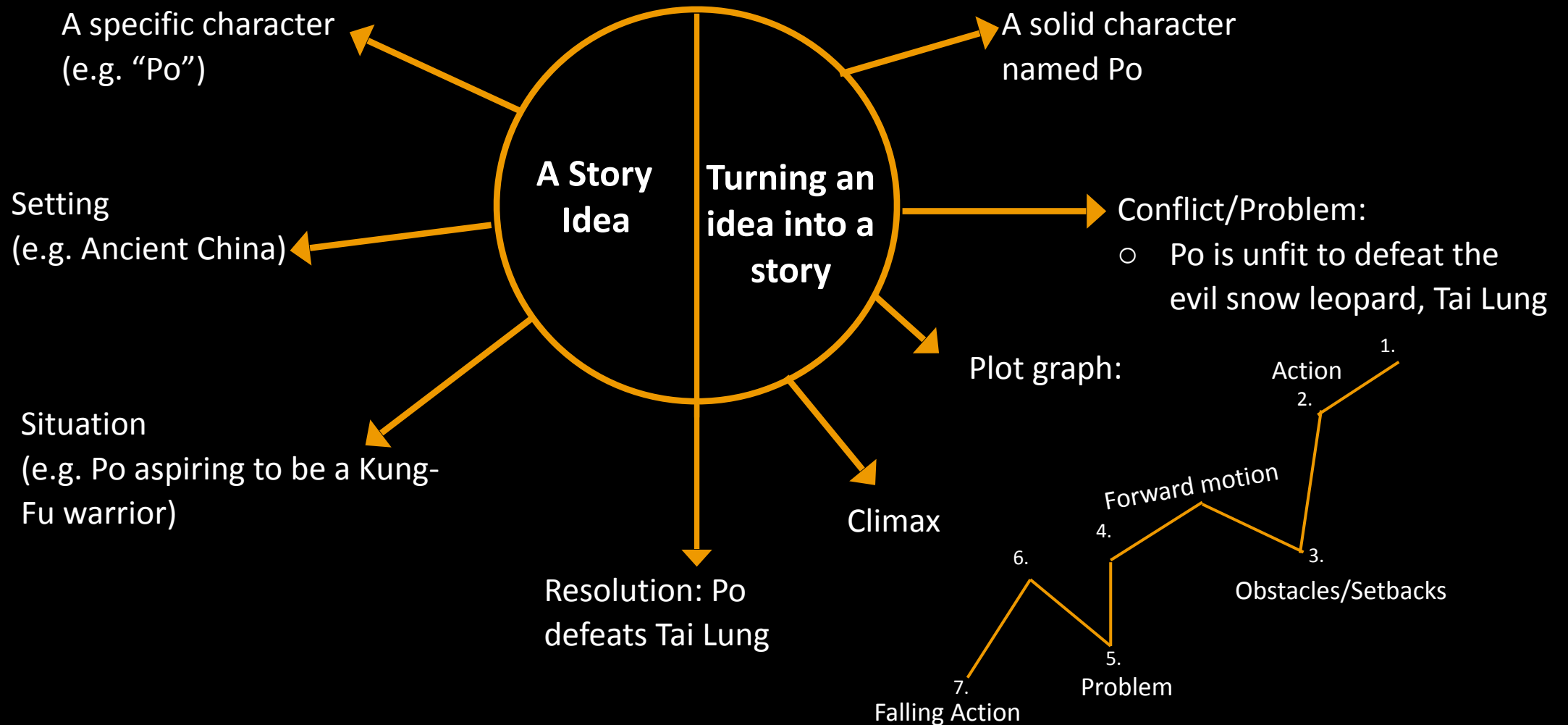- putting obstacles in "L" way

KNOCKOUT [K]

- needs power
- a definite end
- a grand ending and satisfaction (e.g. justice has been done)
- knock the opposition to the mat

Tell a Story

(e.g. Kung Fu Panda)

A specific character
(e.g. "Po")

A solid character
named Po

A Story Idea | **Turning an idea into a story**

Setting
(e.g. Ancient China)

Conflict/Problem:
- Po is unfit to defeat the evil snow leopard, Tai Lung

Plot graph:

Situation
(e.g. Po aspiring to be a Kung-Fu warrior)

Climax

1.
Action
2.
Forward motion
4.
3.
Obstacles/Setbacks
6.
5.
Problem
7.
Falling Action

Resolution: Po
defeats Tai Lung

The 2 Limbs of a Story

Plot

o Is about L and O
o Sequence of events
o Intriguing

(e.g. Spider Man)

Structure

o A solid plot unfolds in 3 acts
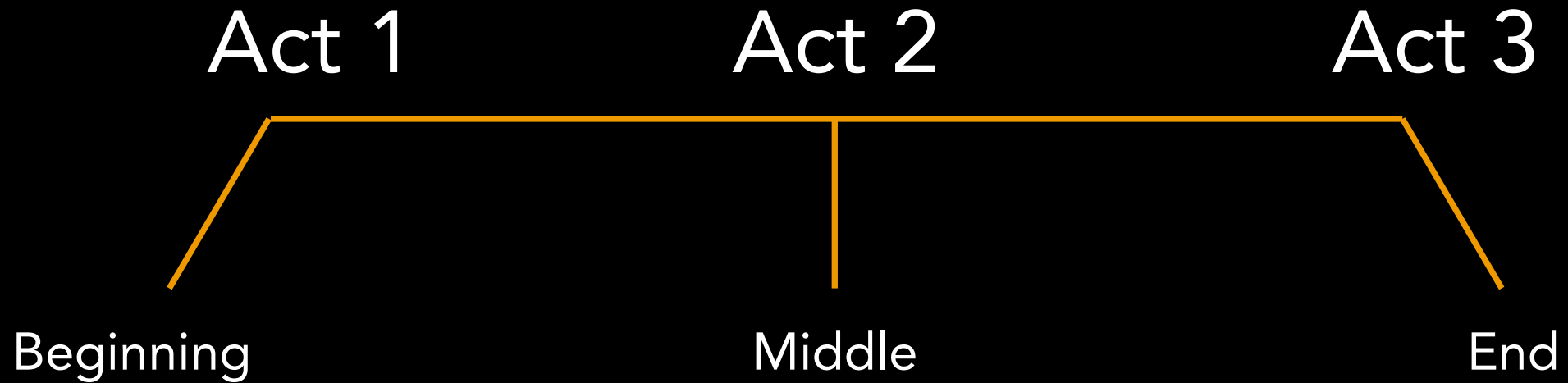o All about timing
o The 3 Act Structure

Beginning   **Middle**   **End**

The 3 Act Structure

Act 1   Act 2   Act 3

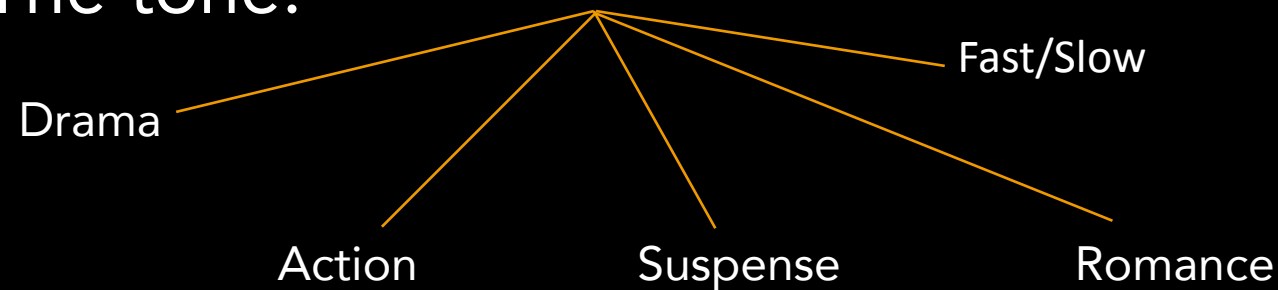Beginning   Middle   End

Act 1

1. Lead enters, thrown into adventure
2. Establishes a connection with the reader
3. Lay out the story work; time, setting, context
4. The tone:

Drama

Fast/Slow

Action   Suspense   Romance

5. Introduce threat and challenges
6. Move the reader to the middle

Act 2

1. Confrontation, the mystery gets deeper
2. A major part of the novel is battles
3. Subplots add for complexity
4. Deeper character interactions
5. Set the stage for final battle, climax
6. Hook the reader to the story

Act 3

1. Resolution
2. Tie up loose ends because readers remember
3. A message and fulfilment
4. Strong ending

Transitioning

Act 1   **Act 2**   **Act 3**

Initial disturbance
(initiating incident)

A doorway of no return:

- A sense of inevitability is created
- Push the lead to Act 3
- Look him through the doorway (e.g. Uncle Ben's death in '*Spider Man*'

- Towards the doorway, something should happen at the end of Act 2
- Final confrontation
- Story must end

Subplots

PLOT

- Flat
- One-note
- Draggy
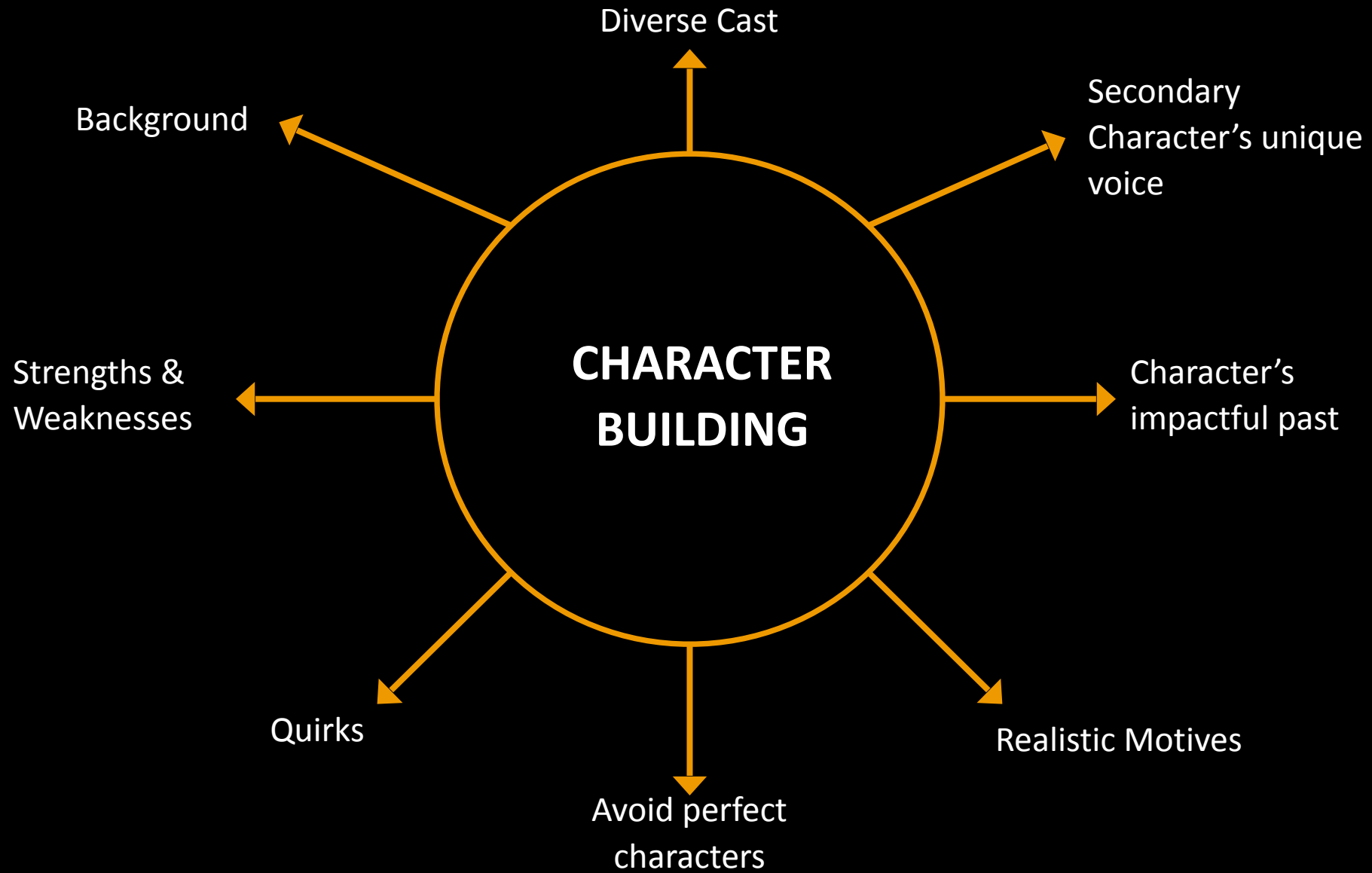- Too simple

SUBPLOTS   +   Secondary Characters

Subplots are simple stands of stories, driving the main plot

- Complexity
- Interesting
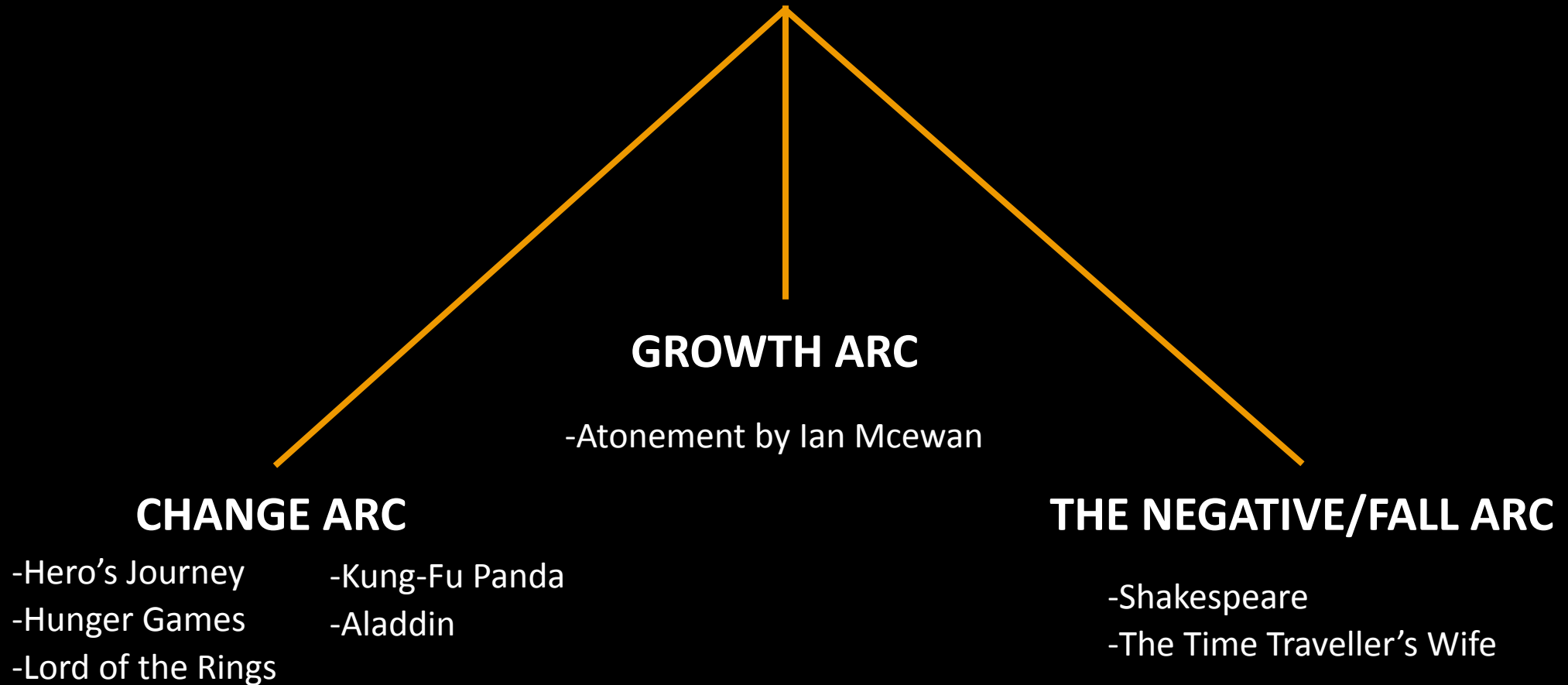- Heighten the action
- Patch holes
- Litter clues and info

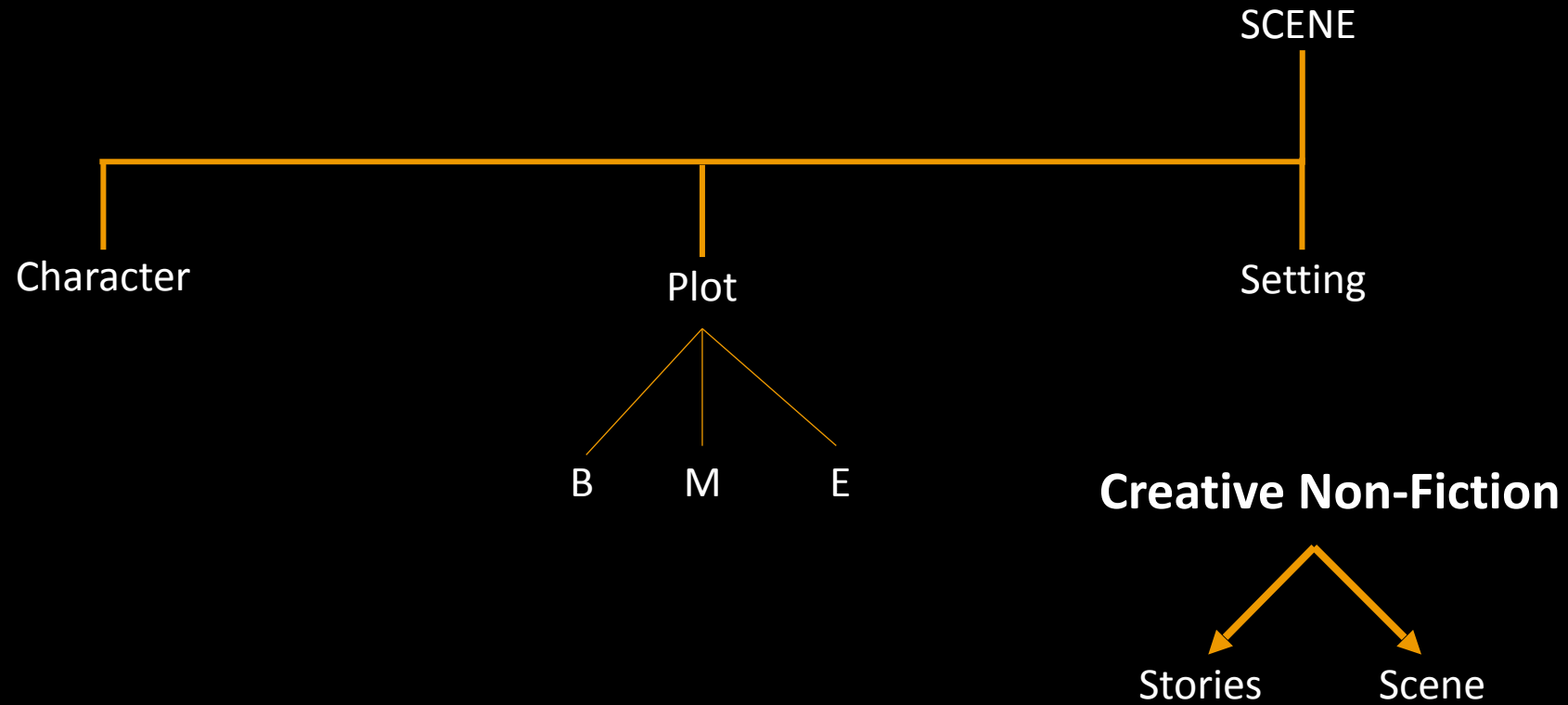- Strengthen the story along with the main character greatly

Character Arcs

GROWTH ARC

-Atonement by Ian Mcewan

CHANGE ARC

-Hero's Journey   -Kung-Fu Panda
-Hunger Games   -Aladdin
-Lord of the Rings

THE NEGATIVE/FALL ARC

-Shakespeare
-The Time Traveller's Wife

What's In a Scene?

SCENE

Character   Plot   Setting

B   M   E

Creative Non-Fiction

Stories   Scene

All Show No Tell

I once had a garden. I can remember the smell of the turned earth, the plump shapes of bulbs held in the hands, fullness, the dry rustle of seeds through the fingers. Time could pass more swiftly that way. Sometimes the Commander's Wife has a chair brought out, and just sits in it, in her garden. From a distance it looks like peace.

-*The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

MYSTERY

○ Takes off after the crisis event (murder)
○ Agatha Christie's novels

THRILLER

○ In danger from the outset
○ *007*

SUSPENSE

○ Creates drama before the event
○ Ethan Hunt from *Mission Impossible*

F Words

This was magic school? I stood and stared at it; I thought it seemed to be set up to depress us. I saw the green hill rising from the earth like some kind of cancer, and I could hear the voices of students on the wind, chanting soullessly, as if the wonder and awe of true magic had been whitewashed from their lives.

Not sure what to look for? Here it is with the filter words removed.

This was magic school? It seemed to be set up to depress us. The green hill rose from the earth like some kind of cancer, and the voices of students carried on the wind, chanting soullessly, as if the wonder and awe of true magic had been whitewashed from their lives.

What did we remove? *I thought*, *I saw*, *I could hear*. **In other words, we removed anything that had you, the reader, looking at her looking at things, rather than looking at the things she saw.**

Know when to roll...
and when to linger

To submit your stories go to:

https://os.me/fiction

The Hidden Power of Subplots

https://youtu.be/DLXwzj59mnM

Descriptive Settings

https://youtu.be/RSoRzTtwgP4

Swamiji's Recommended Reading List

1. Siddhartha by Herman Hesse
2. The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari by Robin Sharma
3. Life of Pi by Yann Martel
4. Rich Dad Poor Dad by Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter
5. How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie
6. 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey
7. The Stranger by Albert Camus
8. Chess by Stefan Zweig
9. Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach
10. The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho