



Plot Perfect: How to Build Unforgettable Stories Scene by Scene

Paula Munier

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Build an Exceptional Plot, One Scene at a Time!

Think of your favorite story--the one that kept you turning pages late into the night, the one with a plot so compelling, so multilayered, so perfect that you couldn't put it down. How can you make your own plots--in your novels, short stories, memoirs, or screenplays--just as irresistible?

"Plot Perfect" provides the answer. This one-of-a-kind plotting primer reveals the secrets of creating a story structure that works--no matter what your genre. It gives you the strategies you need to build a scene-by-scene blueprint that will help elevate your fiction and earn the attention of agents and editors.

Inside, literary agent, editor, and author Paula Munier shows you how to:

Devise powerful plots and subplots and weave them together seamlessly

Organize your scenes for the greatest impact

Develop captivating protagonists, worthy antagonists, and engaging secondary characters

Use dialogue, setting, tone, and voice to enhance your plot

Layer, refine, and polish your storyline

Define your story in terms of its theme

Filled with writing exercises, plotting templates, and expert advice, "Plot Perfect" helps you dive into the intricacies of plot--and write a compelling story that readers won't be able to resist.

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Debra Daniels-zeller says

This is a book to linger over. Well-organized and unique this has plenty of great tips for writing stories. I loved the inspiring bubble charts for characters and themes, the secrets of pacing and the plot perfect checklist. With plenty of room for creativity in stories and lots of different examples, Munier has written the perfect reference for writers to hone their story. This is definitely a keeper for the writers' bookshelf.

Jeannette says

I rarely enjoy reading how-to books because they require pen, pad and highlighters... something that reminds me too much of studying for a test in school. However, this immediately drew my attention because of all the white space--so different from all the other books on writing. I loved the large font and the many charts, checklists and quotes by other authors.

I found the chapters on the power of your theme, translating them into subplots, and creating complex characters the most helpful. Other parts were somewhat tedious, like writing story questions and plus and minus scenes. There was also an entire chapter dedicated to a case study of The Maltese Falcon which I found a bit sluggish to get through.

Also a caution, the author uses a lot of examples from books and movies / television and encourages her readers to go to these sources in order to illustrate her points. If I were to read and watch everything suggested by the author, I'd probably be a hermit for the next few years.

Overall, it's a book I highly recommend to anyone who has started a novel and is stuck trying to figure out where the story is heading.

J.R. Koop says

It's been a while since I've plotted a novel and I honestly don't think I could have done it without this by my side.

If you're getting back into writing after a while, I definitely recommend-- or even if you write a lot! This had some invaluable advice, and so many useful exercises to help me get into my characters' heads to form my plot.

Kamryn (GreyZone) says

This volume featured many exercises that I hadn't come across before! Per usual with books like this, it would be more useful if you're familiar with all the works it references. There were large studies on books I never read, which I often skipped because I can't "remember how I fell in love with a voice" from a book I

haven't picked up. Even though it's written to help planning, there are many, many solutions to problems you come across as you write or edit. All around, it's a solid book on fiction!

Nelou Keramati says

Plot Perfect is somewhat akin to a fruit salad: simple, tasty, and extremely nutritious. It is a quick read jam-packed with invaluable tips that I think novice and seasoned authors alike will benefit from.

When teaching proper writing, concepts can quickly become more and more abstract as you explain them. But what I loved about this book was how the author communicated what she meant by making references to popular books, quotes, movies, etc.

Nothing's quite as frustrating as feeling even more lost after reading a guidebook; for example, it can be challenging to explain a fractured narrative with a non-linear timeline and multiple POVs. The more clearly you try to explain it, the more terminology you require, which can confuse, even overwhelm the reader. But if you make a reference to a popular movie (say, the *Prestige* by Christopher Nolan), then the aforementioned concepts immediately 'click' in the reader's mind. This, in turn, allows the aspiring writer to internalize what he/she must do, and get on with the 'doing'.

If you're looking to reduce the time spent plotting your narrative (and have fun with simple exercises that will enrich your story), I highly recommend this book!

Brett Buckley says

Writing books are generally more or less useful depending on where you are in your journey as a writer, and depending on how many other writing books you've read. Given that I have 34 other books currently on my writing shelf, it's telling that this one still gets a 4 star rating because of its fresh marketing-led viewpoint, and because it is *encouraging*, which is really important. I skipped over a few of the long-winded examples, otherwise it might have got a 5. And I don't know about you, but I'm also rather tired of reading about the hero's journey.

Joy Cagil says

This is probably the only book in the market that gives so much importance to the plot and with good arguments and execution. Most of the elements of writing fiction are the same as in the other books that I have read, but I found that this book has the edge, many edges in fact. The most significant edge for me was the importance given to the theme and how to weave that theme together with the subthemes into a fully rounded story.

This book may greatly benefit those writers who have their first drafts down and are looking for ways and ideas to revise them, but it is also important for those writers to read before they have written a first draft. Inside it, outlining, layering a story, developing complex characters and successful scenes, using the dialogue, setting, voice, and tone are shown in detail together with writing exercises, templates, and quotes

from successful authors.

In addition to the superb level of the explanation of story elements, at the end of the book, several pages on genres are added with an eye for the markets' expectations. This book needs to be read slowly and by paying attention to the exercises and templates. This is not a book to read like a novel. It is a detailed workshop.

I see this book as a must-read for anyone who is planning to write a novel that may be worth its salt.

James Nelson says

While the book "read" well, I had a very difficult time seeing how I would actually use the ideas she mentioned in the way I write my mystery novels. I was quite disappointed because this book came highly recommended by several members of my writing group.

LATOYA JOVENA says

Every writing books starts with the basics. So every time I start to read one I feel like I already know the material. Then it goes into deep detail and I realize that I didn't even know what I didn't know. Now I know my plot is a spastic mess, but thanks to Plot Perfect I also know how to go about fixing it.

Brigitte says

The first part of Plot Perfect is a good review of plot basics, if you're already familiar with them. The best aspect of the text, however, are the other sections, which provide a number of tips and techniques for executing plot effectively. The checklists will be valuable to me as I move forward in another revision of my novel. Highly recommended for those beginning or revising a novel.

T.H. Hernandez says

This is one of the best books I've read on structuring plot, regardless of genre. Packed with examples, checklists, and exercises, this book explains in plain English how to outline your novel to ensure your plot zings, you've built in layers of subplot, and your theme is expertly woven. Plot Perfect covers all aspects of writing fiction, albeit at a high level. It contains the building blocks necessary to create a plot that works with developed characters that reflect your story's theme. It's an excellent resource for both planners and pantsers. Even writers who don't outline will benefit from understanding how story works as they hammer out a first draft by the seat of their pants. I had an outline of a book I was working on, and as I was reading Plot Perfect, I revised my outline after noting several problems with it.

Bottom Line

Plot Perfect is a great resource for novelists of all genres at every stage of their careers.

Karen says

This book was excellent and I highly recommend it to anyone interested in writing or trying to write a novel. I already had my first draft finished when I read this, so I was able to apply everything immediately to my work in progress, which was incredibly helpful.

I have a degree in creative writing, but I don't remember ever learning anything this practical about plot when I was in school. This book will tell you exactly how to structure a 3-act story, what your target word count should be for your genre, and how to make sure your pacing is on point. It helped me identify where my plot was weak and figure out how to fix it. There are published authors who don't know all of this stuff. Without a doubt this book has helped me make my manuscript stronger, and it's one I will keep and likely reread.

Eldon Farrell says

A book like this should only do one thing for you and that is make you see your own writing in a new light. If it does this then it can be called successful. With that said, Paula Munier has succeeded here in a BIG way.

I don't think I'll ever see my own writing the same way again and for that I'll thank Munier. Her insights and experience are spot on throughout this thoughtful and informative read. In particular, the writing exercises add much to the read and really drive home the points that are being made. For example, theme has always been difficult to pinpoint for me. I know what it is in broad strokes but defining it has proven cumbersome. Armed now with the knowledge gleaned from these pages though I feel confident this will no longer be the case.

The only drawback I found here was Munier's inclusion of her own short stories at length. I understand the need to make a point but felt that she included too many pages of her own work that did leave me feeling as if I was being pitched to. Only because of this I'd rate it a strong 4.5 stars and highly recommend to any writers interested in improving their craft.

SJ Shoemaker says

If someone came to me and said "I want to write the next best-selling novel. But I've never read a book, or watched a movie, or picked up a pencil", this is the book that I'd hand them.

Munier covers every aspect of the writing process from the ground up. This means most writers will only need to read a section of this book i.e. whatever they happen to have issues with, in their own writing. Having trouble elaborating on your theme? read her chapter on theme. Can't figure out characterization? you know where to look. etc.

I have a few nitpicks with Munier's misuse of terminology. These issues include: an oversimplification of the 3-act structure, a conflation of subject and theme, and a gross misinterpretation of "MacGuffin".

None of these incorrectly stated terms change her message in any way--which is why I'm still giving this a

fairly high rating--but I found it frustrating at moments.

Alicia says

I particularly love the discussion on themes and subplots.
