



MOVING THE NARRATIVE FORWARD

AUDIO NOTES OUTLINE

ENTERING THE MIDDLE

- The middle can be the hardest part of the book to write.
- The middle is where most books fail. You might have run out of steam.
- Beginnings and endings have momentum, but middles can be a hard slog.

WHAT IS THE MIDDLE?

1. COLLECTION OF SCENES THAT NEGOTIATE THE WAY BETWEEN THE BEGINNING AND THE END

- How the characters attempt to solve their solutions.
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- Continue to develop the context.

2. MIDDLES OFTEN FALL INTO TWO PARTS

- First part -
- Second part -

3. FOR EPISODIC OR EPIC BOOKS, DIVIDE THE MIDDLE OF THE BOOK INTO THREE PARTS

- First part -



- Second part -
- Third part -

4. EACH PART OF THE MIDDLE HAS TO RAISE THE STAKES

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING SCENES

- 1.
- 2.

WRITING IS EPISTEMIC – WRITING CREATES KNOWLEDGE

Sometimes when your ideas are all out there in front of you, it can feel disappointing. But you need to plan and progress your story. The pleasure will still be there.

EXERCISE: PLAN THE MIDDLE OF A THRILLER

In the **Planning The Middle Forum**, we are going to collectively develop the middle of a thriller novel.

WHAT TO DO:

- a. Read the premise below and note the first transition (end of the beginning) and second transition (end of the middle).
- b. On the **Planning the Middle Forum**, take turns in coming up with solutions and further problems for our luckless heroine.
 - i. The first person to the forum gets to write the first attempt Mandy makes at a *solution* to her problem.



- ii. The next person writes in her next *problem* (remember, it's nice if her problems arise out of her attempted solutions). Taking turns, you need to get to the end of the middle, slowly but steadily.
- iii. It's an evolving planning process so feel free to experiment with moving ideas around to get the best possible slow burn happening.
- c. Manage your ideas so that the tension rises slowly.
- d. Discuss on the forum if you think the middle works, if the tension is consistent, if the character acts plausibly, if there are any other ways the story idea could be improved.

Premise

Mandy is a high-powered Australian corporate lawyer who falls madly in love with a visiting Danish businessman. She finds herself pregnant unexpectedly, and throws caution to the wind, agreeing to marry him (let's call him... oh... Viggo) and come to live with him in Denmark. Thus she finds herself in a country where she can barely speak the language with a tiny baby keeping her up around the clock. Three or four small things alarm her about Viggo, and she begins to suspect he's having an affair. But, right at the end of the beginning, she eavesdrops on a phone call and discovers much worse: Viggo is an international criminal mastermind.

By the end of the middle, Viggo has had the baby abducted in order to ensure Mandy's silence (thus forcing her hand, as any good end-of-the-middle transition point should). But how do we get there?

EXERCISE: YOUR SCENE IDEAS

Work on a list of scene ideas (just one-line abstracts) for your novel's middle:

1. Indicate next to each idea, whether you think it belongs to the beginning, middle, or end (you can mark your middle scenes as M1, M2, and so on, if you prefer).
2. Submit to your tutor by email to this address: submissions@awmonlinelearn.com.au
3. Make sure your subject heading is: 'YONline – [Insert Your Name Here]'. If you do not appropriately label your email as specified in the subject heading you may not receive feedback on your piece.