

ROMANCE BEAT SHEET

Title: Enter Title here.

Date: Enter date here.

- 1. Opening Image:** This sets the tone of the story and represents the central struggle. This gives a peek into our heroine or hero's problem before the adventure begins.
- 2. Theme Stated (5):** The message you want to portray by the end of the comic. What's the story about in a larger sense? This message is usually given by someone besides the heroine or hero. It is either said to them or in their presence and they don't understand this truth. Once they go on their journey they will find it. (Meaning produces emotion.)
- 3. Set-Up (1-10):** Enhancing the opening image. Show their current world as it is now, and what is missing in each of their lives. Stasis = Death, the "before" life of the protagonist is such that if it stays the same, they will figuratively die. In addition, their flaw, the problem that needs fixing over the course of the story, is revealed.
- 4. Catalyst (12):** Opportunity presents itself. This is the moment where the heroine and/or hero has the opportunity to go on a journey. Life as they know it is no more, change has begun. It's the finding a mysterious note, creating a monster, leaving the door open for the enemy, one night stand, etc. This Call to Adventure or Inciting Incident is usually denied by the heroine and/or hero at first, but they can't resist the call for long.
- 5. Debate (12-25):** This is where doubts about the journey can temporarily fill the heroine and/or hero's mind. In real life, change can be scary so, it helps this small bit of self-doubt to the characters. Can I face this challenge? Do I have what it takes? Should I go at all?
- 6. Break into Two (25):** (Choosing Act Two) (25) – The choice to go on the journey is made, and our adventure begins. The "Thesis" world we started in is turned upside-down into the "Anti-thesis" world of Act Two.
- 7. B Story (30):** Breather story that allows a break from jumping to act two with the A Story. It carries the theme throughout it and is a time to meet someone new. The new characters follow along the antithesis world of act two, meaning they are upside-down versions of the folks that are in act one.
- 8. Fun and Games (30-55):** This is the fun part. Let your characters explore this new and exciting world and overcome the obstacles that have been promised by the premise of the story. Whether it is a new location or an awesome power, this is the time to have a party with the senses. More than likely, this is where you would get your cover art from. It is the Promise of the Premise. Why did they start reading this story? This is where they will find that answer. This is also were a reminder of the central conflict is placed (scene 16/40). By the end, there should have been progressively difficult complications leading to the Midpoint.
- 9. Midpoint (55):** The false victory or defeat is found here. Either everything is good and it will fall apart or it is bad and it can only get better. This point changes the dynamic of the story and usually is the biggest plot twist. Stakes are raised when it comes down to our characters' goal and can change them all together. It is the official end of the Fun & Games and we are back to the A Story. They have to recommit to the new goal and there is no turning back from here. B Story often incites the midpoint plot twist. If there is a "ticking time clock" for resolving the goal, it begins at the midpoint.

10. Bad Guys Close In (55-75): Now it get serious. The Bad Guys regroup and come at our heroine/hero in full force. This makes everything that seemed good fall apart. The bad Guys are now back on top, while our characters are breaking down. There are new, complex and overwhelming sets of obstacles to the main character's goal. Everything that has been gained here seems useless, plans are shattered, the team is broken up, or they are betrayed by a trusted friend. Remember that Pinch # 2 will be here. Another reminder that brings up the central conflict around Scene 26/40.

11. All Is Lost (75): The False Defeat. Something or someone dies which is the Whiff of Death. The old ways of thinking, the old world and old character dies, clearing the way for the thesis and antithesis to fuse and become synthesis (new world and/or life).

12. Dark Night of the Soul (75-85): This is rock bottom for the heroine and hero. Wallowing in hopelessness, they are mourning the loss of what "died" in the All is Lost beat. This beat completes their character arc and now they can see the truth they were blind to before the start of this journey. New information is revealed and acts as the second catalyst that poses a choice to the heroine and hero. Is it time to pack up and go home, or should they give completing this journey one more try?

13. Break into Three (85): Digging deep down, our character finds a new solution. The A and B story intertwine and become the new option for winning. It can be brought on by inspiration or advice from the B Story and they choose to try again. This clears up the final goal that they will have to complete to end the journey. It will beat the bad guys and make the B story happy once implemented.

14. Finale (85-110): The heroine and hero confront the nemesis or rival with their newfound strength. The theme is now incorporated into their fight since it is the truth behind everything they have been fighting for and they can see it now. This only comes from their experience in the A Story and the context from the B Story. This moves them to resolve the journey and tie off any ends (unless there is a sequel planned). We are now in the "Synthesis" of their world. The thesis and antithesis have merged together creating the finale.

❖ Storming the Castle – "Five Point Finale"

- **Gathering the Team:** Time to rally their allies and make any amends if needed. They grab all their tools and plan their next move.
- **Executing the Plan:** When they put their plan in motion, it is actually working. Everyone is working in tandem and there are minor arcs and proofs of growth for the minor characters occur, their defects are now fixed and even useful to the plan. Small casualties can be felt but they are getting closer to their goal.
- **The High Tower Surprise:** They finally reach the tower and crap! Something goes wrong. If there is a traitor, they would be revealed here and all of their work was just an elaborate trap set by the Bad Guy. ALL IS LOST once again.
- **Dig, Deep Down:** The original idea our heroine and/or hero came up with is shot down and everything that was important to them at the beginning of the story is taken away. When they find a way to let go of what is lost and use their new logic based on the events they have experienced, they will find a new way to defeat the odds. This could never have been done at the beginning of the story, but it is completely feasible now due to the learning done by the leads. They remind us that at some point, we have to abandon the natural world and everything we think we know and have faith in a world unseen.

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- **The Execution of the New Plan:** To win, they will have to try something new. True changes are made and everything is looked at from a new perspective. Facing their fears they win.

15. Final Image (110): This is the opposite of the opening image. Our heroine and/or hero have changed along with the world they are in.

To get the whole picture of these plotting elements, please grab a copy of [Save the Cat!](#) and [Save the Cat! Strikes Back](#) by [Blake Snyder](#). They are great reads with some very fun terms that clear up lots about the art of storytelling.