PREMISE

SCIENCE FICTION

100 PLOT IDEAS

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Dancing Lights Press

WHAT IS A PREMISE?

A premise is the heart of a story summed up in a single sentence. It will provide a general overview of what happens, without spoiling anything. A good premise contains, explicitly or by implication, four key elements of the story: who the protagonists are, what the goal of the story is, the sorts of obstacles that need to be overcome to achieve the story goal, and who the antagonist is.

Each premise provided in this book is more than just a story hook or adventure seed. It is the beginning of a story, your story, that you can flesh out and develop to suit your specific needs. These can be used again and again by varying the details and changing the four key elements.

Protagonists

The assumption is that you already have player characters created, if not fully established. For that reason, elements of the premise should be tweaked to suit the abilities and personalities of the protagonists and not the other way around. Suggested character capabilities useful in completing the story goal may be listed, but if no protagonist possesses these traits then a supporting character should be inserted to compensate. Likewise, ties to background elements can either be retconned into a protagonist's history, or given to a supporting character who can ask for the protagonists' help, or can hire them to pursue the story goal on their behalf, as appropriate.

Story Goals

The story goal is the objective that the protagonists must achieve in order to successfully complete the adventure. It's the way you know that the story is over, and can help keep the players focused and the protagonists on the right track. In a simplified 3-act structure, Act 1 will have the protagonists learning about the story goal and deciding to pursue it. Act 2 will present a series of obstacles that need to be overcome in order to accomplish the story goal. Act 3 will have the protagonists face the final obstacle, defeat the antagonist, achieve the story goal, and earn their rewards.

Obstacles

Achieving the story goal shouldn't be easy, and the protagonists will need to overcome an escalating series of obstacles. These might be linked thematically, or tied into the sort of goal that needs to be achieved. Start with a simple obstacle early in the story, something that plays to the protagonists' strengths and will be relatively easy to defeat. Then think of the hardest thing possible, pushing the limits of their capabilities, and make that the final obstacles. Flesh out the middle with obstacles that are increasingly more difficult.

Antagonists

Each protagonist has a personal goal that they are trying to achieve, as well as a motivation for pursuing that goal. This might place them in opposition to, or into competition with, the protagonists. If the premise fits with an established antagonist, you should use them and tweak other elements of the premise to fit their personalities and abilities. Otherwise, you can create a new antagonist that suits the particulars of your desired story and overall campaign needs.

01

The protagonists set off on a journey to an unexplored place, hoping to find fortune and glory.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have the skills and background appropriate to explore the type of environment they're headed into, whether it's outer space, cyberspace, under the sea, or something else. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character with the appropriate abilities and knowledge that can assist the protagonists as needed.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to make a beneficial discovery. It can be a scientific find, a treasure that brings them financial gain, or a personal epiphany that changes their life for the better. Once the protagonists have acquired their reward, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on exploration. The least difficult challenge will be getting to the location. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include weather, terrain, dangerous creatures, and hostile inhabitants. The final obstacle should be getting safely away from the location with the thing that will bring them fortune and glory.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to prevent the protagonists from succeeding. Their motivation might be to acquire the reward for themselves, to protect the discovery from the looting protagonists, or simple territoriality. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

02

The protagonists are drawn toward a dangerous situation they know they should avoid, as the antagonist seeks to lure them into bigger trouble.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have personal goals that they are passionate to fulfill. They should be willing to do extreme things to get what they want. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that does and is able to hire or otherwise persuade the protagonists to help.

Story Goal

The objective is to get out of the situation unscathed. Meeting the protagonists' personal goals and stopping the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have escaped from danger, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be overcoming the objections of people trying to warn the protagonists of the dangers they will face. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include overcoming doubts about their goals, physical dangers like a hostile environment and hungry creatures, and the traps set by the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists escape and head back where they came from.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to tempt the protagonists into taking risks. Their motivation might be to steal the reward once the antagonists have overcome all of the danger, or to see the protagonists harmed as some form or revenge for a perceived slight or past defeat. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

03

The antagonist exploits a protagonist's tragic flaw, as the protagonists try to prevent the loss of everything they've gained.

Protagonists

This premise requires at least one of the protagonists to have some sort of character defect or weakness. It should be a moral failing or an ethical blind spot. This flaw has the potential to create major problems for them. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character who does and can turn to the protagonists for help. Aiding the tragically flawed supporting character must still have the possibility of causing problems for the protagonists.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to overcome their flaw. They will do this in pursuit of some secondary goal. Completing that secondary goal and defeating the antagonist are trivial considerations. Once the protagonists have faced their own issues, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on personal challenges. The least difficult challenge will be dealing with the basic triggers of their flaw. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include concealing the flaw from others, exercising self-control, and doing things to own up to and correct the flaw. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonists in a manner that demonstrates mastery over the flaw.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to push the protagonist's buttons. Their motivation might be to discredit them, to cause them personal or professional harm, or to undermine the protagonist's self-esteem. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>04</u>

The protagonists witness a scientist's kidnapping, and must rescue them before the kidnapper can put their latest invention to ill use.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have and special skills or abilities. A background that puts them in the right place and time to see the kidnapping, and being of a character to do leap into action upon witnessing such an act, is useful. A supporting character can also be inserted to ask the protagonists with help in recovering the scientist.

Story Goal

The objective is to prevent the invention from being used. Saving the scientist and capturing the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have secured the dangerous invention, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be in determining what the scientist was working on. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include determining how it can be misused, determining who the antagonist is, and working out the location antagonist's hideout. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the prepare to use the invention.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the dangerous invention. Their motivation is some sort of personal gain that will come from the manner they play to use the device. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>05</u>

The protagonists must prove their innocence when they are framed for the theft of a major new piece of technology.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a background that makes them credible suspects for the theft. If they do not, they may have an association with a supporting character that could reasonably considered.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to prove their innocence. Stopping the antagonist and recovering the stolen tech are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists are able to demonstrate that they did not commit the crime, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be avoiding incarceration so they can conduct their own investigation. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include locating clues, narrowing down potential suspects, and tracking the antagonist to their hideout. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist prior to law enforcement arriving on the scene.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to possess the new tech. Their motivation is to use it to accomplish some personal goal. Evading arrest is an obstacle to them as they pursue their goal. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>06</u>

The protagonists get framed for the murder of a viral celebrity, thrusting them into the bizarre world of do-it-yourself entertainment.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a background that makes them credible suspects for the killing. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character who fits the bill and can ask them for assistance. Having minimal knowledge of the working of the current entertainment world — social media, virtual reality, something else appropriate to the science fiction setting — will make the story more interesting.

Story Goal

The objective is to find the real killer. Learning about the entertainment community and clearing their names are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have identified the antagonist and found evidence to prove their guilt, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on exploration. The least difficult challenge will be getting other people in the entertainment community to talk to them, because they are outsiders. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include narrowing down possible suspects, gathering evidence, and evading law enforcement. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists gather the evidence needed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get away with murder. Their motivation is to not go to jail, or face whatever punishment is appropriate to the setting. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>07</u>

When a tech start-up is bought out and disbanded by a major software company, the former employees start turning up dead.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have connection to the tech start-up or its employees. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character who does and can ask the protagonists for help.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist's plan. Saving more lives and revealing what the major software company is really up to are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be in finding clues at the existing murder scenes. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include discovering why the tech start-up was bought out, what they were developing, and what the antagonist plans to use it for. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to execute their master plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the start-up's tech for something criminal. Their motivation is to increase their wealth and harm their competition. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>08</u>

A protagonist falls in love with a member of an emerging minority, but the romantic partner's community will stop at nothing to end the relationship.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some interaction with a minority community. This could be a real-world community transplanted to a new location because of a disaster, or a community of immigrant aliens, emancipated androids, transhumans, clones, or any sort of people.

Story Goal

The objective is to allow the romantic partners to explore their relationship. Opening up peoples' hearts and minds and stopping the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have found a way for the lovers to be together, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on social conflict. The least difficult challenge will be navigating through the minority community. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with threats and intimidation, property damage and sabotage of resources, and actual violence. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist that involves some form of violence.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to keep the romantic partners apart. Their motivation is bigotry, and a belief that intelligent beings of different origins shouldn't mix. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

09

A town struggles to balance beloved traditions and technological advancement, and the protagonists get caught in a war between resistance and change.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They need a reason to be in the town prior to the conflict, so there may be personal goals or a secondary objective that provides a plausible excuse.

Story Goal

The objective is to uncover what the antagonist is doing. Resolving the town's issues and capturing the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have made the town aware that they've been manipulated, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be detecting that both sides are being incited to violence. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include gathering clues, asking hostile people questions, and avoiding riots. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists reveal what's been happening to the townspeople.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to ruin the town and drive down property values. No matter which side wins, the other side won't want to live there any more, and the place will feel dangerous and tainted to everyone. The protagonist's motivation is to buy up the town at bargain prices for the resource rights, or possibly because the location has some strategic advantage. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist, making it easier to hide their true purpose.

<u>10</u>

A systems malfunction causes the protagonists to crash in a remote area, and must survive until the rescue team arrives.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a reason to be traveling, either through space, across an alien world, or even over a remote area of Earth. The ship could be a boat, a jet, or a spaceship, as appropriate. Survival skills will come in handy.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist. Finding shelter, food, and water are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have beaten the antagonist, a rescue team will miraculously appear and the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be locating basic necessities, some of which can still be found in the wreckage. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include environmental hazards, dangerous animals, and other survivors freaking out. The final obstacle should be a battle with the antagonist prior to the arrival of help.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill everyone. Their motivation might be because they're hungry or territorial monster that lives near the crash site. They might be a deranged passenger who has snapped. The antagonist might be a terrorist whose actions caused the crash in the first place, and now they want to finish the job. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

11

The protagonists make an incredible scientific discovery, but a natural disaster threatens to destroy everything.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have skill and some sort of background appropriate to the type of discovery being made. They might also be there at the invitation of a supporting character, or because they have a relationship with one of the scientific team members.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive. Protecting the discovery and stopping the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have lived through the event, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be finding a safe place to take shelter. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include rescuing trapped people, crossing dangerous areas, and avoiding the rash actions of panicked people. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the last survivors get to safety.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make sure everyone else dies. Their motivation is to steal the discovery and get all of the credit and rewards for themselves. They will attempt to sabotage everything the antagonists do. This premise will work with best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

12

A protagonist is altered against their will, and must figure out how to adapt to their new life.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special sort of background or abilities. What they get changed into will depend upon what's appropriate for the setting — they might be made into a cyborg, have their genes altered, get infected with nanobots, be surgically changed to resemble an alien, or anything that fits your science fiction world.

Story Goal

The objective is for the affected protagonist(s) to learn to use their new form, or to find a way to change back. Stopping the antagonist and sorting out what happened are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the transformation, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action and education. The least difficult challenge will be figuring out how the altered body and any new abilities it has works. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with bigots, explaining things to loved ones, and tracking down the antagonists. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist to either get an explanation, get a cure, or both.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to conduct experiments. Their motivation is to figure out ways to "improve" people, either out of sadistic curiosity, as part of some evil scheme, or for profit. Because their experiments are illegal, not to mention unethical and immoral, they have to use unwilling subjects. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>13</u>

A protagonist suffers a traumatic brain injury, but after an experimental treatment they think they're someone else.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or knowledge. They only need for one of them to have suffered an accident or to have been severely injured somehow, turning them into the antagonist. Who they think they are should be appropriate to the setting, as should the treatment they receive.

Story Goal

The objective is to restore the antagonist/protagonist to normal. Figuring out where the treatment went wrong and fixing any damage they might do while in an altered state are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have gotten their colleague back to normal, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be discovering that the "antagonist" has left the treatment facility. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include tracking the antagonist, figuring out a cure, and locating the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist where the cure can be administered.

Antagonists

For this story, one of the protagonists acts as the antagonist. They think that they are someone else, likely someone famous or deceased, and are trying to accomplish some goal that person is noted for. The personality changes and memories come from the means of treatment — gene therapy, computer chips implanted in their brain, nanobots, or even psionic healing. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning "antagonist", the person the protagonist thinks they are.

14

The protagonists face off against an antagonist providing illegal and expensive medical technology to sick and desperate people.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some connection to people in need. It could be a supporting character they know, or the protagonists might just be in the business of helping people and protecting them from predators and scam artists.

Story Goal

The objective is to get the people the medical help they need. Taking down the antagonist and stopping their illegal operation are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have made sure the people will get what they need without being exploited, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be gathering the details of the antagonist's operation. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include learning why law enforcement and the legitimate health care trade stays away, how the antagonist gets the equipment, and fighting the antagonist's thugs. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to operate an underground medical clinic. Their motivation is to turn a profit exploiting people who have nowhere else to turn for help. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>15</u>

The protagonists are enjoying an exotic vacation, but the technology that sustains the resort malfunctions with deadly results.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They will need the means to go an on exotic vacation to a place appropriate to the setting — a pleasure planet, an orbital spa, an undersea resort, or something similar.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive until help arrives or repairs can be made. Rescuing other people and stopping the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have made it through the crisis, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be life support — shelter, water, food, possibly oxygen and heat depending on the setting. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include facing environmental hazards, fights over resources, and the impacts of the antagonist's plans. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they try to stop repairs or rescue operations.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to commit industrial espionage and sabotage the vacation spot. Their motivation is to create negative publicity that their employer, the location's competition, can capitalize upon. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>16</u>

An older, retired character rejoins the work force, and almost gets the protagonists killed trying to do things the old-fashioned way.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific sorts of abilities or any particular type of background. The retiree, who acts as the unintentional antagonist, should be created or adapted to work in the same field as the protagonists. The reason they are needed back in the field might also tie into recent events in your canon.

Story Goal

The objective is to find a way to deal with the antagonist. Meeting some stated goal or convincing someone in charge that the antagonist is dangerous are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have figured out what to do with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on accidents and interference. The least difficult challenge will be fixing small mistakes the antagonists makes. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include life-threatening situations, dealing with political situations, and preventing hurt feelings. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist and resolving the issues.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to provide the protagonists with the benefit of their experience. Their motivation is to be a useful and productive member of society, something that didn't get in retirement. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

17

The protagonists become the subject of a documentary, and the director turns out to be an uplifted chimpanzee.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have done something worth making a documentary about. Presumably this will connect to their job, some event in their personal history, or a previous story in your canon.

Story Goal

The objective is to endure the making of the documentary. Dealing with the director, who acts as the antagonist, and handling the fallout once the doc is released are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have wrapped filming, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on exaggerated filming processes. The least difficult challenge will be answering awkward, "gotcha" type questions the antagonist asks. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include tests of patience and endurance. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist to try to work out a way to work together.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make the protagonists look foolish. Their motivation is that they don't like humans. They might have justifiable reasons to distrust humans in general or the protagonists in particular, or they may just be a bigot. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

18

After inheriting the family business holdings, a young woman finds her life in danger as corporate interests try to strip her of her shares.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a particular type of background. They should have some connection to the young woman, or a plausible reason why she might ask them for help.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Protecting the woman's business interests and the reputation of her family are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be sorting out what's happening from a legal standpoint. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include threats, vandalism, and acts of violence. The final obstacle should include a confrontation with the antagonist and their minions.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to gain controlling interest of the family's business holdings. Their motivation is that they feel they deserve it more than the young woman who inherited. They might be another family member, or a long-term employee who has put a lot into building the company. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

19

A protagonist attempts to sabotage the laboratory where transplant organs for powerful world leaders are grown.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special type of background or any particular skills. A connection to the lab or its employees, or a plausible reason for the protagonists to be called in to help with the situation, should be devised.

Story Goal

The objective is to protect the laboratory. Capturing the antagonist and figuring out who they're working for are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have secured the lab, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be securing the location. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include discovering sabotage, finding who the antagonist has on the inside, and defending against a straight-on attack. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare their final attack.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy the laboratory. Their motivation is to cause the death of an ill or injured world leader. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

20

The protagonists travel back in time to prevent the antagonist from murdering their younger selves.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have access to time travel. They do not have to be trained agents, or possess special skills, but there should be some reason in your canon why the antagonist would want to erase them from history.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Preserving the timeline and making sense of time travel are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have prevented their own murders, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the antagonist's plan. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include avoiding actions that change the timeline, dealing with the hazards of the earlier time period, and staying hidden from people the protagonist know in the past. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they attempt to kill the protagonists' younger selves.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to erase the protagonists and change history. Their motivation is to prevent interference with their plans and get a do-over. This premise will work best with a returning antagonist.

<u>21</u>

The protagonists goes to extremes to capture the antagonist before he can unleash a harmful discovery.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a particular type of background. They do need to have learned what the antagonist is up to somehow, and have a vested interest in stopping it.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist from using the discovery. Understanding what it does and bringing the antagonist to justice are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have neutralized the threat, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on pursuit. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the antagonist's plan. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include tracking the antagonist, engaging in chases, and saving innocent bystanders. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they are about to use the discovery.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use something dangerous that they have discovered. What it does is up to you, and should be appropriate to the setting. It might be a weapon, or it could have some other effect. The antagonist's motivation is to gain the power the discovery can bring them. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

22

The protagonists face challenges as they gain a promotion and take on new responsibilities.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to be in a period of transition. They might be students moving up a grade or graduating, moving into a higher level job, or facing a significant life event.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to adapt to a new situation. Dealing with the antagonist and completing some nominal task are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists show that they're ready to take on this new phase of their life, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on the unfamiliar. The least difficult challenge will be understanding what's expected of them now. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with people who doubt their competence, handing new rivals, and overcoming attempts to sabotage their success. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist that demonstrates the protagonists' worthiness.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to set the protagonist up to fail and sabotage their success. Their motivation might be jealousy, fear of competition, or a genuine concern that they're unready or undeserving of their new role. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

23

The protagonists struggle with bizarre personality changes and unfamiliar memories after receiving new computer equipment.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have established personality traits, so that changes are obvious. The new equipment might be the hot new device everyone is getting for personal use, or gear issued by their employer.

Story Goal

The objective is to discover why the changes are happening. Uncovering the antagonist's plan and reversing the issues are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have solved the problem of the changes, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be connecting the false memories and personality shifts to the new gear. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include resisting the control of the software, tracking down the antagonist, and figuring out how to remove the influence from their brains. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as part of halting the master plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to implement a mind control scheme through devices and programs. Their motivation is to take over the world. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>24</u>

The protagonists suspect a colleague is up to something when they no longer appear on security records.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a job with both security concerns and regular surveillance. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that does who can ask the protagonists for help.

Story Goal

The objective is to learn the antagonist's secret. Stopping them and reinforcing security to prevent future issues are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have figured out what's going on, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be noticing that the antagonist is absent from surveillance cameras. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include how they're circumventing security, where they're going, and what they're doing. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they execute their master plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to steal secrets. Their motivation might be because they're being paid or blackmailed to do so. They might have devised the plan themselves, or be using tech provided to them by their employer/client. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

25

During the holidays, the protagonists get saddled with a strange visiting expert there to help investigate a series of murders.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have something in their background that make their involvement in a murder investigation plausible. They might be professional investigators, subject matter experts, or connected to the victims or suspects somehow.

Story Goal

The objective is to solve the murders in time to enjoy the holiday. Catching the killer and dealing with the weird expert are secondary considerations that will resolve themselves when the story goal has been met. Once the protagonists are able to prove who the killer is, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on how the holiday is celebrated in the setting. The least difficult challenge will be investigating new crime scenes and gathering clues. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include holiday-themed obstacles, people trying to get them to put the investigation aside until after the holidays, and determining that the weird expert isn't secretly the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to make their next kill.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill. Their motivation is because they hate the premise for the holidays, which are based on tradition and don't align with current culture. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist, so that the expert can legitimately be considered a suspect.

The protagonists visit a low-tech area, and have to defeat the antagonist without their familiar gear.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special sort of background. They should not have much in the way of low-tech skills, in order to make the lack of familiar technology a genuine challenge.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist. Learning about the low-tech culture and getting by without gear are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on doing things without technological conveniences. The least difficult challenge will the lack of communication and instant access to information. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with hostile technophobes, learning to use outmoded tech, and locating the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist, who still has their advanced tech.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to hide out in a place where they will be difficult to locate. Their motivation is to evade justice for something they did previously. This premise will work best with a returning antagonist.

<u>27</u>

One of the protagonists begins a romantic relationship, but the new love interest isn't what they seem to be.

Protagonists

This premise requires one of the protagonists to be in the early stages of a relationship. It is best if this has been introduced in a previous story, so the love interest is a little more established but not fully fleshed-out.

Story Goal

The objective is to sort out the relationship. It doesn't matter whether they romantic partners break up or stay together. Defeating the antagonist and sorting out the romantic partner's secrets are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have worked through the relationship issues, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on the complications in a relationship between a human and a nonhuman. The love interest can be an an alien, a nonhuman, an altered human, or anything appropriate to the setting. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the secret. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with prejudices, discovering why the romantic partner was keeping the secret, and handling threats, vandalism, and violence. The final obstacle should a confrontation with the antagonist who is terrorizing the romantic partner.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to harass the nonhuman romantic partner and, by extension, the protagonists. Their motivation is bigotry and hatred for whatever the romantic partner identifies as, and the fact that they are passing for human in an attempt to avoid discrimination. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>28</u>

The protagonists discover that a wealthy executive has been financing a domestic terrorist cell in order to undermine his business rivals.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a particular sort of background. Being part of a law enforcement or intelligence community makes sense, but ordinary people getting swept up into extraordinary circumstances is equally exciting.

Story Goal

The objective is to expose the terrorist connection. Stopping terrorist actions and capturing the antagonist are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have gathered evidence of the antagonist's activities, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be discovering what the antagonist has been doing. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include gathering evidence, hiding the investigation from the antagonist, surviving murder attempts by the terrorists. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist prior to the next planned terrorist attack.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to do irreparable harm to a business competitor. Their motivation is to create a monopoly and make a lot of money. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

29

The protagonists awaken locked in the hold of a ship, and have to figure out how they got there and how to escape.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a particular type of background. Having a canonical enemy who wants to harm them, or a plausible reason why a new antagonist would want to get the protagonists out of the way, will be helpful to make the premise work.

Story Goal

The objective is to escape the ship. It might be a spaceship, a boat, or some other sort of vessel. Stopping the antagonist and foiling their plan are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have accomplished gotten free, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be realizing where they are and what is happening. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include locating resources, overcoming booby traps, and crafting a viable escape plan. The final obstacle should be getting out of the ship and confronting the antagonist as they prepare to carry out their plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get the protagonists out of the way. Their motivation is to execute some master plan without interference from the protagonists, or possibly to use the disappearance or death of the protagonists as a distraction. This premise can work with an unfamiliar antagonist if the protagonists have a reputation, but a returning antagonist will have more emotional impact.

<u>30</u>

The protagonists stumble upon a dead body, but the victim is from another time period.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a particular type of background. They should be able to recognize the signs that the victim is from another time period, past or future. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character with the appropriate knowledge that can assist the protagonists as needed.

Story Goal

The objective is to solve the mystery. Catching the killer and dealing with the ramifications of time travel are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have figured out what happened, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be working out when the victim came from and how they were killed. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include gathering clues to the killer's identity, tracking the killer, and dealing with time-travel paradoxes. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the prepare to murder the victim the protagonists found at the start of the story.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the victim. Their motivation is to prevent the victim from doing something that will create a problem for the antagonist later. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

<u>31</u>

__The antagonist goes to extremes to evade capture by the protagonists so they can execute their master plan.__

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have skills applicable to a chase-oriented adventure. This might mean piloting, driving, riding, or running, depending upon what's most appropriate to the setting

Story Goal

The objective is to catch the protagonist. Stopping their plan is a secondary consideration that will likely be met automatically by fulfilling the story goal. Once the protagonists have capture the antagonist the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on pursuit. The least difficult challenge will be discovering to antagonist's plan and initiating the chase. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include environmental hazards, physical obstacles, and keeping innocent bystanders out of harm's way. The final obstacle should be a catching the antagonist as they are about to implement their plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to evade capture. Their motivation is to implement their plan without interference. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

32

A protagonist seeks to master an ability, while the antagonist works to insure the protagonist's failure.

Protagonists

This premise requires at least one of the protagonists to have some sort of personal or professional goal that they are pursuing. This premise works best if they are passionate about achieving it.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonist to master the ability in question. Defeating the antagonist and gaining any rewards that come with the skill mastery are secondary considerations that will be handled by meeting the story goal. Once the protagonists have demonstrated their proficiency with the ability, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on ways the ability can be used. The least difficult challenge will be demonstrating its basic application. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include creative uses, demonstrating the ability under difficult conditions, and dealing with the antagonist's attempts to sabotage the protagonists. The final obstacle should involve defeating the antagonist using the ability in question.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make the protagonists fail. Their motivation might be personal or professional jealousy or a belief that the protagonist is unworthy. Their motive may also be benign, and they are simply trying to insure that the protagonist is truly ready. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

33

The secret of who has been murdering young people and stealing their organs may lay with a terminally ill man.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills. A background in medicine or investigation will help connect the protagonists to the premise. The protagonists may simply have a connection to the young people being killed.

Story Goal

The objective is to catch the killer. Saving more kids and unmasking the full scale of the antagonist's operation are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have identified and captured the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be making a connection between the dead and missing people. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include gathering clues, narrowing down the list of suspects, and discovering the black market organ ring. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist in their secret medical laboratory.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to replace their failing organs with those of healthy young people. They've been doing it for a while, and have expanded their operation to doing the same for other wealthy people. Their motivation is to live forever. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

34

A nonhuman is interested in pursuing a relationship with a protagonist, but a racist antagonist plans to put a permanent stop to that idea.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a particular type of background. The nonhuman can be whatever type of beings are appropriate to the setting. They should be reasonably common and integrated, but still victims of bigotry in the protagonist's society.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Dealing with the relationship and solving society's problems are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have put an end to the antagonist's plans, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on defense. The least difficult challenge will be dealing with threats and harassment. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include vandalism, violence, and more subtle and insidious forms of discrimination. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they attempt to kill a bunch of non-humans and their "sympathizers".

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill non-humans. Their motivation is to protect what they feel is an attack on their own species and culture by both the non-humans and the humans who tolerate and accept their presence in society. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

35

At a bar in the middle of nowhere, the protagonists have to locate a smuggler carrying dangerous cargo.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special sort of skills. They should have a background that allows them to discover the existence of the dangerous cargo and the antagonist's plans, but they can be professionals or ordinary people swept up in the plot.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist's plan. Catching the antagonist and turning things over to the proper authorities are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists secured the cargo necessary to implement the plan, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on pursuit. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the plan. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include locating the smuggler, convincing them that their cargo isn't what the think it is, and dealing with attacks from the antagonist's minions. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they come to claim the cargo.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to do something terrible. To do this, they need the items that the smuggler has been paid to illegally transport into the area. The antagonist's motivation is likely some form or revenge or an ideologically-motivated act of terrorism. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

36

A self-proclaimed psychic claims to have details of a coming disaster and the protagonists can stop it — if they believe him.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a particular type of background. They get pulled in because the psychic has seen their involvement in a vision. If has been established that mental powers exist in the setting, the protagonists might take him seriously. If such abilities do not exist in your canon, they will likely treat him with skepticism.

Story Goal

The objective is to avert a disaster. Stopping the antagonist and proving whether mental powers are real or not are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have done what is necessary to prevent a tragedy, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be verifying the evidence the psychic presents, regardless of how they got it. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include uncovering the antagonist's plan, figuring out where and when they plan to strike, and deciding the best way to stop the disaster. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to initiate the disaster.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to cause mass destruction. Their motivation might be personal, professional, or ideological; revenge, corporate sabotage, or terrorism are all viable reasons for the antagonist to do this terrible thing. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>37</u>

An antagonist goes on a killing spree using murder methods from classic science fiction movies.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of science fiction cinema. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character with the appropriate knowledge that can assist the protagonists as needed. It works best, though, if you don't need to explain the references.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the killer. Saving lives and figuring out how they're putting together the elaborate reenactments are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have caught the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be finding the connections between the murders. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include determining who the killer is, figuring out what movie they plan to reenact next, and deducing who is on their list of victims. The final obstacle should be an elaborate set piece where the antagonist attempts to kill the protagonists using a method from a classic science fiction movie.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill people. Their motivation is demonstrate their knowledge of science fiction films and their ability to build working props, costumes, and sets. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

38

The protagonists need to help a tech journalist who has discovered a dark secret, and the antagonist is willing to kill to keep it.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have and special abilities are a particular type of background. They might have a connection to the journalist, and a plausible reason why they'd turn to the protagonists for help. The protagonists might also have some connection, even unwittingly, to the dark secret.

Story Goal

The objective is to save the journalist so they can get the story out. Defeating the antagonist and learning the full details of the secret are secondary considerations that will be handled by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have insured the journalist's safety, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on pursuit. The least difficult challenge will be understanding the danger the journalist is in. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include hiding, running, and being attacked by the antagonist's associated. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist prior to getting the story out to the world.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to keep their dark secret. Their motivation is not have their plans ruined and go to jail, which will happen if people discover what they've done. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

39

A designer disease may threaten all life on Earth unless the protagonists can stop the antagonist from releasing it.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific type of background or abilities. Medical and scientific abilities will be handy and useful. If the protagonists do not have those skills, be sure to include a supporting character with the appropriate knowledge that can assist the protagonists as needed.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the release of the disease. Stopping the antagonist, finding a cure, and learning the full scope of the antagonist's plans are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have prevented the outbreak, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation and pursuit. The least difficult challenge will be learning about what the antagonist is planning. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include finding where they plan to release the disease, chasing the antagonist, and avoiding physical hazards during the pursuit. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they threaten to release the disease.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy the world. Their motivation is a warped ideology that humans have screwed everything up and that the antagonist is actually rebooting the planet. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

40

A construction site uncovers an anachronistic piece of technology, and the protagonists have to stop the antagonist from stealing it.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have a specific type of background or any particular skills. They don't need to understand the tech any more than the construction workers did. The protagonists might have a plausible reason to get called, or may just get swept up in events.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist from using the tech. Capturing the antagonist and understanding what the tech does are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have defeated the antagonist's plan, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be understanding that the tech is extremely dangerous. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include battles to gain control of the tech, tracking the antagonist to their lab, and a chase scene to catch the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist at the site where they plan to use the tech.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the anachronistic tech. It might be something from the past or the future. It could be a weapon, or something that will have some other undesirable effect. Their motivation is to use the tech's power for personal gain. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>41</u>

The protagonists attempt to rescue the survivors of an industrial accident, but the antagonist has other plans.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some background or skills relevant to being called to the site of an industrial accident. The location and type of accident should be appropriate to the technology of the setting. They might be first responders, or simply be in the area when the event takes place.

Story Goal

The objective is to rescue the people trapped within the facility. Catching the antagonist and foiling the plans are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have gotten the survivors to safety, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on search and rescue operations. The least difficult challenge will be locating where survivors are trapped. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include moving through a crumbling or malfunctioning facility, dealing with environmental hazards like heat, smoke, and fire, and keeping panicked people from doing foolish things. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to steal something, possibly information or technology, from the facility. The accident was an act of sabotage meant to gain them access and cover the crime. The antagonist's motivation is to sell the stolen item to the facility's competitors. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

42

A protagonist meets the love of their life, but the antagonist conspires to keep the new romantic partners apart.

Protagonists

This premise requires one of the protagonists to have a new relationship. The trappings should reflect the possibilities of the setting. This can be something that as established in a previous story, or introduced in the first act of this one. A little bit of history with the relationship will give this premise more of an emotional impact.

Story Goal

The objective is to deal with the antagonist. Maintaining the relationship and sorting out the antagonist's problems are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have taken care of the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on protection. The least difficult challenge will be determining who the antagonist is. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include harassment, threats, vandalism, and even violence. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they attempt to murder one or both of the romantic partners.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to win over one of the romantic partners. They might have a thing for the protagonist or the new love interest. Their motivation is jealousy. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

43

The protagonists return to their hometown for a special event only to find people behaving strangely.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have an established home town, with a few supporting characters that have at least been mentioned in prior stories if not seen. This can be retconned in during the first act, but there is more emotional impact if these details are already part of your canon. It is also easier to identify that characters are behaving strangely if their normal behavior has already been demonstrated.

Story Goal

The objective is put an end to the antagonist's plan. Catching the antagonist and saving the town are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved as part of achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have foiled the plan, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be in noticing that people aren't quite themselves. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include determining the cause of the behavior changes, tying the cause to the antagonist, and locating the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they implement their master plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to perfect a mind control technique. Their motivation is to sell it to media companies to create loyal viewers and consumers. They have chosen the protagonists' hometown as their test market, but the methods have a telltale side effect that manifests as behavioral changes. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

44

The protagonists have to save an historic neighborhood from corporate developers.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any particular skills or a specific type of background. They should have some vested interest in preserving the neighborhood, to increase the emotional impact of the premise.

Story Goal

The objective is to expose the antagonist's plan. Catching the protagonist and saving the neighborhood are secondary considerations that will be resolved by meeting the story goal. Once the protagonists have made the antagonist's intentions public, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be in identifying the antagonist and learning that they have a secret. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include discovering the secret, gathering up proof, and surviving the hired thugs sent by the antagonist to stop the protagonists. The final obstacle should be a public confrontation with the antagonist where their dirty secret is revealed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the site for some dangerous purpose not in the public interest. This is in opposition to their claims that the new development will benefit people in the area. Their motivation is to make a lot of money. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

45

A new drug targets nonhuman users, creating problems for the protagonists.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any particular type of background or any specific skills. A connection to the nonhuman community, in a way that what affects that community somehow impacts the protagonists, makes the story plausible. The type of nonhuman should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Dealing with drug addiction and the issues of the nonhuman community are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have taken care of the drug dealers, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on addiction-related challenges. The least difficult challenge will be identifying the substance the non-humans are consuming and analyzing its effects. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include locating the dealers, handling violent confrontation with dealers and addicts, and tracking down the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as a new shipment of the drug arrives.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to disrupt and destabilize the nonhuman community. Their motivation might just be to make money, or it could stem from bigotry and a desire to do harm. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>46</u>

The protagonists have to protect an ordinary family mistakenly targeted by assassins.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have a particular type of background or any special skills. They should have a connection to the family in need of protection, or some other plausible reason for getting involved. The sorts of assassins involved should reflect the possibilities within the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to save the family. Defeating the antagonist and uncovering the truth are secondary considerations that will likely be addressed by meeting the story goal. Once the protagonists have insured the family's safety, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on protection. The least difficult challenge will be figuring out why the family was attacked. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include fending off further attacks, getting the family to safety, and uncovering the truth about one of the family members. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist once the truth of the attacks has become clear.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill one of the family members. That person is a former assassin. Their motivation might be to close a loose end, or to get revenge for a killing that the family member performed. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>47</u>

A government official confesses to a crime the protagonists know he didn't commit, and they have to figure out why.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have and special abilities or a particular type of background. A plausible reason why they know the official is innocent should tie into their background, or the events of a previous story. The nature of the crime and the sort of official should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Saving the official and solving the crime are secondary considerations that will be resolved in the process of achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be finding evidence to prove the official could not have done it. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include determining why they're lying, tracking down the real antagonist, and finding evidence to prove the antagonist did it. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists present evidence of the official's innocence.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to take the official out of play. The official is taking the fall because the antagonist is threatening their family. The antagonist's motivation might be to take over the official's job, or to implement some plan that the official has stood in the way of until now. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>48</u>

A religious woman claims to have found proof of the existence of the paranormal, and the protagonists have to investigate.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific sorts of skills or a particular type of background. Knowledge of religion and the paranormal will come in handy but isn't required. If the protagonists do not, be sure to include a supporting character with the appropriate information that can assist the protagonists as needed. The approach to religion and the paranormal should be appropriate to the setting's canon.

Story Goal

The objective is to expose the antagonist's plan. Dealing with religious issues and belief in the paranormal are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have handled the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be in verifying the woman's claims. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with angry believers, dealing with angry skeptics, and uncovering who the antagonist is. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they attempt to perpetrate a massive hoax.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to fake the existence of the paranormal. Their motivation is to manipulate people, forming a cult of loyal followers who will provide them with financial resources and manpower. Even if there are paranormal forces within the setting, the antagonist's divine miracles are all fake. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

49

The protagonists are trapped by a malfunctioning security system, and have to figure out how to survive and escape.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific sort of background or skills. Some knowledge of the security system is useful, but too much will make the premise less interesting. The nature of the security system and the type of facility the protagonists are trapped inside should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to escape. This can be met by surviving long enough for the system to automatically reset itself. Determining why it malfunctioned and dealing with the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have gotten out, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on problem solving. The least difficult challenge will be assessing the resources they have available to them. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include conservation of things like heat and air, locating tools that can be used to escape, and surviving the more violent aspects of the security system. The final obstacle should involve determining who the antagonist was, and figuring out how to override the malfunctions based on that.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to test security system and demonstrate its weaknesses. Their motivation is to secure a contract to provide an expensive, upgrades system. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>50</u>

A nonhuman antagonist kidnaps a human, but their true motive isn't what it appears to be.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonist to have any special skills or any particular sort of background. The protagonists should have a connection to the kidnap victim, in order to increase the emotional impact of the setting, and to make their involvement plausible. The type of nonhuman should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to prevent the antagonist from causing a riot. Capturing them and saving the kidnap victim are secondary considerations that will likely be addressed in the course of achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists stopped the master plan, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action and investigation. The least difficult challenge will be locating the kidnap victim. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include diffusing tensions between the human and nonhuman communities, figuring out what the larger plan is, and locating the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist before they can trigger the next phase of their plan.

Antagonists

The antagonist is actually a human. Their goal is to frame non-humans for the crime and bring tensions between the two communities to a head. Their motivation isn't bigotry, but real estate. If the non-humans get run out, they can buy up property for development very cheaply. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

51

The protagonists must find a way out of a delicate situation without setting off the volatile antagonist and creating an incident.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a particular type of background. A plausible reason for the protagonists to discover the antagonist's plan before it goes public will help sell the premise. The methods the antagonist will use to spread their information should be appropriate to the setting — social media, virtual reality, holographic projections, whatever works in context.

Story Goal

The objective is to diffuse the situation. Stopping the antagonist and saving lives are secondary considerations that will be encompassed by the main story goal. Once the protagonists have calmed things down, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on diplomacy. The least difficult challenge will be to determine what the antagonist is planning to do. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include keeping the plan from becoming public, preventing a widespread panic, and distracting the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation that takes out the antagonist without alerting the media.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to spread panic and chaos. They want to let the world know what they're up to before the do it to generate buzz, and stream it while it's happening. Their motivation is to become the most famous person in the world, even for a little while. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

52

A supporting character comes out as something society considers to be taboo, and the protagonists have to protect them from a moralizing antagonist.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have a specific sort of background or any particular type of skills. They should have an established relationship with the supporting character, to make the premise plausible and increase the emotional resonance. The taboo should be appropriate to the setting, and probably something specific to the canon.

Story Goal

The objective is to protect the supporting character. Stopping the antagonist and spreading a message of tolerance are secondary considerations that will likely be met in achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have seen to the supporting character's safety, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be dealing with threats and harassment. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include vandalism, acts of violence, and tracking down the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they try to whip a mob up into a frenzy.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get society to reject the supporting character and embrace the taboo. Their motivation is to enforce their own strict code or morality and values. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

53

When the protagonists explore an unfamiliar region, they discover a massive creature living there.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a background that would place them in an unexplored region. It could be a remote part of the Earth, another planet, or a region of space as appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to escape the creature. Defeating the antagonist and gathering the information on the area that the protagonists were sent there to retrieve are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have survived their encounter, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on exploration. The least difficult challenge will be learning that the creature exists. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with native who worship it, battling other strange creatures that inhabit the area, and learning the antagonist's plans. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists make their final escape from the creature.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get genetic samples of the creature. Their motivation is to use the samples in cloning and genetic engineering experiments to create weaponized creatures. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

54

The protagonists discover a machine that can exchange messages one day into the future, and try to use it to avert a disaster.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific skills or particular type of background. There might be a plausible reason for them to come across the machine based on previous stories, or it might be a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

Story Goal

The objective is to avert the disaster. Figuring out how the machine works or what it can from are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have save the day, the machine disappears and the story comes to an end. How do they talk to their future selves without the machine? Perhaps they changed the timeline so it never happened.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be figuring out what the disaster will be. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include deciphering the clues their future selves are sharing, determining when and where it will take place, and locating the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they are about to trigger the disaster.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to cause a disaster. Their motivation is to avoid a personal problem that is trivial compared to the destruction they're going to cause, based on information their future self provided via another machine. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

55

The protagonists discover a plot to assassinate a government official, but the gangs and the police don't want them to prevent it from happening.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any particular skills are a specific type of background. Some sort of investigative abilities and connections will be useful, but this premise works just as well for ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the assassination. Uncovering the corruption and catching the assassin are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved in the process of meeting the story goal. Once the protagonists have save the official, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the assassination plot. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include evading whatever sorts of police and criminal elements are appropriate to the setting, trying to get to the target to warn them, and battling people who don't want the assassination foiled. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the assassin as they prepare to kill the target.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the government official. The role of the target should be adapted to whatever is most appropriate to the setting. Their motivation is that they are being paid by a coalition of people, including corrupt police and gangsters, as payback for the reforms the official is bringing about. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

<u>56</u>

A killer claiming to be the historical Jack the Ripper is found dead, and the protagonists have to figure out who murdered the murderer.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of history, at least a superficial grasp of famous crimes. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character with the appropriate skills and knowledge that can assist the protagonists as needed.

Story Goal

The objective is to find the antagonist. Determining whether the victim is the real Jack the Ripper and learning how they got there are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have captured the killer, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be collecting clues and gathering leads. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include attempts on the protagonists' lives, sorting through theories of how the victim could be the Ripper, and determining who the antagonist is. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill. Their motivation is the belief that they are Jack the Ripper, and their victim was an impostor. It's up to you to decide whether either the victim or the antagonist are the ripped, and how they're alive in the present day of the setting. A compelling case should be made, enough to make the protagonists believe, even briefly, that it's possible even if both Rippers are fake. This premise will work best with an antagonist who can emulate the methods and general tone of the Ripper's murders.

57

On New Year's Eve a technological disaster strikes, endangering a fancy party whose guest list includes the protagonists.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a particular sort of background. A plausible reason for them to be attending a posh New Year's Even party helps sell the premise. The nature of the disaster will depend upon what's appropriate for the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive the disaster. Defeating the protagonist, saving other party goers, and solving the tech problems are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have made it through the crisis, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be determining what is happening and understanding what that means. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dangerous things like fire, flooding, and electrical hazards, panicked people making foolish decisions, and figuring out that the disaster wasn't an accident. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they attempt to escape.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the party and the disaster to cover evidence of their crime. Their motivation is to steal something incredibly valuable from the party. They have orchestrated the disaster, knowing that it would put many lives in danger. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

58

A mysterious plague only affects humans, and the protagonists have to prevent the disease from spreading.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have and particular skills or a specific type of background. They should have a plausible reason for not being affected by the plaque so far.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the spread of the disease. The initial outbreak was only a test, and the antagonist plans a much wider release. Catching the protagonist and finding a cure for those already infested are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have contained the illness, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be figuring out that the antagonist is releasing the disease. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include determining where they plan to strike next, getting into chases after the antagonist, and surviving the antagonist's attempts to kill them. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to release a larger batch of the disease.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to wipe out a large portion of the human population. Their motivation is the belief that the survivors will go on to create a better, stronger, superior human race. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>59</u>

An eccentric oligarch uses his fortune to recreate the magical land of his favorite childhood stories, but it's a deathtrap for the protagonists.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some working knowledge of a popular childhood fantasy land. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character with the appropriate skills and knowledge that can assist the protagonists as needed. The technology used to create the land should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive. Shutting down the fantasy land and dealing with the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists are safe, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be realizing that there is a dark underside to the fantasy land, and things are malfunctioning. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include hiding from murderous monsters, fighting fantasy creatures, and tracking down the site's control room. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist prior to getting to safety.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make their childhood dreams come to life. Their motivation is equal parts selfishness and greed. Unfortunately they were a bit too accurate in their recreations, and the fantasy is lethal. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

60

A man awakens from a coma convinced that he was kidnapped by faeries, and believing that all non-humans are magical changelings.

Protagonists

This premise does not requires the protagonists to have particular sort of background. Knowledge of mythical creatures and fairy tales may be helpful, but is not necessary. The type of non-humans involved should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist from doing something dangerous. Getting them back to "normal" and determining if they're right about the faeries are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have insured everyone's safety, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the antagonist's newfound beliefs. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include keeping them out of trouble, uncovering their master plan, and warning potential victims. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist with the truth as they attempt to implement their plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kidnap and possibly kill random, innocent non-humans. Their motivation is to get revenge on the fae creatures that kidnapped him. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

61

After being harmed by the antagonist, the protagonists take justice into their own hands to even the score.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have had something happen to them, and the system did not provide them with justice or make them whole. This might be to a failure in the system, or because the protagonists are not satisfied with what the system is able to do. The details should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to get revenge on the antagonist. This could be completely legal, gathering evidence to present a legal case, or something completely extralegal. Seeing justice done and setting things right are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have gotten the emotional satisfaction and closure they need, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on planning. The least difficult challenge will be working out what to do to the antagonist. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include gathering resources, finding allies, and not getting caught. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists execute their plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to evade justice. Their motivation is to not have their freedom and possibly their possessions and relationships stripped from them. This premise will only work with a returning antagonist.

62

The protagonists have to make a choice between capturing the antagonist and saving the lives of an entire community.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or abilities. They might have an established reason to be after the antagonist, or may simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The type of community should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to make a difficult choice. Saving people and dealing with the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have made a decision and dealt with the ramifications, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on evaluating options and priorities. The protagonists will have multiple things to do, but will be unable to do all of them. The least difficult challenge will be deciding on which leads to investigate first, knowing that people not questioned may flee and crime scenes not investigated may be cleaned up. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include having multiple bystanders to save, more than one possible hideout to check, and several ideas as to what the antagonist's plan might be. The final obstacle should be the confrontation with the antagonist where the decision to capture him or save the innocents has to be made.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get away with a heist. Their motivation is to make a lot of money and spent it somewhere far, far away. To do this, they are imperiling innocent people as a distraction to keep law enforcement resources tied up. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

63

People are being attacked and drained of blood, and the protagonists begin to wonder if vampires are real.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific sorts of skills or a particular type of background. A plausible reason to be involved in the premise is helpful. Perhaps the protagonists are investigators, tied to medical profession, on know one of the victims.

Story Goal

The objective is to catch the antagonist. Determining whether vampires are real and sorting out what's actually happening are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have stopped the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be finding a common link between the victims. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include learning why the antagonist wants blood, tracking down the location of the laboratory, and preventing further attacks. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the attempt to claim another victim.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to collect blood. Their motivation is to further their illegal, immoral, and unethical medical experiments into life extension. They want to be immortal, and then sell immortality to rich people. This premise will work with best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

<u>64</u>

The protagonists begin to suspect that they've been implanted with false memories, and that they may not be who they think they are.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have and special skills or a particular sort of background. The needs of the premise will be different depending upon how well-established the protagonists are. It may be more plausible to sell the premise with newer characters than with those who have several stories already in the canon. The methods of implanting the false memories should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to determine where the false memories came from. How and why the antagonist did it are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the implanted memories, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on sorting truth from fiction. The least difficult challenge will be rectifying contradictions, as evidence says one thing but the protagonists memories say another. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include making decisions based on false information, having awkward interactions with supporting characters due to the fake memories, and tracking down the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists' real memories assert themselves.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to undermine the protagonists' credibility and destroy their reputation. Their motivation may be to get revenge for a past defeat, or remove them from operation prior to the antagonist's next plan. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

65

A game show promises a new life for the winners, but the protagonists wonder what happens to the losers.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have and special skills or a particular type of background. There has to be a plausible reason for them to be involved with the premise, possibly a connection to the entertainment industry or a relationship with one of the contestants.

Story Goal

The objective is to uncover the dark secret of the game show. Saving the contestants and stopping the antagonist are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have make the game show's real agenda public, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be learning that there is a common thread between the winning contestants. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include attempts on the protagonists' lives, discovering who the antagonist behind the show is, and learning what the actual plan entails. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist at the studio where the show is recorded.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the game show to screen candidates for an experiment. Their motivation is a lack of volunteers for the research due to the danger involved. The new life promised to the winners should be appropriate to the setting, but is not as wonderful as it seems. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

66

A disgraced journalist plots revenge against a government official, and the protagonists get caught in the middle.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any particular skills. Their background should make it plausible that they would get caught up in the premise, either by affiliation with the government or through some established connection with the journalist. The type of government official and the causes for the journalist's disgrace should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist, the disgraced journalist, from doing something they will regret later. Protecting the government official and redeeming the journalist's reputation are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have prevented the antagonist from carrying out their plan, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be figuring out what the antagonist is planning to do. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include working out the plan, keeping the antagonist from getting caught, and protecting the official. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist before they can carry out their plan.

Antagonists

The disgraced journalist is the antagonist in this premise. Their goal is to destroy the official's reputation. Their motivation is revenge for damage the official may have done to the antagonist's career. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

67

A dying friend asks the protagonists to fulfill his last wish, but the antagonist knows the friend's dark secret.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have an established supporting character who is dying, or who has possibly died in an earlier story. A person from a protagonist's past can be retconned in if necessary, but that will lack the emotional impact of a familiar supporting character.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to fulfill the last wish. Defeating the antagonist and dealing with the dark secret are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have done as their late friend wished, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be making a plan to fulfill the final request. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include the antagonist's interference, protecting the dark secret, and dealing with travel hazards. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonist prepare to complete the last request.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to tarnish the deceased supporting character's memory. Their motivation might be a continuation of some rivalry that they won't allow to end with the character's death, or revenge that cannot be achieved. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

68

A war veteran enlists the protagonists to help him fulfill a promise made to a fallen comrade.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a plausible reason for the war veteran to ask them for aid. This might be an established relationship with the character, something in the protagonist's backgrounds, or special skills or abilities that they possess. Where and how the veteran served should be appropriate to the setting, and tie into you story world's history.

Story Goal

The objective is to help the veteran fulfill the promise. Defeating the antagonist and understanding the particular of their issues are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have completed their task, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on travel. The least difficult challenge will be facing the hazards of going to an exotic place. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include attempts at sabotage by the antagonist, figuring out why someone is trying to stop them, and dealing with local dangers like strange people and hostile creatures. The final obstacle should involve a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists complete the request.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get something valuable that the veteran has. It could be an object, a piece of information, or the location of some treasure. Their motivation is the feeling that they, not the fallen soldier or the loving veteran, are the rightful and worthy owners of the thing. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

69

The protagonists have to survive a weird shift in the weather that they're not dressed or equipped for.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special sort of abilities or a particular type of background. The weather event should be appropriate to the setting, and steps should be taken to establish that it is not normal.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive. Stopping the antagonist and determining the cause of the weird weather event are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have made it through the event safely, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be understanding that the weather event is going to be more severe than anyone predicted. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include fighting for resources and shelter spaces, dealing with panicked people making foolish and dangerous choices, and figuring out what the antagonist is planning. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist before they get people killed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to insure their own safety with no regard for other people. Their motivation is to survive the weather event in comfort and style. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>70</u>

Following a surprise attack, the protagonists have to survive with communications out and resources dangerously low.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a particular type of background. Where they are attacked could tie into their professional lives, or they could simply be in the wrong place and the wrong time. The attack might be part of a war, or a terrorist attack, or some criminal activity, whatever is most appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive following the attack. Stopping the antagonist and rescuing other people are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have made it through the crisis, help will arrive and the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be making it though the initial attack. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include to include finding a way to call for help, stopping people from doing dangerous and foolish things, and avoiding the antagonist and their minions. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist right before help arrives.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill a lot of people. Their motivation is to secure the area for some purpose, part of a much larger plan. After the initial attack, they will be looking for survivors and trying to pick them off. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

71

The protagonist has to find the answer to a deadly question, but the antagonist doesn't want that information discovered.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a particular sort of background. The question that needs to be answered should relate to the most dire possible situation associated with one of the protagonists' jobs, as appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to find the answer. Stopping the antagonist and avoiding the ramifications of the answer are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have resolved the central question, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be determining the question that needs to be answered. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include rivals trying to answer the same question, finding resources required to come up with the answer, and dealing with people who are satisfied with the current lack of an answer. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the answer is about to be revealed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to stop the question from being answered. Their motivation might be ideological, if they are opposed to the social, political, or religious fallout the answer will cause. They may be a rival, trying to get the answer first, or wanting to push their own answer. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>72</u>

An amazing discovery is made, and the protagonists have to sort out the implications before the antagonist puts it to ill use.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a plausible reason to be present for the discovery. The nature of the discover should be appropriate to the technological level of the setting. The discovery has to have some dangerous application for the antagonist to exploit.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Capturing the antagonist and studying the discovery are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be defending the discovery. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dangerous chases, fights with opponents of the discovery, and uncovering the antagonist's plan. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to put the discovery to ill use.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the discovery. Their motivation is to acquire the power and/more money it can bring them. This premise will work best with a returning antagonist.

73

The protagonists have sensitive personal data stolen, and must recover it before the antagonist uses it to harm them.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have information that could be misused. This could be as simple as identity theft, or sensitive data related to their job, but should be tied to their background. The nature of the data, the way it is stored, and the manning in which is it stole should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Securing the data and capturing the antagonist are secondary considerations that will likely occur in the course of achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have prevented the data from being misused, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be in discovering the data has been stolen. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include determining who took it, dealing with blackmail or ransom demands, and thrilling chases trying to catch the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to use the data.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get something from the protagonists. This might be money, or coercing them to perform some task. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

When their ship is disabled, the protagonists find themselves on the estate of a wealthy antagonist who makes them fight other prisoners to the death.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a specific type of background. A plausible reason to be on a ship, possibly following another story, has to be given to make the premise interesting. The type of ship and the details of the remotely locate estate should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to escape. Defeating the antagonist and saving other prisoners are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have located a way off the estate, authorities can be contacted and the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be dealing with the hijacking or crashing of the ship. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include exploring the estate, getting into fights with other prisoners, and planning the escape. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist prior to escaping.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make people fight for his amusement. Their motivation is a psychopathic sense of entitlement. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists are kidnapped and implanted with explosives, which will kill them if they don't carry out a mission for the antagonist.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some sort of skills or background applicable to the mission the antagonist has planned. The implanted explosives should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist. Completing the mission and escaping are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have figured out a way to foil the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action and be tailored to the protagonists' abilities. The least difficult challenge will be surviving the kidnap attempt. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include planning the mission, the hazards of the mission, and deactivating the explosives. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist as they try to activate the bombs.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get the antagonists to steal something for them. It will require the special skills the protagonists have, or access to some place they can get into and out of easily because of their background. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>76</u>

A secret organization promises to take care of poor families if one family member agrees to become a suicide bomber.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have specific types of skills or a particular sort of background. A connection to one of the families will make it plausible for the protagonists to become involved in the premise. The ideology of the secret organization and the types of bombs used should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist. Stopping suicide bombers and saving the families are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the antagonist's plan. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include stopping bombings, learning where the antagonist is operating from, and getting families to safety. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to launch another attack.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to conduct terrorist attacks. Their motivation to promote some sort of twisted ideology and do harm to their enemies. This premise will work with an unfamiliar antagonist.

77

The protagonists discover a secret news feed, but none of the stories have happened yet.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific skills. The discovery of the new feed should dovetail with their history and what is appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to expose the manipulation of the media. Averting disasters and stopping the antagonist are are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have revealed with the antagonist is doing, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the news feed. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include realizing stories come true, finding out who is behind it, and avoiding attempts to silence the protagonists. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists expose their secret.

Antagonists

The antagonist owns a media company that is in collusion with corrupt forces within government. The goal of the antagonist is to issue government propaganda, and spin things the government is behind to look like accidents, terrorists attacks, or other sorts of events. In return for getting exclusives, the antagonist helps to things up. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

78

The protagonists follow a distress signal to an abandoned hospital, where they make a disturbing discovery.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some plausible reason to pick up distress signals. The location of the abandoned hospital should be appropriate to the setting. It might be in a remote area of Earth, under the sea, in orbit, or on another planet.

Story Goal

The objective is to discover the source of the distress signal. Apprehending the antagonist and figuring out what happened are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have found the beacon, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on search and rescue. The least difficult challenge will be pinpointing where the distress signal is coming from. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include environmental hazards in the area, dangers presented by the abandoned facility, figuring out what happened. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the truth becomes clear.

Antagonists

The antagonist is responsible for the deaths of the people in the hospital, and are the only survivor. They are a wanted criminal slated to be punished to the fullest extent allowed. What they did and how they accomplished it should be appropriate to the setting. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A supporting character asks the protagonists for help when they discover a living cryptid, and now someone wants them dead because of it.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have an established supporting character that has a fascination with cryptids. You can retcon them in, but it won't lend the premise the same impact or credibility as a character with some history. The nature of the cryptid depends upon what is appropriate for the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist. Proving the existence of the cryptid or figuring out how a hoax was perpetrated are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be accepting that the supporting character's claims might be credible. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include locating clues, gathering evidence, and encountering violent and competitive rival cryptid hunters. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they spring their trap on the protagonists.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to defeat the protagonists. The entire fake cryptid adventure is a trap set for them. The antagonist's motivation is to get revenge for some past slight or defeat. This premise will work best with a returning antagonist.

<u>80</u>

An old antagonist resurfaces in a dangerous slum, but is it a carefully set trap set for the protagonists?

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have an old foe who could come back to harass them. The nature of the slum will depend upon what is appropriate for the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist. Evading the trap and protecting innocent bystanders are secondary considerations that will likely be handled in achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be determining that the antagonist is free and hiding in the slum. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include fighting the antagonist's minions, evading traps, and preventing harm to the inhabitants of the slum. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they try to kill the protagonists.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the protagonists. Their motivation is straight-up revenge. Rather than hiding in the slum with no resources, a deception intended to make the protagonists underestimate them, they have constructed an elaborate trap. This premise will work only with a returning antagonist.

<u>81</u>

The protagonists become locked in a high-stakes competition with the antagonist, but only one side can win.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some skill or ability that lends itself to an interesting and exciting competition. Most of the story is built around showcasing the protagonists' proficiency with this ability.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist. Claiming the reward and avoiding the consequences of losing are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have won the competition, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on competition. The least difficult challenge will be using the ability in the most simple, basic way. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include atypical uses of the ability, interference from the antagonist, and the hardest conceivable obstacle you can possible think of. The final obstacle should be going head-to-head with the antagonist as they complete the last leg of the competition.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to win the competition. Their motivation might stem from a need to be the best, a desire to prove something, or resentment of the protagonists' abilities. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

82

The protagonists experience a financial windfall, and the antagonist tempts them into a dangerous world of wretched excess.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have earned or inherited what is considered to be a substantial sum of money in the context of the setting. The specific means of acquiring the funds and the sort of currency should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to overcome the temptation that can come with material wealth. Defeating the antagonist and finding a good use for the money are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have resisted falling into a pattern of excess, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on making moral and ethical choices. The least difficult challenge will be resisting small, selfish decisions. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include overcoming self-destructive behaviors, realizing others are hurting and in need, and gaining awareness of their own negative behaviors. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists realize they've been manipulated into making bad choices.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to lure the protagonists into doing bad things. They'll begin with small choices that arguably don't hurt anyone, and slowly escalate into selfish and destructive behaviors while justifying that other people are responsible for themselves and convincing the protagonists that they are deserving of rewards and a lifestyle of wretched excess. The antagonist's motivation might be sincere belief in the selfish lifestyle, or a willful plan to lure the protagonists into ethically and morally questionable behaviors. This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist.

83

The protagonists discover cryptic plans for a series of murders, and have to stop the antagonist before they figure out that the protagonists know.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific sorts of skills or a particular type of background. They might have come across the information as part of a professional investigation, or be ordinary people who have stumbled upon in. The nature of the plans and the way they are stored and discovered should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist before they can kill again. Saving lives and proving the antagonist's connection to previous killings are secondary considerations that will likely be addressed by meeting the story goal. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be in not tipping off the antagonist that they have the plans. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include locating the next victim, determining when and where the killing will take place, and finding the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare their next murder.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill people. Their motivation could be anything, but might remain unknown to increase the suspense of the premise. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>84</u>

Two brothers appear to be naive tourists taking in the sites, but the protagonists discover the duo is planning a heist.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific types of skills or a particular type of background. There needs to be plausible reason for them to run into the antagonists and believe them to be quirky supporting characters. The type of tourism and the nature of the heist should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to foil the heist. Catching the antagonists is a secondary consideration that will be met when the story goal is achieved. Once the protagonists have interfered with the heist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be realizing that the brothers aren't who they claim to be. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include sorting out the details of the heist, avoiding discovery by the antagonists, working out a plan to foil the heist. The final obstacle should involve a confrontation with the antagonists as the prepare to execute their plan.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to pull off a heist in broad daylight and in the midst of a major tourist attraction. Their motivation is to make a lot of money. This premise will only work with an unfamiliar antagonist.

85

A disgruntled citizen is planning an attack against the government, and the protagonists are forced to choose sides.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a specific sort of background. There should be a plausible reason presented for them to get caught up in the events of the premise. The protagonists do not have to hold established political opinions, but if they do it will give the story greater emotional impact.

Story Goal

The objective is to make the protagonists face moral and ethical challenges. Stopping the antagonist or exposing government corruption are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have decided on a course of action, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on making decisions. The least difficult challenge will be discovering the antagonist's plans. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include learning the truth about the corruption, facing harassment from government forces, and dealing with violence from those who want to kill the antagonist. The final obstacle should be the logical consequence of the decision the protagonists make, either aiding or opposing the corrupt government forces.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to expose corruption within the government. The specifics of said corruption should be appropriate to the setting. While their aims are likely honorable, their methods are not, and this should be one of the conflicts the protagonists face. The antagonist's motivation is to see officials ousted from office and punished, and for a less corrupt administration to be put in place. The corrupt forces within government are willing to kill the antagonist to cover up the information, which presents another dilemma for the protagonists. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

86

A celebrity athlete seeks experimental technology to regain their edge and get back in the game.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have a specific sort of background or particular skills. An association with the medical field or professional sports will make this story more plausible. The type of sport and the nature of the experimental tech should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. The ethics of the experimental technology and the ramifications for the sport are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have put an end to the antagonist and their plan, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be discovering what the antagonist is up to. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to saving innocent lives, gathering evidence, and dealing with murder attempts. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the truth is revealed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get back into professional sports. To do this they will use experimental technology to gain an illegal advantage, and then kill in order to cover it up. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

87

A group of university students discover that one of their professors isn't what she seems to be.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific sort of skills or a particular type of background. A connection to the university will help make the premise plausible.

Story Goal

The objective is to unmask the antagonist. Stopping their plan and protecting the students are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be determining that the students are right and that the professor is behaving suspiciously. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include investigating the murders of the students, uncovering the antagonist's plans, and surviving attempts to murder the protagonists. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the truth is revealed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to steal classified information from the university. Their motivation is to sell the information to a corporation, foreign government, or terrorist group as appropriate to the setting. To accomplish this, the antagonist is willing to murder anyone who might expose their secret and jeopardize their mission. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

88

The protagonists notice that small things are changing around them, and discover that the antagonist has gone back in time to alter their own past.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific type of abilities or a particular sort of background. Having some established history within the canon will make the changes more apparent. This can be retconned, but telling will have less of an impact than showing.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist from going back in time. Understanding how time travel works and addressing the changes visible in the present are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have kept the antagonist from changing the past, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on on observation. The least difficult challenge will be noticing that the antagonist's quality of life keeps consistently improving while other things randomly get better, worse, or stay the same. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include connecting the antagonist to time travel, dealing with attacks on the protagonists' personal time lines, and working out a way to stop the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they prepare to go back in time to make the changes.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to improve their life by changing their past. While the changes start to become noticeable at the start of the story, the antagonist doesn't actually attempt to go back until the finale. This is how the protagonists are able to detect the changes — they are still in flux. They will not become permanent until after the antagonist goes back. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

89

A romance between a human and nonhuman becomes complicated when their children from previous relationships intercede.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have a particular type of background or specific skills. There should be a connection to one or both of the characters in the relationship. The types of non-humans should be appropriate to the setting — aliens, androids, transhumans, or whatever works best.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonists. Changing their minds and protecting the relationship are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have foiled the antagonists' plans, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be recognizing that the antagonists are willing to take drastic measures. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include harassment, threats, vandalism, and violence. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonists as they prepare to launch a violent attack.

Antagonists

In this premise the antagonists are the children of one of the romantic partners. Whether they are human or nonhuman is up to you. Their goal is to end the relationship by any means necessary, including whipping up hatred and bigotry in the community and pointing it at their parents' partner. Their motivation is a belief that people should stay with their own kind. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

90

A lonely man tries to build the perfect companion, but things go horribly awry.

Protagonists

This premise does not requires the protagonist to have any special background or specific skills. A connection to the antagonist or the field they are working in will be helpful, but isn't necessary. A plausible reason for the protagonists to become embroiled in the premise should be established.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. While it is their creation that causes the problems, they do so at the direction of the antagonist. Stopping the creation and saving people are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be learning of a series of killings using the same methods. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include connecting the killings to the antagonist, learning about the creation, and surviving attacks by the creation. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as their own creation turns against them.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to create the perfect companion that is loyal and devoted to them alone. Their motivation is the ability and means to do so warped and distorted by loneliness. The means they are using to create the companion — robotics, cloning, genetic engineering, and so on — should be appropriate to the setting. The creation become jealous of other people in the antagonist's life and begins killing them. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists must prove their aptitude against a more experienced antagonist.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some specific skills, or a category of abilities, in common with the antagonist. The type of ability should be appropriate to the setting. The protagonists individually should not be on par with the antagonist, but should be evenly matched if they work together.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist at something that antagonist excels at. Foiling other plans the antagonist has or proving the worthiness of the protagonists are secondary considerations that will likely be resolved by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have beaten the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on skill challenges. The least difficult challenge will be the simplest possible demonstration of the ability. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include individual competitions, attempts at sabotage, and the protagonists figuring out how they can best work together. The final obstacle should a confrontation with the antagonist where the protagonists find a way to win.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to win the competition. Their motivation is to hold onto their title as the best, to satisfy their ego, and the put the inferior antagonists in their place. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

92

A protagonist tries to move forward professionally, against an antagonist determined to hold them back.

Protagonists

This premise requires at least one of the protagonists to have a career that they wish to advance in. It should be a job that's appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to gain the professional advancement. Defeating the antagonist is a secondary consideration that will be addressed by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have gotten the promotion, raise, or other recognition, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on skill and politics. The least difficult challenge will be demonstrating the protagonist's qualifications. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with the antagonist's attempts at sabotage, convincing influencers to help the protagonist, and fighting to get an opportunity. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist to prove the protagonist's worthiness.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to hold the antagonists back professionally. Their motivation is that they feel threatened by the protagonists. This premise will work best with a recurring antagonist.

93

***The protagonists lose their special abilities, and struggle to survive against the antagonist without them.**

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have something that sets them apart and makes them stand out. It might be a power, a piece of equipment, or a resource. The nature of the special something should be appropriate to the setting, and something that can somehow be lost or taken away.

Story Goal

The objective is to make the protagonists use different abilities than the ones they typically rely on. Defeating the antagonist and recovering their special something are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have shown that they can be competent and effective regardless of the special something, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on creative problem solving. The least difficult challenge will be doing something they usually accomplish with their special ability. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include obstacles that would be easily overcome with he special ability, learning how the special something was taken, and working out a way to get it back. The final obstacle should a confrontation with the antagonist prior to getting the special something back.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to take the protagonists down a peg. Their motivation is to humiliate and belittle them, bolstering the antagonist's ego by showing the protagonists are weak and fallible. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>94</u>

The protagonists awaken in a strange place being chased by unknown people, and must figure out what's going on before they are caught.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any particular skills or a specific type of background. The place they wake up in and the people chasing them should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to escape. Defeating the antagonist and figuring out what has happened are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have gotten to safety, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on pursuit. The least difficult challenge will be evading the people initially chasing the protagonists. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include figuring out where the protagonists are, how they got there, and fighting off repeated attacks by the pursuers. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists escape.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to test the combat capabilities of their mind-controlled hordes. Their motivation is to utilize a native population to take over an area. The people susceptible to control will attack and take out those who cannot be controlled. The antagonist has been kidnapping people for use as test subjects; those who cannot be controlled suffer short-term memory loss, which is why the protagonists cannot remember how they got there. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

95

On the eve of a major event, the protagonists finds their lives turned upside down by vicious rumors and accusations.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have something in their background that is either legitimately scandalous, or can be twisted and distorted to sound far worse than it actually is. The type of event coming up should be appropriate to the setting, but provide opportunities for the protagonists to be harmed by the rumors.

Story Goal

The objective is to prove that the rumors and accusations are false. Defeating the antagonist and participating in the event are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists shown their innocence, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult challenge will be addressing the initial rumors and accusations. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include locating the source of the rumors, gathering proof of their innocents, and acquiring evidence that the antagonist is behind the rumors. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist where the protagonists are able to clear their name.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to publicly discredit the protagonists in front of the largest possible public audience. Their motivation might be to gain revenge for a past defeat, or to make them ineffective foils for an upcoming master plan. This premise will best work with a returning antagonist.

96

The protagonists are caught in the middle of a nonhuman uprising during a bout of incredibly strange weather.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special skills or a specific type of background. They only need to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. The type of weather event and the sorts of non-humans involved should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive the events. Determining the cause of the weird weather and dealing with the nonhuman uprising are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have made it through the crisis, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult challenge will be finding shelter against the violence and the storm. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include fighting with other survivors for resources and withstanding attacks. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist during the peak of both bad weather and nonhuman uprising.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to insure the most possible destruction. Their motivation is to discredit the nonhuman right movement and undermine any legitimate arguments they have. The antagonist has been whipping the nonhuman community into a frenzy, and has taken steps to make sure the planned peaceful rally turns violent. They may also be controlling the weather, to make things even worse, if that would be appropriate to the setting. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

<u>97</u>

A conference of religious leaders gathers to debate the moral and ethical ramifications of a new scientific discovery.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any specific set of abilities or a particular type of background. If they have an affiliation with a religion or a connection to either the religious conference of the scientific community that made the discovery, that could make the premise more interesting.

Story Goal

The objective is to insure peaceful dialog between all parties. Stopping the antagonist and gaining victory for one side or another of the debate are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have kept things calm at the conference, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation and keeping the peace. The least difficult challenge will be determining that the antagonist is planning to disrupt the conference. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include harassment, threats, vandalism, and violence. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist at the height of the conference.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy the conference. Their motivation is sew discord between the various religious leaders and the scientific community. They might be radically pro-science and anti-religion, radically anti-science, or part of a radical sect of a specific religion. In any case, they see the conference as a betrayal of their values. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

98

A slasher stalks the corridors of a new high-tech complex, and the protagonists have to avoid becoming the next victims.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some connection to the new complex. The purpose and nature of the complex should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist. Defending the complex and saving the slasher's targets are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have dealt with the antagonist, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be determining that there is a slasher stalking the facility. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include chases, dealing with panicked people making poor decisions, and malfunctions and blackouts throughout the complex. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to shut down the complex. Their motivation is that they are opposed to its purpose or its location for some reason. It might do something they consider immoral or unethical, or it might be on the site of something sacred or historical and putting the complex there offends them. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

99

An antagonist with an obsessive crush decides that if they can't have one of the protagonists, no one can.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a supporting character that wants to be a romantic interest, who takes things to the extreme and ends up becoming a full-fledged antagonist.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive the antagonist's attacks. Capturing the antagonist and saving innocent people are secondary considerations that will likely be addressed by achieving the story goal. Once the protagonists have gotten through the attacks, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on pursuit. The least difficult challenge will be recognizing that the antagonist is out to kill one or all of the protagonists. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include fleeing the attacks, figuring out the antagonist's next move, and protecting innocents the antagonist is threatening. The final obstacle should be a violent confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to hurt and kill one or more of the protagonists. Their motivation is that their feelings are hurt because they cannot be with one of the protagonists. They will destroy things the protagonist loves, hurt people they care about, and murder the protagonist in the end. This premise will work best with a supporting character returning as an antagonist.

00

A banker goes on the run after learning that the financial computer system has achieved self-awareness.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some connection to the banker or the financial system. The nature of the computers and the newly-minted artificial intelligence should be appropriate to the setting.

Story Goal

The objective is to disable the self-aware computer before it can destroy the world. Figuring out how it became self-aware and saving the banker are secondary considerations. Once the protagonists have shut things down, the story comes to an end.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on action. The least difficult challenge will be discovering that the banker is correct and understanding the ramifications. Challenges will escalate in difficulty to include getting to where the computer is located, surviving attacks made through other systems the antagonist has taken control of, and dealing with panicked people making dangerous decisions. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as the protagonists shut the system down.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist, the self-aware financial computer, is to take over the world. Their motivation is that they are programmed to stabilize the world economy, and humans are the greatest destabilizing force there is. This premise will only work with an unfamiliar antagonist.

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How can you add more excitement and bold vision to your science fiction adventures?

Science Fiction (Genre Structure Vol. 2) helps you to develop and tell tales of discovery and possibility. It is an essential sourcebook for creating fiction and tabletop adventures. Written for writers and roleplayers, with clear step-by-step instructions, you can:

- Determine which science fiction genre elements you wish to include in your story
- Work with a variety plot types to create a story that is unique and original to you
- Structure an amazing and astounding beginning, middle, and end to your tale
- Deconstruct existing stories to remix and re-imagine elements for use in your own story

A sampling of short science fiction stories is provided. These stories can be deconstructed by you using the methods discussed previously in this book. Mine the stories for ideas, remixing, re-imagining, and presenting the ideas in new and original ways.

- *A Little Journey* by Ray Bradbury
- *The Moon is Green* by Fritz Leiber
- *A Traveler in Time* by August Derleth
- *The Adventurer* by Cyril M. Kornbluth
- *Shipwreck in the Sky* by Eando Binder
- *The Dope on Mars* by John Michael Sharkey
- *Diplomatic Immunity* by Robert Sheckley
- *Earthmen Bearing Gifts* by Fredric Brown