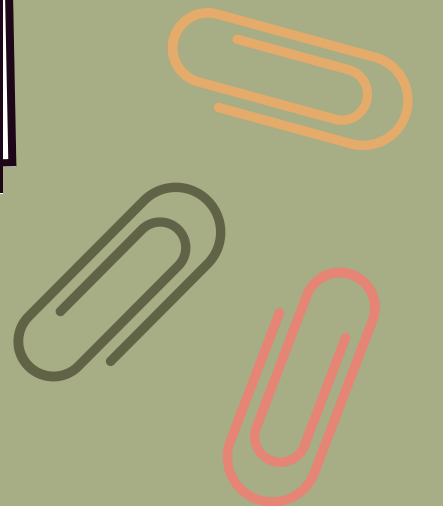


WRITING THE ESSENTIAL SCENES OF ACT TWO

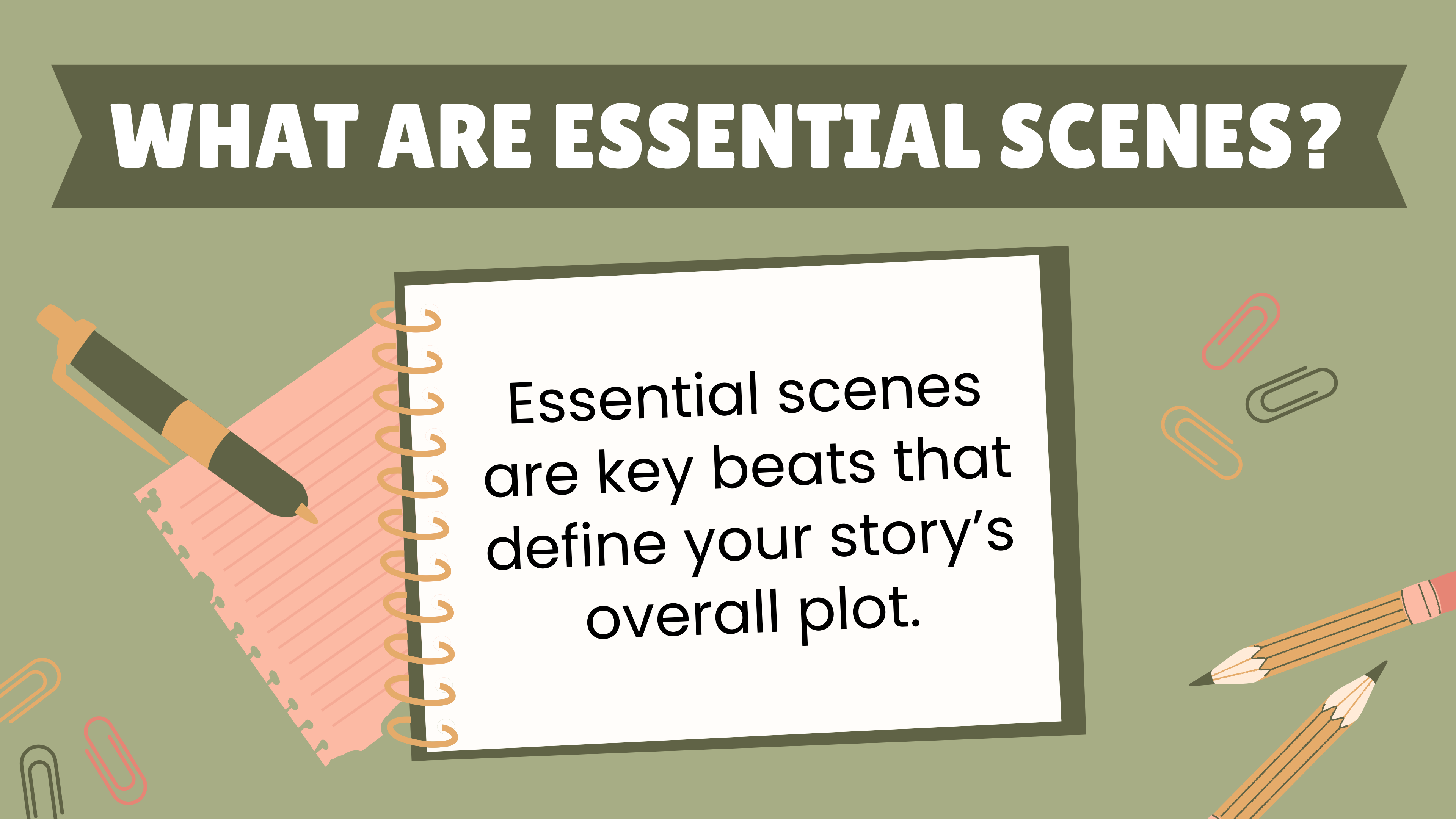
Ley Taylor Johnson

OVERVIEW

- What are the essential scenes of Act 2?
- What makes them work?
- What questions should they answer?



WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL SCENES?



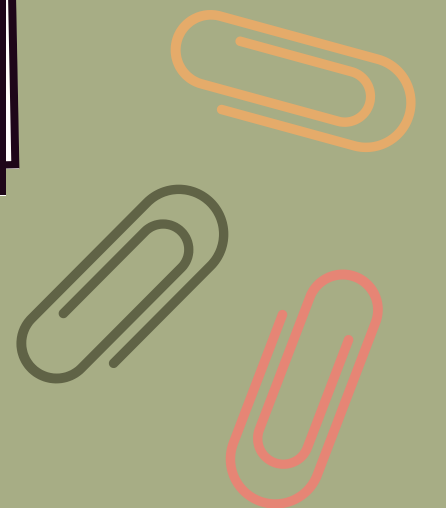
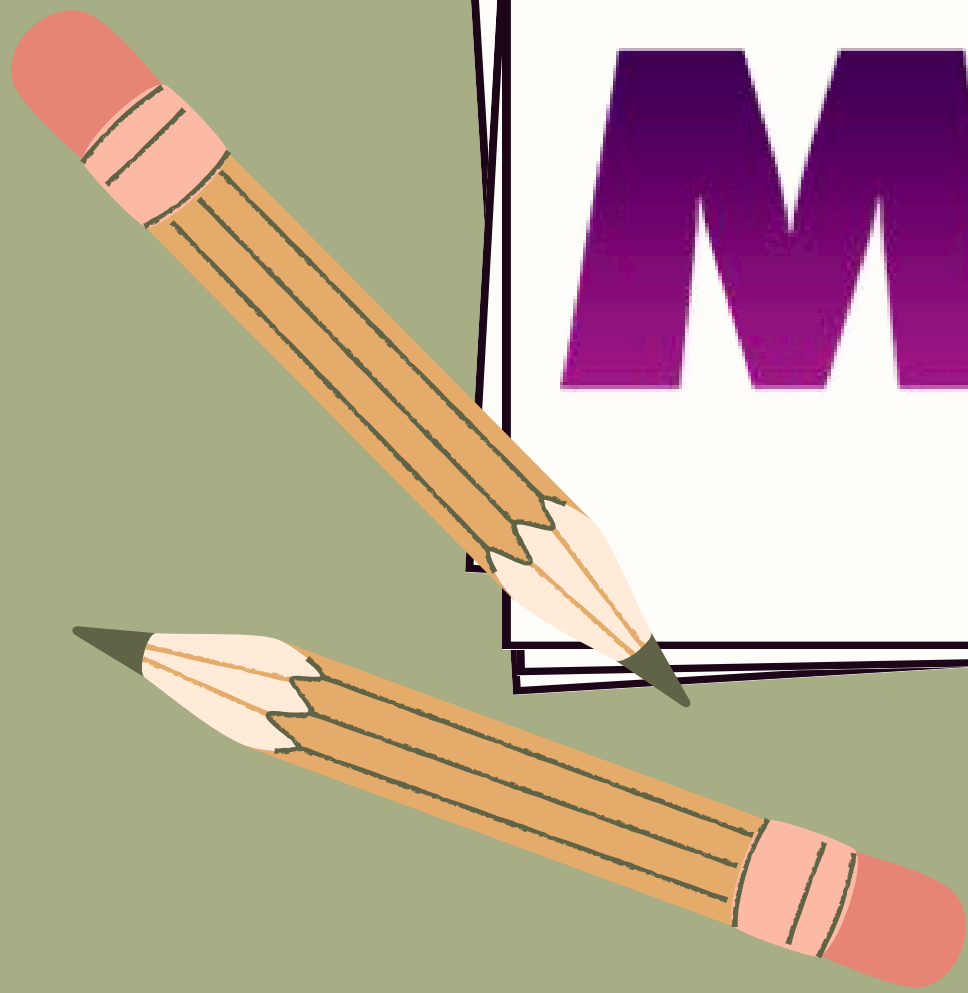
Essential scenes
are key beats that
define your story's
overall plot.

ESSENTIAL SCENES OF ACT 2

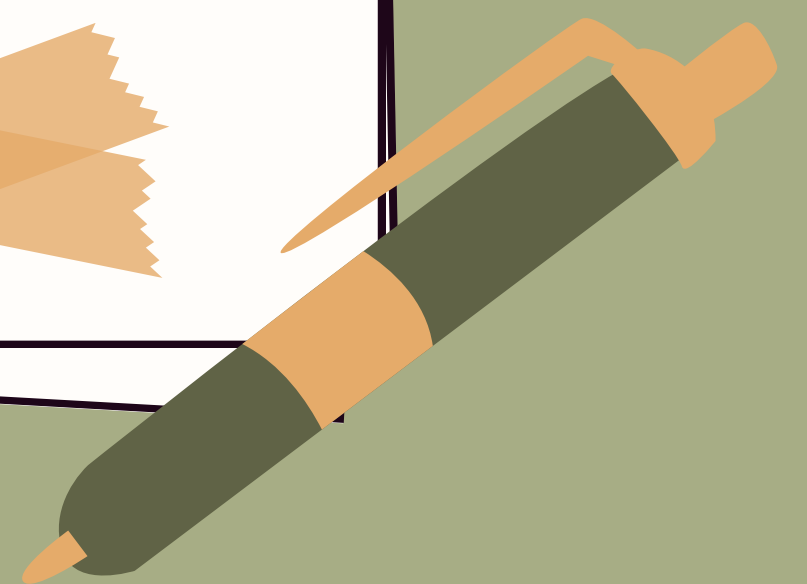
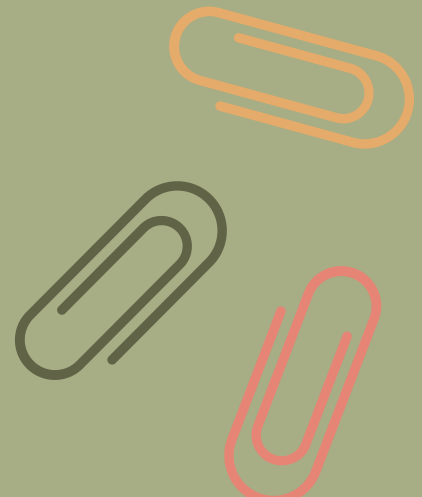
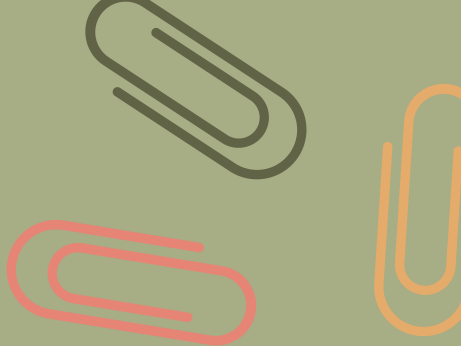
Essential scenes uphold the narrative structure of your story.

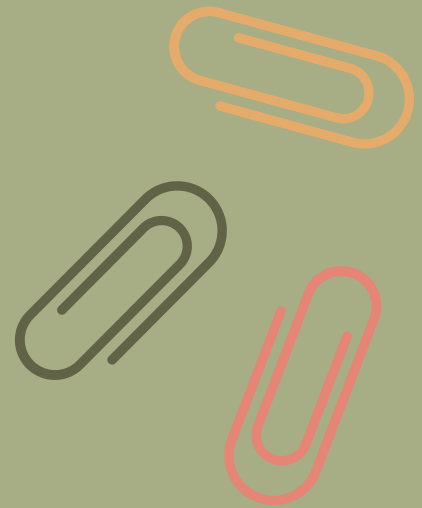


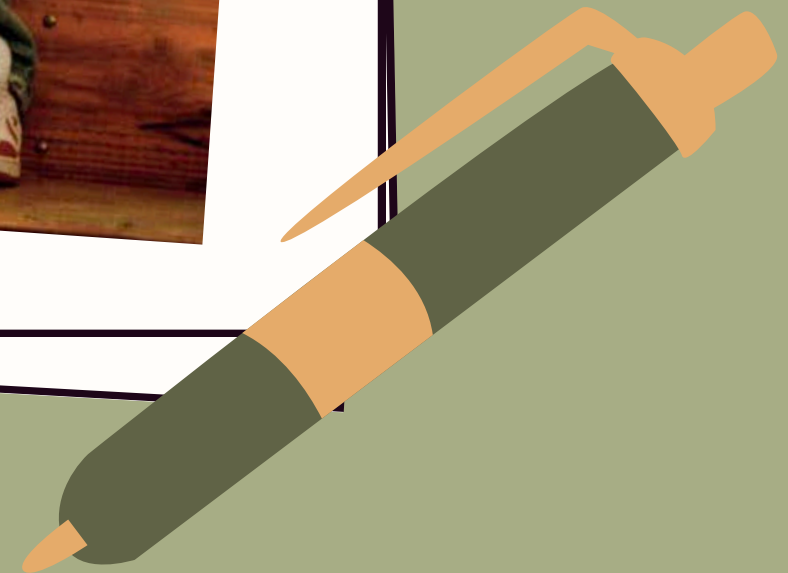
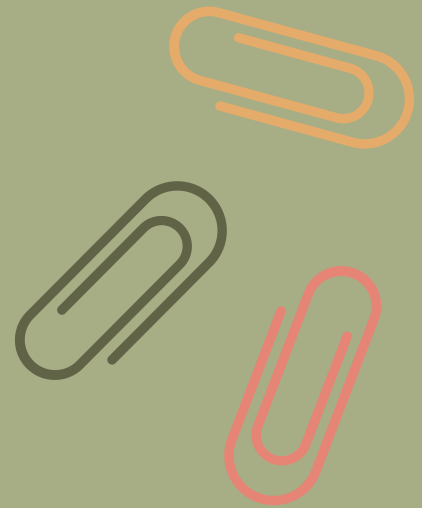
THE ESSENTIAL SCENES
OF ACT 2 IN
MEANGIRLS



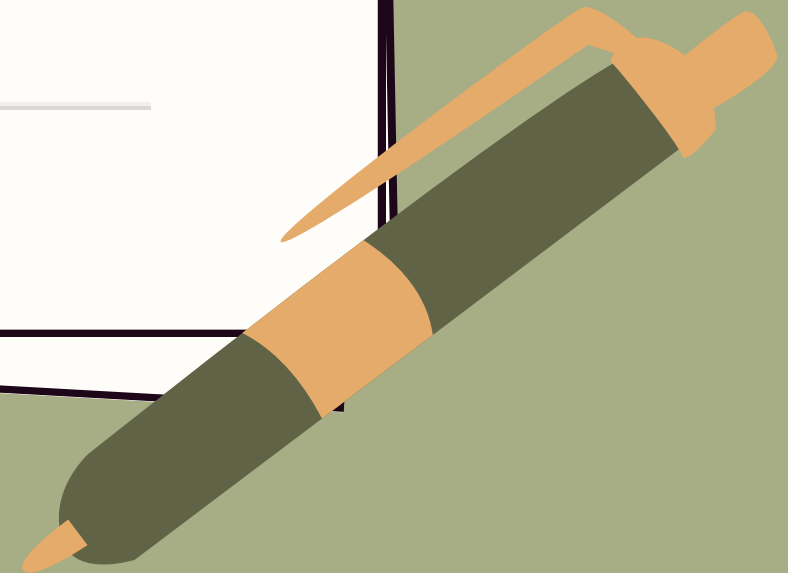
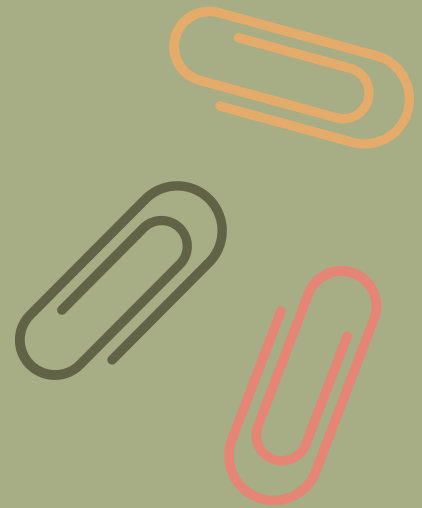






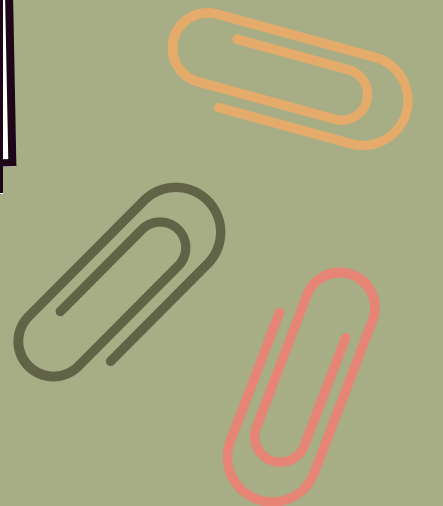







THE NEW WORLD


- Introduces new setting and status quo
- Slowly builds tension and stakes
- Adds complications that set up future conflict




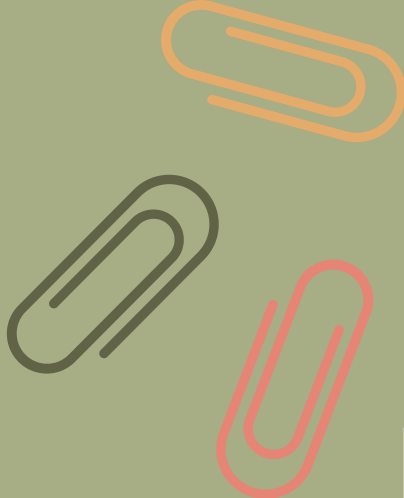
THE NEW WORLD



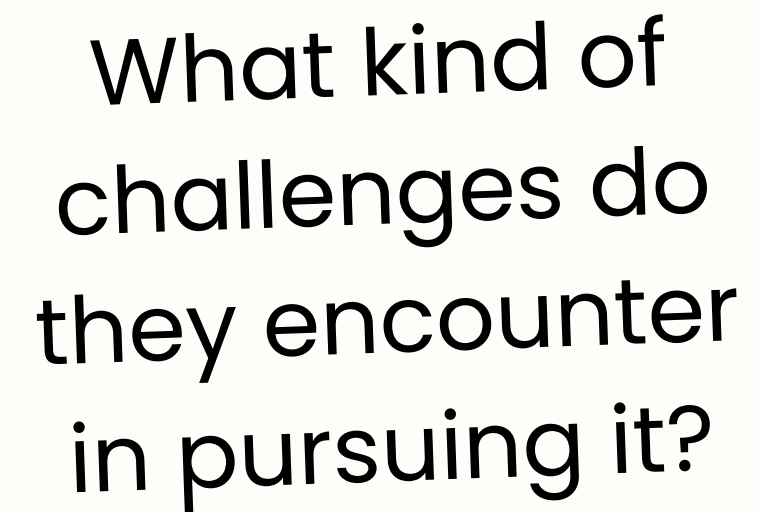
The New World sets up your story and builds tension with early plot points and establishing details.

- Establish a pressing external conflict at the first pinch point
 - Break down the protagonist's goal into smaller, actionable steps
 - Maintain a clear chain of cause and effect
- 

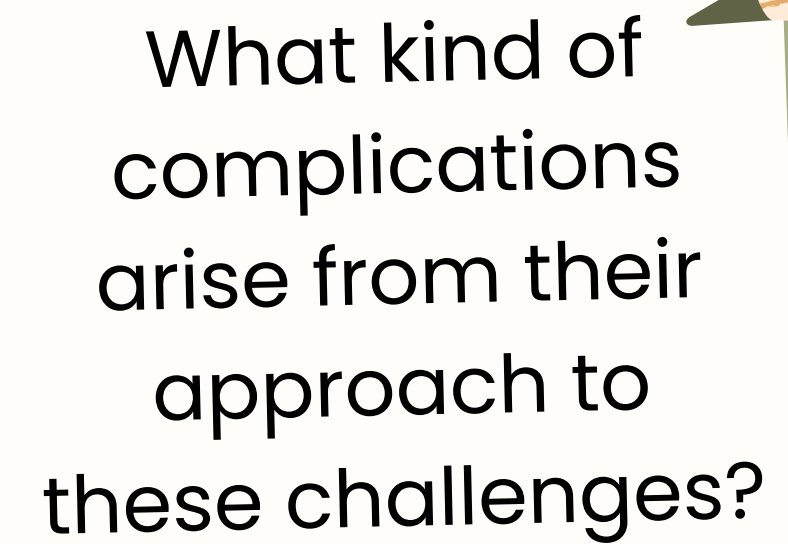
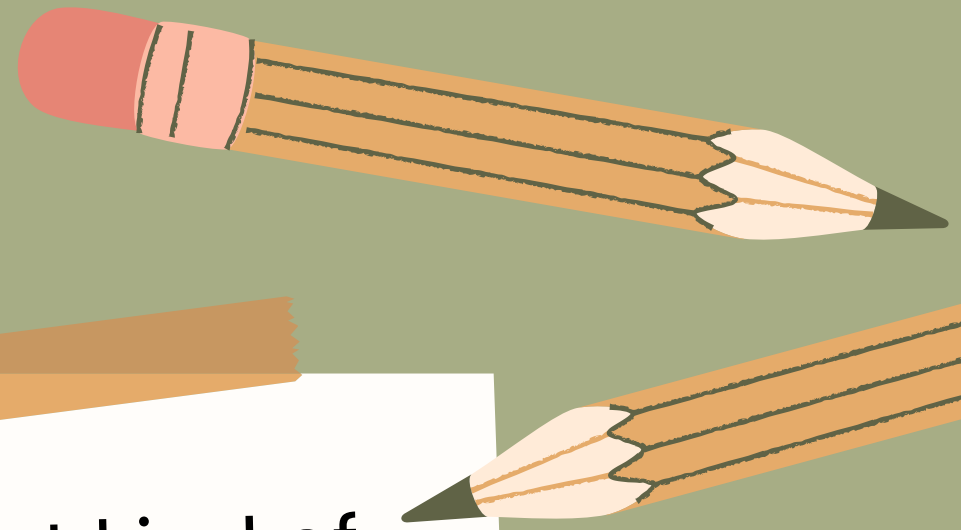
THE NEW WORLD



What is your protagonist's new goal?



What kind of challenges do they encounter in pursuing it?

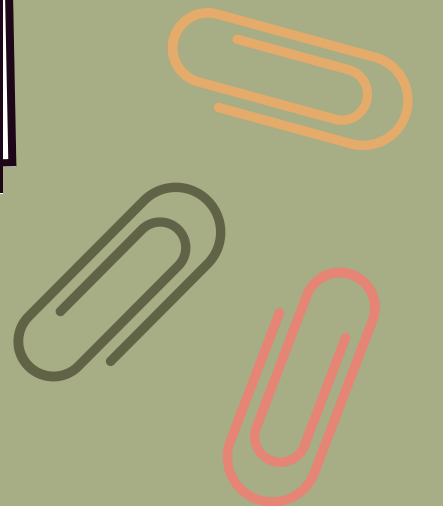


What kind of complications arise from their approach to these challenges?



THE MIDPOINT

- Brings the current stakes to a peak
- Marks a tonal shift in the story
- Reveals the protagonist's fatal flaw



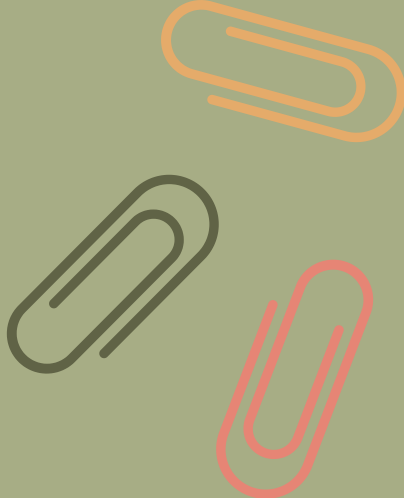
THE MIDPOINT

The Midpoint acts as a mini-climax and provides catharsis for the tension built up in the first half of the story.

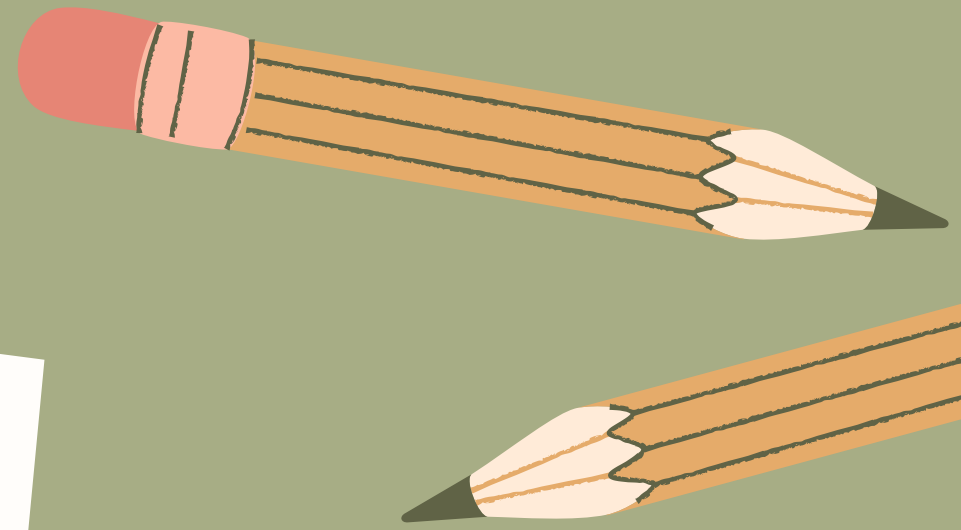
- Create a false victory/defeat that complicates (but doesn't change) the stakes
- Resolve the first external conflict
- Underline the protagonist's fatal flaw



THE MIDPOINT



What major event alters the status quo?

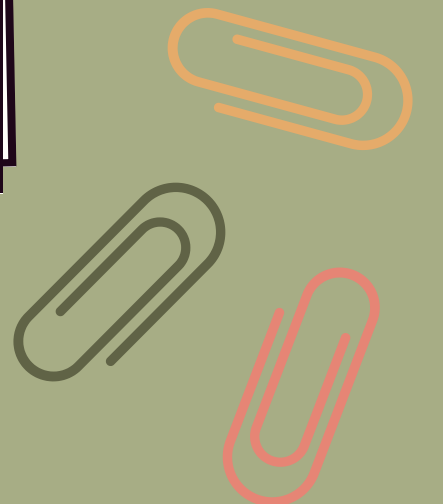


How is it the protagonist's fault?



THE NEW WORLD, TWISTED

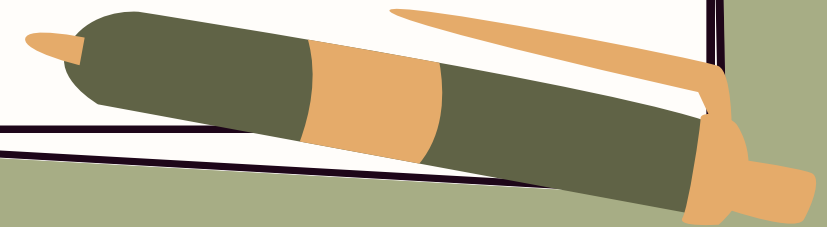
- Introduces the (new) new status quo
- Offers a brief break in tension
- Focuses on the protagonist's development



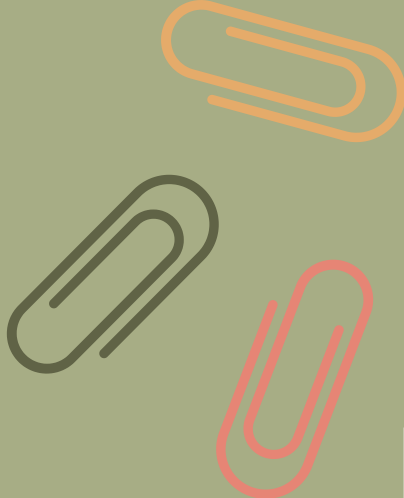
THE NEW WORLD, TWISTED

The New World, Twisted shows how the original status quo of Act 2 has been corrupted.


- Split focus between external and internal conflicts
- Offer a break in tension using fewer action sequences
- Set up the protagonist's upcoming breaking point



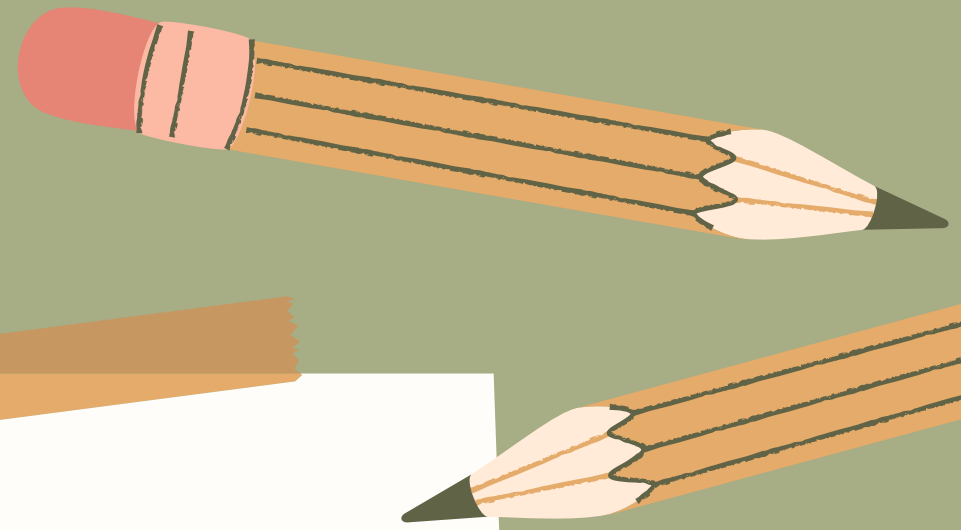
THE NEW WORLD, TWISTED



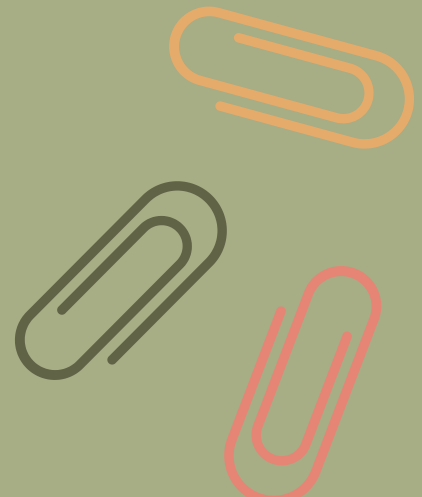
How has the protagonist's goal changed or become more complicated?



How has their approach changed as a result?

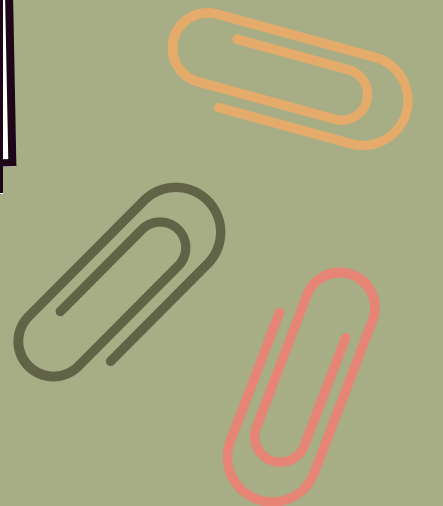


Why is it still doomed to fail?



MISTAKES & CONSEQUENCES


- Establishes your story's "rock bottom"
- Forces the protagonist to confront their internal conflict
- Acts as the climax of their character arc




MISTAKES & CONSEQUENCES




Mistakes & Consequences forces the protagonist to finally confront their fatal flaw.

- Force the protagonist to make a mistake due to their fatal flaw
 - Isolate them from other key characters
 - Give them a realization about their flaw
- 

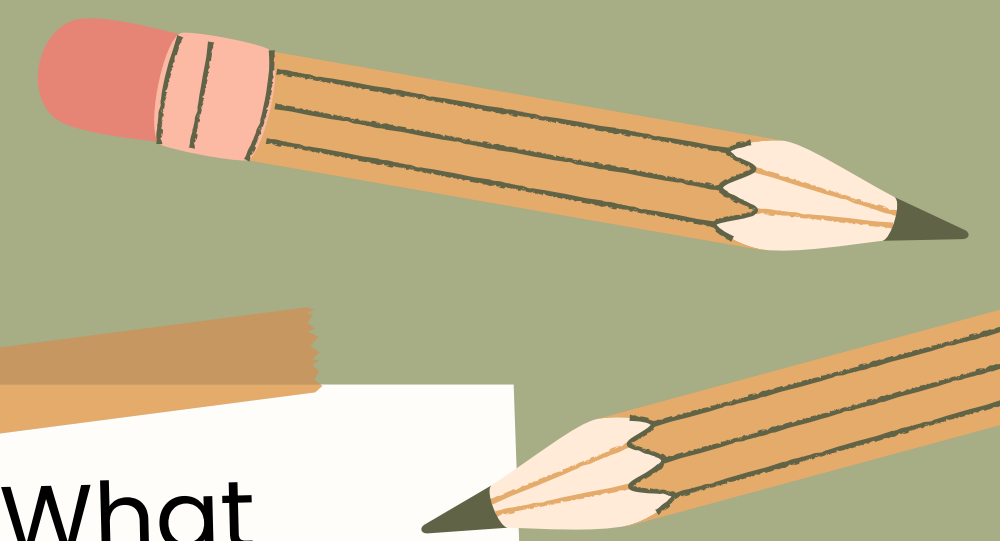
MISTAKES & CONSEQUENCES



What major event disrupts the status quo?



How does the protagonist come to recognize their fatal flaw?

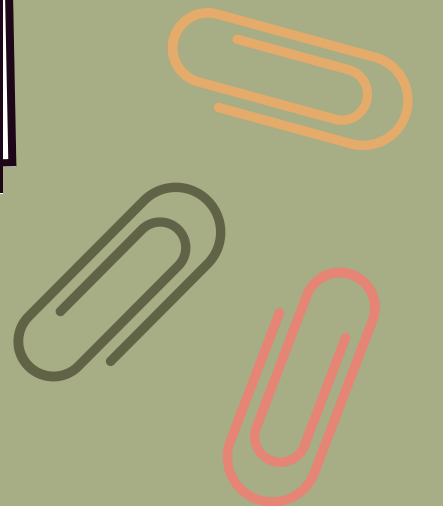


What realization do they have that allows them to overcome it?



ACT 3 TRANSITION

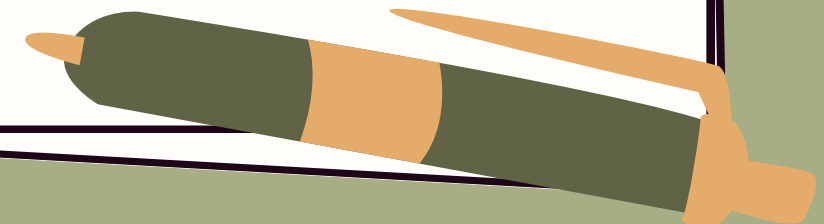
- Sets up the climax
- Marks another tonal shift
- Raises tension and stakes



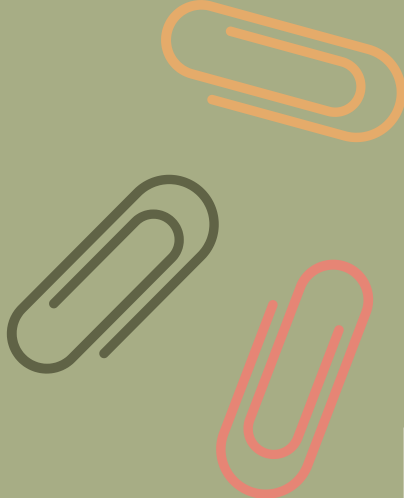
ACT 3 TRANSITION

The Act 3 Transition ties up loose ends and shifts focus to the upcoming climax.


- Establish the protagonist's new perspective
- Reiterate the stakes and primary external conflict
- Create a "plan of action" to ground readers



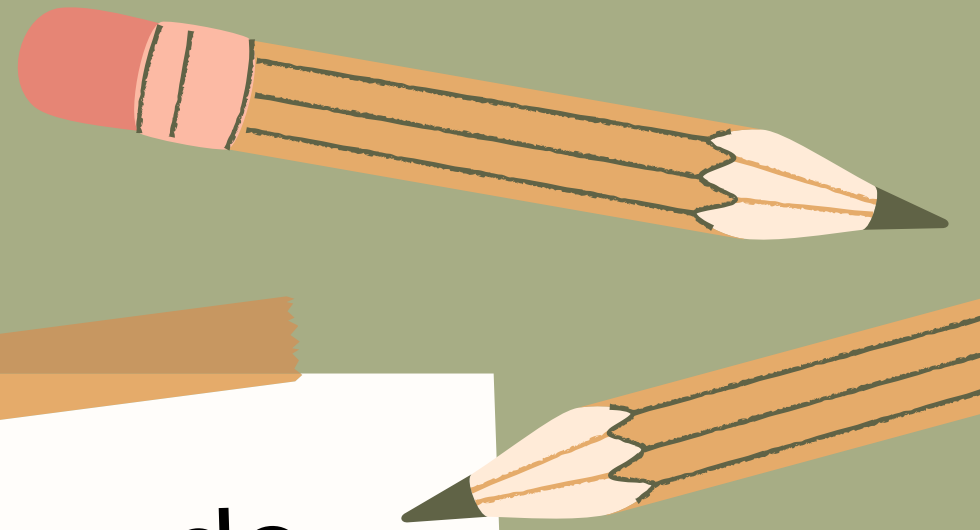
ACT 3 TRANSITION



How does the protagonist's new perspective change their approach?



What makes this approach more likely to succeed?



How do they begin making amends?



CONCLUSION

- Essential scenes define your story's structure in Act 2.
- The New World establishes the external conflict and the protagonist's goal.

CONCLUSION

- The Midpoint resolves the tension of the first half of the story.
- The New World, Twisted shifts focus to the protagonist's character arc.

CONCLUSION

- Mistakes & Consequences forces the protagonist to confront their fatal flaw.
- The Act 3 Transition draws readers' attention back to the main plot.

THANK YOU!

 leytaylorjohnson@gmail.com

 leytaylorjohnson.com

 [@leytaylorjohnson](https://www.instagram.com/leytaylorjohnson)

