



# Raiders of the Lost Story Arc

Planning Exercise and Template



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# Raiders of the Lost Story Arc

## Planning Exercise and Template

**I**n fiction writing, every story has an arc—a path leading readers from the beginning, through the middle, and to the end. A common story arc features the main plot, typically divided into seven sections, starting with the set-up and ending with the resolution. Meanwhile, other individual arcs, also known as subplots, unfold throughout. These might include an action sequence or an individual character’s side story.

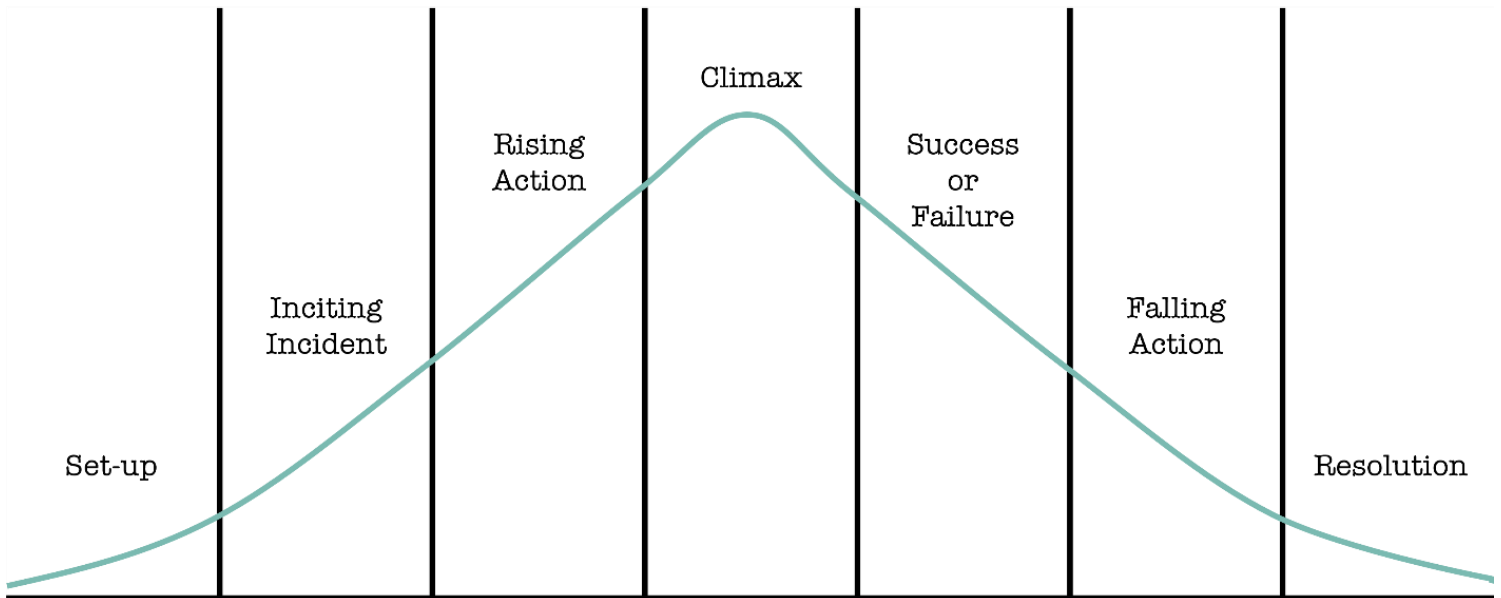


Figure 1: A traditional story arc.

The *Raiders of the Lost Story Arc* exercise is a simple tarot spread you can use for practice developing a new story idea, or for working out specific details and/or filling in plot holes within a storyline you’ve already started writing.

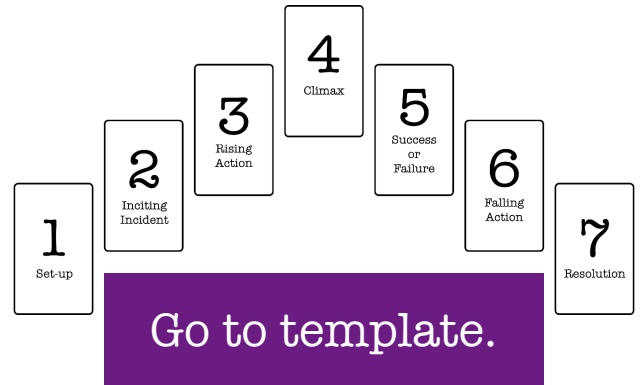


# Preparing—or Repairing—Your Plot

**W**hether you have a new story idea or need to fill a plot hole within a story you've already started, use this tarot activity to prepare—or repair—your plot.

## What you need for this activity:

- Your tarot deck.
- Your favorite tools for notetaking.
- Your intuition.
- A story idea.



## For practice developing a new story:

1. Shuffle your tarot deck until you are satisfied that the cards are ready for pulling, and then turn the deck facedown and set it on your workspace.
2. Cut the deck into seven small piles and place them, in any order of your choosing, on the seven spaces.
3. Starting with Pile 1, flip the top card over and then move to the next pile.
4. Once all piles feature a turned card, intuit the story that unfolds, from set-up to resolution.
5. Draft the story and save it for a future project.

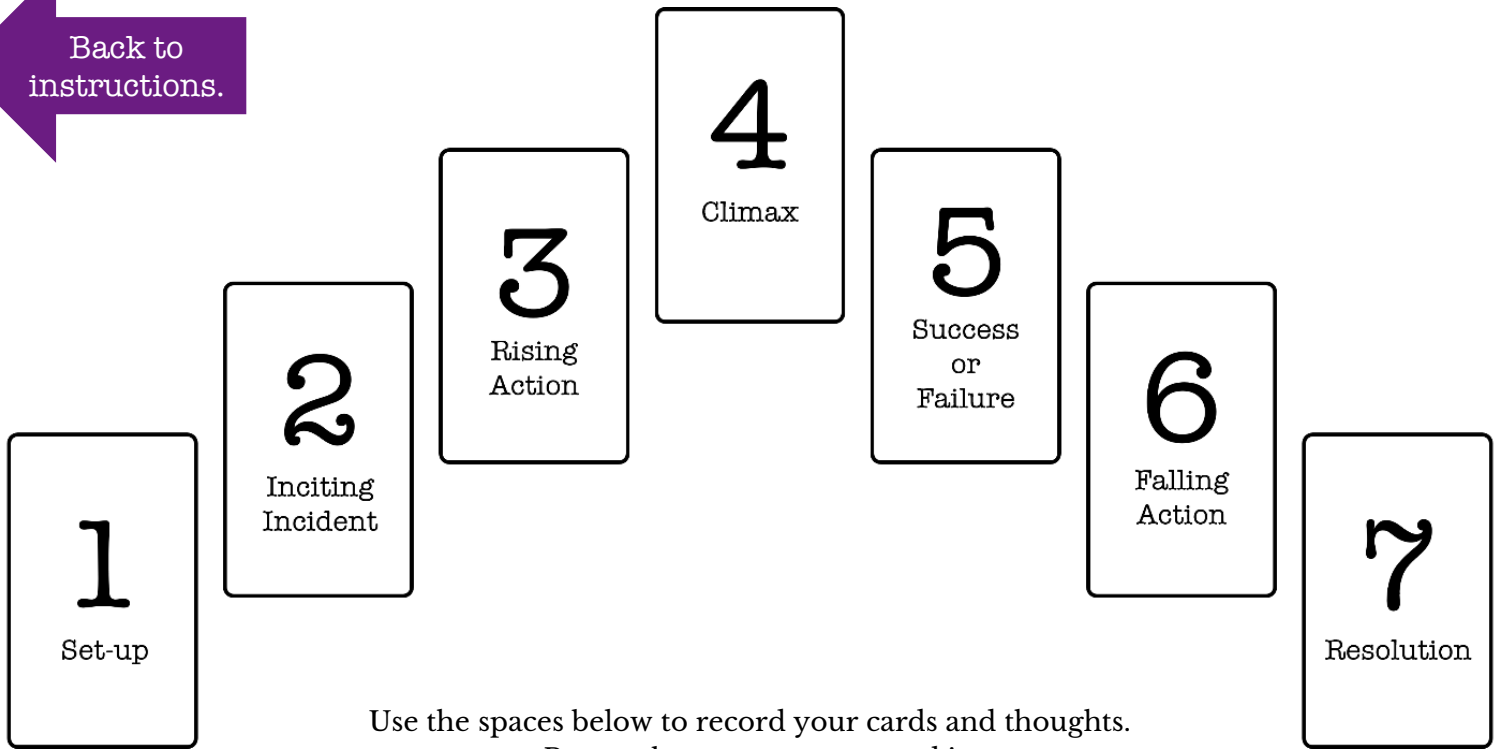
## For filling plot holes within a story you've already started writing:

1. Sort through your tarot deck and pull cards that represent the parts of your storyline you are settled on or have already fleshed out.
2. Shuffle the remaining cards until you are satisfied that they are ready for pulling, and then turn the deck facedown as if you were about to deal them.
3. Start turning cards over onto the spaces that remain—your plot holes—and when all spaces are filled, examine the entire plotline from left to right.
4. Use your intuition to decide what new ideas the plot hole cards bring to the story.
5. Repeat from Step 3 until you are satisfied with the outcome.



# Story Arc Template

Back to instructions.



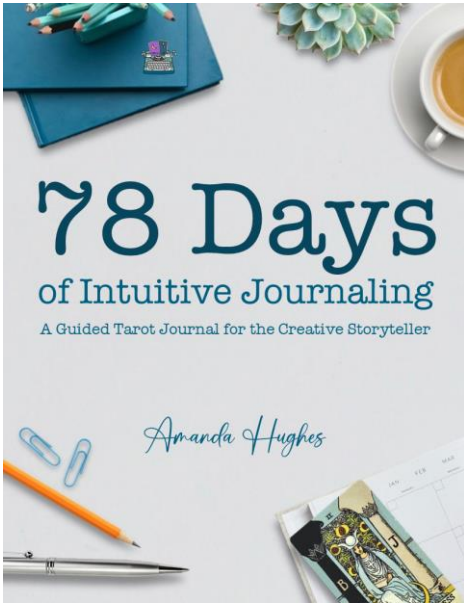
Use the spaces below to record your cards and thoughts.  
Remember to save your work!

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7





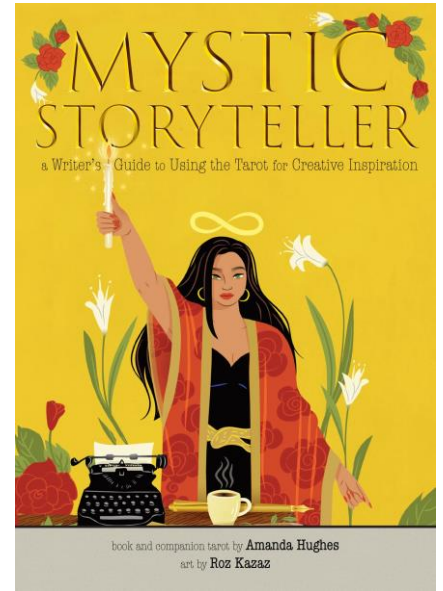
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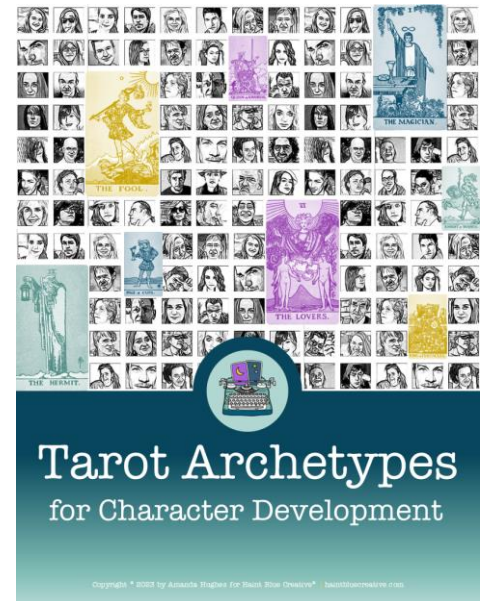
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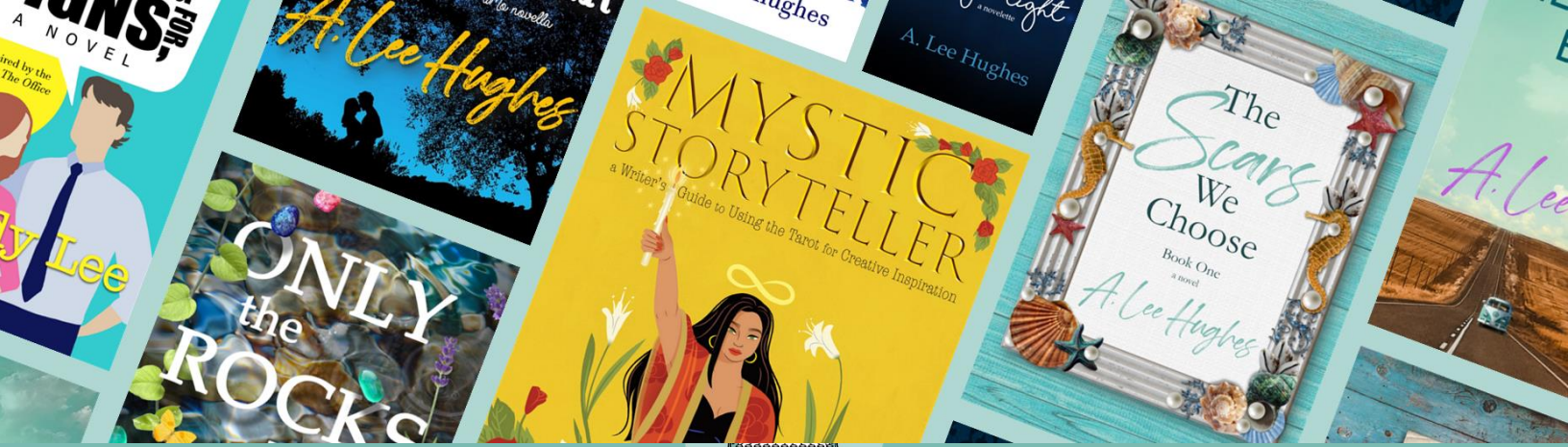
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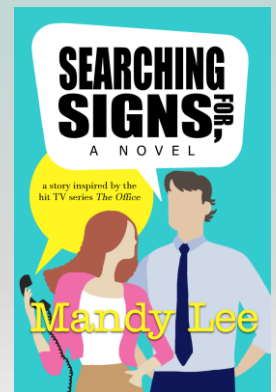
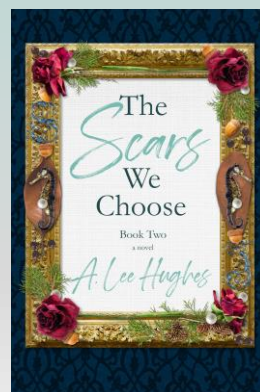
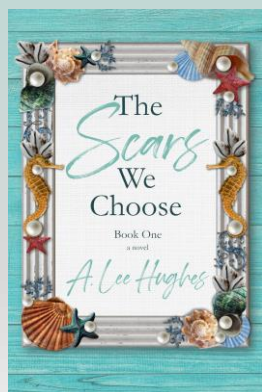
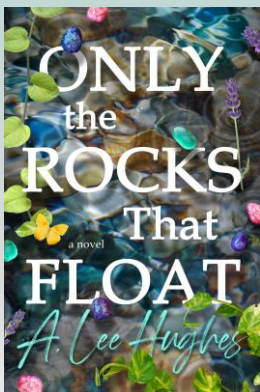
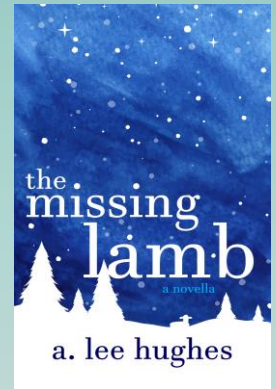
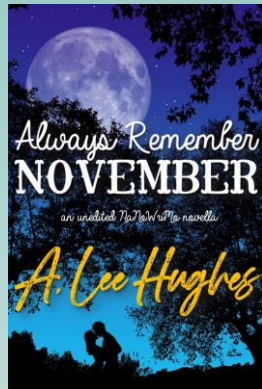
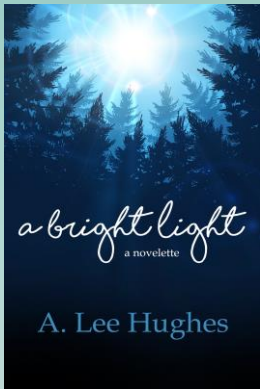
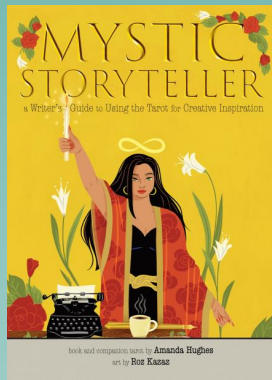
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## »————« About Mandy »————«

In her more than thirty years as a storyteller and visual designer, Amanda “Mandy” Hughes has written and designed over a dozen works of literary, Southern Gothic, and women’s fiction under pen names A. Lee Hughes and Mandy Lee.

Mandy is the founder of Haint Blue Creative®, a space for readers and storytellers to explore, learn, and create. She holds a Bachelor and Master of Science in Psychology, and she has worked as an instructional designer for nearly twenty years.

When she’s not writing, Mandy enjoys the movies, theater, music, traveling, nature walks, birdwatching, and binging *The Office*. She is a tarot enthusiast who uses the cards to enhance creativity and foster wellness. Her book *Mystic Storyteller: A Writer’s Guide to Using the Tarot for Creative Inspiration* and companion tarot deck are coming to La Panthère Studio in 2024.

Mandy lives in Georgia with her husband and four sons, two of whom are furrer than the others (but not by much). Visit her website at [haintbluecreative.com](http://haintbluecreative.com) and follow her on Instagram @HaintBlueCreative and @MysticStorytellerTarot.

