



# The Magic of Storytelling

*How to Write Your Own YA Fantasy Novel*

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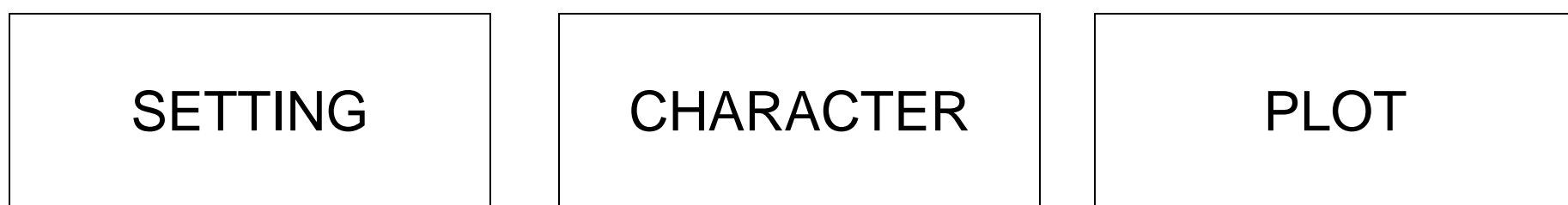
Kellogg Honors College Capstone Project

## INTRODUCTION:

The purpose of this project is to create an interactive model of the YA Fantasy story genre, as a reference for creating or analyzing the genre as a whole. This poster is mainly informative of what general ideas I got from the research I did, which is what I used as a starting point for my project itself.

Because there are so many genres of story, I narrowed my focus to look at this one genre and its common tropes and elements. I focused my research mainly on the elements of plot and story structure, looking at ways stories progress and how characters overcome obstacles and reach their goals. What makes a complete story arc? How do you combine the parts of a story and integrate subplots, side-characters, and plot twists? I also studied the particular contributions of my chosen genre. Young Adult Fantasy novels are characterized by their imaginative settings, realistic and creative components combined with a freedom to explore rules of existence that are different from what we experience in our daily lives. While its appeal is chiefly younger audiences, the sense of adventure and discovery made it a fun topic to center my capstone project on.

## What are the elements of a story?



## Plot Building

After looking at various novel structures I found this framework by Lee Roddy to be comprehensive and in-depth. It sets up the basic outline of a story as well as sub-points which need to be met for the novel to progress:

Beginning: [This section sets up the character and introduces the objective.]

- Situation
- Motive
- Conflict
- Elements
- Story Question
- Decision

Middle: [This section details the character's struggles to reach their objective.]

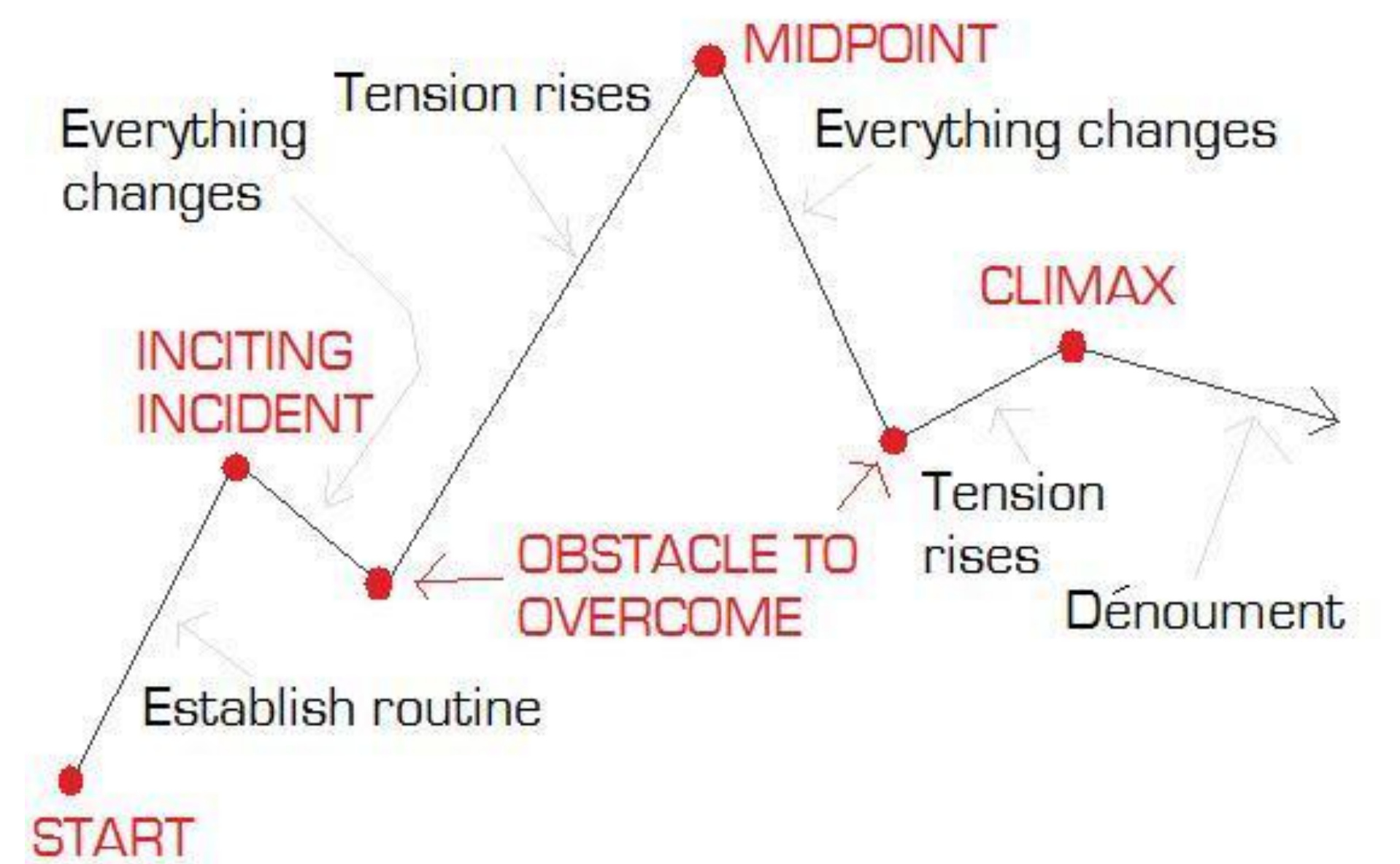
- Obstacles + Adversary
- Perseverance
- Crisis

Ending: [This section brings resolution to the plot as a whole.]

- Crisis, choice
- Climax – one final effort
- Conclusion: victory

To the right I have included additional resources for understanding plot structure which have been helpful to me in designing my model.

Source: Roddy, Lee. *How to Write a Story: An Instructional Guide for Understanding and Teaching Basic Story Writing*, pages 5-6. Institute for Excellence in Writing, Inc. 2003.



## THE STORY ARC

Referred to as the Story Arc or Dramatic Structure, this model of novel structure shows necessary elements of plot development from beginning to end. It clarifies the purpose of each section of a story and is a basic formula for generating interest in a character's progress and moving the plot towards its conclusion.

## Character Building

A character is drawn through the plot by his or her own ambitions, needs, and convictions. A realistic character has goals and investments as well as character flaws which complicate the attainment of those goals.

Throughout your novel, you must use these elements to give your character incentive to keep going, and a satisfying ending is when the character's flaws are resolved or improved upon and his or her goal is met.

In other words, your character design should include:

- Goals
- Strengths (ways your character will naturally succeed)
- Flaws (ways your character must improve itself or seek aid)
- Relationships with others
- Incentives/motivation

It is also important to consider whether your character will have any supernatural abilities or traits, and how these will interact with the world you have created for him or her.

## How many characters should a story have?

Some novels have dozens of characters, while others stick to just a few. It's up to you how many you want to keep track of, as it can get confusing if you have too many, but if you can pull it off it can make the story really interesting.

Some common character types to include:

- The protagonist/hero (or antihero!)
- The antagonist/villain
- The love interest
- The mentor or advisor
- The best friend/sidekick

I have included these main character types in my model, but there are plenty of other typical side-characters to include as well.

	Part 1: Setup	Part 2: Response	Part 3: Attack	Part 4: Resolution
<b>P</b>	GOALS: 1) Setup all that is to follow	GOALS: 1) Hero staggers from FPP	GOALS: 1) Hero becomes proactive	GOALS: 1) No new info enters story
<b>R</b>	2) Create stakes for the hero	2) Hero observes and plans	2) Hero behaves differently	2) Show hero's commitment
<b>I</b>	3) Establish hero's backstory	3) Show hero's new purpose	3) Show true evil of villain	3) Hero is primary catalyst
<b>P</b>	4) Foreshadow future conflict	4) Give hint of evil villain	4) Show final piece of information hero needs to win	4) Show resolution (win / die)
<b>O</b>	5) Create empathy for the hero	5) Show new info to serve as catalyst for hero's evolution	5) Show villain's true nature	5) MILESTONE SCENE
<b>S</b>	MILESTONE SCENES: 1) Opening Scene	MILESTONE SCENES: 4) PinchPoint #1	MILESTONE SCENES: 6) PinchPoint #2	8) Climax
<b>E</b>	2) Hook	5) MidPoint	7) Second Plot Point	
<b>M</b>	Opening scene	1st PP	MP	2nd PP
<b>I</b>	Hook	Pinch 1	Pinch 2	Climax
<b>S</b>	0	10%	25%	37%
<b>C</b>	50%	62%	75%	99-100%
<b>E</b>	SETUP	RESPONSE	ATTACK	RESOLUTION
<b>N</b>	Hook	1st Plot Point (FPP)	Pinch Pt 1	MidPoint
<b>T</b>	Pinch Pt 2	2nd Plot Point	Climax	
<b>O</b>	This scene grabs the reader.	This scene defines the hero's need and quest going forward. It is the moment that changes his life and commences the dance.	Our first look at the villain (doesn't show the full evil yet).	A context shift occurs when new info enters the story that changes the understanding of the hero. The curtain falls.
<b>E</b>	We see the villain in all his nasty glory.	The final injection of new info into the story. It gives the hero everything he needs to become the primary catalyst in the story's conclusion.	The hero either swins the day or dies trying.	
<b>C</b>	ORPHAN: DISCONNECTED	WANDERER: EXPLORING	WARRIOR: ATTACKING	MARTYR: ALL-IN
<b>H</b>	The hero is disconnected from his ultimate goal and destiny.	The hero is exploring his options, making mistakes that teach him lessons about what he is facing. Old patterns and inner demons kick in to compromise his efforts. We begin to see 2nd dimension rationalizations and the mask they create which must be cast aside for the hero to succeed.	The hero begins to see how his inner demons are in the way of success and experiences a willingness to rise above them possibly for the first time in his life and he attacks. He is now a warrior, attacking.	He has now grown, changed, evolved. He is now prepared to apply that learning toward heroic decisions and acts, even to the point of martyrdom, to save the day.
<b>A</b>	We are shown the full range of 1st dimension character traits.	Backstory is introduced which links to inner demons and the 1st dimension traits which compensate for them.		
<b>R</b>				
<b>A</b>				
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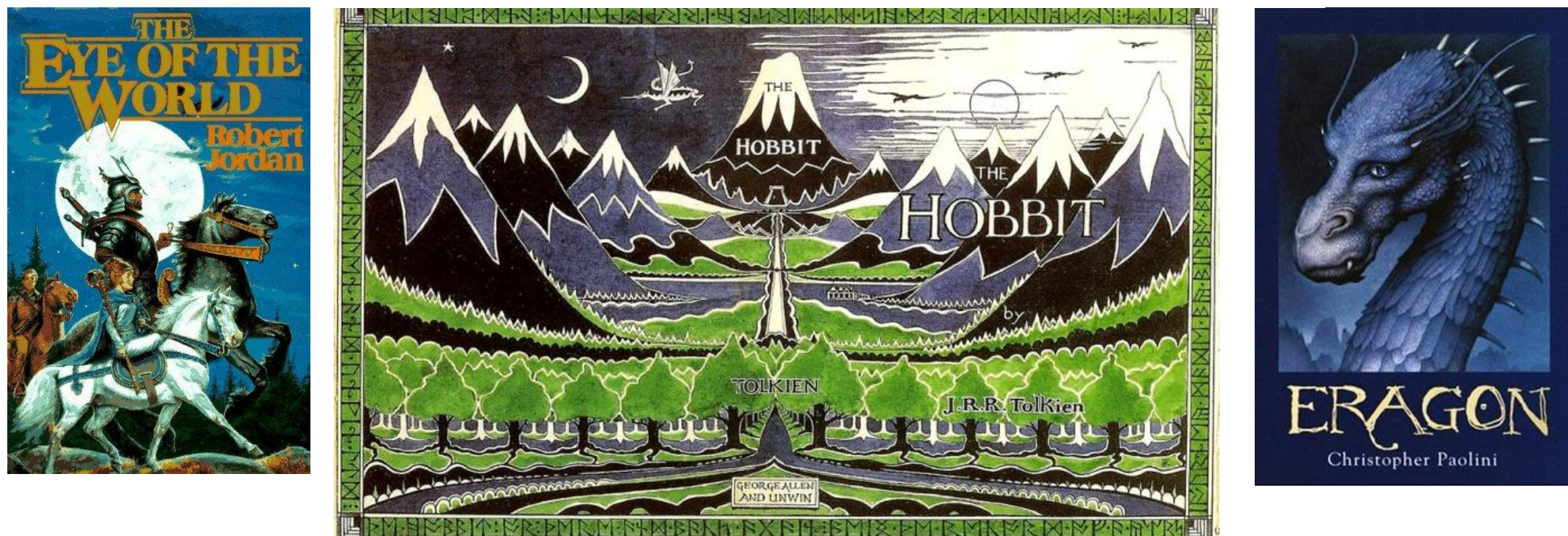
In this guide to story writing, The Wasted Poet gives details of the heroic plotline that takes you through every step of the process. This visual gives much more depth on what different sections of a novel need to accomplish in order to create a satisfying outcome. By combining character development (bottom row) and plot development (top row), it gives a plotline that incorporates everything with a sufficient explanation of its purpose.

Source: The Wasted Poet. "Four Stage Novel." Graphic. *The Wasted Poet*, 2016. Web. 14 Mar. 2016.

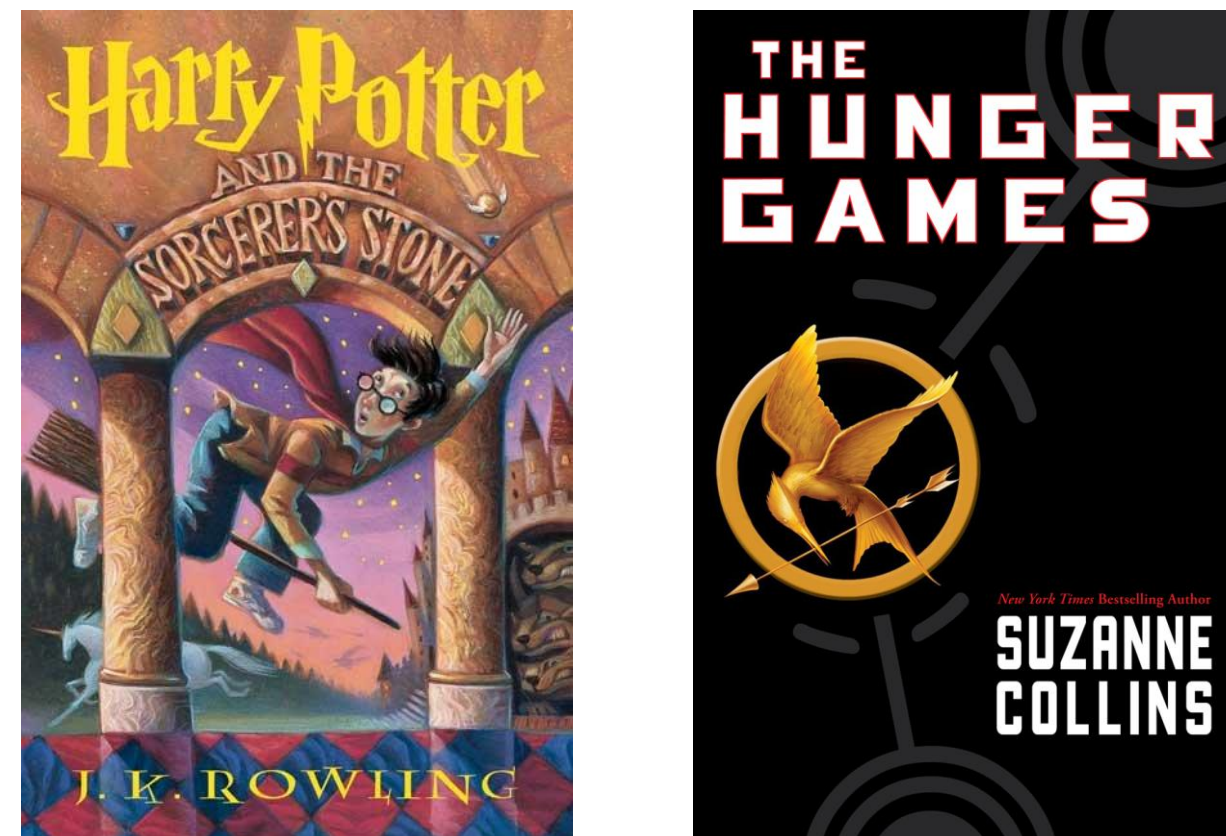
## SETTING - WORLD BUILDING

There are three basic kinds of fantasy world...

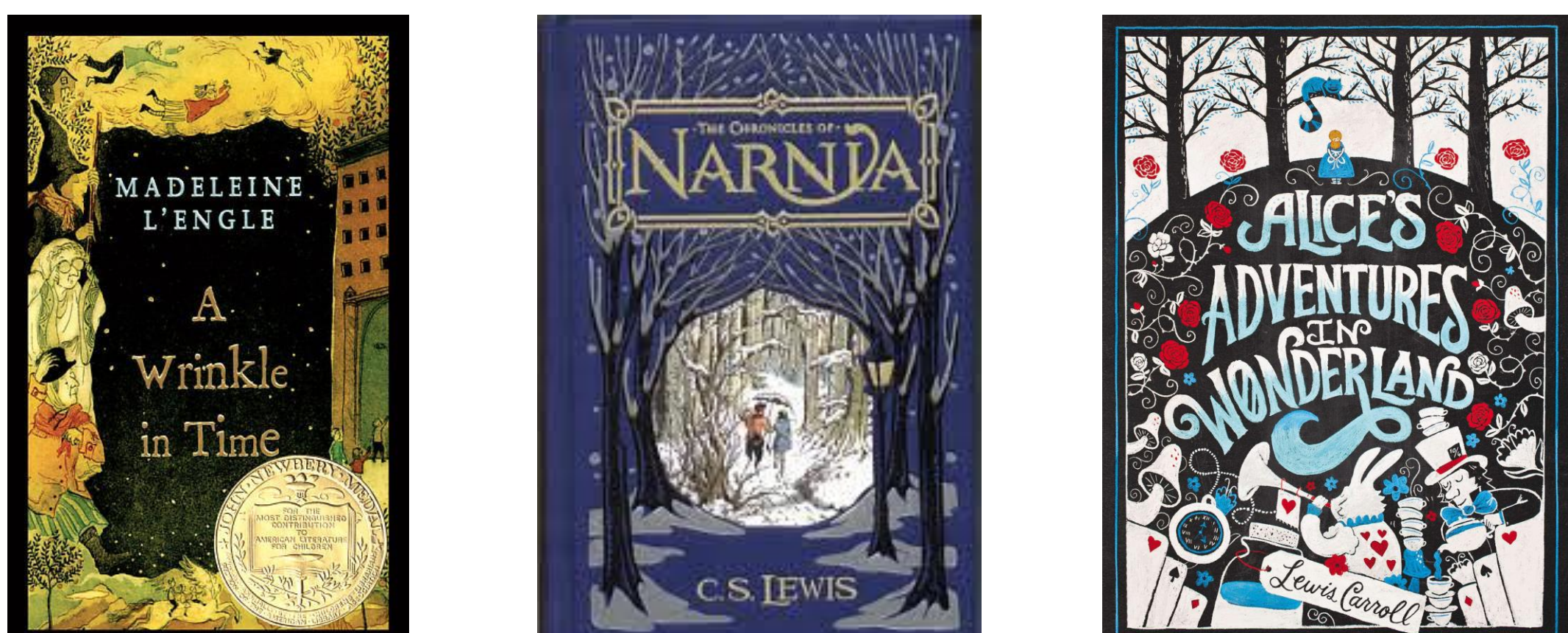
1. Novels which begin and end in a fantasy world:



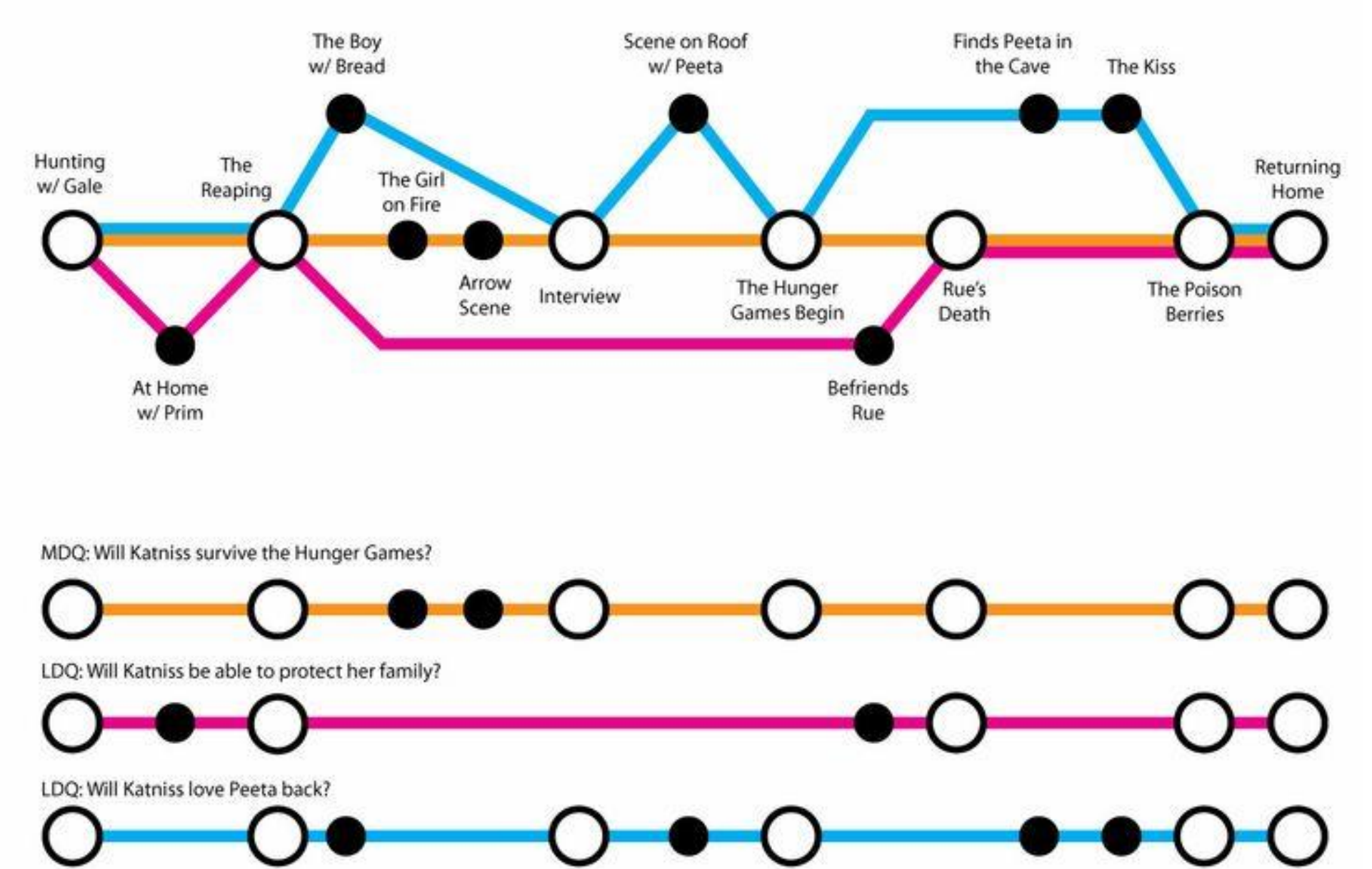
3. Novels which are set in the real world but elements of the fantasy exist within them:



2. Novels which start in the real world and move into the fantasy world:



## The Hunger Games



In this model, which uses the example of the Hunger Games, a combination of storylines is presented, each answering a question that must be answered in the course of the story. This kind of model shows how moments in the plot can serve to develop multiple elements of the story at once.

Source: n.p. "The Hunger Games." Graphic. *DIYMFA.com*