

3 Act Structure for Romance Novels

As I said on the podcast (Episode 12: Story Structure), although I use the 3 Act Structure as a guide to writing my novels, I don't use it as a vice to shackle me into an unbendable format, and neither should you. Ultimately, write the story God has given you. I hope this document is helpful to that end. Email me at jen@jenifercarlltong.com at let me know how it goes!

Act 1	Hook and Inciting Event	Attention grabbing scene where the characters meet one another. Characters' personal goals are established.	25%
	Key Event	Set's the story in motion. Leads to key event.	
	1 st Disaster	1 st event that keeps your characters apart. Their personal goals interfere with their ability to love one another.	
Act 2	1 st Pinch Point	Emotions between characters intensify. Characters and/or their goals begin to change. Brings characters closer to a relationship.	50%
	2 nd Disaster	Characters are closer than ever to being together, but their personal goals once again get in the way. A change in circumstance or location makes story move in a new direction.	
	2 nd Pinch Point	Characters change to the point of being able to get together. This change is often viewed by the reader but generally not by the characters because of the 3 rd disaster.	
Act 3	3 rd Disaster	The failure of the relationship seems eminent. An unexpected event or upheaval in their lives.	25%
	Climax	The characters overcome obstacles to finally be together.	

3 Act Structure Example: Searching for Anna

Here is a sample outline using my novella, Searching for Anna. You can download this novella by signing up for my newsletter at <http://freebook.jenifercarlltong.com/>

Act 1	Hook and Inciting Event	Warren Mallory has tea with a little girl and her doll.	25%
	Key Event	Anna receives tickets to the theater and 'meets' Warren.	
	1 st Disaster	Anna discovers the box holds an engagement ring	
Act 2	1 st Pinch Point	Warren shows Anna the truth about the ring and the two begin to date secretly.	50%
	2 nd Disaster	The truth about Anna's circumstances is exposed and she is fired. Warren searches for her but cannot find her.	
	2 nd Pinch Point	With Miss Leonne's help, Warren arranges a meeting with Anna. His true emotions are revealed to her.	
Act 3	3 rd Disaster	Anna discovers who Warren's father is and realizes the two of them can never be together.	25%
	Climax	Warren tracks Anna down, exposes the truth about his father so they can be together.	

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Act 1	Hook and Inciting Event		25%
	Key Event		
	1 st Disaster		
Act 2	1 st Pinch Point		50%
	2 nd Disaster		
	2 nd Pinch Point		
Act 3	3 rd Disaster		25%
	Climax		

3 Act Structure Outline for Novella

Act 1	Act 2		Act 3
CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 9	CHAPTER 17	CHAPTER 25
CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 10	CHAPTER 18	CHAPTER 26
CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 11	CHAPTER 19	CHAPTER 27
CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 12	CHAPTER 20	CHAPTER 28
CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 13	CHAPTER 21	CHAPTER 29
CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 14	CHAPTER 22	CHAPTER 30
CHAPTER 7	CHAPTER 15	CHAPTER 23	CHAPTER 31
CHAPTER 8	CHAPTER 16	CHAPTER 24	CHAPTER 32
First Disaster	Second Disaster	Third Disaster	Climax