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The Novel Planning Kit

Three working templates for the parts of a novel that live outside the draft. Sketch your people, lay the story out in order, and hold the whole shape on a single page. Print them, write on them, come back to them as the book grows.

1

Character
Profile, for the
people your
reader has to
believe in.

2

Story Timeline &
Beats, so the
middle never
sags.

3

One-Page
Outline, the
whole book at a
glance.

KARDE · A PLATFORM FOR THE COMPLEX
WORK OF WRITING A BOOK · WWW.KARDE.CO

Character Builder

Real characters do more than move the plot along. They carry the weight of the story on their shoulders. Sketch each one here, in your own hand.

- 1.1 What is their name?
- 1.2 What is their role in the story?
- 1.3 How do they look, in one line the reader would remember?
- 1.4 How old are they, and where are they from?
- 1.5 What three traits define them?
- 1.6 What do they do, and what shaped them before page one?

Character Builder

- 1.7 Who matters most to them? The person they'd call at three in the morning.
- 1.8 What is their biggest fear, the weight they've never put down?
- 1.9 What are they genuinely good at, and what do they do purely for themselves?
- 1.10 What is the outer thing they chase, and the real reason underneath?
- 1.11 What choices do they make, and at what cost?
- 1.12 Who have they become by the last page?

You can hold every character in one place and grow them out with the Character Builder. Portraits, associations, relationships, and prompts that keep pulling at what makes them tick.

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Story Timeline & Beats

Every book has a shape. Lay yours out in order, so the middle never sags and every turn earns its place.

- 2.1 What world does your reader meet on page one?
- 2.2 What event pulls your protagonist off their normal life?
- 2.3 What is the first moment there is no going back?
- 2.4 What starts to slip out of reach as they push forward?
- 2.5 What reveal or reversal in the middle flips the game?
- 2.6 What is the collapse before the climb?

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Story Timeline & Beats

- 2.7 What is the confrontation the whole book has been building toward?
- 2.8 What is the new normal, in them and in the world?
- 2.9 What smaller scenes carry the reader between the big turns?
- 2.10 What threads do you seed early and pay off late?
- 2.11 What are the moments of quiet between the storms?
- 2.12 Where does the story push on beyond the last page?

The Timeline & Beats view keeps your events in chronological order with beats nested inside each, so you can zoom from arc to scene without losing the thread.

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One-Page Outline

The whole book at a glance. Keep it beside you when you write, so every scene knows what it is for.

- 3.1 In one sentence, what happens in this book?
- 3.2 Who is your protagonist when we meet them?
- 3.3 What is the outer thing they would give anything for?
- 3.4 What is the force pushing back, inside them or outside?
- 3.5 What breaks if they fail?
- 3.6 Where and when, in one line?

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One-Page Outline

- 3.7 What is the argument this book is making?
- 3.8 What is the first sentence your reader will read?
- 3.9 What is the last picture you leave them with?
- 3.10 What are the three moments the whole book turns on?
- 3.11 Who have they become by the last page?
- 3.12 What will not let you write anything else?

The Brief holds your premise, protagonist, stakes and the argument the book is making, all on one page. The document you come back to whenever a scene stops knowing where it is going.