

# STORY SCHOOL



MASTERING  
THE 'HOOK'  
IN YOUR  
STORIES

# WHAT IS A HOOK?

The hook is the scene or sequence or chapter that brings the reader into the world of the story.

A webnovel hook almost always introduces your reader to the main character and establishes their main goal or their main conflict (or both!). It is the very first event that happens in a story, the first thing a character faces, and the first thing a reader reads.

Here at Wattpad, we know that the most successful stories on the platform are the ones that hook the readers in the very first chapter.

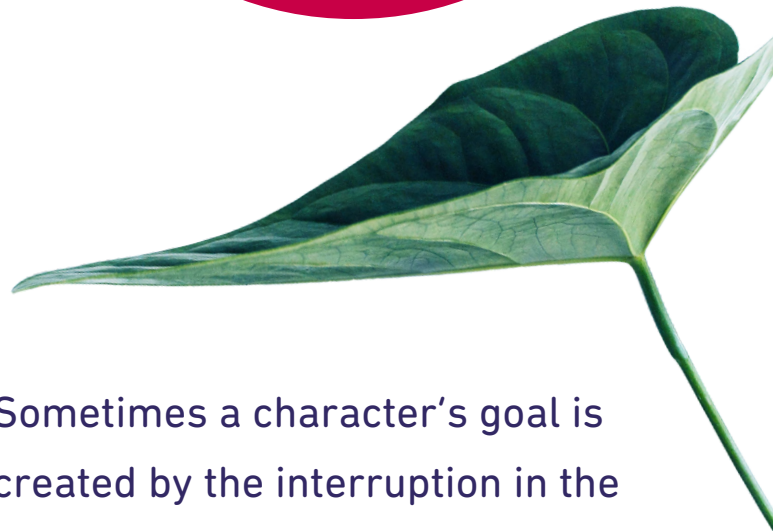


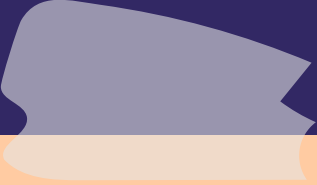
# THE INCITING INCIDENT

There are many different types of hooks, but one of the most common is called The Inciting Incident. The Inciting Incident involves a major, emotional interruption to the protagonist's everyday life. The status quo of their life is confronted with a conflict or an obstacle that sends them on a journey to try to achieve their goal. The Inciting Incident falls on a day in your character's life that is very different from every other day thus far.

In a rom-com, the inciting incident is almost always the moment when our protagonists meet, perhaps by colliding in a busy hallway and spilling coffee on one another. In a sci-fi story, this could be the moment of first contact with aliens. The inciting incident should match the tone and scope of your story, create the conditions for the rest of the plot to happen, and happen in the very first chapter.

Sometimes a character's goal is created by the interruption in the Inciting Incident (i.e. a romance where a character spills coffee on the other), but other times a character is aware of their goal before, and uses the interruption as an incentive to begin their journey towards it (i.e. a sci-fi story where explorers are seeking aliens and finally find them).





There are three essential components  
to a successful Inciting Incident.

1. THE STATUS QUO
2. THE INTERRUPTION
3. THE ACTION

*Use the following pages to fill in the moments of your first chapter that correspond to each part of the Inciting Incident.*

# THE STATUS QUO

It's important to paint a brief picture of your protagonist's life before their journey so the reader can grasp their significant change as the story progresses. What is your protagonist's life like before it's interrupted? How do they relate to the people/places around them?



How do they feel about their life? Are they seeking change or are they in a place of comfort? Why?



Is your character aware of their goal at this point? If so, what is it?  
Note: It's ok if they only fully realize their goal after the interruption.



# THE INTERRUPTION

What event or action causes a major disruption in your character's day-to-day life? Why is this day different from every other day?

Why does this event happen? Is it completely random or has it been orchestrated? Are there any underlying motives or hidden forces behind the occurrence of the interruption?

What are the immediate consequences of the interruption on the protagonist's life and surroundings? How does it disrupt the flow of their daily routine?

How does your character feel about the interruption? Does it terrify them? Are they excited by it? What is their emotional reaction to it?



# THE ACTION

How does your character respond to the interruption? What actions or actions do they take immediately following the change in their life?

How does the protagonist's immediate response to the interruption set the trajectory for their future actions and decisions? What are the short-term and long-term implications of their chosen course of action?

What is your character's goal? Are they looking to return to their original status quo, or are they trying to create a new status quo?