



PREMISE
FANTASY

100
PLOT
IDEAS

DANCING LIGHTS PRESS

PREMISE: FANTASY

100 Plot Ideas

Dancing Lights Press

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WHAT IS A PREMISE?

A premise is the heart of a story summed up in a single sentence. It will provide a general overview of what happens, without spoiling anything. A good premise contains, explicitly or by implication, four key elements of the story: who the protagonists are, what the goal of the story is, the sorts of obstacles that need to be overcome to achieve the story goal, and who the antagonist is.

Each premise provided in this book is more than just a story hook or adventure seed. It is the beginning of a story, your story, that you can flesh out and develop to suit your specific needs. These can be used again and again by varying the details and changing the four key elements.

Protagonists

The assumption is that you already have player characters created, if not fully established. For that reason, elements of the premise should be tweaked to suit the abilities and personalities of the protagonists and not the other way around. Suggested character capabilities useful in completing the story goal may be listed, but if no protagonist possesses these traits then a supporting character should be inserted to compensate. Likewise, ties to background elements can either be retconned into a protagonist's history, or given to a supporting character who can ask for the protagonists' help, or can hire them to pursue the story goal on their behalf, as appropriate.

Story Goals

The story goal is the objective that the protagonists must achieve in order to successfully complete the adventure. It's the way you know that the story is over, and can help keep the players focused and the protagonists on the right track. In a simplified 3-act structure, Act 1 will have the protagonists learning about the story goal and deciding to pursue it. Act 2 will present a series of obstacles that need to be overcome in order to accomplish the story goal. Act 3 will have the protagonists face the final obstacle, defeat the antagonist, achieve the story goal, and earn their rewards.

Obstacles

Achieving the story goal shouldn't be easy, and the protagonists will need to overcome an escalating series of obstacles. These might be linked thematically, or tied into the sort of goal that needs to be achieved. Start with a simple obstacle early in the story, something that plays to the protagonists' strengths and will be relatively easy to defeat. Then think of the hardest thing possible, pushing the limits of their capabilities, and make that the final obstacle. Flesh out the middle with obstacles that are increasingly more difficult.

Antagonists

Each protagonist has a personal goal that they are trying to achieve, as well as a motivation for pursuing that goal. This might place them in opposition to, or into competition with, the protagonists. If the premise fits with an established antagonist, you should use them and tweak other elements of the premise to fit their personalities and abilities. Otherwise, you can create a new antagonist that suits the particulars of your desired story and overall campaign needs.

01

The protagonists leave home on a journey to an unfamiliar and exotic place, hoping to find fortune and glory but encountering unexpected dangers.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. This is a perfect, if a bit generic, premise for new characters starting out on their first adventures. They have ideas of what they want to see and do, but have no concept of what's really out there in the world.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to have new experiences and learn something about themselves. They need to see something they've never seen before and survive something dangerous. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will seem more dangerous than they actually are. The threat comes from the protagonists having no context for what's happening. The least difficult obstacle will be extremely easy, and only escalate in difficulty by small increments with each subsequent encounter. The final obstacle should also be relatively easy and within the protagonists' capabilities. The point isn't so much to challenge the characters as to present them with experiences they haven't had before.

Antagonists

This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist. Their goal is going to be something simple like greed, expressed as robbing or taking advantages of the protagonists' naivete. Their motivation is nothing more than not being able to pass up what they see as easy targets in front of them.

02

The protagonists are drawn toward something they should avoid, as the antagonist seeks to get them into trouble.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Their relative innocents works in favor of the premise, because they will be more likely to ignore good advice and follow bad counsel. The object of their temptation doesn't matter — it could be adventure, fortune, sex, drugs, anything they has the appeal of the exotic and forbidden because it lies outside their current experiences.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to avoid getting into too much trouble while figuring things out for themselves. There is something that they want to see or do, but they have no concept of how much danger they're walking into. They'll get to experience it, and on their own terms, but only with great difficulty. Once the protagonists have accomplished this and survived, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve other people trying to talk the protagonists into and out of things. People with their best interests in mind will try to keep them out of danger, or at least attempt to prepare them. The antagonist will try to lure them in deeper. The least difficult obstacle will be resisting the advice of people trying to convince them to stay home, and escalate in the difficulty on not listening to the antagonist selling the appeal of the forbidden thing. The final obstacle should come in not completely succumbing to the temptations presented by the thing they should have avoided.

Antagonists

This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist. Their goal is to get the protagonists what they're after, which makes them seem friendly and helpful. Their motivation might be something nefarious, but could be as simple as wanting new customers or enjoying the sensation of corrupting the innocent.

03

A protagonist struggles with a tragic flaw (which the antagonist exploits) as they try to prevent the loss of everything they have.

Protagonists

This premise does require a protagonist to have some sort of significant problem that they have to cope with. While it could be something like a health issue or money problems, the root cause ought to be a character flaw. They're not perfect. They're vulnerable. This makes them a more well-rounded character, but it also means they have a weakness for the antagonist to leverage.

Story Goal

The objective is for the character to rise above their own tragic flaw and be the hero anyway. They stumble, but they get back up. When they make mistakes, they also make amends and try not to do it again. There will be some secondary objective that their flaw makes difficult to achieve, and that will need to be resolved, but it will be symbolic of the protagonist's mastery of themselves. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will stem from the protagonist's flaw. The least difficult obstacle will be having to cope with it under ordinary circumstances. It will escalate in difficulty as external pressure is put on them, making it harder and harder to manage. The final obstacle should be the antagonist pushing all of the protagonist's buttons, making the flaw come out in a painful, embarrassing, and likely very public way.

Antagonists

This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist. It might be that a new antagonist has done their research, or is cunningly observant, and has figured out how to manipulate the protagonist's vulnerability. An established foe will know the protagonist well, and the relationship they already have will allow them to really dig into their vulnerability make it hurt.

The protagonists struggle with bizarre personality changes and unfamiliar memories after using new magic items they've found.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. The only thing that needs to be clear is that they are feeling compelled to do things that are out of character, so what's in character has to be established. Enough of their history has to be revealed to make it understood that the things they are remembering are not their own memories.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to realize that the magic items are affecting them somehow, and to figure out how to resolve that. They might be possessed, or cursed. Someone or something might be trying to communicate with them through the items. The specifics of what's happening and how to find closure with it is up to you. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will come from the distraction caused by the behavioral changes. There should be a secondary objective that needs to be accomplished, where the strange memories and odd reactions and decisions the characters make become obstacles. The least difficult obstacle challenges will come from mild confusion based on conflicting memories, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty. The final obstacle should involve characters trying to do things that they cannot do, or are not particularly good at, because they remember being able to do them.

Antagonists

This premise will work best with an unfamiliar antagonist. They might be malevolent, trying to control or harm the protagonists. They could also be benign and misunderstood, attempting to communicate, ask for help, or warn the protagonists away from a greater danger.

At the request of the elders, the protagonists return to their hometown for a celebratory feast day only to find people acting strangely.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to know where they come from, and have some sort of relationship with that place and its people. It can be good, bad, or mixed, but someone there thinks highly of them. If they do not have a detailed back story, be sure to include an appropriate supporting character who can ask the protagonists for assistance.

Story Goal

The objective is to determine why people are behaving strangely. It could be as innocent as they're planning a surprise for the protagonists. They might be up to something nefarious and are trying to keep dark secrets. It might be something they're afraid of, that is threatening and controlling them. Once the protagonists have determined what's happening and resolved it, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be a lack of information. The least difficult obstacle will surprise that things are not as they seem, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as new answers lead to more questions. The final obstacle should be in confronting the root cause of their behavior, theoretically restoring things to normal.

Antagonists

This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist. An old foe might be doing something to the people in the protagonists' home town as a form of revenge or punishment. A supporting character from the protagonists' past might have risen up to become an antagonist. Or, the villain could be unrelated, but tied to the town somehow.

After suspecting that a supporting character is involved with evil forces, the protagonists investigate and make a startling discovery.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They should have enough of a relationship with the supporting character in question to notice something unusual is going on. Even if they don't care about that character, they should be concerned about the potentially spreading evil.

Story Goal

The objective is to discover what's going on with the supporting character and deal with it. The goal is to either help the character if they're in trouble, or put an end to their evil scheme if they've turned to the dark side. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be based on gathering information and obtaining proof of illegal, unethical, or immoral activities. The least difficult obstacle will be noticing that the supporting character isn't their usual self, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include find out what the antagonist is hiding. The final obstacle should be foiling whatever plan, or stopping whatever malevolent force, lay underneath the web of secrets and deception.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to commit some evil deed, the scale of which will depend upon the capabilities of the protagonists. Their motivation is nothing more than they're evil and self-serving, with no cares about who they hurt. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist. If the supporting character has turned evil, or was secretly evil all along, use an established character. If some other force is behind the supporting character's behavior, it might be a new antagonist.

When the protagonists explore a cavern hidden deep beneath a lake, they discover an ancient creature unlike anything ever seen.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have abilities related to dealing with water, operating underwater, and crawling around in caverns. They'll probably need some strong fighting skills. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to discover what's under the lake and deal with it. The assumption is that it is dangerous and poses some sort of threat to a nearby community, the people who live in and around the lake, or the environment itself. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be investigative. The protagonists will find strange happenings, like disappearances or bizarre damage to buildings or boats. The least difficult obstacle will be narrowing down the location where the creature is hiding, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as the antagonist draws closer. The final obstacle should be fighting the creature, or otherwise subduing or appeasing it, so that it ceases to be a danger.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist might be to protect its territory, to find something to eat, or to intentionally spread terror. Their motivation is probably as simple as monsters gotta monster. They might have an agenda, awakening to fulfill some prophecy or purpose. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist in the form of the creature, or perhaps some evil wizard controlling it.

The protagonists lose their spellcasting abilities, and struggle to discover who they are once that defining characteristic is gone.

Protagonists

This premise requires that at least some of the protagonists have magical abilities, or at least signature magic items that they rely on. They have to be incredibly dependent on magic, to the point that they feel ineffective without it.

Story Goal

The objective is to find out what is preventing the protagonists' magic from working. It may be that it only affects them specifically, and supporting characters can still cast and use magic items, or it may be that all magic in the area has stopped working. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will stem from having to do things without magic. The least difficult obstacle will be not having utility-type spells to make light or detect things, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to reflect a lack of protection and offensive capabilities. The final obstacle should be against an antagonist who uses nothing but magic.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to gather all of the magic for themselves, or at least to neutralize opponents who might use magic against them. Their motivation is some personal goal that they're trying to accomplish that requires either magic, like crafting a powerful item, summoning a major demon, or raising the dead. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

With a brutal monster stalking the town during a major holiday, the protagonists get partnered with a strange specialist.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They might want to have some knowledge of the holiday being celebrated, to give the fact that killing are happening at this time more emotional impact.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the monster before it kills again. Then maybe everyone can go back to enjoying the holiday. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will holiday-themed and revolve around finding the killer. The least difficult obstacle will be finding a body and looking for evidence of the type of monster involved, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as they have to track it and try to catch it before it strikes again. The final obstacle should be battling the monster, capturing or killing it to make the holiday safe again.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill people for some reason. Their motivation might be because they're a monster and that's what they do, but they might hate the holiday. Some aspect of celebration, like singing or the smell of special holiday foods cooking, might attract or enrage them. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists share a vision in which they witness a brutal murder, and must catch the killer before it claims the next victim.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Something will happen in the first act that causes the characters to have the vision. It could be the result of a spell or potion, happen while they're sleeping, or take place when they enter a particular area like a shrine or magical grove.

Story Goal

The objective is to prevent the murder. It hasn't happened yet, so the protagonists have a limited time to keep it from happening. Once the protagonists have stopped the killing from happening, or caught the killer if they fail to stop it, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will stem from having to interpret the clues within the vision. The least difficult obstacle will be in realizing that it hasn't happened yet, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as time runs out. The final obstacle should be at the potential murder scene, and preventing the killing from happening.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill someone. Their motivation is up to you, and could be a normal human thing like jealousy or a robbery gone wrong. It might also be a serial killing, a ritual murder, or the work of a cannibal looking for their next meal. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

11

The protagonists set off on a journey to find a rare treasure, but learn something important about themselves that will change their lives forever.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. You should know where their moral and ethical centers lay, because this is an exploration of their stance on good and evil, order and chaos.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to have their actions questioned and their beliefs challenged. They need to be faced with the consequences of their actions, whether they are good or evil, or support the law or promote chaos. Specific doctrine based on deities they profess to follow should also be called into question. Once the protagonists have been shown conclusively to fall under a specific moral alignment, whether it was their original professed belief or not, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around moral and ethical judgments. The least difficult obstacle will be justifying acts that are more cleanly good or evil, lawful or chaotic, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as gray areas are explored in greater depth and detail. The final obstacle should test the character's beliefs, forcing them into taking actions that go against their professed stance in order to solve a significant problem.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to create moral quandaries for the protagonists. Their motivation might be to humiliate them and show them to be hypocrites. In this premise the antagonist might also be a good guy, testing the protagonists to help them stay on the right path and make better decisions. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

12

The protagonists are morphed into a new form as punishment for their real or perceived sins, and they need to adapt or find a way to change back.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. It's possible that the antagonist has transformed them for some deed they committed in the past, but it might as easily be something that they do during the first act of the story.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to find a way back to their original form. This might be locating something, performing some task to appease the antagonist, or atoning for whatever sins the protagonists may have committed. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be understanding what happened and determining what is needed to undo it. The least difficult obstacle will be finding out who is responsible, which should be easy. Difficulty will escalate as the protagonists jump through hoops to find the remedy or fulfill a quest. The final obstacle should be taking the cure, performing the final task, or confronting the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to torment the protagonists. Their motivation can vary, and might be to gain revenge, or to teach the protagonists a valuable lesson. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist. The relationship to the protagonists will affect the motivation and the ultimate goal.

In an attempt to save their childhood home from being sold to a wealthy merchant, the protagonists attempt to scare off the merchant's agents.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some sentimental attachment to where they grew up and where their family presumably still lives. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that does, and is willing to ask the protagonists for aid or hire them to intervene.

Story Goal

The objective is to save the home from falling into the hands of the merchant. Presumably what is happening is legal, but there may be coercion and other illegal dealing going on. There might be some treasure located on the property, that will belong to the protagonists' family if it can be located prior to the sale or seizure. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will face an increasingly desperate merchant and all of the forces he can afford to hire. The least difficult obstacle will be the legal threat, and some minor thugs using intimidation rather than force. This will escalate in difficulty and the challenges will become more illegal in nature and increasingly more violent. The final obstacle should involve either determining why the merchant wants the property, revealing some illegal actions the merchant is involved with, or a huge battle with hired mercenaries.

Antagonists

This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist. The merchant might want the property for a specific purpose, with no care for who the protagonists are. It could be some act of revenge for a past conflict, where the protagonists got the best of the merchant or foiled their plans.

After discovering a magical item that can send and receive messages one day into the future, the protagonists try to use it to their own advantage.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. The instructions on how to use the magic item will be clear. If the protagonists have personal goals, ways that the magic item can help to achieve them should be emphasized.

Story Goal

The objective is to keep the item from falling into the wrong hands, including the protagonists if they intend to misuse it. They might utilize the magic item to fulfill some secondary goal, saving the day or preventing a disaster, but that will require resisting the temptation to use it for personal gain. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve exploring the way the item can be used, the rewards and complications that come with it. The least difficult obstacle will be determining how it works, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as other people try to get their hands on it using increasingly more aggressive tactics. The final obstacle should be keeping it from, or getting it back from, the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to acquire the item for their own ends. Their motivation is likely the same as the protagonists, to make predictions that provide some advantages. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists witness a relative's kidnapping, and must rescue her before the kidnapper put her latest magical creation to ill use.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some relative that is a crafting wizard, magical tinkerer, or other sort of inventor appropriate to the setting. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can approach the protagonists for help or hire them to enact the rescue.

Story Goal

The objective is get the relative back safely. They should also prevent the antagonist from misusing the magic item if possible, because that's likely the greater threat to the world and the right things to do. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will locating the kidnapped relative and insuring her safety. The least difficult obstacle will be tracking down the kidnappers and gathering information, and escalating in difficulty to having confrontations. The final obstacle should be stopping the antagonist from using the magic item.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the magic item for some personal gain. Their motivation will depend on what the magic item does and the benefit is can possibly provide. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists awaken in a strange dungeon deep underground, being chased by unknown humanoids, and must figure out what's going on before they are caught.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have survival skills that don't require special equipment. They will, at least initially, have to fight empty-handed or with improvised weapons as well as locate food and water. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is for the characters to get out alive. Figuring out how they got there is an intermediary goal that will allow them to complete the main story goal. Once the protagonists have escaped, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will include acquiring gear, figuring out how and why they're there, and making their escape. The least difficult obstacle will be fulfilling the protagonists' basic needs, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as they are pursued by the humanoids and gain additional information about what happened. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist, ending with the protagonists getting out of the dungeon.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to keep the protagonists locked up. Their motivation might be to conduct some sort of experiment, to feed their pet monsters, or to gain some sort of payback for a past defeat at the hands of the protagonists. This premise works with either a new, unfamiliar antagonist or a recurring foe. An old enemy will have reasons for kidnapping the protagonists that are far different than an original enemy will.

On the eve of having honors bestowed upon them by the king, the protagonists finds their social and professional lives turned upside down by vicious rumors.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. The rumors should be credible, but can be based on the events of adventures played out at the table rather than events from the protagonists' back stories.

Story Goal

The objective is to have the protagonists prove their innocence and worthiness, avoiding scandal and scorn. Their lives aren't necessarily in danger, but their reputations are. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around finding out who is spreading the rumors and proving that they are false. The least difficult obstacle will be discovering why people are suddenly treating them differently, and why the king is canceling the ceremony. This will escalate in difficulty as the rumors become widespread and the accusations become more terrible. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist, getting a confession, or acquiring the evidence to prove that the protagonists have been smeared.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy the reputations of the protagonists. Their motivation might be based on revenge for some past defeat. They might need to remove the protagonists before they can perform some future mission for the king, which would mess with the antagonist's plans. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

The protagonists struggle to prove their innocence when they are framed for a series of grisly murders.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They need to be in the wrong place at the wrong time to make the accusations against them credible. Skills relevant to avoiding arrest and hiding from the city guard will be especially useful.

Story Goal

The objective is to find the real murderer. This will result in the charges against them being lifted and things going back to normal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve investigation and stealth. The least difficult obstacle will be avoiding arrest, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include not being recognized on the street as they try to find out who the real killer is. The final obstacle should involve capturing or killing the actual murderer, in a way that proves the protagonists' innocence.

Antagonists

There are two possible antagonists here. The first is the murderer, whose goal is to evade capture for their crime. This could be a human, humanoid, or monster. The second type of antagonist is the person framing the protagonists. This could be the same person as the killer, looking to cover their tracks with nothing personal about it. They might also be someone with a beef against the protagonists, and saw framing them as an expedient way to get rid of them. For those reasons, this premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists get framed for the murder of a famous bard, thrusting them onto the main stage of an underground entertainment scene.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. The point is that they should be thrown into a world that they know nothing about, and feel out of place and a little bit helpless. Even if a protagonist happens to be a bard, they will be of a different tradition or troupe than the victim's community.

Story Goal

The objective is to find out who killed the famous bard. A secondary objective will be avoiding the people who want to do them harm thinking that the protagonists are guilty. Rather than fleeing the authorities, the protagonists will have to deal with the people who cared about the victim and want revenge rather than justice. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve entering a community that is strange and different from what the protagonists are used to. The least difficult obstacle will be avoiding angry fans, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with the friends and relatives of the victims, each of whom has increasingly greater means for exacting revenge. The final obstacle should be confronting the actual killer, capturing or killing them.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get away with murder. Their motivation for the killing can be nearly anything, from professional jealousy to romantic rivalry. The true antagonist, arguably, is the need for revenge within the bardic community, after one of their own was killed. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

A protagonist suffers a head injury and wakes up under the delusion that he is the king, bringing him into conflict with the real monarch.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. If they physically resemble the actual king, have knowledge of his life, and possess a similar skill set, that helps the story but isn't necessary. Information that the protagonist possesses can be retconned to make this premise work.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonist to get his memory back before things turn tragic. The fake/personal goal will be for them to overthrow the real king, whom they believe to be an impostor. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve not getting arrested or killed by the forces of the king. The least difficult obstacle will be avoiding notice, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as the delusional protagonist asserts his claim to the throne. The final obstacle should involve some plan to take down the real king.

Antagonists

There are a few ways to handle this. The first is to have the delusional protagonist act as the antagonist, as he works to overthrow the king. Another is to treat some agent of the king's guard as the antagonist, forcing the other protagonists to run interference and keep the delusional protagonist out of trouble. The simplest solution might be to have an antagonist enabling and manipulating the delusional protagonist for their own ends. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

The antagonist goes to extremes to capture the protagonists before they can deliver a vital spell component to a powerful wizard.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They don't need to understand what they're transporting. All they need to know is where to pick it up, where to deliver it, and possess some minimal ability to defend it.

Story Goal

The sole objective of this premise is to deliver a package to a wizard. Stopping the antagonist is entirely optional. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will stem from the efforts of the antagonist to halt the delivery. The least difficult obstacle will be to stop them from acquiring the package, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include attempts to steal or destroy the package. The final obstacle should be a violent confrontation between the antagonist and the.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to prevent the wizard from gaining the spell component. Their motivation is might be personal or professional. They might want to mess with the wizard, or they might have a specific reason to stop them from casting a particular spell. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists face challenges in order to be accepted as members of a prestigious guild.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have the skills and abilities required for membership. It's assumed that membership in the guild will bring them some benefit, which will expand upon their existing back story.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to be accepted into the guild, gaining all of the benefits that come with it. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around demonstrating the abilities required for guild membership. The least difficult obstacle will be basic skills, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include things the protagonists aren't as good at. The final obstacle should be something designed around gauging their attitudes, and they may not be expected to succeed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to determine whether the protagonists are worthy of guild membership. Their motivation is to maintain the standards and integrity of the guild. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

After completing a job, the protagonists are given the deed to a haunted mansion as their reward rather than the gold they were expecting.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. A lack of experience in dealing with the undead, particularly ghosts, can make this premise more fun.

Story Goal

The objective is to figure out how to turn a haunted house into profit. This probably means clearing out the ghosts, demons, or other creatures inhabiting it so it can be used or sold, but the protagonists should be allowed to come up with other solutions. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will focus on dealing with ghosts and supernatural phenomena. The least difficult obstacle will be resisting fear and cheap scares, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include escaping physical harm. The final obstacle should be a fight with the most powerful creature.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to scare the protagonists out of the house. Their motivation is to maintain possession of the house. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists must protect a school for wizards from arsonists in the local thieves' guild, who are demanding protection money.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. It can be assumed that the school has magical abilities covered, and that the protagonists are expected to provide muscle.

Story Goal

The objective is to get the guild to stop shaking down the school. If it means shutting down the guild, that's a solution but not the actual goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around threats, intimidation, and actual violence against the people in the school. The least difficult obstacle will be verbal abuse, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include property damage and assault. The final obstacle should involve fighting a fire while engaging in combat with the thieves' guild thugs.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get paid for protection. Their motivation is to protect their reputation by not allowing the school to evade paying their "tax". This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists run into themselves, but both sides are convinced that they are real and the other group are doppelgangers.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They should have some notable features, in order to be able to call them out in the doppelgangers.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the doppelgangers from impersonating the protagonists. Learning how and why they began the impersonation are steps toward the goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will begin with determining how the impostors got there. The least difficult obstacle will be determining if they really believe they're the originals, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include find out who sent them. The final obstacle should either defeating them in combat, or defeating whatever third party antagonist is deceiving or controlling them.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to mess with the protagonists' heads. Their motivation might be because they were hired to do so, or because they have a beef with the protagonists. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists have to protect a blacksmith from an evil warlord who wants to force him to craft a special magic sword.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They might know something about how magical weapons are made, or have information about the warlord, which will make it easier to come up with plans to meet the story goal.

Story Goal

The objective is defend and possibly rescue the blacksmith. Defeating the evil warlord is secondary and not required to meet the story goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around the safety of the blacksmith. The least difficult obstacle will mean defending the home and forge, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include a rescue operation. The final obstacle should be fighting the evil wizard to save the blacksmith and prevent the creation of the special magic sword.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to gain a magic sword with a unique ability. Their motivation is to conquer the land, and the sword somehow makes their larger plan possible. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists try to take some time off to enjoy their treasure, but their enemies have other plans.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They should have recently completed an adventure that left them with a substantial amount of money, and there should be no loose ends to ongoing plots or subplots that require immediate attention.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist so the protagonists can relax and enjoy their vacation. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will stem from having their peace and quiet disrupted. The least difficult obstacle will be interruptive, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include harassment, theft of money and important items, and the destruction of property. The final obstacle should involve a confrontation with the antagonist that is messing with their mellow.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to ruin the protagonists' downtime. Their motivation is likely tied to an existing feud, possibly revenge for the previous loss to the protagonists. They will not come at the protagonists directly, and may use hirelings and other agents to disrupt things. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

The parents of one of the protagonist's romantic interests decides to secretly put them through a series of tests to determine if they are worthy.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities. The only specific background element necessary is for one of them to have an established romantic interest.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonists to determine who is messing with them. Passing the tests is secondary and not required to meet the story goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, the antagonist will stop and you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around tests of character. Situations will be set up to see if one specific protagonist does the right thing. The least difficult obstacle will require them to help others, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to reflect challenges based on the antagonist's values. The final obstacle should involve rescuing the romantic interest from a fake situation that everyone, including that love interest, thinks is real.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to test one of the protagonists specifically, as well as their "friends" the other protagonists. Their motivation is to protect their child and insure they're not having a relationship with the wrong sort of person. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist in the form of the romantic interest's parent.

The protagonists have to convince a community divided by racial tension to work together against an uprising of the undead.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They may or may not be members of one of the clashing groups.

Story Goal

The objective is to get two communities that are normally at odds with one another to cooperate for the common cause. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be built around the things that divide the communities. The least difficult obstacle will involve personal disputes, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include challenges based on cultural divides and clashes of belief systems. The final obstacle should be a battle where everyone should be fighting the undead rather than each other.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy, kill, or eat the people. The undead remain the antagonists, and the arguing communities experiencing racial tension are not the bad guys. Neither group should be portrayed as or implied to be the antagonist. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists are hired to capture a monster hiding out in a small village, and are surprised to find the villagers rallying to protect him.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Not knowing anything about the village or the type of monsters will increase the level of surprise and make the protagonists have to make an effort to learn.

Story Goal

The objective is to learn why the monster is innocent and find the real antagonist. Getting the monster because that's what they were hired to do does not meet the story goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be mainly investigative. The least difficult obstacle will involve discovering why the protagonists were hired and why the village is protecting him. This will escalate in difficulty to include the challenges in finding the real antagonist. The final obstacle should involve defending the monster from the actual antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy the monster. Their motivation is ideological, because all monsters are bad and should be destroyed no matter how nice they pretend to be. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The antagonist goes to extremes to evade capture by the protagonists before he can implement his evil scheme.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have abilities applicable to a chase, possibly including tracking and observation. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to eventually catch the antagonist. The pursuit is an excuse for the action, and doesn't matter; it is assumed that catching the antagonist will fulfill the secondary goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve things that interfere with a chase. The least difficult obstacle will be issues of transportation, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include challenges based on tracking, physical obstacles, and distractions. The final obstacle should be the last big push to catch up to and capture the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to evade. Their motivation might be to avoid capture, or to arrive in a specific place to complete a particular task. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonist seeks to fulfill some personal goals, while the antagonist embodies the greatest challenge.

Protagonists

This premise requires a protagonist to have personal goals. They have to be something that the antagonist can interfere with somehow. If the protagonist doesn't have some sort of subplot or issue to resolve, be sure to include a supporting character that does and can ask the protagonist for help.

Story Goal

The objective is to accomplish the personal goal, whatever that may be. Defeating the antagonist is secondary. Once the protagonist has accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will depend on the type of personal goal a protagonist has. The least difficult obstacle will be based on the logical steps to achieving the goal, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as the antagonist interferes with greater frequency and intensity. The final obstacle should involve the hardest step in completing the goal, in spite of the antagonist's interference.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to prevent a protagonist from achieving their personal goal. Their motivation will vary, but might be based on a rivalry to attain the same goal, revenge for a past defeat, or any other reason that makes sense in the context of the setting and characters. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

After a shipwreck, the protagonists must defend the survivors from an island full of monsters until they can all be rescued.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. While knowledge of sailing and shipbuilding might help them get off the island, and knowing how to hunt, fish, and build shelter can aid in their survival, missing those skills makes the story more interesting.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive until rescue comes. There will be supporting character survivors as well, whom the protagonists will need to protect. The protagonists may or may not know when another ship is scheduled to come, so a set timeline is optional. Once the protagonists have found a way off the island, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve survival. The least difficult obstacle will be in finding food, water, and shelter, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as animal life and monsters are discovered and need to be dealt with. The final obstacle should be the most dangerous creature on the island, which has to be defeated before it kills the survivors.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill and eat the survivors. Their motivation is nothing more than instinct, because they are an animal or monster. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

An over-the-hill warrior tries to relive his glory days, interfering with the mission the protagonists are on.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They may or may not have an established relationship with the warrior, or have knowledge of who he or she is.

Story Goal

The objective is to keep the warrior from getting killed, or getting anyone else killed. There should be a secondary goal that looks and feels like the main goal, but it's an excuse for the interaction with the warrior. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around the warrior, who is effectively the antagonist, trying to help but interfering with whatever the protagonists are trying to do. The least difficult obstacle will be the warrior as bystander in need of rescue, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as the warrior attempts to help more frequently and obtrusively, which will cause the protagonists to make mistakes. The final obstacle should be saving the warrior after they almost get everyone killed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to help the protagonists. Their motivation is to relive their glory days, when they were younger and their abilities were sharper. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A monster steals the protagonists' magic items, and the protagonists have to track it down to get them back.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have the skills required to track the monster to its lair. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to recover the protagonists' stolen items. Killing or capturing the monster isn't as important. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve investigation and tracking. The least difficult obstacle will be figuring out what took their items so they no what to look for, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include determining whether or not the monster can use their items, and what it might want them for. The final obstacle should be confronting the monster in its lair.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to have many shiny magical things. Their motivation will depend on the context of the story. They may need them for something, or have a plan that requires them, or they may have a compulsion to steal. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

A nobleman hires the protagonists to retrieve some incriminating love letters before they fall into the hands of his rival.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Knowledge of the relationship between the nobleman and the antagonist might be helpful, but isn't necessary.

Story Goal

The objective is to prevent the antagonist from using the letters. The nobleman wants them returned, but destroying them or killing the antagonist will have the same effect. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve investigation and probably violent conflict. The least difficult obstacle will be determining where the antagonist is, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include discovering what they plan to use the letters for, and finding where the protagonist is hiding them. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to harm the nobleman. Their motivation might be money, if they're blackmailing him. It might be to force the nobleman into some action, or to embarrass and humiliate him by revealing the information within the letter. They might also want to manipulate or harm the love interest that wrote the letters to the nobleman. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists come across a letter proving that another man, and not the one on the throne, is the true and rightful king.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have basic working knowledge of the royal family, so that the lineage and claim to the throne makes sense. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to place the true king on the throne and deposing the impostor. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve protecting the letter and determining its legitimacy. The least difficult obstacle will be preventing it from being stolen, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include fending off agents of the false king who want the evidence destroyed, and preventing the witnesses from killed. The final obstacle should involve a battle with the false king and his minions.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to retain the throne. Their motivation is power and greed, and all of the good things that come with being king. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonist are hired to protect a rich merchant's pet, which the merchant's rival is trying to have killed.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some animal handling skills appropriate to whatever type of animal or create the merchant keeps as a pet. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to keep an animal safe from harm. Defeating the rival merchant will do this, but isn't the actual goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve defense and combat. The least difficult obstacle will be securing the merchant's home against kidnappers, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include fighting mercenaries and assassins. The final obstacle should be against the rival merchant's top henchman, or the rival merchant himself.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to hurt their rival. Their motivation depends on the history between them, and could include revenge for some past defeat or to intimidate them into giving up territory. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

Something is murdering members of the city guard, and the protagonists are deputized to lead the investigation and catch the killer.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some degree of investigative skills. They should also have a reasonably positive relationship with the city guard. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to catch a killer. Determining their motive is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve investigation and tracking. The least difficult obstacle will be locating potential suspects, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include finding the killer's motives and locating the killer before they get away completely. The final obstacle should be a showdown with the killer.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to embarrass and weaken the city guard. Their motivation might be to strengthen the thieves' guild, to create opportunity for mercenaries, or to exact revenge. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A vampire has set his sights on one of the protagonists, at the same time the that protagonists are trying to stop a pack of hungry werewolves preying on a town.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of werewolves, but not necessarily of vampires. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the werewolves from killing everyone in town. The vampire is a distraction that has to be dealt with, but is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be the advances of the vampire. The least difficult obstacle will be basic seduction, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include preventing victims from being kidnapped and obstructing lethal blood-sucking. All the while, there are werewolf attacks as the pack expands. The final obstacle should taking out the werewolf pack in spite of the vampire.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to turn the strongest people in the village into werewolves. Their motivation is to expand the pack so it can go conquer another town. The vampire is an obstacle that makes the werewolf hunting more difficult, and is only a secondary antagonist. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists head into an abandoned temple to rescue a kidnap victim from the antagonist.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Knowledge of the deities of the temple is entirely optional but possibly useful.

Story Goal

The objective is to recover the kidnap victim and return them to safety. Defeating the antagonist and whatever their plans were is secondary to the safety of the victim. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be around locating the victim. The least difficult obstacle will be around identifying the cult the antagonist belongs to, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include finding the temple and overcoming angry cultists. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist and getting the victim to safety.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to complete an evil cult ritual. Their motivation is to gain favor and power from their deity. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A protagonist meets the love of their life, but the antagonist conspires to keep them apart.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. The relationship might be brand new, or with an established supporting character who is ready to take things to a new level.

Story Goal

The objective is for the protagonist and their love interest to be together. Once the protagonists have cleared the obstacles in order to accomplish this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve anything that could drive a wedge into the relationship. The least difficult obstacle will be keeping them physically separate, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include slandering the protagonist in the eyes of their love interest, and presenting romantic rivals to give both lovers doubts about their faithfulness. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist over their interference.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to split the lovers up. Their motivation might be because they are a romantic rival in love with either the protagonist or their partner. They might be trying to protect one of the lovers from someone they feel is unworthy. They could want to hurt someone based on an unrelated feud. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists are hired to find an amazing magical treasure, but the mission turns out to be a trap.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have someone out to get them. The items they go after should be something they've wanted for a long time. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive the trap that's been set. Getting the treasure, if it actually exists, is a bonus. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve the normal sorts of early adventure things. The least difficult obstacle will be acquiring a map to the item, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include overcoming normal traps and monsters. The final obstacle should be an ambush by the antagonist that takes all of the protagonists' abilities and weaknesses into consideration.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to defeat, possibly kill, the protagonists. Their motivation is to gain revenge for some past defeat. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

Everywhere the protagonists go they find freshly killed dead bodies, and have to figure out what is going on

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Some knowledge of necromancy and ways that people can be killed remotely by magic could be useful.

Story Goal

The objective is to figure out why people are dying around the protagonists and make it stop. Figuring out why the antagonist is doing it is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve locating the antagonist. The least difficult obstacle will be tracking the cause of death, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include find the motives and identity the antagonist. The final obstacle should be the confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make people fear and distrust the protagonists. Their motivation to upset the balance of good and evil, drawing the life force of the victims to increase their evil power while undermining the protagonists. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists are hired to collect a debt from a scribe with a gambling problem, who turns out to be an assassin hired to kill a high-ranking nobleman.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a relationship with the person hiring them to collect debt. Not knowing much about assassins can help the antagonist to cover his tracks. Having some knowledge of the nobleman who is the target of assassination can be useful.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the assassination. Collecting the actual debt is a secondary goal and not important to meeting the story goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve observation and investigation. The least difficult obstacle will be tracking down the antagonist, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include figuring out who the antagonist really is. The final obstacle should be a battle with the antagonist while preventing the assassination.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the nobleman. Their motivation is the amount of money they will make for the job, which will cover their gambling debt. They are working undercover as a scribe in order to get close to their target, but they cannot resist their gambling habit. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

Following a simple caravan escort job, the protagonists get paid with what turns out to be stolen property, bringing down the wrath of the thieves' guild.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of how dangerous the thieves' guild is. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to smooth things over with the thieves' guild. If this means getting them arrested or killed, that solves the problem. Peaceful solutions work as well. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve avoiding the thieves' guild. The least difficult obstacle will be talking to the caravan master who hired them, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include disposing of or returning the stolen goods. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the guild.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make a point. Their motivation is to show the consequences of people stealing from them. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

At least one of the protagonists' parents is a legendary adventurer, shows up and is in competition to complete the same mission.

Protagonists

This premise requires one or more protagonists to have an adventuring parent (or mentor, aunt or uncle, older sibling, etc.) in their back story. If it's never been mentioned before, it can be retconned.

Story Goal

The objective is to complete the mission before the parental team can. Teaming up to overcome differences might also work. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will stem from whatever the secondary adventure is, but will have the added element of stress and speed. The least difficult obstacle will be performing at least as well as the other team, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as the challenges and encounters get increasingly bigger. The final obstacle should involve a race to the final encounter.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to show their child they're still the best. No matter what the secondary objective is, the parent is the antagonist here. Their motivation is to do their job without the interference of the younger, less experienced protagonists. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

While raiding the lair of humanoid bandits, the protagonists find what appear to be ancient deities frozen in ice.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some minimal knowledge of what they have found. The humanoids do not, but still revere the frozen figures. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the deities before they gain their full power. They can't be destroyed while frozen, and at full power they will be too much for the protagonists. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve stopping deities that at their weak point are already a match for the protagonists. The least difficult obstacle will be defeating the humanoid bandits, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include finding a plausible way to stop the deities. The final obstacle should be an epic battle with the deities.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to reclaim their place in the world. Their motivation is that they're deities and it's what they do. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

A merchant hires the protagonists to help him give away all of his money before midnight on a full moon.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. There's probably a reason the merchant hired the protagonists, but that could be based on reputation rather than an established relationship.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist that's messing with the merchant. They're being coerced to give away their money, or else something bad will happen to them, their family, or the community. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around learning the antagonist's plan. The least difficult obstacle will be getting the merchant to admit what's going on, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include figuring out the scope and details of the antagonist's plan. The final obstacle should be the confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to humiliate and destroy the merchant. Their motivation could stem from a professional rivalry, a form of revenge, or because it ties into some larger plan. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A younger version of one of the protagonists appears, warning them that they failed to kill an antagonist that they all clearly remember killing.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some enemy from the past that is very clearly dead. They need to be able to recognize their younger self, at least enough for the impersonation to be believable.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist again. Figuring out that it's not a case of time travel and that their heads are being messed with is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve figuring out what's going on. The least difficult obstacle will be sorting out that the younger version of a protagonist is a fake, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include working out how the antagonist is still alive. The final obstacle should be a recreation of the original battle with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get revenge on the protagonists for killing him. Their motivation is that they didn't enjoy being dead and being undead isn't that great either. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

The protagonists must escape from a race riot, and get away from an antagonist who wants to keep them trapped there.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of the fantasy races in the setting and the problems between them. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive the rioting. If they can managed to stop it, that's a solution but shouldn't be construed as the goal. Proving that the antagonist incited the riot and is responsible for the injuries deaths, and property damage can be the premise of a sequel adventure. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be avoiding the rioting. The least difficult obstacle will mean hiding from an angry mob, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include avoiding two angry mobs, and dealing with the city guard as they move in to quell the situation. The final obstacle should be getting out of the riot area to safety.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the protagonists by keeping them trapped within the riot zone. They incited the riot and are taking action to keep it going. Their motivation is to destroy the protagonists in the most chaotic, violent, and harmful way possible. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A protagonist must find a way to be with the person they love, even though their relationship is forbidden by society.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a relationship that is somehow taboo among the cultures within the setting. This might have to do with race, religion, politics, or any number of things.

Story Goal

The objective is for the romantic partners to find a way to stay together. Changing the social mores and traditions is probably unrealistic, so that's not the goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will have to do with keeping secrets and avoiding bigots. The least difficult obstacle will be strange looks, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include rude comments, threats, and actual violence. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist who is fanning the flames of intolerance.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to see the romantic partners punished for their relationship. Their motivation is the maintenance of their belief system. They will make sure that the relationship is public, and insure that everyone who will oppose them knows about it. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

When the mayor bans alcohol from the city following a series of drunken riots, the protagonists must decide whether to support the bootleggers or the city guard.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some contacts and relationships within the city, as well as an opinion on prohibition. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can ask for help or hire them.

Story Goal

The objective is to reveal the conspiracy to drive up the price of alcohol. They want the ban so they can create a monopoly, which includes strong-arming the taverns that brew their own ale. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will come from violence flaring up on both sides of the issue. The least difficult obstacle will be personal arguments turning into fights, and escalate into discovering who is behind starting the drunken riots. The final obstacle should be with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get a monopoly on alcohol sales within the city. Their motivation is pure profit and control. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

When a priest is rumored to be having a love affair with a non-believer, the protagonists have to stop radical followers from destroying the city.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some working knowledge of the religion involved. They don't have to be believers but should be aware of the basic tenets and practices followers adhere to to understand why they're upset. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to reveal the antagonist who is spreading lies and whipping up religious frenzy. Keeping the priest from being lynched is a good secondary goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be centered preventing a riot. The least difficult obstacle will be convincing individuals that the rumors are false, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include locating the antagonist and proving that they're lying. The final obstacle should be a confrontation directly with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to supplant the priest as the head of the religion. Their motivation is to gain more personal power. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

As payment for escorting a caravan through bandit country, the caravan master tells each of the protagonists how and when they will die — and it's unfortunately, it will be tomorrow.

Protagonists

This premise doesn't require the protagonists to have any special abilities or history. If there are any existing prophecies, or causes of death that tie into a character's back story, they should be incorporated with the caravan master's prediction.

Story Goal

The objective is to change the future and prevent the prediction from coming true. There may be a secondary goal that the protagonists are pursuing when the near-death experiences take place. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be whatever the caravan master predicted. The least difficult obstacle will be exactly as describe, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as events slowly begin to vary from the original prediction and create new problems. The final obstacle should not happen the way that the protagonists were told, because they have already changed their future.

Antagonists

The antagonist in this premise is the concept of the protagonists' imminent death. The goal of the antagonist is to take their lives through a variety of means, including accidents, random events, and the sorts of fights the protagonists normally get themselves into.

A group of young adventurers are pretending to be the protagonists in order to capitalize on their reputation, but their inexperience leads to disaster.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some level of recognition and a reputation for being good at what they do. They shouldn't be so famous that people would recognize that the young adventurers are impostors.

Story Goal

The objective is to prevent the young adventurers from getting themselves and other people killed. There may be a secondary objective, which both teams are pursuing. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around mistaken identity. The least difficult obstacle will getting blamed for something the impostors did, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include fixing the things that the impostors have messed up. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the impostors, possibly to rescue them when they get in other their heads.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to take advantages of the protagonists' reputation. Their motivation is to make more money than they can as themselves. Unfortunately, while they can impersonate the protagonists' looks, they don't have the experience and overall competence of the protagonists. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The servants of an abusive nobleman rise up during a party and take all of the guests hostage, including the protagonists.

Protagonists

This premise requires there to be a credible reason for the protagonists to be invited to a fancy party. This isn't a get hired and bring all of your gear event, so they should be prepared be dressed in fine clothes and have a good time rather than equipped for impending battle.

Story Goal

The objective is to put down the insurrection while protecting their host and his guests. Putting the abusive nobleman in his place is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will come from not having armor, weapons, and other equipment handy. The least difficult obstacle will be fighting servants, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include saving the hostages and preventing further murders. The final obstacle should be rescuing the nobleman host from the majordomo who led the uprising.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonists is to take revenge on the rich people who have systematically mistreated them their whole lives. The nobleman is an abusive creep who has done reprehensible things to his servants. Their motivation is justified even if their specific actions aren't. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists have to pretend to join a cult in order to learn the location of a powerful magic item in the cult leader's possession.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a working knowledge of the cult and its leader. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to get the magic item. When the protagonists do with the cultists is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on passing as cultists. The least difficult obstacle will be following orders and knowing what to do, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include some icky things the cultist and their leader engage. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the cult leader to procure the magic item.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to use the magic item for some evil purpose. Their motivation is power, gained by pleasing the deity they worship. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist, because the cult leader shouldn't recognize the protagonists.

The protagonists are hired to guard a brewery from angry miners, after the brewmaster stolen the mining foreman's girlfriend.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have the need and reputation to do this sort of security work. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can ask for assistance or convince them to help.

Story Goal

The objective is to save the brewery. Solving the relationship problems of the brewmaster and the miner is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be standard guard duty. The least difficult obstacle will be chasing off angry miners, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with an angry mob and stopping arsonists. The final obstacle should involve the scorned miner and his biggest, baddest friends.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to take revenge on the person who stole his girlfriend. Their motivation is a sense of justice and closure. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists are hired to harvest crops in a local farming community, after many of the original farm workers were killed in a raid by hostile humanoids.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have enough sense of community to realize that people will starve if the crops aren't brought in. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that will appeal to them for help and explain the consequences.

Story Goal

The objective is to rescue what's left of the farming community from the hostile humanoids. The actual harvesting of the crops is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will stem from protecting the farm. The least difficult obstacle will be doing manual labor, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include fighting humanoid raiders and defending the farmers. The final obstacle should be an epic battle with the humanoid chief.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to steal food, which includes both crops and farmers. Their motivation is hunger. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

After being hurt by the antagonist, the protagonist takes justice into their own hands in an attempt to even the score.

Protagonists

This premise requires that something unjust happens to at least one of the protagonists. This can be an every out of their back story, or something that occurs early in the adventure. For some reason, they cannot find recourse through normal channels.

Story Goal

The objective is to get revenge on the antagonist. If a wrong is righted or some injustice is corrected, that's secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve making plans to get revenge. The least difficult obstacle will be avoiding detection by the antagonist and the authorities, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include setting up a plan for revenge and/or justice, and deceiving the antagonist long enough to execute that plan. The final obstacle should be the confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get away with what they've done. Their motivation is to avoid justice entirely if possible. This premise will work best with an established antagonist.

The protagonists need to sacrifice a beloved item in order to gain another item needed to defeat the antagonist.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some object that has value and meaning to them. It might be a magic item, or something with sentimental value. The point is that the protagonists have to suffer a genuine loss to give it up.

Story Goal

The objective is to get the item the protagonists need to complete a secondary goal. The act of sacrifice has to be made. Once the protagonists have done this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve bargaining and searching for alternatives. The least difficult obstacle will be trying to find a plan that works without the sacrifice, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include facing the possible complications that will arise if they fail the mission. The final obstacle should involve getting the item needed.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to force the protagonists to lose something dear to them. Their motivation is to either help the protagonists grow, to teach them a lesson, or to hurt them. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

While traveling, the protagonists wander into the middle of a battle between rival armies.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to be moving through a war zone. They probably don't know where they are, and news of the conflict may or may not have reached them yet.

Story Goal

The objective is to avoid getting killed by rival armies. Both sides will assume the protagonists are spies for the other side because they have no uniforms. Once the protagonists have gotten away, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on avoiding attention. The least difficult obstacle will be hiding from patrols, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include crossing populated areas and getting into fights. The final obstacle should be an epic battle between both sides with the protagonists literally in the crossfire.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to win the war. Their motivation is based on their side's intentions. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists find a treasure map, but the location is on a farm owned by a strange family.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They might know that the map is old, in a more remote area, and that no stories tell of the treasure even being found.

Story Goal

The objective is to recover the treasure. Defeating the creepy degenerate antagonists, who didn't know that an ancestor had treasure buried on the property, is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on finding the treasure and getting away. The least difficult obstacle will be hiding their intentions, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as the antagonists figure out what's going on. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonists over the treasure.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get the treasure. Their motivation is their current poverty and the sense that they are entitled to it. They are willing to kill the protagonists to get it, and prefer that to cutting any sort of deals. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists are hired by a nobleman to escort him to a diplomatic conference, only to discover he's not who he says he is.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have enough credibility and trust to be hired by noblemen. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help vouch for them and get them the job.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop an assassination at the diplomatic conference. They brought the fake nobleman/assassin in the first place, after all. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on stopping the assassin's plan. The least difficult obstacle will be figuring out he's an impostor, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include learning the antagonist's plan and finding out where he's hiding. The final obstacle should be the confrontation during the planned assassination attempt.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill a diplomat. Their motivation is that he's been paid to do it, to help break down relations between the countries and start a war. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists are hired by a student at a school for wizards, who is convinced that one of her teachers is trying to kill her.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a reputation that would make a student reach out to them for help. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that would ask for their assistance or provide a reason to hire them.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the wizard-teacher's plans. Preventing the student's death is secondary, but should be done if possible. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be centered on investigation. The least difficult obstacle will be figuring out that the wizard is up to something, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include avoiding detection by the wizard and learning what his actual plan is. The final obstacle should be a battle between the protagonists and the wizard.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to cast some powerful spell that requires the sacrifice of that particular student. Their motivation is to gain spells that no other wizard possesses. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

A wizard attempts to extort the protagonists into undertaking a dangerous quest.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some sort of dirt in their background that the wizard can use it as leverage. If they do not, he may have fake evidence that can be used to frame them for some serious crime.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the extortionist. The quest he wants to send them on is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on investigation. The least difficult obstacle will be figuring out who the wizard really is and what he wants, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include preventing the release of incriminating information and figuring out the wizard's endgame. The final obstacle should be a battle with the wizard that prevents the leak or otherwise prevent damage to their reputations.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to force the protagonists into undertaking a quest. Their motivation is the acquisition of whatever they're nominally supposed to go find for him. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A shop owner hires the protagonists to protect her from a local gang, but she turns out to be a retired assassin being targeted by her former guild.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. The shop owner might hire them because they're good, or because they're less likely to figure out the truth than official authorities.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the assassins. Whether they do anything about the shop owner, if she is wanted for past crimes, is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will begin with protecting the shop owner. The least difficult obstacle will be defeating the assassins' first attempt, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include figuring out that the assailants are not a gang, and that the shop owner is more than she claims to be. The final obstacle should be an epic battle with the assassins.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the shop owner. Their motivation is that she betrayed them and that cannot go unanswered. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists are hired to protect an old wizard, who turns out to be a monster in need of protection from another band of adventurers.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. They should be competent enough to take on the people trying to kill the monster.

Story Goal

The objective is to save the monster from getting killed. Defeating the other adventurers is secondary, because the goal can theoretically be accomplished without combat. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will focus on guard duty and protection. The least difficult obstacle will be overcoming the urge to kill the monster themselves before hearing him out, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include preparing defenses or moving the monster to a safe location. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonists, the other adventuring party.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the monster. They refuse to believe he isn't evil. Their motivation is to gain the treasure the monster is supposed to have. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

Thinking that they've been hired to escort a merchant caravan, the protagonists unwittingly help foreign spies get out of the country.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Knowing that there are refugees, migrant workers, or poor traveling foreigners in the land is a bonus.

Story Goal

The objective is to catch the spies before they get to safety. Whether this happens while they're still in the country or after they cross over doesn't matter, except in terms of obstacles. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be in outsmarting spies. The least difficult obstacle will be figuring out who they really are before they cross over, seeing through their disguises, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include tracking and pursuing them. The final obstacle should be confronting the spies and capturing or killing them.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to escape back to their homeland with the secret information they possess. Their motivation is to serve their country by doing their job well. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists have to find the cure for a magical disease, but the antagonist doesn't want that to happen.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of the widespread damage the magical disease can do, and how difficult it is to treat. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can provide the knowledge.

Story Goal

The objective is to find and spread the cure. Stopping the antagonist in any way other than foiling the plan is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will include travel and locating rare ingredients. The least difficult obstacle will be standard hazards on the road and in the wilderness, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include the antagonist intentionally obstructing the protagonists' efforts. The final obstacle should include a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to spread the disease. Their motivation is to wipe out the population of the kingdom so their minions can more easily take over. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

An ancient book with long-forgotten spells has been discovered, and the protagonists have to make a decision before the antagonist puts it to ill use.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have an awareness of what the legendary book is and what it may contain. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can provide that background information.

Story Goal

The objective is to keep the antagonist from using the book. What actually happens to the book or the antagonist is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on locating the book. The least difficult obstacle will be discovering its current location, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include a race against the antagonist to get the book. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist as they attempt to cast a particularly powerful and nasty spell.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to unleash terror and destruction upon the world, via a spell from the ancient spellbook. Their motivation is to increase their own power and influence. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The followers of a lesser deity are disappearing without a trace, and the protagonists are called upon to investigate.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have knowledge of the lesser deity, their followers, and their mortal enemies. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can provide the background information needed.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist who is kidnapping innocent people. Saving the kidnap victims is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will focus on investigation. The least difficult obstacle will be finding suspects responsible for the kidnapping, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include locating the victims and determining what the antagonist is planning. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to sacrifice the followers of a rival deity. Their motivation is to gain favor with their own dark master. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

In a remote village, the local priest harbors a dark secret that will cause serious problems for the protagonists.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a reason to be in the remote village, personally or professionally. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that will have hired them to travel there for some plausible reason.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist, the local priest. Getting out of the village, and dealing with the complications the priest causes, is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on annoyances that are part of a larger curse. The least difficult obstacle will be misplaced objects, bad luck, and minor illnesses, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include losing magic items and sustaining accidental injuries. The final obstacle should be a face-off with the priest once the protagonists discover he's behind it.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to steal power from the protagonists through an escalating series of curses. Every time something happens to them, the antagonist gains power. The final act will be to sacrifice the protagonists, once they have been rendered too weak to fight back. The antagonist's motivation is to gain power over the region. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists walk into a bar to discover it packed with old antagonists mysteriously back from the dead.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have to have a number of old foes, preferably notable and memorable ones. The harder they were to defeat, and the more annoying they were, the better.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the antagonist who has brought the old foes back. Once he is stopped, the other enemies will disappear. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on reliving old encounters. The least difficult obstacle will be the most easily dispatched foe, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty as the protagonists fight their way through their toughest foes. Along the way, other obstacles will focus on discovering how these dead antagonists have come back, and who brought them back. The final obstacle should be with the main antagonist responsible for the resurrections.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy the protagonists. Their motivation is that they are a minor old foe that the protagonists never took serious and likely don't remember. This premise works best with established, recurring antagonists.

The protagonists are hired to protect a pleasure barge, which sails into a bizarre fog bank and ends up in another plane.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have the sort of reputation that would make rich people hire them. Alternately, if the protagonists are rich they might have bought a space and be there to party. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can get them invited or convince them to go.

Story Goal

The objective is to get back to the protagonists' own plane. Saving people on the barge is a noble thing, but secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on figuring out where they are and how they got there. The least difficult obstacle will be attacks by creatures native to this plane, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include battling increasingly bigger creatures. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist who brought them there.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get some powerful magic item that's on the barge. Their motivation is to use it for some goal here on their native plane. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

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A merchant hires the protagonists to guard a ship, but the crew scuttles it and flees, leaving the protagonists aboard to sink.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a relationship of trust with the merchant. If not, they should have no reason not to trust them. It may also be that they are hired by a third party claiming to represent someone they trust.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive a sunken ship, which is a large trap and filled with angry, panicked monsters. Finding the antagonist who did this is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on survival. The least difficult obstacle will be basic monster fights, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with the reality that they're running out of air, getting out of the sunken ship, and returning safely to the surface. The final obstacle should be a giant monster in the water outside of the ship, waiting to eat survivors.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill the protagonists. Their motivation is probably revenge for a past defeat, or possibly they were hired by someone else to kill them in an expensive and elaborate way. This premise works best with an established, recurring antagonist.

Someone or something is kidnapping babies, and the protagonists have to discover what's going on before the next disappearance.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have keen investigative skills. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help out with those abilities.

Story Goal

The objective is to save the babies. Learning why they were kidnapped and understanding the antagonist's plan is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on locating the kidnap victims. The least difficult obstacle will be narrowing the list of suspects, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include getting into the place where the kidnapped babies are being held, and doing so in a way that won't bring harm to the babies. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to collect a large quantity of babies. Their motivation is up to you, and will depend on the tone of your campaign. This can be silly, lighthearted fun, or dark and disturbing. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A member of the king's guard comes to the protagonists for help, claiming other guardsmen are out to kill him.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a relationship of trust with at least one member of the guard. If they do not, the guardsman might outright hire them rather than ask for help.

Story Goal

The objective is to uncover the existence of corruption within the guard. Stopping whatever plan the secret circle of guardsman have is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will focus on secrecy and gathering information. The least difficult obstacle will involve spying on the guard, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include breaking into their headquarters and getting into fights with them. The final obstacle should be all-out combat with the corrupt guards.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to take over the guard and eventually the kingdom via a quiet coup. Their motivation is power, and dissatisfaction with the current leadership. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists have to escort a group of children away from a town riddled with plague, to temple where healers can keep them safe.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a relationship with the healers, and the compassion to want to help children. If they don't, then they can be hired to do that job.

Story Goal

The objective is to get the children to safety. Helping to cure the disease and stop the spread of the plague is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on protection. The least difficult obstacle will be avoiding the plague-infested areas, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include travel hazards like wild animals and bandits. The final obstacle should be with the necromancer who is responsible for the plague.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to kill people in large numbers. Their motivation is to gain favor with their death-based deity. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonist and antagonist compete to be the first to the location of a buried treasure.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. If there's a legend around the treasure that makes it interesting.

Story Goal

The objective is to beat the antagonist to the treasure. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around locating the treasure site. The least difficult obstacle will be translating the map, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include wilderness hazards, wandering monsters, and traps set by the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a battle against the antagonist over the treasure.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get to the treasure first. Their motivation is getting whatever gold, magic, and other valuable or powerful items for themselves. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist, but a rivalry with a recurring villain can be more fun.

A protagonist suddenly inherits a vast fortune, and the antagonist draws them deeper into a dangerous world of wretched excess.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. The more naive they are, the more interesting this premise plays out.

Story Goal

The objective is to test the inheriting protagonist's moral compass. How will they behave when they can have anything they want? Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on moral judgments and willpower. The least difficult obstacle will be doing something small that the inheriting protagonist knows they shouldn't do, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include committing serious breaches of morality, ethics, and the law. The final obstacle should be breaking things off with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to pull the newly-rich protagonist deeper into the depths of depravity. Their motivation might be to willfully corrupt the protagonist, or they might like having a new friend. They won't like it when the protagonist wants to quit, because they've seen too much, know too much, and pose a threat to the antagonist now. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists discover an underground gladiator ring, where peasants are forced to fight monsters.

Protagonists

This premise does not require the protagonists to have any special abilities or a specific sort of background. Background elements that allow them to have sympathy for the peasants is a plus, as are any combat skills.

Story Goal

The objective is to break up the ring. This will save the peasants and handle the antagonist as well. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on fighting and investigation. The least difficult obstacle will be locating the ring, which may or may not literally be underground, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include getting captured and organizing an escape. The final obstacle should be a fight with the antagonist on the scene of the gladiator matches.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to turn a profit from people gambling on the matches. Their motivation is to fulfill their greed while entertaining themselves with the pain and suffering of others. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists investigate a claim made by a supporting character that the whole world magically changed overnight, and only he remembers it.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a working knowledge of the world. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that. This will help them to spot inconsistencies and changes.

Story Goal

The objective is to return the world to the way it was. Putting an end to the antagonist that did it is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will include spotting “continuity errors” in reality to verify that the supporting character is right. The least difficult obstacle will be dealing with paradoxes, like certain spells not working the way they should, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include fighting monsters with the wrong abilities. The final obstacle should be with the antagonist who wished the world into its current configuration.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to make the world work the way they want it to. Their motivation is to always be right about things. Their wishes started coming true, so they began to abuse it to the point of breaking reality. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A nobleman hires the protagonists to kill a demon he made a deal with, before it can come to collect what it is owed.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of how to deal with demons and similar forces. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can provide the necessary information.

Story Goal

The objective is to kill the demon. Addressing the repercussions of the nobleman is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will revolve around demon problems. The least difficult obstacle will be protecting the nobleman temporarily, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include gathering the items necessary to bind or banish the demon, and fighting the demon's minions. The final obstacle should be a massive fight with the demon itself.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to collect on a debt. Their motivation is to have the things they are owed, and to protect their professional reputation. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists become cursed and cannot use magical healing until they complete a pilgrimage to a faraway shrine.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have done something that got them cursed recently. If they do not, then that should happen early in the adventure, perhaps as part of pursuing a secondary goal.

Story Goal

The objective is to get the curse removed before the protagonists die. Any secondary goal they were pursuing isn't important, and probably not possible, until this objective is met, but it might add a time limit for some extra suspense. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on not getting injured, because healing is slow or impossible. The least difficult obstacle will be avoiding fights, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include wilderness hazards, traps, and wandering monsters popping up randomly. The final obstacle should be with the antagonist who cursed them, after they're able to use magical healing again.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to have the protagonists kill. Their motivation is to get them out of the way of a large plan, or to get revenge for past defeats. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists arrive in a town to find that it is abandoned and in ruins, and have to search for clues to learn what happened.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of the town, even if they've never been there before. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to discover where the townspeople are and rescue them. Putting the town back together afterward is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will include investigation. The least difficult obstacle will be working out what happened, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include finding where the townspeople are hiding, and tracking down the antagonist. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to conquer the area. Their motivation is to amass more power. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists are hired to deliver supplies to a monastery only accessible by a dangerous river.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some wilderness survival skills. Knowing something about the monastery will be useful as well. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to get the supplies to the monastery. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be travel-based. The least difficult obstacle will be sailing on the river, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include weather, traps set by the antagonist, and ambushes by wandering monsters. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to get the supplies. Their motivation is that there is nothing out here in the wilderness, other than what you can hunt and scrounge for. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

A religious order is trying to build a hospital, and hires the protagonists to protect it from the evil cult that keeps trying to tear it down.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a relationship with the order of healer. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can ask them for assistance, or offer to hire them for their services.

Story Goal

The objective is to guard the construction site until it's completed. Defeating the evil cult once and for all is secondary, but would meet the main goal. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will be general guard duty. The least difficult obstacle will be fighting off common thugs, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include thugs using magic, and battling trained or summoned monsters serving the cult. The final obstacle should be with the main antagonist, the cult leader.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to increase suffering by destroying the hospital. Their motivation is to appease their evil deity. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

A person the protagonists meet in a tavern becomes a groupie, then starts making outrageous demands and stalking them.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have something of a reputation and impressive stories about them in taverns and by traveling bards. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to get rid of the dangerous groupie. Preventing damage to their reputation and cleaning up the mess the groupie has made is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on an obsessed person who wants to do them harm. The least difficult obstacle will be shouting and yelling, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include dealing with nasty rumors and accusations, discovering acts of vandalism, and reacting to threats. The final obstacle should involve confronting the antagonist and whatever group of friends or angry mob they've whipped up.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to hurt the protagonists. Their motivation is that they feel the protagonists have hurt them by not accepting the antagonist as their new best friend. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The protagonists must face off against a band of rival adventurers whose abilities parallel their own.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have established their signature abilities. Having some basis for a rivalry, such as belonging to a guild or faction, or getting jobs from the same employer, can help reinforce the premise.

Story Goal

The objective is to be the first to achieve some superficial goal. That secondary goal is less important than being the antagonists to the punch. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will focus on direct competition. The least difficult obstacle will be races and chases, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include skill challenges and keeping count of who has beaten more opponents in combat. The final obstacle should end in a direct fight with the rivals.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to beat the protagonists to a secondary goal. Their motivation is to complete what for them is the story goal. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists are given a quest by the king, which the antagonist does not want them to complete.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have either a reputation for reliability, a special set of skills, or a relationship with those who have the ear of the king. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with that.

Story Goal

The objective is to fulfill the quest. Defeating the antagonist is secondary to pleasing the king. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on completing the quest and appeasing the king. The least difficult obstacle will be following proper courtly etiquette, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include facing travel hazards, locating the object of the quest, and fending off the antagonist's attempts at sabotage. The final obstacle should be confronting the antagonist right before presenting the object of the quest to the king.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to foil the desires of the king. Their motivation might be political, personal, or part of a larger plan that requires the quest item. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

Children have been going missing from the city, and the protagonists discover a portal to a magical wonderland.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have no special skills. They might have some connection to the children that have gone missing.

Story Goal

The objective is to bring the children home. Defeating the antagonist is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will involve exploring the magical land the children have been taken to. The least difficult obstacle will be getting the lay of the land, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include fighting the local bad guys and locating the children. The final obstacle should be a battle with the main antagonist in the magical realm.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to defeat the children who have been brought from another world to defeat him. Their motivation is to maintain their power base. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

The family of an old antagonist shows up, looking for revenge against the protagonists.

Protagonists

This premise requires that the protagonists have an old antagonist. That antagonist should credibly have family, whether it's children, siblings, or something else. They also need to be able to know that the protagonists are responsible for whatever happened.

Story Goal

The objective is to defeat the new antagonists. There might be a secondary objective as well. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on surviving the attacks from the antagonist. The least difficult obstacle will be break-ins and theft, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include increasingly tougher and more violent attacks by the henchmen. The final obstacle should be a direct confrontation with the antagonist family.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to punish the protagonists. Their motivation is revenge for what the protagonists did to their relative, the original antagonist. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The protagonists get caught up in a turf war between the merchants guild and the thieves guild.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have at least a little bit of knowledge about who the major players in the area are. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with information and useful contacts.

Story Goal

The objective is to not make lasting enemies. Any outcome that doesn't have one of both factions angry with the protagonists completes the story goal. Their may be a secondary objective that the protagonists are trying to accomplish in the midst of this. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will include having to make choices about how their actions will be perceived. The least difficult obstacle will be avoiding members of the factions, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include doing favors for the factions to keep peace, and helping to negotiate deals and truces. The final obstacle should be a fight between the two factions with the protagonists literally in the middle.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonists is to take territory away from the other antagonist. Their motivation is to expand the power base of both their criminal activities and legitimate operations. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

The sun didn't come up today, and the protagonists have to deal with panic, riots, and religious fanatics throughout the city.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have the abilities or equipment to operate in the dark. Any sort of magic or diplomatic skills that can calm people down will also be handy. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with those tasks.

Story Goal

The objective is to stop the antagonist who has brought darkness to the world. Everything else is an obstacle keeping them from that task. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on frightened people doing dangerous and irrational things. The least difficult obstacle will be getting through crowds, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include getting caught up in riots and attacks by evil cultists. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the evil cult that's summoned up the darkness.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to generate terror. Their motivation is to generate enough fear to be able to summon their dark lord. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

A cult is recruiting poor and desperate peasants and turning them into undead soldiers.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have the abilities needed to deal with large numbers of the undead. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help to fight them, and destroy them.

Story Goal

The objective is stop the necromancer from exploiting the peasants. Dealing with the undead rampage is secondary to saving the innocent people who are still alive. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will focus on determining what the cult is really up to. The least difficult obstacle will be finding someone who has recently run off to join the cult, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include battling increasingly larger and tougher legions of the undead. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the necromancy leading the cult.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to create an army. Their motivation is to spread death throughout the land to increase their power and please their deity. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.

An ancient building collapses with the protagonists inside, and it propels them back in time to when the structure was built.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some knowledge of local history. Some architectural and engineering skills wouldn't hurt either. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with those abilities.

Story Goal

The objective is fix the flaw that causes the building to collapse in the present. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story. and the protagonists will return to their own time.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will focus on the antagonist's attempt to sabotage the building. The least difficult obstacle will be noticing the weakness that will make it fall, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include figuring out what the antagonist's plan is. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the antagonist.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to destroy the building. Their motivation is to make the chief engineer and architect look bad, so the antagonist can take their place at court. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

While traveling the protagonists find the perfect place to camp for the night, but the location turns out to be haunted.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have some survival and camping skills, as well as the ability to deal with ghosts. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can help with supernatural creatures and the basics of outdoor living.

Story Goal

The objective is to survive the night. Revealing the story of the ghosts and learning why the area is haunted is secondary. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on being haunted. The least difficult obstacle will be troubles setting up the camp, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include investigating weird noises, defending against telekinetic attacks, and engaging in terrifying battles. The final obstacle should involve clearing out the source of the haunting.

Antagonists

The goal of the antagonist is to scare the protagonists and make them leave. Their motivation is to protect some dark secret at the site. This premise works best with a new, unfamiliar antagonist.

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A merchant's daughter hires the protagonists to help her run away from home. Then the merchant hires them to find her and bring her back.

Protagonists

This premise requires the protagonists to have a reputation as people who can help with these sorts of situations. If they do not, be sure to include a supporting character that can ask for their help or hire them to do the jobs.

Story Goal

The objective is to do what's best for the daughter. You might decide, based on the circumstances you present, that this is running away from home or being reunited with the parent. Once the protagonists have accomplished this, you have reached the end of your story.

Obstacles

For this premise, obstacles will center on travel and negotiation. The least difficult obstacle will be getting the daughter away undetected, after which obstacles will escalate in difficulty to include finding the daughter again, and convincing the daughter or the merchant on the best course of action. The final obstacle should be a confrontation with the armed muscle hired by the person who doesn't get their way.

Antagonists

Either the merchant or the daughter is likely to end up as the antagonist. The merchant will be mad if he finds out the protagonists helped her run off. The daughter will be made if she finds out the protagonists sold her out. Both will hire other armed and dangerous people if the protagonists aren't on their side. This premise will work with either an unfamiliar or returning antagonist.