



“Supercharge Your Scene: A 5-Day Writing Challenge” (using Three Story Method)

Day 1 Homework:



In three sentences or less, explain what is happening in this scene.



What are you trying to say about life?

Jamie has been out all night because he has an undercover job. He's had to ignore messages from his boyfriend, who is mad the following morning. He wants to come clean with Kyle and get to a place he can be more honest with him.

The complexities of a new relationship can be a challenge, especially building trust when you have to hide part of yourself.

Commented [J1]: Excellent!

How can you make this a stance or an argument? For example, “Love only occurs when you’re vulnerable.” Or the other approach, “Don’t let anyone get close because you’ll eventually get your heart broken.”

Day 2 Homework:



What does the protagonist want (external pursuits)?



What does the antagonist or force of antagonism want (external pursuits)?

To finish his current assignment and then do something different that won't require so much secrecy.

Jamie thinks that Kyle wants him to be more truthful and more available.

Commented [J2]: Get inside of Kyle's head for wants and needs.



What does the protagonist need (internal desires)?



What does the antagonist or force of antagonism need (internal desires)?

He wants to be truthful in his relationship while also doing a good job at work. Want to find a balance.

Jamie believes Kyle wants to feel secure.

What's wrong with the protagonist's personal world? What is the disruption?

Having to not be honest with the guy that he likes weighs on him. A disruption is coming one way or the other as he feels Kyle will leave if something doesn't change, or that his job will change if he prioritizes his relationship.

Commented [J3]: For this, try to think more global (as this will tie into theme which I asked in “What are you trying to say about life?”)

For example, “Finding love is more complicated than it should be.”



Day 3 Homework:

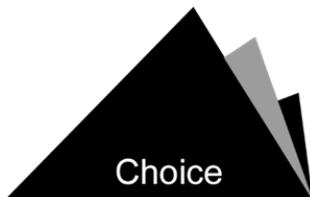


What single moment or circumstance pushes the protagonist out of the status quo? Tip: It must be "on the page," not something that occurred before the beginning of this scene.

How can Jamie do right by Kyle given the structure of his current job?

Commented [J4]: Try to be as specific as you can with the initial Conflict. Identify the exact moment that Kyle will be forced to do something differently than he did the previous day. What event is pushing him out of his "normal?"

Day 4 Homework:



What choice must the protagonist make in this scene? Tip: Label it as a Best Bad Choice or an Irreconcilable Good and list all possible outcomes.

- to ask for security clearance for Kyle
- to request a job change that doesn't require secrecy
- maintain status quo and create more elaborate lie

Commented [J5]: I think you have more than one Choice in this story sequence which we'll discuss.

A great way at drilling down to the Choice is playing out the decision on both sides. We'll brainstorm Kyle's options in the scene...

Day 5 Homework:



What event(s) occur as a result of the protagonist's decision? Tip: Use the consequence of this scene to set up the conflict of the next.

- Kyle either can't get clearance OR he can but doesn't want it OR he can and all is well
- Jamie changes jobs and Kyle is satisfied a change is happening OR job change happens and Kyle is still not happy and is leaving anyway. OR job change and that puts a new stress in relationship as Jamie gave up a lot for new relationship
- morning about keeping status quo works and either breakup happens OR more arguments happen.

Commented [J6]: This will follow directly from the Choice, once established.



Your Scene (2,000 words or less)

After you've written your scene, use "comments" to identify your conflict, choice, and consequence. For example:

<p>"You must be some kinda crazy," he said. "Coming back like you own the place after the way you blazed outta here? Boss has gone half-crazy looking for you."</p> <p>"Yeah, well I'm here now. So let me in."</p> <p>Covey shook his head. "You know the drill. He lifted his hands and twiddled his fingers at her. "Show em."</p> <p>The fire buried deep in Jill's chest sparked with interest, and mentally, she stomped on it. "Come on, Covey. Aiden sent for me. Look." She dug out the scrap of paper and waved it at him. He tugged it out of her tightly pinched fingers, and she itched to snatch it back. It wasn't like she didn't know what it said, though. <i>I found your mother. You know where to find me.</i> And Aiden's mark, the black rose, stamped in inked blood below it.</p>	<p>Commented [CC2]: Conflict: Can't pass until she proves herself.</p>
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Supercharge Your Scene Challenge – Jeff Adams

Prompt: It never failed. As soon as she he hung up, Jamie regretted telling Kyle where she'd he'd been the previous night.

The reason I never dated became apparent when I powered on my personal phone. After an unexpected night crammed into a high tech surveillance van two blocks from a warehouse where Jennifer Castillo's gang turned up last night, I knew Kyle wasn't going to be happy. Finding a dozen text messages and two voicemails from him indicated exactly how pissed he was.

We'd been scheduled to spend the evening on a triple date consisting of dinner, amazing seats to *Dear Evan Hansen* and then desert. It'd been planned for a few weeks and proved how serious thigs were getting with Kyle. I'd met his bestie Meredith right after our second date and later I'd met her wife. However, for this date another milestone was to happen meeting Kyle's older brother. Not quite as big as meeting the parents, but meeting Simon and his wife was important.

And, I'd missed it.

No doubt the countdown timer on how much longer I'd be Kyle's boyfriend sped up considerably.

I scanned the increasingly angry, late night messages in the elevator headed up to the office. Brenda, my partner, mercifully busied herself with her phone. She knew what last night cost me since we'd talked about it en route to the assignment.

It least we got a victory. Jennifer and her crew were taken into custody along with all of their equipment.



The phone vibrated in my hand and Kyle's name and picture filled the screen. I glanced at Brenda.

She nodded. "Go ahead and take it. Might as well rip that Band-Aid off." Her brown eyes were as sad as her smile.

"Hey Kyle." I attempted upbeat but it only came out tired. After a full day in the office yesterday and no sleep, it was the best I had. "I'm just back at the office and will be out of here in about an hour. Meet me for breakfast?"

"So you *can* answer the phone." The acid in his voice burned my heart. "You didn't say it was going to be all night again."

Again.

I'd already pulled a dozen overnights since we started going out five months ago. Usually I could grab a call, or at least jot a text. Last night was devices off though.

"Yeah. It turned out to be more complicated than expected, but we got the job done." I refused to let his level of pissed off affect me. If I stayed calm, maybe he'd get there too.

"Complicated but great? Where the hell were you? How you work for the freakin' state—what on earth goes on in the middle of the night that can be complicated and great." He sighed and I didn't know what to say. "I don't know if I can do this much longer."

The elevator arrived and Brenda stepped out first and I followed her down the hall to our office. Voice filtered out from a couple other offices, but not many people were in yet.

I liked Kyle—a lot. My sometimes undercover work in the Cyber Crimes division meant I kept secrets though and until I'd met Kyle one night while I watched the Red Wings play in a bar, I hadn't been looking for anyone because I knew it was futile. Kyle's cute smile and great game commentary though meant we saw more of each other until we finally decided to give it ago.

"I know. I'm sorry."

"That can't keep being the talk we have. I trust you, but..." He stopped before he said something terrible. "You know what, let's get breakfast and figure out what we're going to do. Maybe..."

We should end it.

I silently finished the sentence for him.

"Cafeteria Diner in an hour?" I offered.

Commented [J7]: Nice! Perfect example of showing us Jamie's mood without telling us he's upset. Bonus points for making it active voice.

Commented [J8]: I'll forgive you for this. As a die-hard Pittsburgh Penguins fan, I'll look the other way when you're talking about the Red Wings.



"Fine. I'll see you there."

He disconnected.

It never failed. As soon as he hung up, I regretted telling Kyle where I'd been the previous night. He'd been cheated on hardcore with his last serious boyfriend. Even though we'd talked about my long hours, I knew it was hard on him not being able to know where I was and who I was with. We'd almost decided to split over it, but mutually decided to give us a try.

I threw the phone onto my desk as Brenda sat down at hers.

"Sorry, Jamie." She put her messenger bag on the desk. "I can take care of what needs to be done this morning if you want to get going?"

I shook my head as I shrugged out of my backpack. I dropped into my chair as I set it on the floor. The time it would take to get my stuff from last night situated wouldn't affect getting to Cafeteria on time.

"Have you thought what you're actually going to tell him?"

"No."

Her phone rang. Thank God because I didn't know what to tell her either.

My options were limited.

Some people in the undercover team had put their significant others through the rigors of security clearance so they'd be able to know some of the logistics. Not a lot, but it at least what their spouses did and the dangers involved. As a nurse, Kyle already had to be trusted with patient confidentiality so that would go in his favor if his record was good and we decided to go that way.

However, I'd only seen married agents do that. Kyle and I hadn't even talked about that concept, although I could envision a future—I'd felt it with how we meshed cooking together, deciding on dates or even having comfortable silences.

I didn't know if I could give up undercover and the ops that went with it? There was plenty to do besides being in the field—everything from support, which still might involve late nights but at least I'd be more transparent on the why and where. I could teach too. I already enjoyed working with new agents to show them the ropes, so full out teaching cybersecurity and agent training could be an option. There was always teaching at a University too.

"I can practically hear your brain whirring over here," Brenda said.

Commented [JA9]: Prompt

Commented [J10]: Interesting. Why did you identify this as the Conflict?

Commented [JA11]: Conflict

Commented [J12]: Great choice. I'd consider having Jamie talk through the other side of the decision too.

What happens if he gives up undercover? What happens if he doesn't?

It doesn't need to be on the page every time, but you want the reader weighing these possible outcomes. That's what's going to force them to turn the page. They're living vicariously through Kyle and they want to know what he's going to do.

If the decision is too easy, they're not incentivized to keep reading.

Commented [JA13]: Choice



I chuckled. "Yeah. I don't know if I can make this good for everyone. And what if Kyle's not the guy I should turn my life upside down for."

Brenda wheeled herself across the office next to my desk. "It was easier for me. Ty and I had been married a couple of years when I moved from analyst to undercover. He knew I went for and got the promotion and what that change would be. I can't imagine being in it with someone new."

I nodded. She was a good companion to the voice in my head.

"I'm going to see if Menendez is in."

"Oh?" She didn't sound as surprised as I expected. Hell, it surprised me.

I pulled my laptop from my pack and got it on the network to start a file transfer of last night's data.

"The files will upload so the team can start the full analysis. I'll set this to ping them when it's done. I'm going to crash after breakfast for a few hours. You gonna be here much longer?"

"I'm out in less than 10." She gave me an exhausted smile and slid back across to her desk.

"Good." I squeezed her shoulder as I went for the door. "I'll catch up with you this afternoon."

"Good luck."

I nodded and raised my eyebrows. What would I even say? I'm in love with a guy and I want to change everything. If it wasn't for Kyle, it'd be for somebody else. My life wasn't built for a relationship and had to know what I could do to change that.

Menendez faced away from the door so I knocked on the frame. "Got a minute?"

"Jamie! I didn't expect to see you." He yawned giving away his own exhaustion having worked in ops control all night.

"Headed out in a minute. But I wanted to see if we could talk for a sec."

"Of course. Drink?" He pointed at his fridge as he went to it.

"Oh yeah. Got any Frappuccinos in there?"

"You sure?" He held one up. "Caffeine at this point?"

"I need it."

Commented [J14]: Feels like it could be the start of a second scene.

Commented [J15]: Conflict



He tossed it to me even though he looked skeptical. He got a caffeine free Coke for himself. "So what's up?"

I sat in silence until he raised an eyebrow at me. "... I need a change. I don't know how to make this work anymore."

Menendez took a deep breath and let it out slow. "Tell me."

I gave him the rundown, both of the problem and what I thought my options were.

"Going the security clearance route isn't even available without the minimum marriage commitment of four years, so that's out."

When was did a marriage requirement enter into that? Probably mentioned in a memo I hadn't paid full attention to since it didn't apply to me at the time.

"I'll support any choice you make. You're great undercover, but there's usually a breaking point for most agents. You're valuable here so we can definitely look to transfer you. I'd like to see you stay on in ops support because you've got skills we can use there. Will it solve you're problems though? That still has a lot of confidentiality and late nights."

I didn't speak right away and burned time by taking a big, cold gulp. Was I sure? No way to know until I talked to Kyle.

"At least it gives me options."

"That it does. What's your timeline?"

I stood. "I'm headed to have a talk now."

Menendez stood too and offered a hand. "That's kinda crazy after the night you've had."

"I think it's now or never."

He nodded. "Let me know."

"Of course. Thanks for the support."

And with that I was off with a bit of time to spare. I arrived ahead of Kyle and got us a table. The breakfast rush was in full swing, but I was seated and mochas served just as he walked in.

Commented [J16]: Choice

Should Jamie bring up the issue with his superior possibly risking advancement or does he broach the subject in hopes it'll save his relationship?

Commented [J17]: Consequence

Jamie brings it up and discovers that Menendez has his back either way.

Commented [J18]: Could be the start of a third scene.

SUPER CHARGE
YOUR SCENE



A 5-DAY WRITING CHALLENGE

1 2 3 4 5 ✓

His shoulders were tight as he sat. He didn't take off his jacket or lean in to kiss me. He hadn't lost any of his frustration. At least he took a sip of the coffee and a slight smile appeared. He loved the coffee here.

"I'm sorry," I jumped in first. "Here's the deal, I really do work for the state but it's all classified. That's why I'm so tight lipped." I paused for a reaction. I didn't see any. I hoped for a slight ease of tension. "I know it's hard not knowing where I am so I'm giving up classified work for at least a while so we can build a stronger foundation."

He scrubbed his hand across his eyes and shook his head. "I don't think that's a good idea."

Commented [J19]: Conflict

Commented [J20]: Choice (implied)

Does Jamie start the conversation and try to put a positive spin on the situation, or does he let Kyle talk first, maybe to vent?

Commented [J21]: Consequence

Jamie jumps in first, but Kyle responds in a way that he (and the reader) wasn't expecting.

Love the twist/cliffhanger!

Commented [JA22]: Consequence