

Plot Outline done for Green Magic One

By Holly Lisle

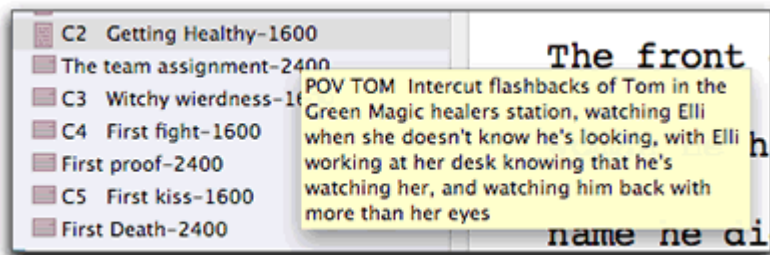
I had a couple folks ask how I would do headers on the plot cards. So I took a picture of the outline view of my plot card outline for **Green Magic I**.

This is done in Scrivener; your results will look different depending on what you're using to outline your book. But...

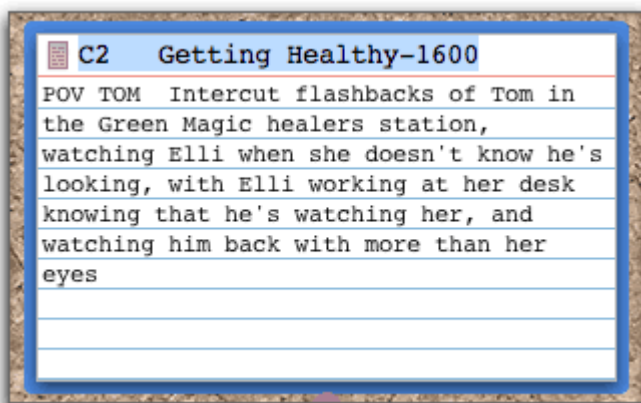
The entire project is in a folder titled (ever so imaginatively) Draft. The working synopsis is the green rectangle beneath it. That holds my short description, main character arc, theme, and cover copy description. Then I have my character list—each character has a short description that I can roll over at any time with my cursor, so that the names of my folks are in front of me all the time, plus pertinent details about their appearances, jobs, etc.

Following that is the title, and then the book divided into three beats. It also follows Three-Act Structure, but you'll see that the actual acts, Gathering the Players, Intensifying the Situation, and Resolving the Conflict, do not land at the same place as the story beats.

At the far left of every other title, C[#] marks off each chapter (you can see I'm doing two scenes per chapter), each card has a title that cues me in to what the main action of that scene will be, and the necessary word count I have to hit to come in on deadline at length, and within the specifications for the book. This is a line romance with a requirement for 60%-40% heroine-hero viewpoints. Having the cards marked off this way will keep me on track.



I can see the contents of each card as I roll the cursor over it, preventing me from ever having to click back into the plot-cards working view, but keeping all that information at my fingertips.



Here's the corkboard with card in place for comparison purposes.

The information in the body of each card is the character POV for each scene and the scene's main action.

Finally, here's the titles-only view that I see as I'm actually writing the book. (All of the cards are drag-and-drop, too, to make in-progress revision simple.

And to the cries of "Where's the creativity in the midst of all that structure..." well, I like to write sonnets, too. It's the same process. You learn the rules, you integrate the rules, and then you see just how far outside the envelope you can push you can push your content without breaking the entire structure.

▼ Draft	
Synopsis	
▼ Character List	
Tom O'Riley	
Elli Fox	
John Green	
Paul Howard Zmed	
Rachel Haightly	
Ari (Aragorn) Linden	
Marissa Lee	
Rob Kitura	
Kate O'Hanlon	
Mike Brikowski	
▼ [Redacted]	Title intentionally obscured
▼ Boy Meets Girl	
C1 Out of the cage-1483	
To safety-2559	
C2 Getting Healthy-1600	
The team assignment-2400	
C3 Witchy wierdness-1600	
Two bods and a jeep-2400	Act I ends here
C4 First fight-1600	
First proof-2400	
C5 First kiss-1600	
First Death-2400	
▼ Boy Loses Girl	
C6 Power struggle-1600	
Elli prevails-2400	
C7 Stuck with the team-1600	
Hunting the killer-2400	
C8 San Jose-1600	
The Room-2400	
C9 Wake up call-1600	
Elli scores big-2400	
C10 Old City-1600	
Love and Death-2400	
▼ Boy Gets Girl	
C11 And Guatemala-1600	
Supplying for Disaster-2400	
C12 Run through the Jungle-1600	
Following Bread Crumbs-2400	
C13 The Last Night-1600	
The Last Day-2400	
C14 Captured-1600	Act II ends here
The End of the World-2400	
C15 Morning After-1600	
Brand New Day-2400	Short Act III
▶ Research	
▶ Trash	