

## **Coping strategies for the plot challenged—by Rebecca York**

Fool yourself into writing down the plot. Start small and build on what you have. The more you know, the more you will know.

Write down your basic idea. Add ten to fifteen incidents that might take place in the story. Make sure you think about “the worst thing that can happen to the h/h.”

Design characters who will work best in your novel.

Describe the external and internal conflicts of these characters. Give them a backstory.

Knowing your h/h (and villain) will help keep you from having them act out of character.

Decide where the story should start. Come up with a dramatic opening scene that will hook the reader. Don't give away too much at the beginning of the book.

Have the h/h together as much as possible in the book.

End chapters and scenes with a “cliff-hanger.”

Make sure the problems in the story are real and substantial.

Foreshadow danger.

Create a deadline for the h/h.

Use the villain's point of view to increase the tension.

If you get stuck—stop. Walk away for a few hours or days.

Let your mind wander to the plot while you are in the shower or while you exercise.

Use the minutes before you fall asleep to focus on the plot. Keep a notepad beside the bed so you can write down ideas.

Use the talking cure—get a fresh perspective by discussing your story with another writer or your critique group.

Divide the story into thirds. One third of the way through the book, make everything shift. In other words, what the reader has assumed is no longer true.

## Plot and Character: They Go Together Like Love and Marriage – *Patricia Rosemoor*

To define the relationships between the main characters, thereby knowing where your plot can take you . . .

	<b>Protagonist (main character)</b>	<b>Antagonist (keeps m.c. from goal — in suspense, the 'villain', in romantic comedy, the love interest)</b>	<b>Reflection (m.c. learns about self through this person)</b>
<b>Protagonist</b>			
<b>Antagonist</b>			
<b>Reflection</b>			

1. What does each character want/need from others (including self)?
2. How would each character define the others strengths & weaknesses (including self)?
3. What must the character do (or how must s/he change) to reach her/his goals?