The Art of Storytelling



The Elements and Structure of Stories that Capture the Imagination





The Art of Storytelling

Today we're going to talk about the magic of Storytelling and even begin the journey of creating your own stories but first, let's hear about your favorite stories.

1. What are some of your favorite books, TV shows, or movies?

_____

_____

_____

2. Who are your favorite characters from question 1? What are they like?

_____

_____

3. Where do these stories take place?

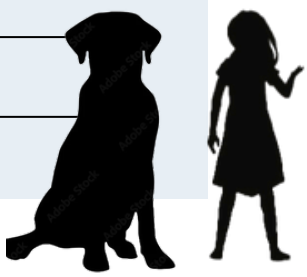
_____

4. What are some of your favorite parts of the story(ies)?

_____

_____

_____







The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a look at the parts (or elements) of every good story.

THEME

What is your story about? Can be more than one thing.

CHARACTER

Who is your story about and why should we care?

SETTING

When or where does the story take place? How does it affect the story?

POINT OF VIEW

Who is telling the story? Can they be trusted?

PLOT

How the story unfolds.

CONFLICT

What keeps your character from achieving their ultimate goal.

RESOLUTION

How the story comes to a close - either your character achieves their goal or they don't and what happens as a result.







The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a look at the parts (or elements) of every good story.

THEME

_____

CHARACTER

_____

SETTING

_____

POINT OF VIEW

_____

PLOT

_____

CONFLICT

_____

RESOLUTION

_____

_____





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of theme.

THEME

- Heartbeat of your story
- Can have multiple themes
- Avoid making it too obvious - let your reader discover it over course of story
- Some stories set big clue to theme near beginning

Tirza stretched out her legs and let them dangle on both sides of the branch. She patted the spot in front of her, but Eli shook his head.
"I'm too angry right now. Aren't you mad?"
"No." She smiled.
Eli rolled his eyes. "Why? Because we have our family, and that's all that matters?" he asked with the mocking voice she had told him a million times she hated. He only used it when he wanted to annoy her.
She let it slide and laughed. "Yeah. Even with an annoying little brother who likes to push his luck. Can't be mad when I have that."
Eli clasped his hands in front of him and looked down. He stayed silent for a long time but then scooted toward her and leaned his back against her."
- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of theme.

What does this passage reveal about theme?

_____

_____

_____

_____

If this was your story, what are some other themes that could connect to the one from this passage?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Name a them(or 2 -3) from one of your favorite stories:

_____

_____

_____

_____





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Theme

Your turn: Think of some themes for your new story idea.

Theme Ideas

- Family
- Friendship
- Overcoming fears
- Overcoming Limitations
- Breaking Stigmas
- Magic
- Lost Family
- Lost Treasure
- Monsters
- Ghosts
- Natural Disasters
- Survival
- Teddybears that ride unicorns
- Moose on rollerskates
- Heavy Metal Penguins

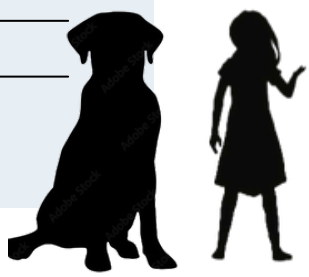






The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Theme Notes





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of character.

CHARACTER

- Protagonist(s)/Antagonist(s)/Mentors/Side Characters/Background
- What do they want? What stands in their way? What will they do about it?
- Character Arc - growth and change
- Relatable - realistic and flawed - well-rounded

Cal slapped her tail in frustration and dove beneath the lake's surface. She had peace and freedom in the water. Here, she was lithe and agile. Here, she moved faster than the landborn could fathom. No creature was faster.

How could I have ever thought differently?

On land, her tail transformed into the legs of the landborn; she was slow and awkward. On land, she was a slave.

She settled among the tall green lake weeds and schools of orange-and-black striped dart!sh. How long would it be before Ravena came looking for her? Cal hoped it wouldn't be anytime soon. Ravena had been holed up alone in her throne room for hours. At least Cal hadn't seen anyone enter. But there was that voice— that man's voice, dark and full of malice. Cal ran from the castle not long after hearing Ravena arguing with it. Running was cowardly, but she wanted nothing to do with the man. She also didn't desire to be around Ravena when she !nished with whomever it was. Cal had never heard Ravena so frightened. If she even thought Cal had heard her like that... Cal did not want to think about the consequences.

- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares







The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of character.

What does this passage reveal about one of Cal's wants?

What does this passage tell us about the personality of Ravena?





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Character

Your turn: Create a character or two and describe them using the building points on the right.

Character 1

Character 2

Character Building

- Wants
- Needs
- Flaws
- Strengths
- Hopes
- Dreams
- Physical Traits
- Personality
- Make them as real as you are

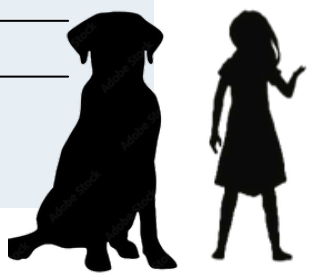






The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Character Notes





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of setting.

SETTING

- Where and When
- Engage the senses (all the senses - but don't overdo it - seasoning, not the meal)
- Show, don't tell

E li woke to a stench so pungent he began dry heaving before he even opened his eyes. Eli's body ached all over, and his shoulder throbbed worse than the time he fell out of a tree when he was six. His head spun, and he couldn't focus, so he kept his eyes closed to stave off the gurgling in his stomach.

He rolled onto his back, and it !nally registered that the ground was rough. Lots of sharp, pointy things jabbed him in the back.

Gah! Must have scraped the skin right off my elbows and knees. Urrrrgh... it burns...

He opened his eyes, but only darkness met him. He rubbed his eyes and looked around again. No change. "What's going on?"

He touched the ground; cold, gritty stone pressed against his skin. Panic seized him, and his heart rocketed like a jet breaking the sound barrier.

- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of setting.

What is the first thing Eli noticed about his new surroundings?

_____

_____

What was the first thing Eli saw?

_____

_____

How many senses are used in this passage?

_____

_____







The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Setting

Your Turn: Using the squares below, think of ways you can use each sense to describe scenes for your story.

Sound

Smell

Touch

Taste

Feel

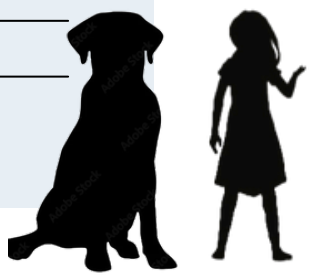






The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Setting Notes





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of point of view.

POINT OF VIEW

- Who's telling the story?
- First/Second/Third Person
- Omniscient/Limited
- Trustworthy?

Eli hopped down the thirty or more feet he had climbed, ran back into the forest, and searched for a large stick. Maybe he could keep his footing better if he had something to keep him stable. It was worth a shot. It had to be better than tearing his hands to shreds every time he tried to stop himself from sliding down.

Something growled behind him.

Eli spun around and searched the thick tangle of trees, vines, and foliage.

Nothing.

A rushing wind whooshed over him, and something scampered away. The ferns and bushes near him rustled, but he ignored them and turned his eyes skyward. A huge blue-green dragon soared through the sky, #ying away from the mountain. Its passing stirred the forest canopy as if a wild, powerful gale blew overhead.

- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of point of view.

POINT OF VIEW

Who is telling the story in this scene?

_____

_____

Is the point of view first, second, or third person?

_____

_____

Is the point of view limited or all-knowing?

_____

_____

Why do you think the author chose this point of view for this scene?

_____

_____







The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

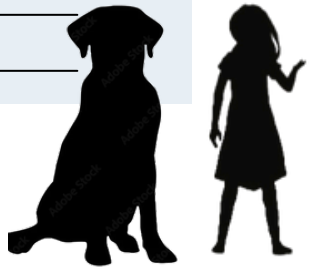
Point of View

Your Turn: Tell about something you did today - but try three different POVs. We'll use the three most common for this practice. If you want, you can try 2nd person on the back of this page.

First Person POV

Third Person POV (Limited)

Third Person POV (All-Knowing)

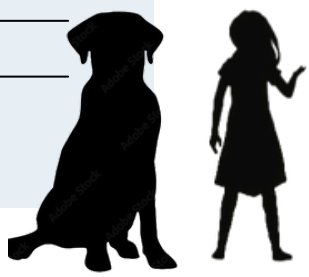






The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Point of View Notes





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of plot.

PLOT

- What is going on?
- Story Structure
- An Opener/An Inciting Incident that changes everything/A series of crises that build tension/A Climax/A Resolution (or Conclusion)

Eli spun to face her. "Spells? You're reading a book of spells?"
Tirza raised an eyebrow. "Oh, c'mon. They're not real. As much as I would love it to be, magic isn't real. You know that, and I know that."
"Fine then," Eli said, folding his arms across his chest as if trying to look unafraid, though his voice quavered. "If you're so sure, finishit."
Tirza's stomach knotted.
This is ridiculous. I'm letting my imagination take control. There's no such thing as magic.
She had wished for it every day of her life, and there had never been any evidence to say otherwise. And it was only a coincidence that Papa used the same name for the evil monster in his stories. Just to prove it to Eli—and herself—she stood with the book in her hand to finish the poem, not an incantation, a poem.
"Open Wide, Blood of Time, Light the Way, Soul of Space, Link our Worlds and Rip the Veil, Show me now Your Hidden Trail."
"Noooo!" someone screamed—a woman's scream but not one Tirza had ever heard before.
The room hummed with electricity, and Tirza's hair rose in the air as if pulled by static. She tried to turn and look at Eli, but it felt like she was moving through thick mud. Something was burning. A heavy, acrid stench !lled her nostrils. Suddenly, the woman's scream stopped. The humming ceased. Tirza's ears felt stuffed with cotton. Eli was jumping, leaping toward her with his mouth wide open, but he moved as if in a slow-motion movie. Sparks zapped the air all around him, around her. Then, a bright, white light consumed everything else, blinding her vision.
- Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of plot.

What does Eli say that Tirza is doing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What does Eli say that Tirza is doing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Why does Tirza continue reading the spell?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What plot point takes place in this scene?

_____

_____

_____

_____





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Plot

Your Turn: Match the scene descriptions on the left with the plot points on the right.

The Pevensie children are moved from London to the castle of Professor Digory Kirke in the English countryside to escape the war.

Lucy Pevensie discovers a magical wardrobe that transports her to the world of Narnia.

Edmund lies about knowing about Narnia.

Edmund runs away to the White Witch.

Aslan sacrifices himself for Edmund.

The Pevensie's lead an army to battle against the White Witch and her army.

The Pevensie's become the four rulers of Narnia and sit on the thrones of Cair Paravel.

Resolution

Series of Obstacles to build tension

Opener

Inciting Event

Climax

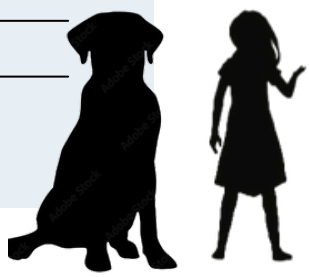






The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Plot Notes





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of conflict.

CONFLICT

- Engine of the story
- Readers crave conflict and desire to see where it leads
- Moves the story forward

Tirza's mind whirled with ideas. "So, what happens if the queen dies? If you're... if we're not able to save her?"
"Far worse than our loss of power," Merry said. "All power, all life, would unravel. And not only in the Lighted Lands. Your world and this world are connected in many ways. All of creation would unravel. All of it."
"What!" Eli yelled. "Then put someone else on the throne! Make them king or queen!"
"It doesn't work like that," Ziglin said. "Only the rightful ruler can sit upon the throne. Raggor assured that thanks to Drimmil. And only an heir—or someone named by the current ruler—can be true and rightful."
"And Queen Penelope had no children," Tirza said in a whisper. "Oh—"
"So, if she dies, there's no rightful heir?" Eli asked. No one answered. Eli's face scrunched up, and he screamed at the top of his lungs. "Are you all freaking stupid? Seriously? Of all the absolutely, incredibly idiotic things!"
-From Children of the Ancient Heroes: Dreams and Nightmares





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of conflict.

What problem is presented in the scene above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the difference between Tirza's and Eli's responses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

How does this conflict help move the story forward?

_____

_____

_____

_____

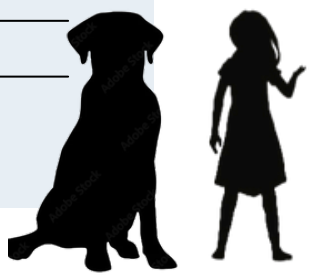






The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Conflict Notes





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of resolution.

RESOLUTION

- Where is your story headed?
- Keep the end in front of you
- Keep MC centered - growth must match resolution

Curdie was gone in a moment, and soon returned with a great rich fur, and the news that dead goblins were tossing about in the current through the house. They had been caught in their own snare; instead of the mine they had flooded their own country, whence they were now swept up drowned. Irene shuddered, but the king held her close to his bosom. Then he turned to Sir Walter, and said:

'Bring Curdie's father and mother here.'

'I wish,' said the king, when they stood before him, 'to take your son with me. He shall enter my bodyguard at once, and wait further promotion.'

Peter and his wife, overcome, only murmured almost inaudible thanks. But Curdie spoke aloud.

'Please, Your Majesty,' he said, 'I cannot leave my father and mother.'

'That's right, Curdie!' cried the princess. 'I wouldn't if I was you.'

The king looked at the princess and then at Curdie with a glow of satisfaction on his countenance.

'I too think you are right, Curdie,' he said, 'and I will not ask you again. But I shall have a chance of doing something for you some time.'

'Your Majesty has already allowed me to serve you,' said Curdie.

'But, Curdie,' said his mother, 'why shouldn't you go with the king? We can get on very well without you.'

'But I can't get on very well without you,' said Curdie. 'The king is very kind, but I could not be half the use to him that I am to you. Please, Your Majesty, if you wouldn't mind giving my mother a red petticoat! I should have got her one long ago, but for the goblins.'

'As soon as we get home,' said the king, 'Irene and I will search out the warmest one to be found, and send it by one of the gentlemen.'

'Yes, that we will, Curdie!' said the princess. 'And next summer we'll come back and see you wear it, Curdie's mother,' she added. 'Shan't we, king-papa?'

'Yes, my love; I hope so,' said the king.

Then turning to the miners, he said:

'Will you do the best you can for my servants tonight? I hope they will be able to return to the house tomorrow.'

The miners with one voice promised their hospitality. Then the king commanded his servants to mind whatever Curdie should say to them, and after shaking hands with him and his father and mother, the king and the princess and all their company rode away down the side of the new stream, which had already devoured half the road, into the starry night.

-From The Princess and the Goblin by George MacDonald





The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Let's take a closer look at the story element of resolution.

How does the main characters stay centered in this resolution?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What questions are answered or problems solved by this passage?

_____

_____

_____





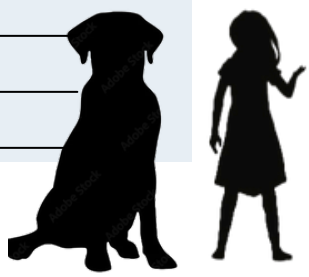


The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Resolution

Your Turn: Make a list of questions you want answered or events you want fixed by the time your story ends.

Resolution Must-Haves

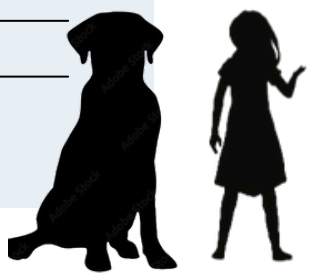






The Art of Storytelling: The Elements

Resolution Notes





The Art of Storytelling: Structure

How To Build Your Story

Now we take a deeper look at the element of plot, and learn how to structure our stories. There are many ways to structure your story and none are better than any other. It's best to explore different ones and see which one works best for you. All of them share the same basic points that must be covered in your story to make your reader/audience invested. We will talk briefly about some of the different styles and then go into depth with my favorite/most used method.

Types of Writers

Plotters
Uses a structured outline of their story to keep them guided through the writing process.

Pantsers
Writes completely without any guide and purely as the ideas come to mind. Still uses structure, just not planned.

Most Common Structures

3 Act Structure

5 Point Structure

7 Point Structure

Hero's Journey

Save The Cat







The Art of Storytelling: Structure

Story Structures

3 Act Structure

Act I (Setup)

Exposition (Introduction to Character(s) and Normal World
Inciting Incident (What starts the story going)
Plot Point 1 (Crossing the Threshold)

Act II (Confrontation)

Rising Action (obstacles/dangerous move toward climax)
Midpoint (crisis of faith/near breaking point for MC - growth too)
Plot Point 2 (Phoenix Rising - the comeback from Midpoint crisis)

Act III (Resolution)

Pre-climax (biggest set-back - all seems lost)
Climax (everything has led to here - big showdown/growth/Character Arc/etc.)
Denouement (the closing, what happens after, wrap-up, lead-in to what's next)







The Art of Storytelling: Structure

Story Structures

5 Point Structure

Introduction
Help us know who and what the story is about.

Inciting Incident
What sets everything in motion.

Crisis of Faith/Midpoint
Where the MC chooses to keep going or to stop. Point of no return. Breaking point.

Climax
Culmination of all the conflict - physical, mental, emotional, everything.

Denouement
The aftermath - what happens next, what is the result of the climax.





The Art of Storytelling: Structure

Story Structures

7 Point Structure

Hook
Makes Reader ask "What happens next?"

First Plot Point
What sets everything in motion.

Pinch Point 1
Real pressure starts - villain introduced.

Midpoint
MC goes from reaction to action - growing - deciding - investing.

Pinch Point 2
All is lost/failure/hopelessness....

Second Plot Point
Everything starts to come together - MC can win - they can do this!

Resolution
End goal - opposite state than the hook.







The Art of Storytelling: Structure

Story Structures

Hero's Journey

The Ordinary World
We meet our hero.

Call to Adventure
Will they meet the challenge?

Refusal of the Call:
They resist the adventure.

Meeting the Mentor
A teacher arrives.

Crossing the First Threshold
The hero leaves their comfort zone.

Tests, Allies, Enemies
Making friends and facing roadblocks.

Approach to the Inmost Cave
Getting closer to our goal.

Ordeal
The hero's biggest test yet!

Reward (Seizing the Sword)
Light at the end of the tunnel

The Road Back
We aren't safe yet.

Resurrection
The final hurdle is reached.

Return with the Elixir
The hero heads home, triumphant.







The Art of Storytelling: Structure

Story Structures

Save The Cat

Originally created for screenwriting, the bracketed number by each beat(headline) is the page or pages that it would take up of a standard 110-page screenplay. The beats are as follows:

Opening Image [1]
An opening snapshot.

Theme Stated [5]
We are introduced to the central theme or lesson of the story.

Set Up [1-10]
The hero and the 'ordinary world' are introduced.

Catalyst [12]
Something happens that sets the story in motion.

Debate [12-25]
The hero is hesitant to take action.

Break Into Two [25]
The hero takes up the challenge.

B Story [30]
The subplot kicks in, introducing a character who helps the hero in their transformation.

Fun and Games [30-55]
The hero in the throes of their challenge or journey.

Midpoint [55]
The stakes are raised.

Bad Guys Close In [55-75]
Things start going downhill for the hero.

All is Lost [75]
Things go from bad to worse. The hero hits rock bottom.

Dark Night of the Soul [75-85]:
Faced with defeat, the hero must reckon with their loss an how they got there.

Break Into Three [85]
The hero realizes a truth that's been evading them all this time.

Finale [85-110]
Putting their new awareness into action, the hero conquers the bad guys.

Final Image [110]
A snapshot that mirrors or contrasts the opening image.







The Art of Storytelling: Structure

What I Often Use

5 Point Structure

All of the structures have a lot to offer. I like the simplicity of the 5 point, and I like that most every other structure seems to play off of it in one way or another.

Example

Golden Eyes and the Notorious GRP (Giant Red Panda) Adventures

5 Books in 1

Book 1: The Mystery of the Lost Egg

A Forest Meeting (Introduction)

1. Golden Eyes stalks a small rabbit. Just when she almost captures the rabbit, GRP leaps down from the trees to rescue the rabbit.
2. Angered, Golden Eye chases GRP through the forest. GRP treats it as a game and taunts Golden Eyes. They run into a rampaging, fire-breathing dragon.

A Reluctant Quest (Inciting Incident)

1. GE and GRP see the danger posed to the forest and work together to stop the dragon. A lucky blow sends the dragon sprawling, and crying.
2. GE and GRP find out the dragon is upset because an egg was stolen from it. GRP readily agrees to help find it. After a lot of persuasion, GE reluctantly agrees, too.

A Hidden Clue (Midpoint)

1. GE and GRP search the forest for clues. GE does so half-heartedly, but GRP reminds her of her promise to help.
2. Stumble upon mountain trolls who want to eat them. Discover dwarves had come that way, carrying something large in a sack. GRP is captured, but GE escapes. GE comes back to rescue GRP. They make an escape, but trolls corner them. Dragon comes in and eats the trolls to save GE and GRP. GRP is humbled – realizes he isn't the best at everything and needs help sometimes.

A Dangerous Enemy (Climax)

1. Track dwarves to Rose Mountain, a bright pink mountain. First come upon the Village of Rosebud. Villagers panic at sight of dragon. GE and GRP manage to calm everyone. Find one dwarf from Rose Mountain in village. Capture him for information. Dragon keeps wanting to eat him, but GE and GRP stop it.
2. With aid of info from dwarf, GE, GRP, and dragon make a stealth attack on the dwarves' kingdom. Can't infiltrate, battle ensues. Lots of damage to dwarves' stronghold, but GE is captured and taken prisoner.

A Darker Threat (Denouement)

1. GRP sneaks in to rescue GE while dragon distracts dwarves. He finds GE and they try to find the egg and escape. They succeed and almost escape, but discover dragon was captured.
2. Dwarves try to negotiate egg for dragon. GRP and GE discover why they want the egg. Dwarves believe a dark, ancient enemy will return soon and want protection. Dragon and dwarves work out agreement to work together. GRP and GE decide to head back to forest as friends.

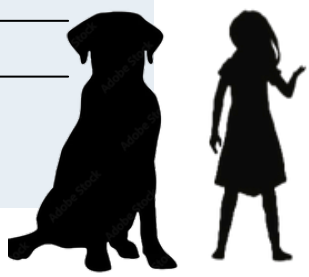






The Art of Storytelling

Your Story

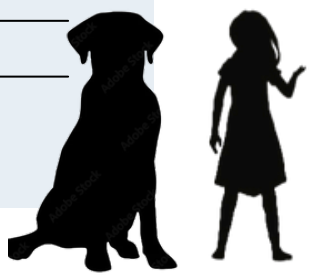






The Art of Storytelling

Your Story

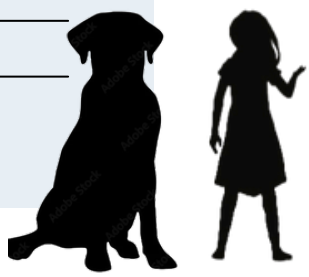






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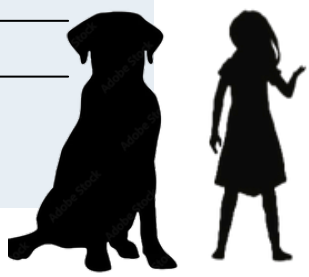






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