



# Episode 72: The Spreadsheet Olympics Trilogy-Long Plot and Structure Discussion

# Seven Scene, Three-Act Plot Analysis

## **Act One:**

Scene One: The Inciting Incident

Scene Two: Choice to Engage

## **Act Two:**

Scene Three: Midpoint Reversal

Scene Four: No Way Out But Through

## **Act Three:**

Scene Five: Dark Moment

Scene Six: Climax

Scene Seven: Resolution

# The Framework

# Seven Scenes, Three Acts: Looking Closer

## Act One: Setup and Conflict Launch

*Inciting Incident:* Protagonist, meet conflict. The protagonist has a problem they cannot solve with the tools and resources they have on hand.

*Choice to Engage:* Rather than turning away from the conflict, the protagonist decides to do something about the problem.

# Seven Scenes, Three Acts: Looking Closer

## Act Two: Things Get Worse

*Midpoint Reversal:* The protagonist thinks they're on their way to solving the problem, but they can't because the problem is bigger/worse/different than they expected. The protagonist probably already tried (and failed) to solve the problem "the easy way."

*No Way Out But Through:* The protagonist realizes that they can't solve the problem with their old tools. They must go "through" the problem and overcome it, or change.

# Seven Scenes, Three Acts: Looking Closer

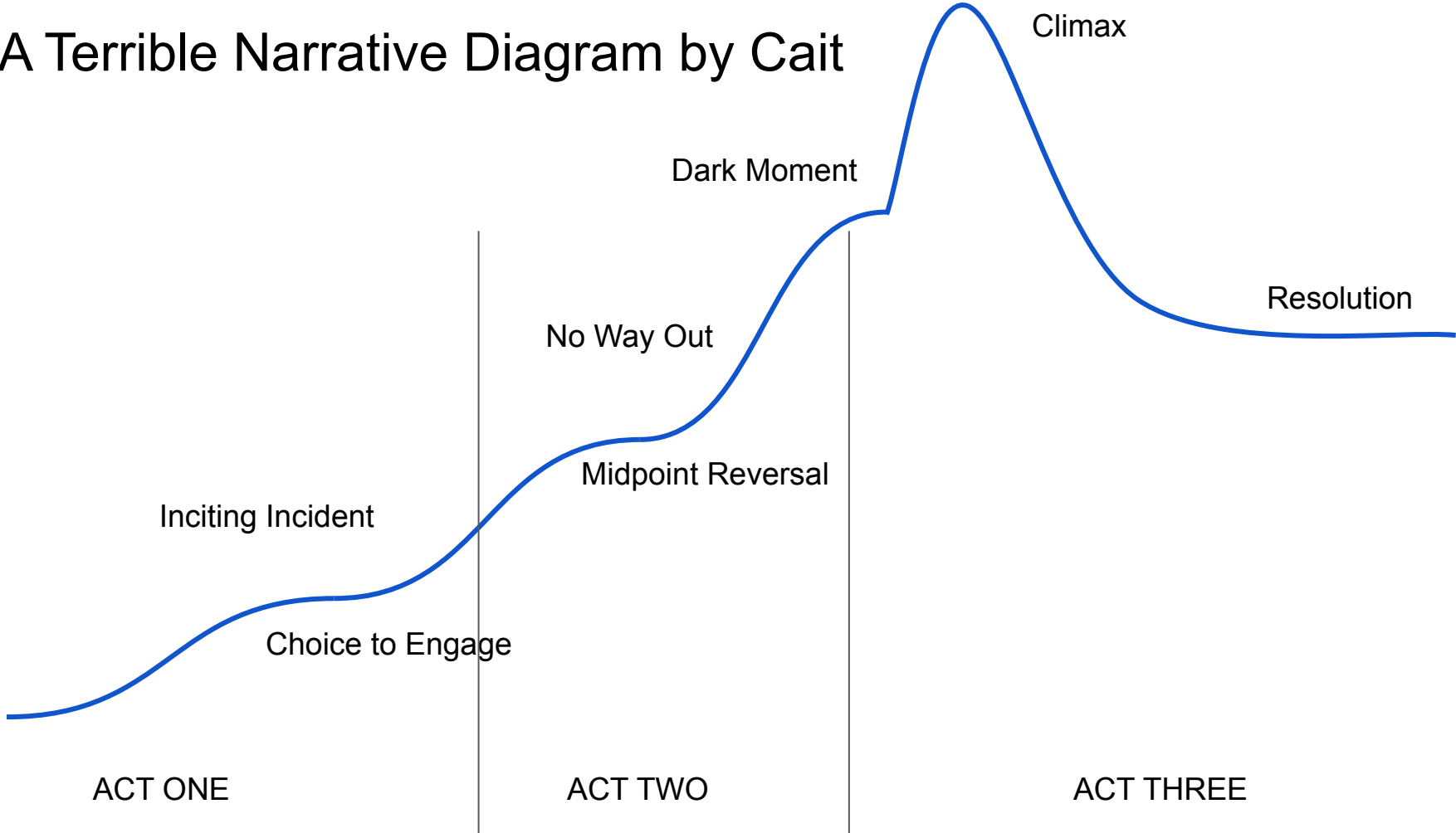
## Act Three: Things Get Worse

*Dark Moment:* The protagonist tries the new solution and it fails, or they suffer a serious setback. The protagonist (and others) wonder whether they will triumph.

*Climax:* The protagonist and the antagonist are directly opposed and only one of them can win.

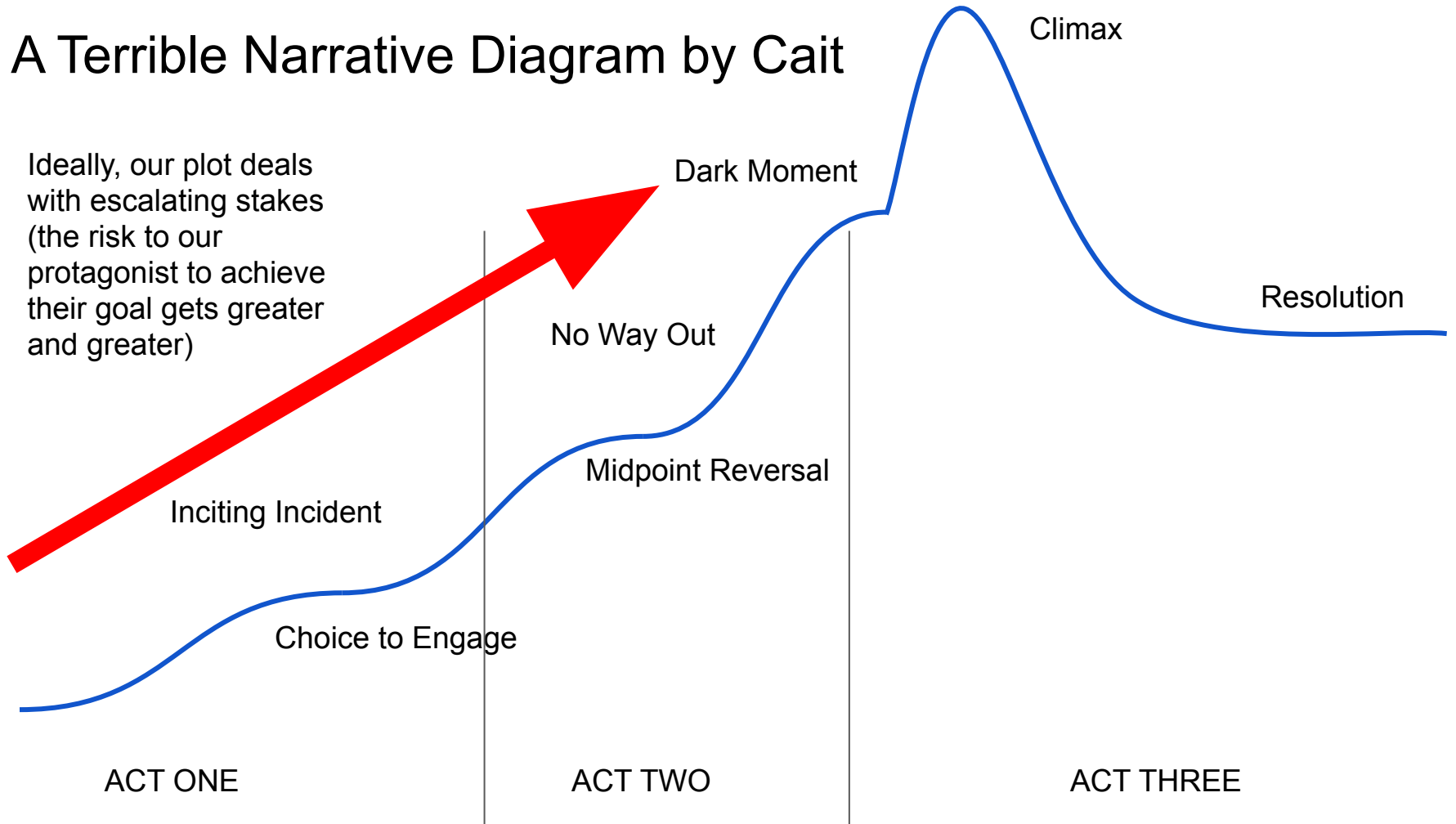
*Resolution:* The protagonist wins (or loses)\* and the world is changed.

# A Terrible Narrative Diagram by Cait



# A Terrible Narrative Diagram by Cait

Ideally, our plot deals with escalating stakes (the risk to our protagonist to achieve their goal gets greater and greater)





# Trilogy-Long Plots

## The Smol Spreadsheet

# The Seven\* Plots (and Narrative Questions) of the All Souls Trilogy

1. Who is Diana Bishop? (DB character arc)
2. Can Matthew and Diana have a working relationship? (DB/MC romance)
3. What is the Book of Life and what does it mean? (The Book of Life)
4. What is blood rage/who is the vampire murderer? (Blood rage)
5. What does it take to stop the Congregation? (Congregation)
6. What is the symbolic meaning of Matthew and Diana's relationship? (M&D symbolic)
7. How high do the stakes have to be before Matthew and Diana give a flip/become proactive?\*

# Plot Intersections

If an event is highlighted in gold, that means that I think it does the same thing for the structure of two different plots that span the whole of the trilogy.

I think it's especially interesting to see which plots begin together and end together.

## Trilogy-Long Plots (1-4)

	Inciting Incident	Choice to Engage	Midpoint Reversal	No Way Out	Dark Moment	Climax	Resolution
DB Arc	DB calls Ashmole 782 (ADOW)	DB uses magic to escape oubliette (ADOW)	DB is a weaver (SON)	DB casts first spell, calls Corra (SON)	Benjamin in the Bod (BOL)	DB drops bow, kills Benjamin (BOL)	Sol in Everything (BOL)
M&D Romance	The dock (ADOW)	DB and MC reunite in France (ADOW)	NOT MATED (SON)	Heart vein, witch's kiss (SON)	DB and MC separate (BOL)	Babies (BOL)	Portrait (BOL)
Book of Life	DB calls Ashmole 782 (ADOW)	House delivers page from Ashmole 782 (ADOW)	Kelley (SON)	Getting the Book (SON)	Book of Death (SON)	DB assembles/becomes BOL (BOL)	DB is/uses BOL (BOL)
M&D Symbolic	House delivers page from Ashmole 782 (ADOW)	DB uses blood to heal MC (ADOW)	Fight with MC in SON about "how to be" (SON)	Pregnant x2 (SON)	The crossroads/higher magic (BOL)	The Bright Born (BOL)	Blood rage/daemons/all together now (BOL)

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# Trilogy-Long Plots (4-8)

	Inciting Incident	Choice to Engage	Midpoint Reversal	No Way Out	Dark Moment	Climax	Resolution
Blood rage/vampire murders	MC tells DB he's studying evolution/vampire headline (ADOW)	Discussion of potential progeny (ADOW)	Matthew has blood rage (SON)	D pregnant, Chris confronts Matthew about blood rage (BOL)	Jack is the vampire murderer/has blood rage (BOL)	Blood rage makes the Bright Born (BOL)	Blood rage/daemons /all together now (BOL)
Congregation	Domenico (ADOW)	Must escape Congregation/timewalk (ADOW)	Matthew is a member of the Congregation (SON)	Diana kills Champier (SON)	Baldwin is on the Congregation and orders DB to disband house/MC to kill Jack (BOL)	Congregation Meetings (BOL)	DB is on Congregation (BOL)
Making M&D GAF	Satu tortures DB (ADOW)	DB and Juliette (ADOW)	Matthew and Diana argue about change/16th century (SON)	Lord Burghley/Elizabeth I (SON)	Baldwin orders MC to kill Jack (BOL)	MC kidnapped (BOL)	DB has Congregation seat/fully participating (BOL)

**Let's Revisit the Other Three Books,  
Shall We?**

## A DISCOVERY OF WITCHES PLOT OVERVIEW (THE STARTER PLOTS)

	Inciting Incident	Choice to Engage	Midpoint Reversal	No Way Out	Dark Moment	Climax	Resolution
Diana vs. Self	DB calls Ashmole 782, it's enchanted	DB decides to recall Ashmole 782	Satu tortures DB	DB uses magic to escape oubliette	DB learns she is spellbound	DB kills Juliette	DB uses her blood to heal MC
M&D romance	The dock	MC and DB have dinner, he invites her to the lab	Witchwater	DB and MC reunite	DB kills Juliette/Matthew mortally wounded	DB uses blood to heal MC	Timewalk to 1590/mingled scent of witch and vampire
M&D vs. the World/Book	DB calls Ashmole 782, it's enchanted	DB decides to recall Ashmole 782	Ashmole 782 doesn't reappear/Domenico threatens MC/DB	DB and MC reunite	DB kills Juliette	DB uses blood to heal MC	Decision to timewalk

## SHADOW OF NIGHT PLOT OVERVIEW

Conflict	1 – Inciting Incident	2 – Choice to Engage	3 – Midpoint reversal	4 – No Way Out	5 – Dark Moment	6 - Climax	7 - Resolution
M & D vs. the world	Rima	Ysabeau and Sarah	Ysabeau and Sarah	Phoebe and Verin	Knox and Strahov	Knox and Strahov	Return to Sept-Tours
M & D vs. Time	Congregation/Spy/Witch Hunt/SON	Going to France/Philippe's Coin	Philippe/Pregnant/Weaving	Philippe/Pregnant/Weaving	Book/Benjamin	Book/Benjamin	Stephen/Coming Home
M & D vs. Book	Dee has the book	To Prague	Rudolf and Kelley	Abraham/Ask for the Book	Book of Death	Book of Death/Leave Prague	Stephen/Leave the Book
M & D Romance (int)	NOT MATED	Fight re: Mating	Pregnancy and Miscarriage	Heart vein and witch kiss	Louisa/Kit/Bedlam	Louisa/Kit/Bedlam	The Exchange
M & D Romance (ext)	Kit	Kit pleads for Diana to leave M	Rudolf	Heart vein and witch kiss	Louisa/Kit	Louisa/Kit	The Exchange
M vs. Self	Kit	Philippe	B+L/Blood Rage	Marriage	Prague and Bedlam	Prague and Bedlam	The Exchange
D vs. Self	Quince	Look for witch	Weaver	First spell	Kit + Louisa	Kit + Louisa	Travel back
Philippe Scheming?							



BOOK OF LIFE PLOT OVERVIEW	Inciting Incident	Choice to Engage	Midpoint Reversal	No Way Out	Dark Moment	Climax	Resolution
Benjamin	Benjamin calls from Miriam's phone	Benjamin's live feed in Madison/to Yale	Jack sired by Benjamin	The mountain	Benjamin in the Bodleian	Benjamin at Chelm	D kills Benjamin
Congregation	Em's death	Coven fails test in Madison/to Yale	Cannot cure blood rage	Baldwin wants to register the twins	Matthew kidnapped/D to Venice	The Congregation meetings	D is on the Congregation
Book of Life	Baldwin asks after the BOL	Benjamin asks for the Book of Life/decision to find it	Knox on the trail of the BOL/no pages in Voynich	Diana finds the missing pages	Benjamin in the Bodleian	Diana reassembles the book	Diana becomes/uses the Book of Life
Blood Rage	Marcus and Phoebe find pedigree	Chris and Madison/Blood purity	Chris and Madison/Blood purity	Creature lab at Yale	Jack has blood rage/blood rage is incurable	Diana is the BOL/Bright Born	Humans with a difference
Scion	Baldwin and blood vow	Baldwin orders Matthew to kill Jack/Diana fights Baldwin	Diana fights Baldwin	The mountain	Sol in Libra/New Orleans	Baldwin accepts scion	Portrait
Marriage	M and D fight about the plot	Crossroads in Madison	Jack has blood rage	The mountain	Sol in Libra	Birth of the twins	Chess metaphor/epilogue
Diana's arc	Diana takes charge at Sept-Tours	Diana works magic in Madison	Diana fights Baldwin over Jack	London	Benjamin in the Bod	Diana becomes the BOL	Diana is/uses the BOL

That is a lot of plotschunds, y'all.  
Seventeen book-level plots, seven trilogy-level plots.

Want to see where they intersect?

Of course you do.

On to the Plot Decathalon, then.  
But first, a guide to the great big  
multicolored mess.

# The Plot Decathlon: Methodology

- Laid out all of the critical scenes of each plot (Trilogy/A Discovery of Witches/Shadow of Night/Book of Life) in a spreadsheet.
- Gave all of the events a short, descriptive name.
- Fought with a data-visualization program to try and use that set for something VERY AMBITIOUS AND VERY PRETTY.
- Failed.
- Reverted to color-coding events -- but only those that are significant for both the Trilogy-long arcs and the arcs of the books in which they appear.

Plot	Inciting	Choice	Midpoint	Through	Dark	Climax	Resolution
T-DB Arc	Callbook	Oubliette	Weaver	Forespell	BenjBod	KillBenj	SolinDenouement
T-M&D Romance	Dock	If two plot events have matching colors, that means they factor BOTH into a trilogy plot arc and the plot arc of the book where they appear.			Mountain	Babies	Portrait
T-Book of Life	Callbook		BookofDeath		DBisBook	DBisBook	
T-M&D Symbolic	Bishoppage		Crossroads		BrightBorn	Allconnected	
T-Blood rage/vampire murders	Evolution		Jack		BrightBorn	Allconnected	
T-Congregation	Domenico		BaldwinThreatens		CongregationVenice	DBCongregation	
T-Making M&D GAF	Satu		BaldwinThreatens		MattKidnapped	DBCongregation	
ADOW-Diana vs. Self	Callbook	Recall	Oubliette	HealMC	Spellbound	Juliette	HealMC
ADOW-M&D romance	Dock	Dir	Witchwater	Reunited	Juliette	HealMC	Timewalk
ADOW-M&D vs. the World/Book	Callbook	Recall	Domenico	Reunited	Juliette	HealMC	Timewalk
SON-M&DvsWorld	Rima	YsabeauandSarah	Ysabeau	Reunited	Nov	KnoxandStrahov	ReturntoSeptTours
SON-M&DvsTime	WitchHunt	PhillippesCoin	Phillippe			BenjBook	Stephen
SON-M&DvsBook	Dee	Elizabeth	Rudd			BookofDeath	Stephen
SON-M&DRomanceInt	NotMated	FightreMating	Pregn			LouisaandKit	Exchange
SON-M&DRomanceExt	Kit	KitPleads	Rudd			LouisaandKit	Exchange
SON-MvsSelf	Kit	Philippe	Blood				Exchange
SON-DvsSelf	Quince	FindWitch	Weaver			LouisaandKit	ReturntoSeptTours
BOL-Benjamin	BenjCall	Livefeed	JackBenj	Mountain	BenjBod	Chelm	KillBenj
BOL-Congregation	Em	Coven	Bloodragegenetic	RegisterTwins	MattKidnapped	DBisBook	DBCongregation
BOL-Book of Life	BaldwinBOL	BenjBOL	Voynich	Missingpages	BenjBod	DBisBook	DBisBook
BOL-Blood Rage	Pedigree	Chris	Chris	Creaturelab	Jack		Allconnected
BOL-Scion	Bloodvow	BaldwinThreatens	BaldwinThreatens	Mountain	NOLA	CongregationVenice	Portrait
BOL-Marriage	BOLFight	Crossroads	Jack	Mountain	Libra	Babies	SolinDenouement
BOL-DBvsSelf	DianaSeptTours	MagicMadison	BaldwinThreatens	London	BenjBod	DBisBook	DBisBook

If two plot events have matching colors, that means they factor BOTH into a trilogy plot arc and the plot arc of the book where they appear.

Events with a white background are significant for the book in which they appear, but not for the trilogy-wide arcs.

Plot	Inciting	Choice	Midpoint	Through	Dark	Climax	Resolution
T-DB Arc	Callbook	Oubliette	Weaver	Forespell	BenjBod	KillBenj	SolinDenouement
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T-Book of Life	Callbook	Bishoppage	Kelley	Rudolf	BookofDeath	DBisBook	DBisBook
T-M&D Symbolic	Bishoppage	HealMC	FightMC1	Pregnanttwins	Crossroads	BrightBorn	Allconnected
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ADOW-Diana vs. Self	Callbook	Recall	Oubliette	HealMC	Spellbound	Juliette	HealMC
ADOW-M&D romance	Dock	Dinner	Witchwater	Reunited	Juliette	HealMC	Timewalk
ADOW-M&D vs. the World/Book	Callbook	Recall	Domenico	Reunited	Juliette	HealMC	Timewalk
SON-M&DvsWorld	Rima	YsabeauandSarah	YsabeauandSarah	PhoebeVerin	KnoxandStrahov	KnoxandStrahov	ReturntoSeptTours
SON-M&DvsTime	WitchHunt	PhillipesCoin	Philippe	Weaver	BenjBook	BenjBook	Stephen
SON-M&DvsBook	Dee	Elizabeth	Rudolf	Abraham	BookofDeath	BookofDeath	Stephen
SON-M&DRomanceInt	NotMated	FightreMating	PregnancyMiscarriage	Heartvein	LouisaandKit	LouisaandKit	Exchange
SON-M&DRomanceExt	Kit	KitPleads	Rudolf	Heartvein	LouisaandKit	LouisaandKit	Exchange
SON-MvsSelf	Kit	Philippe	Bloodrage	Marriage	Bedlam	Bedlam	Exchange
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BOL-Scion	Bloodvow	BaldwinThreatens	BaldwinThreatens	Mountain	NOLA	CongregationVenice	Portrait
BOL-Marriage	BOLFight	Crossroads	Jack	Mountain	Libra	Babies	SolinDenouement
BOL-DBvsSelf	DianaSeptTours	MagicMadison	BaldwinThreatens	London	BenjBod	DBisBook	DBisBook



You'd like to see the inverse, wouldn't  
you?

Diagrams may be my love language.

In the following diagram, the green events are significant on a trilogy-level, not a book level. The yellow events are the inverse.

Plot	Inciting	Choice	Midpoint	Through	Dark	Climax	Resolution
T-DB Arc	Callbook	Oubliette	Weaver	Forespell	BenjBod	KillBenj	SolinDenouement
T-M&D Romance	Dock	Reunited	NotMated	Heartvein	Mountain	Babies	Portrait
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SON-M&DvsTime	WitchHunt	PhillipesCoin	Philippe	Weaver	BenjBook	BenjBook	Stephen
SON-M&DvsBook	Dee	Elizabeth	Rudolf	Abraham	BookofDeath	BookofDeath	Stephen
SON-M&DRomanceInt	NotMated	FightreMating	PregnancyMiscarriage	Heartvein	LouisaandKit	LouisaandKit	Exchange
SON-M&DRomanceExt	Kit	KitPleads	Rudolf	Heartvein	LouisaandKit	LouisaandKit	Exchange
SON-MvsSelf	Kit	Philippe	Bloodrage	Marriage	Bedlam	Bedlam	Exchange
SON-DvsSelf	Quince	FindWitch	Weaver	Forespell	LouisaandKit	LouisaandKit	ReturntoSeptTours
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# Some Thoughts That Didn't Make the Episode...

...because these slides took longer than expected.

- As expected, ADOW and BOL do a lot of heavy lifting in the plot -- they both start and end major plot arcs.
  - ADOW is tightly plotted and its major plot events tend to cluster. Most of it boils down to the last third of the book.
  -
- Trilogy-critical scenes are fairly well-balanced across all three books.
- SON has a lot of extra material that's crucial to its own plots, but not to the trilogy-long arcs.
  - That's not a knock on SON, it just suggests that SON is telling a *different story* -- one that nests within the trilogy but has its own topography.
  - If I hazarded a guess, I'd suppose that SON is telling a story that's more important to Diana and Matthew's character development than to the trilogy writ large. It's definitely crucial, just for different reasons.

# Questions? Thoughts? Brilliant Commentary?

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