



Scene Rubric

Version 1.0 – November 2021

Author: A. W. Roberson
Project Title: Union of Clans – The Iterum Chronicles, Book 1
Chapter or Scene: Chapter 30
Length: 1327
Date: 07 Dec 21

In three sentences or less, what is happening in this scene? This scene occurs roughly around 50% of the manuscript when the antagonist is gaining momentum and gaining strength as the force of evil. This scene, however, illustrates the antagonist as having an empathetic motive for what drives his wants and needs. Now, the reader understands why the antagonist chases his pursuits and may even sympathize with him.

Why is this scene important? AND/OR What are you trying to say about life? I particularly enjoy this scene because it illustrates that even antagonists can rationalize their aggression. Unless the antagonist is pure evil, there are many times that villains have relatable reasons for their choices. I'm not condoning those choices, but it helps to build more dynamic characters.

How do you want the reader to feel when they read the scene? This is a pivotal moment in the manuscript as the need for humanity to evolve is shown through the desolation of how far some have fallen. It is also a place in the manuscript that shows why both the antagonist and protagonist are pursuing a new way of life for humanity. In this scene, we see the antagonist choosing decimation of the weak as his solution.

What's wrong with the protagonist's antagonist's personal world? What is the disruption? The antagonist has returned to his childhood home. It was a place of poverty and death. It is now a place of debauchery and filth...a representation of the lowest forms of humanity. This is also the place where the antagonist's parents were murder when he was a child. That event set the course for his life and the motivation for his conviction that the weak must be destroyed.

Who are the characters in the scene?

Character	Voice	Emotional State	Physical Condition
- Willock	Apathetic	Stoic, Dismissive	Healthy
- Ulena	Curious	Confused, Disgusted	Healthy

+ protagonist
- antagonist

What does the protagonist want (external pursuits)? Do they get it?


Want: He wants to remind himself why he must destroy the weak and filthy of humanity. He wants to show Ulena that evolution of the powerful is necessary.

Acquired: Yes/No

Underdeveloped	Fair	Good	Excellent
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Commented [J1]: Take a shot at this yourself. Bold or highlight the box in each table.

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The want or external pursuit of the protagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's want as flat.	The want or external pursuit of the protagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it often defies logic.	The want or external pursuit of the protagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the protagonist does not always act consistently on the want. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	The want or external pursuit of the protagonist is well-defined. Their external pursuit is obvious to the reader and understood by the other characters in the scene.
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Notes:

What does the protagonist need (internal desires)? Do they get it?

Need: He needs to convince himself that evolution of the powerful is the only solution to avenge the murder of his parents and the lifestyle he was forced to endure.

Acquired: Yes/No

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The need or internal desire of the protagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's need as flat.	The need or internal desire of the protagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's internal desire in the scene, but it often defies logic.	The need or internal desire of the protagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the protagonist does not always act consistently on the want. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	The need or internal desire of the protagonist is well-defined. Their internal desire is obvious to the reader and understood by the other characters in the scene.

Notes:

What does the antagonist or force of antagonism want (external pursuits)? Do they get it?

Want: The culture of the town is debauchery and filth. The force wants to consume and devour people.

Acquired:

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The want or external pursuit of the antagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's want as flat.	The want or external pursuit of the antagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it often defies logic.	The want or external pursuit of the antagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the antagonist does not always act consistently on the want. Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	The want or external pursuit of the antagonist is well-defined. Their external pursuit is obvious to the reader and understood by the other characters in the scene.

Notes:


What does the antagonist or force of antagonism need (internal desires)? Do they get it?

Need: It needs to continue to decline in order to follow the natural progression of deviance and immorality.

Acquired:

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The need or internal desire of the antagonist is unclear or undefined. Readers perceive the character's need as flat.	The need or internal desire of the antagonist exists, but it is unclear or inexplicably inconsistent throughout the scene. Readers understand the character's	The need or internal desire of the antagonist is easily identified. Although it is defined, the antagonist does not always act consistently on the want.	The need or internal desire of the antagonist is well-defined. Their internal desire is obvious to the reader and understood by

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	internal desire in the scene, but it often defies logic.	Readers understand the character's motive in the scene, but it is often too predictable.	the other characters in the scene.
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Notes:

What is the Conflict? (What single moment or circumstance pushes the protagonist out of the status quo?)

Conflict: If the place is so fallen and wicked, then Willock must explain why he brought Ulena there.

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The protagonist does not face an initial Conflict. The event pushing the character out of the status quo is missing.	The initial Conflict is present but lacks the intensity to make a reader care. The protagonist can avoid or defuse the obstacle presented by the Conflict.	The initial Conflict propels the protagonist into a situation that forces a Choice. The character cannot go back to the previous state and cannot do nothing.	The initial Conflict catches the protagonist and reader by surprise. The event creates an unavoidable situation and should logically set the stage for a Choice.

Notes:

What is the Choice? (Best Bad Choice or Irreconcilable Good?)

Choice: If he doesn't explain, then there is mistrust in him as a leader. If he does explain, then he shares an intimate part of himself which is a sign of weakness.

Best Bad Choice or Irreconcilable Good:

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
The protagonist does not face a Choice. The character is completely passive or reactive, acting without agency.	The Choice is too easy for the protagonist. The stakes for all the consequences are not equally positive or negative.	The Choice posed to the protagonist is difficult. The character struggles to determine the best path forward.	The Choice becomes incredibly difficult for the protagonist. The character cannot see a way out of the predicament, and neither can the reader, which should set up a surprising but inevitable Consequence.

Notes:

What is the Consequence (What event occurs because of the protagonist's decision?)

Consequence: He explains why he brought the two of them to Raven Wharf and Ulena learns of his past and empathizes with his motivations.

<i>Underdeveloped</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
Because the protagonist is passive or reactive, the Consequence is dull and one that the reader anticipated, creating an unsatisfying ending to the scene.	Because the Choice is too easy for the protagonist, the Consequence is obvious and easily predicted by the reader, but there is minor satisfaction when the reader correctly guesses the outcome.	When the protagonist struggles to determine the best path forward, the Consequence is often unexpected, which delights the reader.	With an incredibly difficult Choice for the protagonist, the Consequence strikes the perfect balance of surprising but inevitable. The reader never sees the end of the scene coming, but once it does, they realize they should have seen it all along.

Notes:

Commented [J2]: Try to identify the exact beat in the scene where this happens.

My observation: It's when Ulena asks Willock why they're there because it forces him to articulate exactly why.

This Conflict definitely works, but I wonder if there's a way to put more of an emphasis on it? Is there a physical beat or occurrence you can create to prompt Ulena's question?

Commented [J3]: This Choice works. However, how could you increase the tension on it? This well into the story and therefore it might be obvious, but reading the scene out of context, the "sign of weakness" doesn't feel like much of a consequence.

Commented [J4]: Excellent. So if Ulena needs to learn of his past and empathize with his motivations, make it really difficult for him to tell her about it.

Commented [J5]: This is a well-written scene. My comments are mostly tweaks.



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If you find the Story Rubric helpful, please consider buying me a coffee at <https://ko-fi.com/ithorn>.

Thank you and best of luck with your story!

Sincerely,
J. Thorn