**Riding the Plot Roller Coaster**

Plot is what we use to describe the most important events in a story. You can think of plot like being on a roller-coaster ride. There are six parts of a story’s plot:

1. **The Set-Up**
   *What kind of rollercoaster are we getting on?*
   Though some novels begin with an “inciting incident”—which you will read about in just a second—many of them start by telling the reader a little bit about the characters, the setting, and the conflict before jumping into the action. Just like you’d want to know what kind of rollercoaster you’re getting on before waiting in line, a reader wants to know what kind of novel he or she is about to read before committing time to it.

2. **The Inciting Incident**
   *Getting on the rollercoaster*
   The inciting incident launches the story into the adventure. The Inciting Incident is the main problem of the story. It can be a pretty scary moment for your main character. Once it happens, there's no turning back.
3. Rising Action
*Climbing the big hill*
This can be the longest section of the story. We learn about the characters. The characters deepen their relationships with one another, and carefully pace all the important things that happen to them before the climax. Think of the rising action as the biggest hill on the rollercoaster—the higher you go, the more suspenseful it gets. The rising action is made up of many events, each of them building to the most exciting part of your story: the climax.

4. The Climax
*The top of the rollercoaster*
This is the moment at the very top of the rollercoaster, right before your high-speed drop. This moment doesn’t last long, and neither does the climax in a story. It can be as short as a couple paragraphs—just enough to make your readers hold their breath in suspense and ask, “What’s going to happen next?!”

5. The Falling Action
*The high-speed drop*
The falling action is what happens after the climax. It is the fast-paced, action-packed part of the story. You’re finally speeding down the tracks of the rollercoaster with your hands in the air! Does the bad guy get defeated? Does the main character’s dreams finally come true? If so, how? Keep in mind however that just because the falling action is fast-paced, it doesn’t have to be over quickly. In some stories, the falling action actually takes place over whole chapters. What's important is that the action is paced to feel exciting whether it spans mere minutes or whole years of your characters' lives.

6. The Resolution
*Getting off the rollercoaster*
The resolution is how things work out in the very end, after the main character gets (or doesn’t get) what he or she wants. It has been said by creative writing sages that your characters—especially your main character—must change over the course of the book. This change happens gradually as the main character battles his or her fears, defeats villains, and makes friendships and relationships with a cast of amazing characters. All of these adventures will end up changing the way your main character sees the world and his or her place in it. The final scene of the story can show or highlight those changes.