THE MASTER BOOK OF ALL PLOTS

PLOTTO

William Wallace Cook

FOREWORD BY
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The soul, with its human faculties which put it in immediate touch with the Universe, is a Divine Instrument, an Aeolian Harp which is not played upon by the Winds of Chance but by all the Winds of Destiny that blow from the four quarters of Human Nature; and this Music of the Soul is a Divine Harmony which the Creative Imagination, alone of the human faculties, interprets in Creative Art. To this high interpretation, through fictional narrative,

Plotto is dedicated.
Foreword

Picture a man and a woman walking through a thick fog in London. The year is 1926. They are in love, and they are miserable.

The man, a promising young director on one of his first projects, has just been told by studio executives that his newly finished film will almost certainly be shelved. It is too depressing, too disturbing—too frightening. In love with his production assistant and hoping to marry her, the would-be groom now suspects his directing career is already over. So the two stroll for hours in the fog, aimless, not knowing what final decision to expect from the head of the studio.

“As a lifelong purveyor of suspense, so called,” Alfred Hitchcock would later muse in a 1970 interview, “I have never before and have never since endured such suspense myself.”

The film—a dark thriller based on Jack the Ripper called *The Lodger*—was indeed released in the end. With it, Hitchcock’s career truly began, and eventually grew and crossed the Atlantic altogether. Before the big jump to Hollywood, though, he studied up a little further on plotting.

Tearing open that package from overseas, Hitchcock might have recognized a formulation of his own youthful trials right in *Plotto*'s opening pages:

Purpose, expressed or implied, opposing Obstacle, expressed or implied, yields conflict . . . *Plotto* concerns itself with but one General Purpose in its application to three general goals of endeavor:

1. To Achieve Happiness in Love and Courtship.
2. To Achieve Happiness in Married Life.
3. To Achieve Happiness (Success) in Enterprise.

Hitchcock did marry his beloved and did succeed in his enterprise—but nothing was quite so memorable as those obstacles in between, or the conflict they’d created. It was a hard-won insight that *Plotto*'s author had long since arrived at himself.

William Wallace Cook (1867–1933), known in the pulp community as “the man who deforested Canada,” spent decades pursuing his own peculiar version of “Success in Enterprise.” Working under an array of pseudonyms—he even used one on his own memoir, *The Fiction Factory*—Cook pumped out hundreds of nickel and dime novels over a forty-four-year career. In 1910 alone, he conjured a staggering fifty-four nickel novels, or just over one a week. At times, Cook would pound out an entire manuscript in a twenty-four-hour marathon session. Each production, though, was always carefully molded into the same 40,000-word format of sixteen chapters of five single-spaced pages each. At one point, Cook calculated he’d worn out over twenty-five typewriters in as many years, frantically clacking out everything from romances (*Little Vassar Girl*) to science fiction (*A Round Trip to the Year 2000*) to Westerns (*Jim Dexter, Cattleman*).

“A writer is neither better nor worse than any other man who happens to be in trade,” he explained. “He is a manufacturer.”

The comparison was apt: with the rise of high-speed presses and railroad distribution, writing was an industry. The masses wanted literature that was cheap, potent, and reliably satisfying—and to meet that demand, Cook couldn’t rely on anything so capricious as artistic inspiration. He needed to systematize fiction so that nearly anything within his grasp could be readily converted into narrative—including the system itself.
And so as Cook eased into old age in the same Michigan home he’d occupied for three decades, he decided his system of storytelling would become—what else?—another book.

“FIRST AID TO TROUBLED WRITERS,” the Boston Globe announced in September 1928—“MACHINE GRINDS OUT PLOTS WITHOUT ANY FALSE START.”

The subject of the article was not really a machine at all, but a book—which, unveiled in Manhattan at the Plotto Studio of Authorship at 1658 Broadway, was announced as “Plotto, an invention which reduces literature to an exact science.”

If it’s neither a machine nor quite an exact science, Plotto does have a machinelike logic to it. It is a plot generator, Cook explains to the reader, built around three essential elements: the protagonist, the conflict situation, and the resolution. With thousands of variants and subroutines on these three elements, at first glance the entries within resemble some utterly mad thesaurus:

1367

(b) (1083) (1287)

A has invented a life preserver for the use of shipwrecked persons *
A, in order to prove the value of the life preserver he has invented,
dons the rubber suit, inflates it and secretly, by night, drops
overboard from a steamer on the high seas ** (1414b) (1419b)

The notion of fundamental plot elements wasn’t a new one—back in 1894, French critic Georges Polti had identified thirty-six plots that he claimed all drama derived from. But Cook now went much further. By varying the combinations of such elements, the Globe explained, “it is possible to develop several million original works.” While one might wonder just how original those works might be, Cook’s Manhattan representative was unperturbed by any criticism that the book was formulaic.

“There are any number of highbrow authors who will ridicule this invention in public and use it in private,” he scoffed.

In fact, some authors were using it. Along with the midtown Plotto Studio, Olivet College in Michigan had adopted Plotto as a
textbook—while in Indiana, an attorney bought a copy to break out of the grind of his law office.

“I used *Plotto* to find out what a plot was and how to build it,” Erle Stanley Gardner later explained. “I secured data from it which has been worth a great deal to me.” He was not speaking idly: as the creator of Perry Mason, the former lawyer sold 170 million books in America alone within his lifetime.

As with any valuable industrial process, others tried to mimic *Plotto*. In 1931, magazines announced the debut of the Plot Robot, a contrivance by Hollywood screenwriter Wycliffe Hill. A photograph accompanying one article shows a tin man with a disturbingly fixed smile—“a mechanical robot that turns out plots for brain-fagged authors,” *Popular Science* reported, in a mere “twenty minutes, to the accompaniment of whirring gears.” What readers received in the mail, however, was a plot book and a cardboard-wheel calculator that randomized nine different plot elements. It was, in short, a literary slide rule.

“It may or may not have been a mistake, to give the name ‘Plot Robot’ to the device,” Hill later admitted, “inasmuch as it is not really a robot.”

*Plotto* proved popular enough to go through multiple editions: it soon outlasted Cook himself, with an additional instruction book being issued in 1934, and a combined edition in 1941. But if *Plotto* and Plot Robot promised the literary process of the future, by the postwar era those plots were beginning to sound curiously like the past.

Examining these guides in 1958, the mathematician Martin Gardner found himself reminded of the concentric wheel charts created by the thirteenth–century Spanish logician Ramon Lull. *Plotto*, he argued, “was essentially Lullian in its technique of combining plot elements.” There is indeed something almost medieval about the process: first one lays out certain premises as unquestioned truths, and from there builds a wildly complex philosophical mechanism around it. *Plotto* resembles nothing so much as those Ptolemaic globes that use gloriously elaborate gear works to explain the motion of the heavens as they wheel around an unmoving Earth.

Like those antique globes, old copies of *Plotto* now fetch a small mint when they go up for sale. There is a fascination to them, a joy in
beholding their wildly overcalculated archaisms. Even by 1970, when Erle Stanley Gardner’s own fiction factory had turned its last gear, and an exhausted-sounding Alfred Hitchcock was being interviewed by sharp young reporters, it seemed that the old verities in their copies of *Plotto* had vanished.

“*Easy Rider* . . .” Hitchcock mused in amazement. “The chaps sell dope. That’s the sort of thing we used to put in for villains to do.”

Far less has changed in plotting than Hitchcock might have feared, but a world that also included antiheroes, irony, and metanarrative simply made no sense in *Plotto*’s cosmology. And yet I suspect that, inveterate writer that he was, William Wallace Cook himself would have scarcely flinched. It’s just another story: a magnificent old craftsman becomes bewildered by new art that is inexorably leaving him behind. Why, that’s the very stuff of tragedy itself. Cook would have taken the confusion around *Plotto* and made that into his next story—and why not?

“All’s fish,” he once wrote, “that comes to the writer’s net.”

—Paul Collins
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Plotto 101

Plotto is, ultimately, an outline generator. It helps you create and shape the skeleton of your story before (or as) you’re writing it. There are three ways to approach Plotto, depending on what pieces of story you already have in mind. You can start with the Masterplot (more on that to come), a combination of characters, or a conflict situation. Whichever route you go, you can continue to build and morph your outline as you write.

Starting with the Masterplot

The Masterplot formula: A Clause + B Clause + C Clause

The A Clause: Establishes the protagonist (in general terms)

The B Clause: Originates and continues the action

The C Clause: Continues and resolves the action

The Masterplot serves as a general theme or summary of the story at its most basic level. Cook suggests fifteen A Clauses, sixty-two B Clauses, and fifteen C Clauses. Under each of the B Clauses are numerous conflict situations that, when combined and interwoven, make up the basic plot of your story. Each conflict situation—numbered 1–1462—contains between two and fourteen suggested “lead-ups” and “carry-ons.” By scrutinizing the various suggestions and winding your way through the pages—the way you might a choose-your-own-adventure novel—you combine the conflict situations until you have the bones of your story.
Starting with Character Combinations

If you have even a rough idea of your characters, but a hazier notion of where those characters might take you, it might be wise to start instead with a character combination. *Plotto* assigns symbols to more than fifty unique character types, which then appear throughout the various conflict situations. Once you find the appropriate character combination (beginning on page 266), you can choose from various story types and subtypes (beginning on page 271) that will lead you to appropriate conflict situations with which you can began structuring your story.

Starting with a Conflict Situation

Perhaps a less scientific means to approach *Plotto* is by starting with one of the 1,462+ conflict situations. As mentioned in Starting with the Masterplot, each conflict situation has between two and fourteen lead-ups and carry-ons. If a conflict situation strikes you as a good starting place, you can trace those lead-ups backward and forward to construct your plot.
THE PLOTTO METHOD. Plotto achieves creative art in fiction by a new Method of plot suggestion. Suggestion is based on Themes (or Masterplots) and Conflicts.

THEME. Every story has a Theme, or an underlying proposition that indicates its type. The Theme may be clear-cut and distinct, or shadowy and vague; it is always in evidence, and differentiates one type of story from all the other types. Around each Theme any number of distinctly different stories may be written.

A story may be constructed with, or without, a certain Theme in mind. Rarely perhaps does a writer begin a story with a set Theme in front of him. He may develop his plot from a situation, or Conflict; nevertheless, as the plot develops the Theme develops with it. The writer will feel the Theme and, consciously or unconsciously, combine his Conflicts to a certain pattern. This pattern, plain in the finished work, will conform to a Theme. When a story is built around a Theme, the Theme becomes a Masterplot.

The Plotto Method enables the Plottoist to begin his story with a Masterplot and marshal his situations or Conflicts in conformity to it; or, it enables him to begin with a situation or Conflict and consciously to watch the particular Theme as the plot unfolds.

MASTERPLOTS WITH INTERCHANGEABLE CLAUSES. Each Plotto Masterplot classifies in general terms and in a single terse sentence a certain type of story. Each Masterplot consists of three Clauses: An initial Clause defining the protagonist in general terms, a middle Clause initiating and carrying on the action, and a final Clause carrying on and terminating the action. Suggestions for exemplifying the action with concrete situations are offered by the Conflicts.

THE CONFLICTS. Desire, in some one of its many forms, is responsible for the awakening of Purpose. Something from without, impinging upon something within, excites a feeling or an emotion, and the soul flows into Purpose, and Purpose into action. Then, somewhere on the path of rising action, Purpose
encounters Obstacle. At this point, and at this point only, do we establish what writers of creative fiction call a situation. Purpose alone never made a situation; Obstacle alone never made one; but strike the flint of Obstacle with the steel of Purpose and sparks of situation begin to fly.

Plotto, as a Method of plot suggestion for writers of creative fiction, is founded upon this law: Purpose, expressed or implied, opposing Obstacle, expressed or implied, yields Conflict.

PURPOSES AND OBSTACLES. How many Purposes are there in the world? Not many, although their variations are infinite. Perhaps, in the last analysis one General Purpose would comprehend all the Purposes: TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS. That is the end and aim of life on this planet. But happiness has a different meaning for most of us. There is the happiness of love and courtship, of married life, of achieving wealth or power by all the many methods, good or evil, that may be contrived by the thinking mind, Religion may be the road to happiness for some, and revenge the road to a doubtful happiness for others. The virtues or the faults of a human soul set the pattern of Purpose for that soul. Plotto concerns itself with but one General Purpose in its application to three general goals of endeavor:

1. To Achieve Happiness in Love and Courtship.
2. To Achieve Happiness in Married Life.
3. To Achieve Happiness (Success) in Enterprise.

Yet, while this one General Purpose runs through all the Conflicts, a host of subordinate Purposes will appear in them, opposed by an infinite number of Obstacles.

There is one Supreme Purpose in every life: TO LIVE; and there is one Supreme Obstacle each life encounters: DEATH. Complicating the scheme and giving zest to the plot of life are innumerable subordinate Purposes and Obstacles, dealing with all the enterprises of which life is capable.

Overshadowed by the Supreme Purpose of LIFE, and the Supreme Obstacle of DEATH, we wage our mimic wars of conquest and gain; but, at any minute, the Supreme Purpose may fail, and DEATH come striding into our finite calculations and calling a truce. There is also a Paramount Purpose in all the lesser activities of our existence, opposed by a Paramount Obstacle; and they marshal their secondary Purposes and Obstacles to keep us “on our toes” and fighting valiantly for all we have, or hope to have. Blessed be Purpose! And thrice-blessed be Obstacle!

The Conflicts in Plotto are brief statements of Purpose in active opposition with Obstacle—situations which are to be combined with other situations. For instance: “A, in love with B, is not favored by F-B, father of B.” Here is the implied Purpose, “To Achieve Happiness in Love,” meeting an Obstacle bluntly expressed.

Purpose and Obstacle give concrete exemplification of the Theme in every form of fictional narrative, whether short story, novelette, or novel.
THE SHORT STORY. Purpose and Obstacle at grips in one dramatic situation will define the short story, since it is calculated to leave a single dominant impression upon the reader's mind. Ordinarily, this form of narrative fiction will be woven about a plot of the simplest construction. There will be the main situation as suggested by a chosen Conflict, the Conflict leading up to it and the Conflict carrying on and terminating the action. These three Conflicts may be reduced to two, if the main Conflict should in itself possess the qualities of a terminal Conflict. Conflicts too long, or too involved, for short story purposes will usually be found to be broken Conflicts. When such a Conflict is selected for the main situation, it is possible to use only that part of it which contains the most dramatic appeal.

THE NOVELETTE. This form of narrative fiction may be considered as a long short story, or as a short novel. If the former, the Conflict suggesting the situation will be elaborated with dramatic material concerned with the Purpose and Obstacle. If, on the other hand, the novelette partakes of the character of a short novel, the Paramount Purpose and Obstacle will involve subordinate Purposes and Obstacles all cumulative in power and bearing upon the story's climax or crisis. Here, as everywhere, the imagination must exercise constructive judgment.

THE NOVEL. The full-fledged novel may be considered as consisting of several short stories all leading up to, and intimately bound up with, the Paramount Purpose and Obstacle that give the complete story its unity. Construction here plays its most discriminating role, for the subordinate situations must grow toward a single, decisive crisis. The effect must be cumulative. If the main Conflict shall involve the crisis—and it should—all the subordinate situations dealing with the Theme will be so selected as to grow naturally in dramatic strength toward the climax. Here no rules of construction will take the place of taste and discrimination. The constructive imagination, properly exercised, will deal capably with the situations, and the creative imagination will work a miracle of dramaturgic power.

ORIGINALITY. The Conflicts all come from the vast storehouse of Human Nature. They are there, millions upon millions of them, waiting for the imagination to select them and group them in an original combination. For there is "nothing new under the sun." Originality in creative work comes from our own individual use of the tools so bountifully provided by the Divine Creator. All that is possible to a mortal craftsman is the combining of old material into something new and different.

Originality is the ideal of the Plotto Method; and it is realized by disregarding the references prefixed and affixed to the Conflicts and (or) interpreting the Specific as well as the General, Conflicts in terms of the Plottoist's own experience. Nothing in the Specific Conflicts will be used literally, but the concrete exemplification in such Conflicts will serve as a suggestion, lending wings to the creative imagination for its own high flight.
Introduction

For original combinations of Conflicts the Classification by Symbols will be found a treasure-trove of suggestions. If the main Conflict selected is built around A, or B, alone, the A or B group should be scanned; if around A and B alone, the A and B group will yield suggestions, or the A or B group may be found to serve; or, if several characters are involved in the main Conflict, reference may be had to that particular group of symbols. If a certain group of symbols proves too limited, drop one of the lesser character symbols and consult the group represented by those remaining. This course may be followed, in the search for original combinations, until only the protagonist remains in the situation. Somewhere along the line of search the imagination is certain to find exactly what it is looking for.

CONFLICT GROUPS AND SUB-GROUPS. The Conflicts in Plotto are classified in three main groups:

1. Conflicts in Love and Courtship.
2. Conflicts in Married Life.
3. Conflicts in Enterprise.

The Conflicts in Love and Courtship are re-grouped as follows:
- Conflicts in Love’s Beginnings.
- Conflicts in Love’s Misadventures.
- Conflicts of the Marriage Proposal.
- Conflicts in Love’s Rejection.
- Conflicts of Marriage.

All the sub-groups are classified, for convenience of reference, under the middle, or “B,” Clauses of the Masterplots; and these form the only subdivisions of the main group, “Married Life.” Conflicts of the third group, “Enterprise,” fall into the following general classifications:

- Conflicts in Misfortune.
- Conflicts in Mistaken Judgment.
- Conflicts in Helpfulness.
- Conflicts in Deliverance.
- Conflicts in Idealism.
- Conflicts in Obligation.
- Conflicts in Necessity.
- Conflicts in Chance.
- Conflicts in Personal Limitations.
- Conflicts in Simulation.
- Conflicts in Craftiness.
- Conflicts in Transgression.
- Conflicts in Revenge.
- Conflicts in Mystery.
- Conflicts in Revelation.

Inasmuch as dramatic situations are a product of the emotions, and the emotions, by reason of their complexity, have defied a hard and fast classification, it follows naturally that the Conflicts themselves will defy a rigid classification. The
groupings noted above are more or less arbitrary, yet they will be bound to serve. Some Conflicts in Misfortune might easily fall into the sub-groups, Mistaken Judgment, Simulation, etc., and Conflicts in other sub-groups might logically be reclassified. Nevertheless, the classification in each case will exemplify in the Conflict the particular sub-group in which it has been placed.

**MECHANICAL STRUCTURE.** There is, of course, a mechanical structure underlying every properly constructed story. There are some very intelligent people who believe in the “divine afflatus” as something apart from hard, consistent, carefully calculated effort. Overlooking the old adage that “Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains,” these wise ones will have their back-handed slap at anything mechanical in its application to Art.

It remains, however, that a good story must have a carefully developed plot for its framework; and the plot in itself, is purely mechanical. It is the logical devising of means to an end, a motivating of all the parts into a harmonious whole. A plot may be simple, or it may be complex, but an interesting story without some sort of plot is inconceivable. This machinery must not creak or complain as the story advances. A discriminating imagination must oil it so well with logic and plausibility that the god in the machine shall not be ruffled by the turning wheels. Plausibility is attained when fine discrimination, true judgment and a facility with words so cover the necessary mechanism that it does not intrude at any point upon the completed work. And therein lies the art of the story teller. Plotto, at least, holds this to be true; and, as a corollary of the position thus taken, exalts the imagination as the greatest force in the world.

**IMAGINATION.** If a story is a skeleton structure of plot, overlaid with a felicity of thought and phrase that may be called the flesh, then the pulsing heart of the creation, the one factor that gives it life and beauty, is the imagination. But this imagination must be rightly controlled.

The demands of fictional narrative would seem to predicate an imagination of three types: Mediocre, Constructive and Creative. A mind positively brilliant in its mastery of scientific research, or of the pursuit of trade, might be hopeless in meeting the demands of fictional narrative. Nevertheless, Plotto believes sincerely that a desire to write successful fiction is predicated upon the ability to write successful fiction; and that, given the technical requirements of experience and a fair education, not often will the mediocre imagination be found hopeless. Intensive training should develop constructive power; and it is but a step, in the interpretation of suggestion, from the constructive to the creative. Originality is the soul of creative art, and originality is nothing more than the interpretation of suggestion in terms of individual experience.

Each life is the sum of many experiences, and character indicates the reaction of those experiences upon the soul. In other words, life is a combination of situations, or Conflicts, with a spiritual signification drawn from the Conflicts themselves. So a story plot, which holds the mirror up to life, is a combination of Conflicts, selected to the pattern of a single Theme, or Masterplot. Life, with its
The multitude of experiences, is general; the imagination, dealing with a cross-section of life, makes the story plot particular. And imagination does this through the interpretation of suggestion.

**SUGGESTION.** The ideal of the Plotto Method, as stated elsewhere, is the interpretation of Conflict suggestions in terms of individual experience. Some of the Conflicts are General. Thus, Conflict No. 31 reads: “B, rescued from an accident by A, whom she does not know, falls in love with him.” The nature of the accident, and the character of B and of A, are circumstances left to the constructive imagination. In dealing with these circumstances, references to other Conflicts, prefixed and affixed to this general suggestion, will offer further suggestions for inventing the circumstances.

Many of the Conflicts are Specific. Thus, to quote Conflict No. 647: “B, a respectable working girl seeking employment, follows the advice of a supposed friend, A-5, and finds herself in an immoral dance hall where she is compelled to dance with patrons and serve drinks.” References to other Conflicts will suggest the cause of B’s necessity for seeking employment, and other references will suggest a finalé for B’s unhappy plight. The constructive imagination might use Conflict No. 647 literally, but Plotto would not approve of such literal use. The ideal method is for the imagination to use the dance hall merely as a suggestion for something equally pertinent to the situation; in other words, use the concrete example in interpreting an equivalent for this specific suggestion as to B’s misfortune. Herein lies the opportunity for originality, and the way to creative work.

**DEVELOPING THE PLOT FROM A MASTERPLOT.** For purposes of illustration, we will select a Masterplot from the Masterplot Chart and build up a short story plot in tabloid form.

A 11  A Person Swayed by Pretense,

B 11  (49) Assuming a fictitious character when embarking upon a certain enterprise,

C 2  Emerges happily from a serious entanglement.

The B Clause “originates and carries on the action.” Prefixed to this B Clause in parentheses is the number, (49). On the back of the Masterplot Chart, we find that No. (49) refers us to a sub-group of Conflicts beginning with Conflict No. 1173, this particular B Clause serving as a title for the sub-group:

**1173**

(2b, c, d, e, g, h) (1187; 2f)
A, a pretender, encounters B, who is also a pretender * A and B are pretenders, yet neither knows the other is not what he or she seems to be ** (773; 772 ch A to B & A-4 to A) (806 ch B-4 to B) (1462)

The reference numbers prefixed to this Conflict offer lead-up suggestions. Numbers 1187 and 2f form a complementary suggestion, or a combination of two Conflicts appropriate to the main situation.
1187. A is a poor clerk who, with a limited capital, dons a dress suit and takes a "fling" in high society.

2f **-**. B, poor and humble but pretending to be wealthy and aristocratic, meets rich and influential A, and they fall in love.

Thus we have our two pretenders, neither knowing that the other is not what he or she seems to be. No. 2f has a carry-on suggestion:

1461a. B fights a hard battle with her conscience; she finds it a losing battle and makes an important revelation in order that she may achieve peace of mind.

A and not B is the protagonist of 1461a, but we manipulate the Conflict by changing A to B. This Conflict has a reference. No. 358 **-***:

358 **-***. A, in order to win B, is compelled to confess his true rank and station.

We can now eliminate our main suggestion, Conflict 1173, so that our tabloid plot will read:

2f **-**. B, poor and humble but pretending to be wealthy and aristocratic, meets rich and influential A, and they fall in love.

1187. A is a poor clerk who, with a limited capital, dons a dress suit and takes a "fling" in high society.

1461a. B fights a hard battle with her conscience; she finds it a losing battle, and makes an important revelation in order that she may achieve peace of mind.

358 **-***. A, in order to win B, is compelled to confess his true rank and station.

We have manipulated the combination Conflict by allowing 2f **-** to precede 1187; and if we keep the reader in ignorance of the fact that A and B are pretenders and allow the revelation to come at the end of the story, we shall achieve a double surprise and find ourselves with the plot of O. Henry's story, "Transients in Arcadia." Yet any number of stories, true to the Masterplot, may be built around these suggestions.

By changing the first two situations and selecting different Conflicts, the plot will develop along criminal lines:

2h. B, a criminal, assumes an alias and makes use of stolen funds in evading the law * B, a criminal in disguise, meets A, and they fall in love **

1c. A, a crook, pretends to be an honest man in order to forward his love affair with B.

Or, we could make our plot more dramatic by having the second situation read:

3a. A is a judge, and B is a fugitive from justice posing as a woman of wealth and fashion * A, a judge, falls in love with B, a criminal **

This might be followed with:

1292. B seeks happiness as a reformed transgressor * B, seeking happiness as a reformed transgressor, has her old transgression discovered **
727. A, a judge presiding at a murder trial, finds himself unexpectedly confronted with a circumstance that makes his work a torture to his soul.

These changes in the plot would make necessary a change in the C clause of the Masterplot:

C (1). Pays a grim penalty in an unfortunate undertaking.

CONFLICT MANIPULATIONS. Characters in the Plotto Conflicts are represented by symbols (see “The Plotto Character Symbols,” page 23). These symbols may be readily changed or transposed, as an aid in manipulating the Conflict suggestions. Thus, “261 ch A-3 to A,” indicates that A-3 in the Conflict is to be changed to A; and, “578b tr B & B-3,” indicates a transposition in which B-3 takes the place of B and B of B-3.

The character symbols are changed, or transposed, in the auxiliary Conflicts to agree with the character symbols of the Conflict whose ramifications are being studied.

In many instances the Conflicts are “broken”—that is, divided into two or more parts. The end of the first part is marked with a star (*), of the second part, with a double star (**), of the third part with a triple star (***) , etc. Thus, “*” indicates that the Conflict is to be used up to the first star; “**” indicates that the first part of the Conflict is not to be used, but only that part between the first star and the double star; “***” indicates that all of the Conflict is to be used up to the double star, etc.

DEVELOPING THE PLOT FROM A SELECTED SITUATION. The most practical way to illustrate the Plotto Method of developing a plot from a single situation, or Conflict, will be to select a Conflict and follow the Method through, step by step. For this purpose, the first Conflict, 1a, may be used:

1

(a) (112) (117) (148) (656)
A, poor, is in love with wealthy and aristocratic B * A, poor, in love with wealthy B, pretends to be a man of wealth ** (209) (187)

The simplest combination will consist of three Conflicts—the Conflict selected as the working basis for the plot, the one Conflict leading up to it, and the third Conflict terminating the action, both auxiliary Conflicts taken from the references prefixed and affixed to the main, or basic, situation. For example, as a lead-up Conflict No. 112 may be used, followed by 1a, and this in turn followed by No. 209.

It develops, however, that the second part of the broken Conflict, 1a, may be eliminated; and that, with this elimination, 1a-* may logically precede Conflict 112, giving the three-Conflict plot as follows:
1a. A, POOR, IS IN LOVE WITH WEALTHY AND ARISTOCRATIC B.

112. A loves B; and B’s father, F-B, promises him B’s hand in marriage if he will successfully carry out an enterprise of great difficulty and danger.

209. A carries out successfully a very difficult enterprise when promised the hand of B in marriage by F-B, father of B. A, discovering secretly that B loves a rival, A-3, refuses to hold B to a promise of marriage made by her father, F-B. Nobility of character on the part of A is suggested by this heroic renunciation. The character of B, of F-B and of A-3, as well as the “enterprise of great difficulty and danger,” may be left to the creative imagination.

Again using Conflict 1a for our main suggestion, we might begin with Conflict 656 for a lead-up:

656

(751) (961) (1000) (1079)
A’s ancestral acres have been heavily mortgaged and he is about to lose the property. A, by hook or crook, seeks to save his mortgaged paternal acres from foreclosure.

(500) (860) (874) (1029)
Reaching backward into the causes of A’s unfortunate condition, we will select lead-up suggestion No. 1079. Many other Conflicts in Personal Limitations, Misfortune, or some of the other groups would serve us equally well, or better; but we will content ourselves with

1079

(127a) (656)
A’s character weakness is betting; and he seems unable to conquer the failing although he invariably suffers loss.

(367a) (524a) (902)
Here we have a suggestion as to the character weakness which caused A to squander his fortune and mortgage his ancestral estates. We shall assume now that none of the references prefixed or affixed to 1079 appeals to our imagination, so we shall proceed on our own initiative—a course which Plotto earnestly recommends to the Plottoist in the working out of every plot. A further study of Personal Limitations suggests

1075

(a) (850b) (902)
A, struggling hopelessly against a character weakness, forms a platonic friendship for B.

(850a, b) (364d) (1075b)
Thus we have A, struggling hopelessly against a character weakness that has wrecked him financially, forming a platonic friendship for B. If we consider it expedient to bring about a dramatic first meeting of A with B, the Conflicts are brimming with such suggestions. But we will not go into that in this skeleton plot, our object being to simplify the references as much as possible. Conflict 1075b, a reference appended to 1075a, offers this suggestion as to B’s influence
over A: “A’s admiration for his friend B, and his desire to please her, inspires him to bring out the best in his nature.” Also appended to 1075a is a reference to Conflict 364d, which seems quite apropos at this point:

364

\((d)\) (850a, b) (1075a, b)
A, with the help of B, overcomes an ignoble weakness * A’s gratitude to B blossoms into love; and, when A is sure he has rehabilitated his character, he proposes marriage to B and is accepted ** (826) (828)

This Conflict may be called a terminal Conflict, in the sense that it brings our love story plot to marriage, the finale of most such plots. But we are not ready, as yet, to close the action, inasmuch as we are merely leading up to the main situation, 1a; so we shall use only the first part of this broken Conflict: “A, with the help of B, overcomes an ignoble weakness.”

At last we have the female protagonist, B, firmly fixed in the plot, and we need not go back further into the lead-ups.

1079. A’s character weakness is betting, and he seems unable to conquer the failing although he invariably suffers loss.

653. A’s ancestral estates have been heavily mortgaged and he is about to lose the property * A, by hook or crook, seeks to save his paternal acres from foreclosure **

1075a. A, struggling hopelessly against a character weakness, forms a platonic friendship for B.

1075b. A’s admiration for his friend B, and his desire to please her, inspires him to bring out the best in his nature.

364d -*. A, with the help of B, overcomes an ignoble weakness.

1a. A, POOR, IS IN LOVE WITH WEALTHY AND ARISTOCRATIC B *
A, POOR, IN LOVE WITH WEALTHY B, PRETENDS TO BE A MAN OF WEALTH **

From this, it is manifest that A’s platonic association with B has gone the way of most platonic associations (see Conflicts 9a, b, c), and his gratitude has blossomed into love. A, by inference, is so deeply in love with B that the best in his nature is, for the time, eclipsed by his desire to win B. He resorts to simulation in forwarding his suit—thinking less of saving his ancestral acres by a wealthy marriage than he is of his own future happiness. Conflict 1a has a reference to Conflict 187 for carrying on the action:

187

\((145)\) (956 -*) (1105) (1119)
A, in love with B and wishing to propose marriage, finds it impossible because B is so busy he can never find her alone. He seeks to make an opportunity by stratagem. (163; 91) (352a)

We will discard this suggestion, for the reason that it will plunge A deeper into
the questionable methods into which his ardor has already lured him. He is pretending to be a man of wealth when he is almost a bankrupt; but he has overcome his passion for gambling, thanks to B's influence, and he is ready to husband his remaining resources and save what he can from the wreck of his material fortunes. A carry-on suggestion appended to Conflict 187 is a two-Conflict combination, 163; 91:

163. B learns that her lover, A, has fallen into desperate misfortunes.
91. B, in love with A, seeks to save A from disaster.

We are now approaching the climax of the action. A's pretensions to wealth, B secretly discovers, are a hollow mockery. She learns that he is faced with disaster; and the Conflicts, if desired, will offer suggestions as to just how she discovers this secret. B is in love with A and ready to overlook his shortcomings, so she hastens to his rescue. We will depart, at this point, from the references and show B, on her own part, indulging in a bit of simulation. Turning to the sub-group, Simulation, we select Conflict,

1155

B, the friend of A, learns that A is desperately involved in debt * B, unknown to A, settles with A's creditors and frees him from debt **

This happy turn of affairs, naturally, cannot long remain unknown to A. If he has pride, let him pocket it; or let his pride be humbled by B's proof of her great love for him. If this course cannot be made to serve, the Conflicts will offer many suggestions for estrangement and reconciliation; but, in our plot, we will not have A a cad. Of the thousands of changes possible in such a series of actions as we are studying, we could eliminate the Conflicts from 163, inclusive, onward and place A in a better light by using this suggestion from Revelation:

1451a. A fights a hard battle with his conscience; he finds it a losing battle, and makes an important revelation in order that he may achieve peace of mind.

But we will not make the change. We will proceed to close the action with Conflict 364d *:**: “A's gratitude to B blossoms into love; and when A is sure he has rehabilitated his character, he proposes to B and is accepted.”

The nature of the Conflicts, and their pliability, often calls for useless repetition. The statement in 364d that “A's gratitude to B has blossomed into love,” is redundant. That fact has been known for some time, and has formed the basis for much of the action; and we simply ignore it here.

The latter part of this love story plot would stand as follows:

1a. A, POOR, IN LOVE WITH WEALTHY AND ARISTOCRATIC B, PRETENDS TO BE A MAN OF WEALTH.

163. B learns that her lover, A, has fallen into desperate misfortunes.
91. B, in love with A, seeks to save A from disaster.

1155. B, in love with A, learns that A is desperately involved in debt * B unknown
to A, settles with A’s creditors and frees him from debt **

364d **. A’s gratitude to B blossoms into love; and when A is sure he has rehabilitated his character, he proposes to B and is accepted.

In the Classification by Character Symbols, all terminal Conflicts are marked by the parentheses number of the C Clauses. For instance, 364d exemplifies C Clause (9) “Achieves success and happiness in a hard undertaking.” This Conflict, 364d, will be found, marked “9”, under the A and B symbols of Conflicts in Marriage in the Classification by Symbols. An elusive terminal situation may be run down by consulting this Classification.

________________

INDIVIDUALIZING PLOTTO. It is possible for the Plottoist to individualize his Plotto by adding material of his own. Every writer has newspaper clippings or other memoranda filed away for possible use. Let all this be catalogued in a loose-leaf book under the Conflict numbers to which each bit of material applies, and a notation to that effect penciled opposite the Conflicts thus amplified. This will broaden the usefulness of Plotto, often with concrete exemplifications of the Conflicts from real life.

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INSTRUCTION MANUAL. At the end of Plotto, on page 439, is a separate lesson guide to mastering all the techniques of plotting your next masterpiece. It is suggested that once newcomers to Plotto get the basic lay of the land by reading the introduction and charts, they then turn their attention to conquering the seven lessons included in this special guide.
NOTE

A Plotto Masterplot consists of three clauses: An “A” Clause, a “B” Clause and a “C” Clause.

The A Clause is the Protagonist Clause.

The B Clause originates and carries on the action.

The C Clause carries on and terminates the action.

Any A Clause may be used in conjunction with any B Clause and with any C Clause.

Suggestions for evolving a plot to the pattern of the Masterplot selected will be found in the Plotto Conflicts. The Conflicts are listed in sub-groups; and each sub-group is listed under the full text of the B Clause which the sub-group exemplifies.

On the page immediately following the Masterplot pages will be found an index of the respective Conflict sub-groups under the parentheses number of the B Clause.

The C, or Terminal, Clauses are also numbered in parentheses; and Conflicts suggesting these terminations will be found opposite the C Clause numbers in the Classification by Symbols.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“A” CLAUSES</th>
<th>“B” CLAUSES</th>
<th>“C” CLAUSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A Person in Love,</td>
<td>(1) Engaging in a difficult enterprise when promised a reward for high achievement,</td>
<td>(1) Pays a grim penalty in an unfortunate undertaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Falling in love at a time when certain obligations forbid love,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Seeking to demonstrate the power of love by a test of courage,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) Being impelled by inordinate fancy to exercise mistaken judgment in a love affair,</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5) Becoming involved in a hopeless love affair, and seeking to make the best of a disheartening situation,</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6) Challenging, in a quest of love, the relentless truth that “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(7) Becoming involved in a love affair that encounters unforeseen obstacles,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(8) Confronting a situation in which wealth is made conditional upon a certain course of action in a love affair,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(9) Being put to a test in which love will be lost if more material fortunes are advanced,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Masterplots with Interchangeable Clauses

#### “A” CLAUSES

2. A Married Person,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Suffering an estrangement due to mistaken judgment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Confronting a situation in which courage and devotion alone can save the fortunes of one beloved,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Falling into misfortune through disloyalty in love,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### “B” CLAUSES

3. A Lawless Person,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Seeking by craftiness to escape misfortune,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Falling into misfortune through the wiles of a crafty schemer,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Finding a sustaining power in misfortune,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Being delivered from misfortune by one who, in confidence, confesses a secret of transgression,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Bearing patiently with misfortunes and seeking to attain cherished aims honorably,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Rebelling against a power that controls personal abilities and holds them in subjection,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Meeting with misfortune and being cast away in a primitive, isolated and savage environment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Becoming involved with conditions in which misfortune is indicated,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### “C” CLAUSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Emerges happily from a serious entanglement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Foils a guilty plotter and defeats a subtle plot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PLOTTO

Masterplots with Interchangeable Clauses

### “A” CLAUSES

### 4. An Erring Person,

- (21) Falling into misfortune through mistaken judgment,
- (22) Following a wrong course through mistaken judgment,
- (23) Becoming involved in a complication that has to do with mistaken judgment and suspicion.
- (24) Becoming the victim of mistaken judgment in carrying out an enterprise.

### “B” CLAUSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(21)</th>
<th>(22)</th>
<th>(23)</th>
<th>(24)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Falling into misfortune through mistaken judgment,</td>
<td>Following a wrong course through mistaken judgment,</td>
<td>Becoming involved in a complication that has to do with mistaken judgment and suspicion.</td>
<td>Becoming the victim of mistaken judgment in carrying out an enterprise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### “C” CLAUSES

### 5. A Benevolent Person,

- (25) Seeking to save a person who is accused of transgression,
- (26) Seeking secretly to preserve another from danger,
- (27) Refusing to betray another’s secret and calmly facing persecution because of the refusal,

### 6. A Protecting Person,

- (28) Facing a situation in which the misfortunes of one greatly esteemed call for courage and sagacious enterprise,
- (29) Aiding another to hide from the world a fateful secret,
- (30) Enlisting wholeheartedly in the service of a needy unfortunate and conferring aid of the utmost value,

### “C” CLAUSES

- (4) Undertakes a role that leads straight to catastrophe.
- (5) Emerges from a trying ordeal with sorely garnered wisdom.
- (6) Makes the supreme sacrifice in carrying out an undertaking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;<strong>A</strong> CLAUSES&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;<strong>B</strong> CLAUSES&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;<strong>C</strong> CLAUSES&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. A Person of Ideals,</strong></td>
<td>(31) Living a lonely, cheerless life and seeking companionship,</td>
<td>(7) Reverses certain opinions when their fallacy is revealed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32) Seeking to conceal identity because of a lofty idealism,</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>(33) Resisting secretly and from an honorable motive a mandate considered disgraceful,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(34) Embarking upon an enterprise of insurrection in the hope of ameliorating certain evil conditions,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(35) Becoming involved in a complication that challenges the value of cherished ideals,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(36) Undergoing an experience that results in a remarkable character change,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(37) Seeking against difficulties to realize a cherished ideal,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8. A Person Influenced by an Obligation,</strong></td>
<td>(38) Committing a grievous mistake and seeking in secret to live down its evil results,</td>
<td>(8) Achieves a spiritual victory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(39) Forsaking cherished ambitions to carry out an obligation,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(40) Embarking upon an enterprise in which one obligation is opposed by another obligation,</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(41) Finding an obligation at variance with ambition, inclination or necessity,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(42) Falling into misfortune while seeking honorably to discharge an obligation,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A” CLAUSES</td>
<td>“B” CLAUSES</td>
<td>“C” CLAUSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9. A Person Subjected to Adverse Conditions,</strong></td>
<td>(43) Seeking to overcome personal limitations in carrying out an enterprise,</td>
<td>(9) Achieves success and happiness in a hard undertaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(44) Seeking by unusual methods to conquer personal limitations,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(45) Seeking to forward an enterprise and encountering family sentiment as an obstacle,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>10. A Resentful Person,</strong></td>
<td>(46) Seeking retaliation for a grievous wrong that is either real or fancied,</td>
<td>(10) Meets with an experience whereby an error is corrected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(47) Finding (apparently) an object greatly coveted, and obtaining (apparently) the object,</td>
<td>(11) Discovers the folly of trying to appear otherwise than as one is in reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(48) Assuming the character of a criminal in a perfectly honest enterprise,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(49) Assuming a fictitious character when embarking upon a certain enterprise,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11. A Person Swayed by Pretense,</strong></td>
<td>(50) Being impelled by an unusual motive to engage in crafty enterprise,</td>
<td>(12) Rescues integrity from a serious entanglement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(51) Devising a clever and plausible delusion in order to forward certain ambitious plans,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(52) Encountering a would-be transgressor and seeking to prevent a transgression,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(53) Opposing the plans of a crafty schemer,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“A” CLAUSES

13. A Person Influenced by the Occult and the Mysterious,

14. A Normal Person,

15. Any Person,

“B” CLAUSES

(54) Becoming involved in a puzzling complication that has to do with an object possessing mysterious powers,

(55) Becoming involved in a mysterious complication and seeking to make the utmost of a bizarre experience,

(56) Seeking to test the value of a mysterious communication and becoming involved in weird complexities,

(57) Seeking to unravel a puzzling complication,

(58) Engaging in an enterprise and then mysteriously disappearing,

(59) Engaging in an enterprise and becoming involved with the occult and the fantastic,

(60) Becoming involved, through curiosity aroused by mystery, in a strange enterprise,

(61) Becoming aware of an important secret that calls for decisive action,

(14) Achieves a complete and permanent character transformation.

“C” CLAUSES

(13) Comes finally to the blank wall of enigma.

(14) Achieves a complete and permanent character transformation.

(15) Meets any fate, good or evil.
INDEX OF CONFLICTS GROUPED UNDER THE “B” CLAUSES

(1) Love and Courtship 110
(2) Love and Courtship 16, 119, 271
(3) Love and Courtship 175
(4) Love and Courtship 148
(5) Love and Courtship 168, 313
(6) Love and Courtship 331
(7) Love and Courtship 333
(8) Love and Courtship 117
(9) Love and Courtship 116
(10) Love and Courtship 105; Married Life 369, 386, 391, 399, 418
(11) Love and Courtship 179; Married Life 545; Revelation 1462
(12) Love and Courtship 337; Married Life 547
(13) Love and Courtship 96, 244; Married Life 457; Misfortune 650; Craftiness 1247; Mystery 1373
(14) Married Life 471: Craftiness 1260; Misfortune 660
(15) Love and Courtship 12, 106, 265, 360; Married Life 496; Helpfulness 815; Deliverance 874; Chance 1051
(16) Helpfulness 831
(17) Idealism 934
(18) Misfortune 674
(19) Misfortune 685
(20) Love and Courtship 24, 153, 196, 280, 365; Married Life 571; Idealism 956; Necessity 1026; Chance 1036; Personal Limitations 1122; Transgression 1295; Misfortune 695; Mistaken Judgment 793; Deliverance 887; Obligation 997; Craftiness 1285; Mystery 1438; Revelation 1460
(21) Love and Courtship 40, 182, 205, 342; Married Life 369; Misfortune 595; Mistaken Judgment 747; Helpfulness 804; Deliverance 851; Idealism 897; Obligation 979; Necessity 1023; Chance 1034; Personal Limitations 1057; Transgression 1290; Revenge 1310; Mystery 1330
(22) Love and Courtship 255; Married Life 484; Mistaken Judgment 768
(23) Love and Courtship 21, 177, 328, 365; Married Life 538; Mistaken Judgment 786
(24) Mistaken Judgment 794
(25) Love and Courtship 122; Helpfulness 820; Deliverance 894
(26) Married Life 558; Helpfulness 825; Misfortune 671
(27) Helpfulness 824
(28) Love and Courtship 125; Helpfulness 836
(29) Love and Courtship 147; Married Life 537; Misfortune 667; Personal Limitations 1070; Simulation 1160
(30) Helpfulness 845
(31) Idealism 910
(32) Idealism 917
(33) Idealism 958
(34) Idealism 949
(35) Love and Courtship 292; Idealism 922
(36) Love and Courtship 152; Misfortune 680; Idealism 963
(37) Married Life 563; idealism 965; Personal Limitations 1107
(38) Obligation 987
(39) Love and Courtship 123, 282; Married Life 508; Obligation 989
(40) Love and Courtship 287; Married Life 517; Obligation 1011
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(42) Obligation 1018
(43) Helpfulness 835; Personal Limitations 1071
(44) Love and Courtship 191; Personal Limitations 1101
(45) Personal Limitations 1138
(46) Married Life 567; Revenge 1312
(47) Simulation 1165
(48) Simulation 1167
(49) Simulation 1173
(50) Love and Courtship 1, 66, 185, 230, 347; Married Life 419; Helpfulness 813;
    Deliverance 863; Idealism 932; Simulation 1141; Craftiness 1209; Mystery 1365
(51) Craftiness 1277
(52) Craftiness 1275
(53) Helpfulness 834; Craftiness 1280
(54) Mystery 1379
(55) Mystery 1385
(56) Mystery 1394
(57) Love and Courtship 174; Married Life 560; Helpfulness 833; Mystery 1399;
    Revelation 1460
(58) Mystery 1414
(59) Mystery 1418
(60) Mystery 1429
(61) Mistaken Judgment 802; Revelation 1447
(62) All Conflicts
THE PLOTTO CHARACTER SYMBOLS

Characters in the Plotto Conflicts are represented as symbols. These symbols indicate the relationship of the auxiliary characters to the protagonist. This relationship is invariably explained in the text of the Conflicts, with the exception of the symbols A and B—these being the symbols of the male, and the female, protagonists. These symbols give a certain uniformity to the characters and facilitate character changes or transpositions. Protagonist A, or B, might be a criminal, an officer of the law, an employer, etc., but the numeral is never used in connection with the protagonist symbol—the explanation is given in the text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>male protagonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2</td>
<td>male friend of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3</td>
<td>male rival or enemy of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-4</td>
<td>male stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-5</td>
<td>male criminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-6</td>
<td>male officer of the law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-7</td>
<td>male inferior, employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-8</td>
<td>male utility symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-9</td>
<td>male superior, employer, one in authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-A</td>
<td>father of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-B</td>
<td>father of B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>GM-A</td>
<td>grandmother of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM-B</td>
<td>grandmother of B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF-A</td>
<td>stepfather of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF-B</td>
<td>stepfather of B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM-A</td>
<td>stepmother of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM-B</td>
<td>stepmother of B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCH-A</td>
<td>grandchild of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GCH-B</td>
<td>grandchild of B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH</td>
<td>a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AX</td>
<td>a mysterious male person, or one of unusual character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BX</td>
<td>a mysterious male person, or one of unusual character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>an inanimate object, an object of mystery, and uncertain quantity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** BR-A, BR-B, SR-A, SR-B, SN-A, SN-B, D-A, D-B, CN-A and CN-B may on occasion be merely BR, SR, SN, D, and CN

Where necessary to indicate a male friend of B, or a female friend of A, the symbols aB-2, bA-2 may be used. Likewise, bCN-A, female cousin of A; aCN-B, male cousin of B, bGCH-A, female grandchild of A, aCH, male child, etc.

X added to any character gives to the character a suggestion of mystery.
CONFLICT SITUATIONS

(50) BEING IMPELLED BY AN UNUSUAL MOTIVE TO ENGAGE IN CRAFTY ENTERPRISE

1

(a) (112) (117) (148) (656)
A, poor, is in love with wealthy and aristocratic B * A, poor, in love with wealthy B, pretends to be a man of wealth ** (187) (228) (233) (347a -*)

(b) (171) (734) (1106 - ch B to A) (1146)
A, of humble birth, falls in love with aristocratic B * A, of humble birth, in love with aristocratic B, pretends to be a man of high social standing ** (139) (153) (209) (1200)

(c) (918a) (926) (928a)
A, in love with B, finds that B considers him too perfect for married happiness * B considers her lover, A, too perfect for married happiness; so A simulates a “hard-boiled” character in order to prove that he is not so perfect as he seems ** (1167) (1170) (1216) (1227 a, b, c)

(d) (148) (149) (160)
A, elderly, is in love with youthful B * A, elderly, in love with youthful B, seeks to forward his love affair by simulating youth ** (40 a, b) (75b) (78) (97) (156) (330a)

(e) (59) (1146) (1175a)
A, a crook, outlaw, gambler, pretends to be an honest man in order to forward his love affair with B (280a, b, tr A & A-3) (318; 236; 267) (252a)

(f) (230) (1060) (1101)
A is in love with B, who is devoted to scientific pursuits * A, who knows nothing of the sciences, pretends to be engaged in scientific research ** (179a, b, c) (181 a, b, c)

(g) (234a -*) (1061) (1150)
A falls in love with romantic B * A, in love with romantic B, pretends to be a hero ** (234a -***) (1150; 851; 885a) (1227b, c)
(h) (43 -*) (101b) (898 -*)
A quarrels with his sweetheart, B, and fears he is losing her love * A, fearing he is losing the love of B, pretends to take poison with suicidal intent ** (249)(262a, b, c) (1461b)

2

(a) (949a) (954) (968)
A, a poor clerk, finances a “fling” in high society * A, a poor clerk financing a “fling” in high society, meets wealthy and aristocratic B (1146 ch A to B) (1187 ch A to B), and they fall in love ** (1461a ch A to B) (146a, c)

(b) (1146) (1175a) (1197)
A, a fugitive from the law and using a fictitious name, falls in love with B * A, craftily engaged in a secret enterprise, falls in love with B (1146 ch A to B) (1169 ch A to B) who has also embarked upon a crafty enterprise ** (91) (224) (233) (876a)

(c) (232) (420) (818b)
A, one of the “idle rich,” gratifies his love of adventure by frequenting the slums in the character of a city “tough” * A, disguised as a city “tough,” meets B, and they fall in love ** (114) (220) (358)

(d) (818a) (1197) (1198)
A is mistaken by B for A-8. B has corresponded with A-8 but has never seen him * A, falling in love with B, pretends that he is A-8 ** (82a) (97) (822)

(e) (1170) (1329)
B, wealthy, devotes much time to settlement work; and, in carrying out her philanthropic enterprises, she pretends to be a shop girl * B, while posing as a shop girl, meets A, and they fall in love ** (115) (336b) (1461a ch A to B; 358 **-***)

(f) (916) (974)
B, poor and humble but romantic, acquires unexpectedly a small sum of money; thus financed, she pretends for a time to be wealthy and aristocratic * B, poor and humble but pretending to be wealthy and aristocratic, meets rich and influential A (1163c) and they fall in love ** (117) (152a)

(g) (850a) (1159 ch A-4 to A)
B, a maid, uses the wardrobe of her wealthy mistress and pretends to be a distinguished personage * B, poor but pretending to be wealthy and aristocratic, meets rich and influential A (1148a) and they fall in love ** (885a) (1060)

(h) (876a) (1244a)
B, a criminal, assumes an alias and makes use of stolen funds in evading the law * B, a criminal in disguise, meets A (1169) (1175a) (1181) and they fall in love ** (97) (1208)