

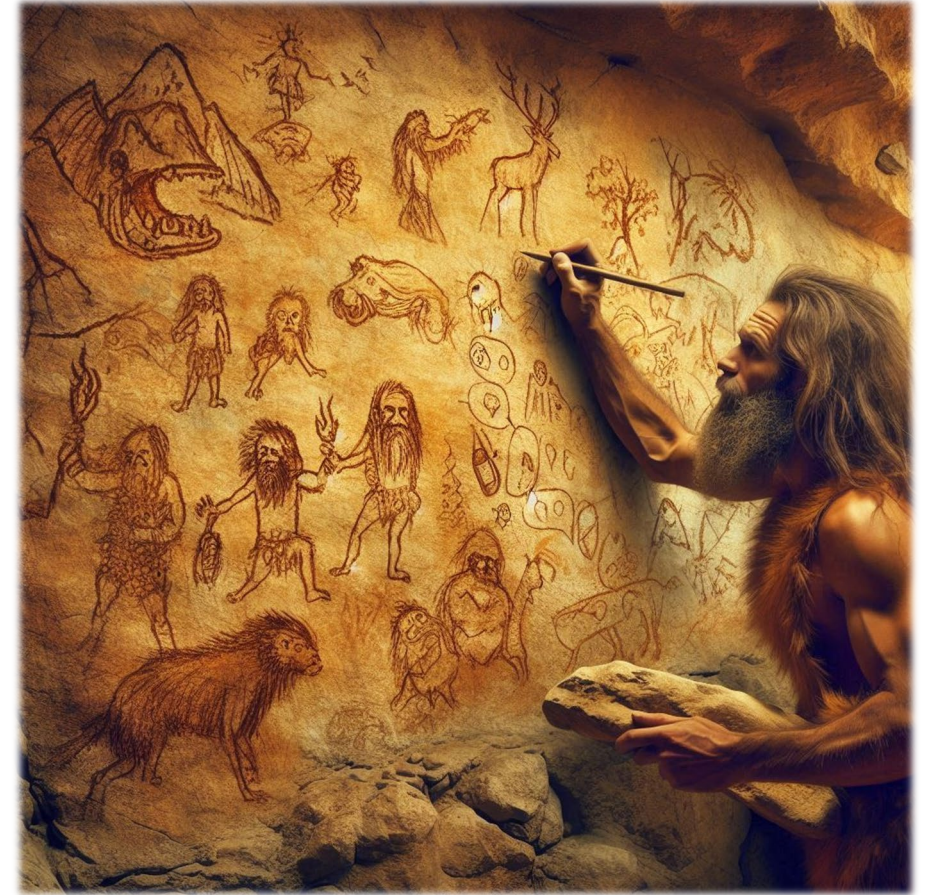
Steal Like an Artist: Learning from Other Author's Novels

T.O. Paine

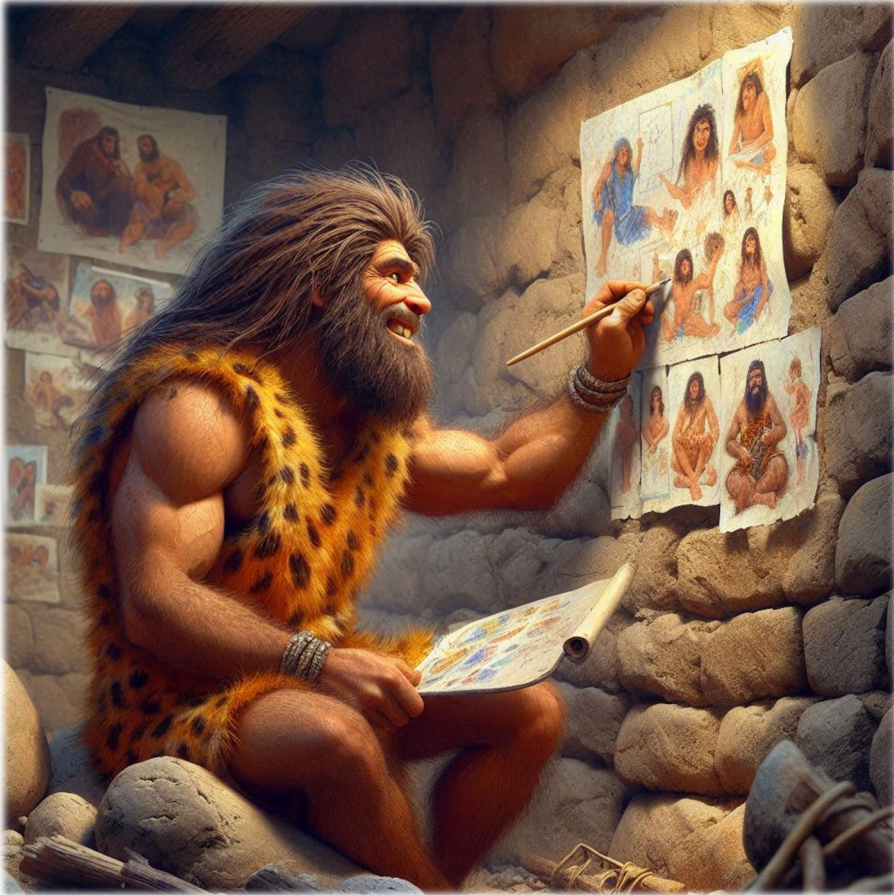
Congratulations! You are a storyteller!

Zog write hunting thriller.

Zog great storyteller.



But, are you a “**great**” storyteller?



Ogg try write romantasy.

Ogg bad storyteller.

What makes a novel a bestseller?

Plot

Character

Action

Setting

Conflict

Theme

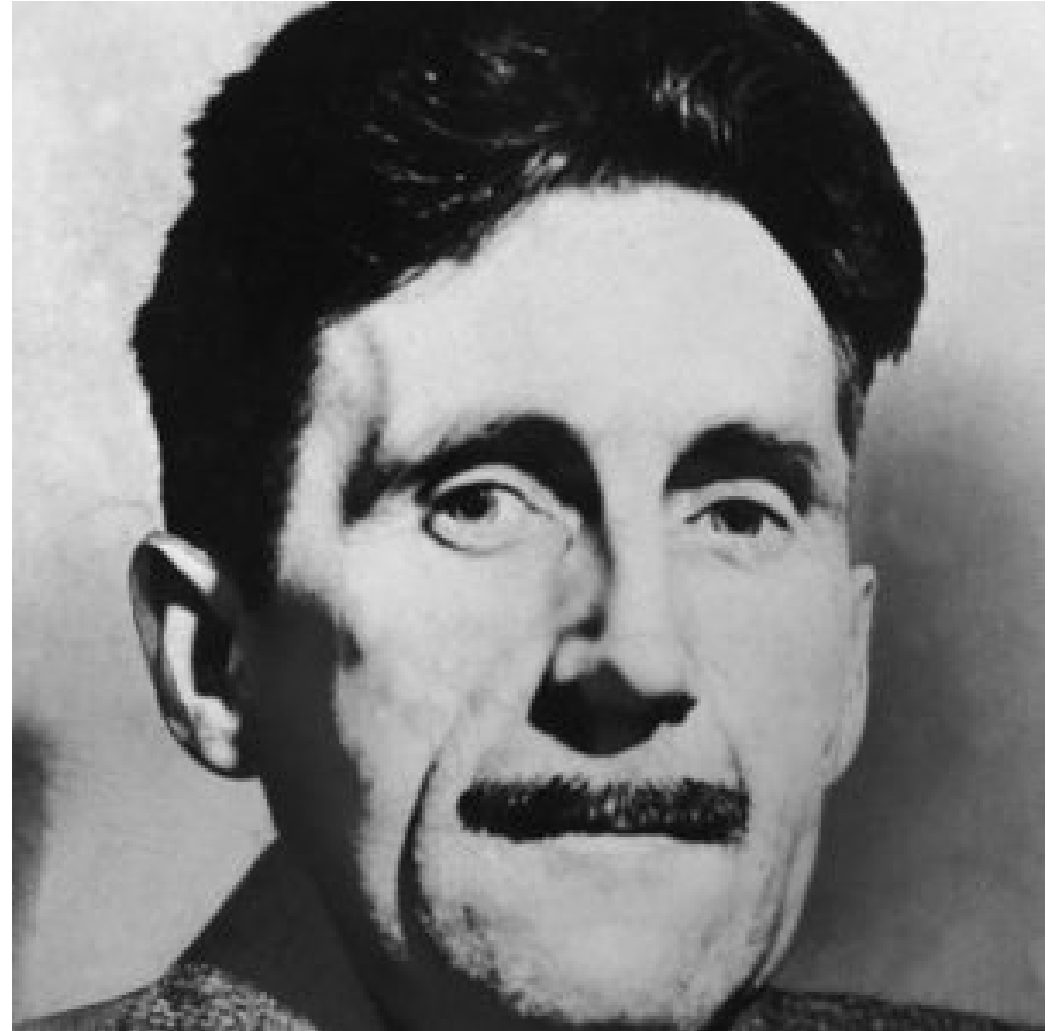
Simple, right?



What makes a novel a bestseller?

“Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long bout with some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand.”

- George Orwell



What makes a great story?

“Writing a book is a horrible, exhausting struggle, like a long march with some painful minor setbacks. One could never undertake such a thing if one were not driven on by some desire to which one can neither resist nor understand.”

WORK

- George Orwell



With 30,000 years of storytelling . . .

Nothing is original

“What is originality?
Undetected plagiarism.”

—William Ralph Inge

“I steal from every single movie ever made. I love it—if my work has anything it's that I'm taking this from this and that from that and mixing them together... I steal from everything. Great artists steal, they don't do homages.”

—Quentin Tarantino



Steps to Steal Like an Artist



1) Brainstorm Questions

2) Choose A Best Seller

3) Record Chapter Information

4) Analyze Chapter Information

5) Answer Questions

1) Brainstorm Questions

How many POVs can I have?

Do I need to end every chapter with a cliff hanger?

How often should I repeat an important event?

How should I structure the novel?

How many subplots do I need?

How should I structure the chapters?



2) Choose a Best Seller



- A novel you read and transported you into a fictive state
- Strongly in your genre and writing style
- Has proven mass appeal in sales, social media, and other ways

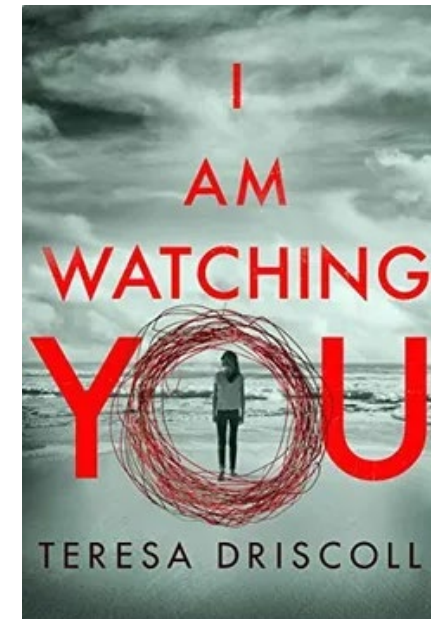


2) Choose a Best Seller



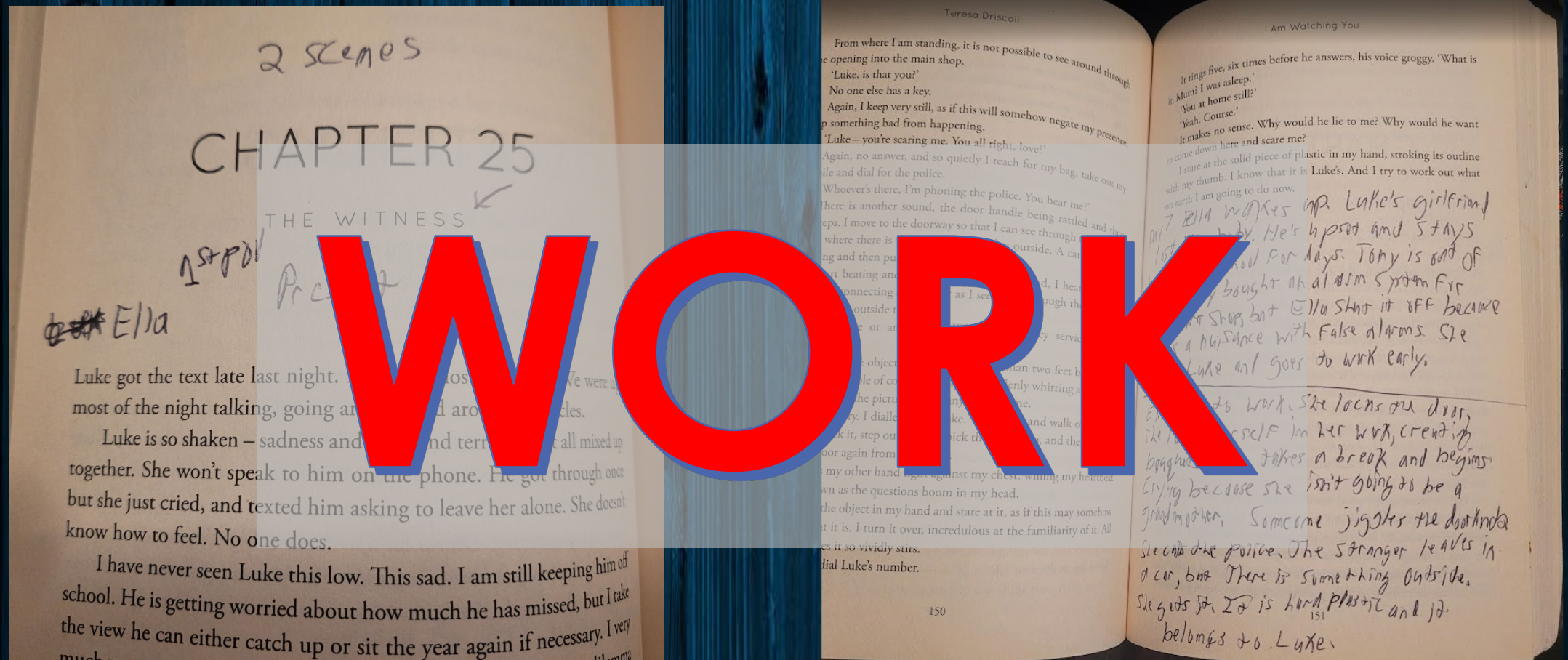
I AM WATCHING YOU

- Over one million copies sold
- Kindle No. 1 in the UK, US and Australia
- 139,591 Global Ratings with 4.2 out of 5 Stars on Amazon



3) Record Chapter Information

Facts	Summary

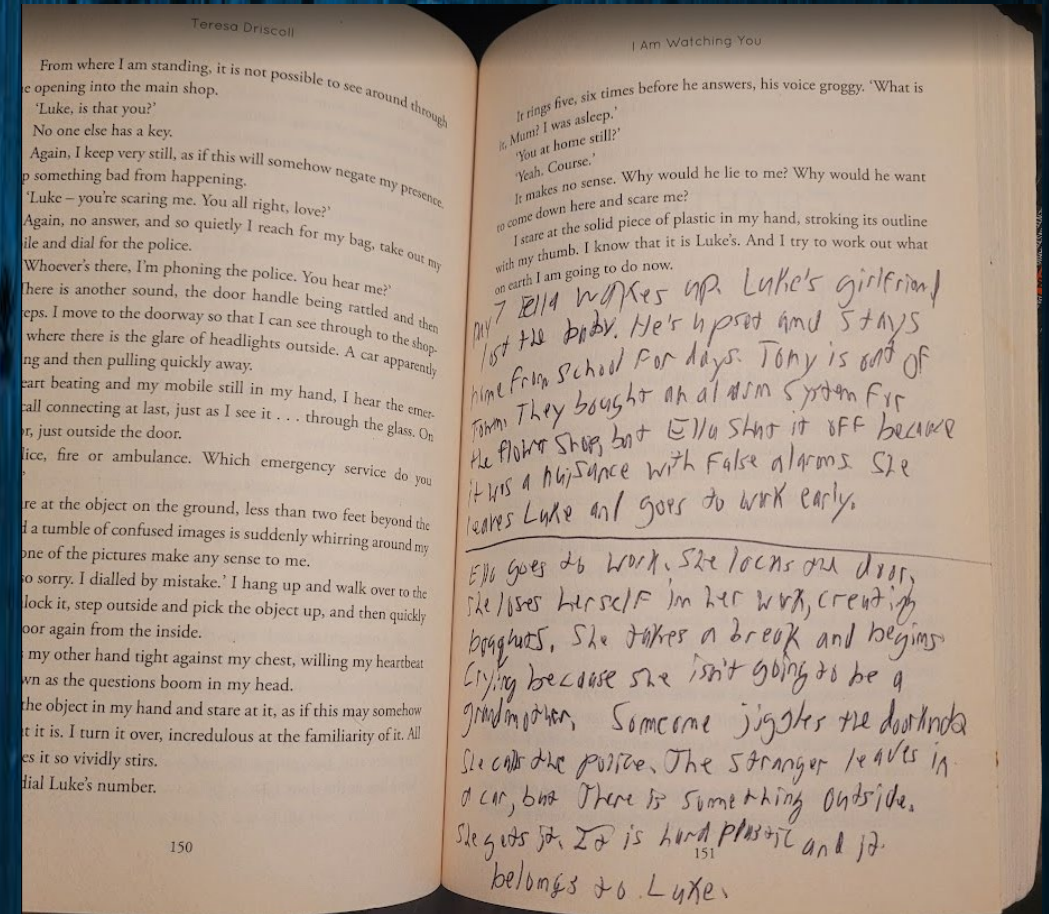
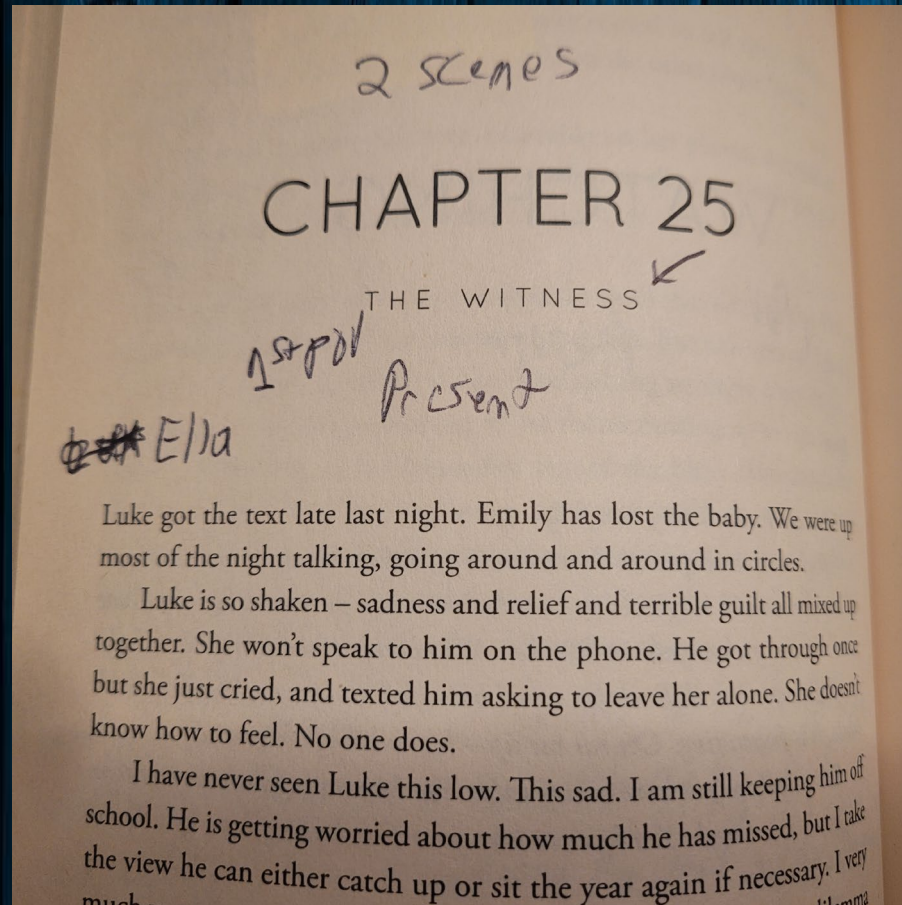


Chapter Beginning

Chapter End

3) Record Chapter Information

Facts	Summary
-------	---------



Chapter Beginning

Chapter End

3) Record Chapter Information

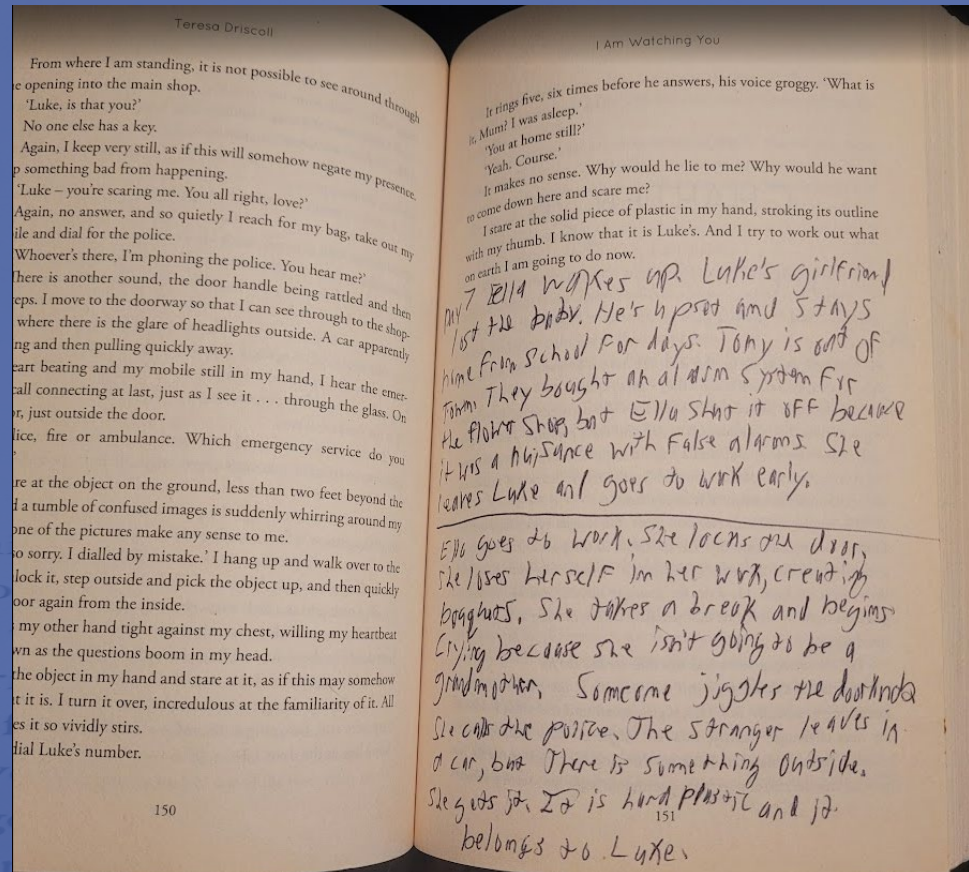
Facts

Point-of-View: *1st Person*
Tense: *Present*
Subheading: *The Witness*
POV Character: *Ella*



3) Record Chapter Information

Summary



3) Record Chapter Information

Summary

MORE

CHAPTER EIGHT - FIVE The Witness - Ella 1st POV

DAY 7 Ella wakes up. Luke's girlfriend lost the baby. He's upset and stays home from school for days. Tony is out of town. They bought an alarm system for the flower shop, but Ella shut it off because it was a nuisance with false alarms. She leaves Luke and goes to work early in the morning

Synopsis

DAY 7 Ella wakes up. Luke's girlfriend lost the baby. He's upset and stays home from school for days. Tony is out of town. They bought an alarm system for the flower shop, but Ella shut it off because it was a nuisance with false alarms. She leaves Luke and goes to work early.

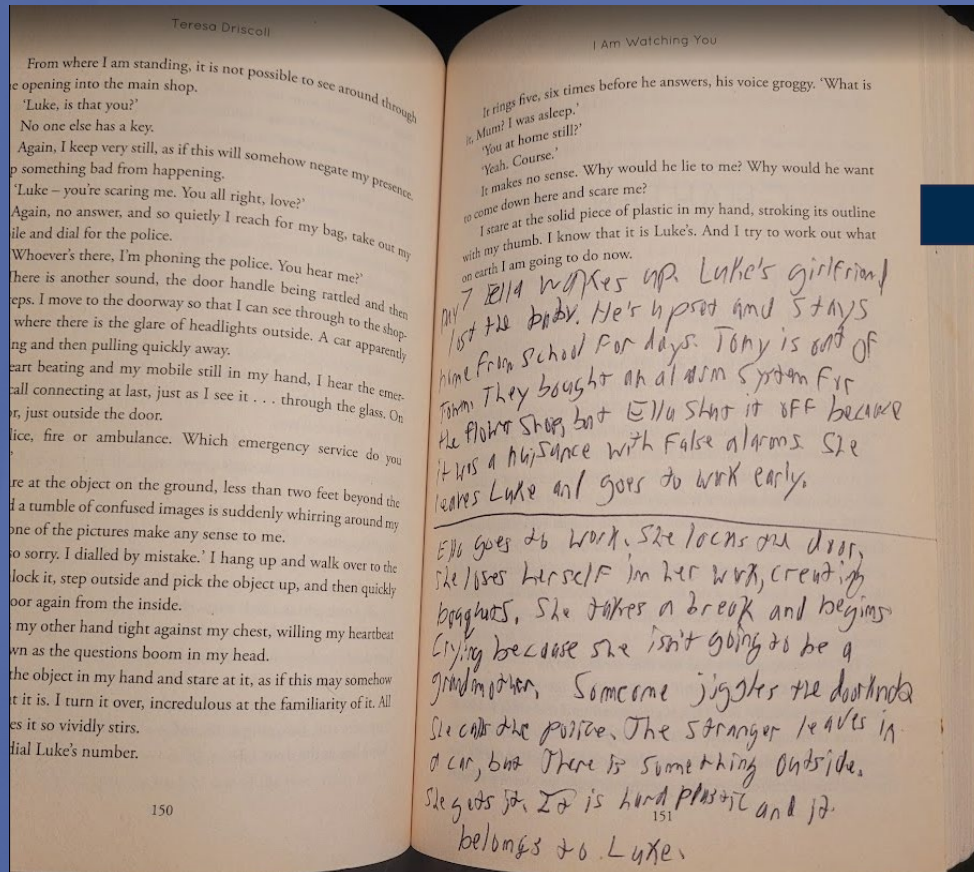
E-33

one left toy hanging in the shop

DAY 7 Ella wakes up. Luke's girlfriend lost the baby. He's upset and stays home from school for days. Tony is out of town. They bought an alarm system for the flower shop, but Ella shut it off because it was a nuisance with false alarms. She leaves Luke and goes to work early. She loses herself in her work, creating a bouquet. She begins crying because she isn't going to be a mother. She calls the police. The stranger leaves in a car, but she doesn't see it. It is a hard plastic toy, and she recognizes it below Luke's car.

3) Record Chapter Information

Summary



CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-32

Luke lost the baby, Tony is out of town, Ella goes alone to the flower shop early in the morning

Synopsis

DAY 7 Ella wakes up. Luke's girlfriend lost the baby. He's upset and stays home from school for days. Tony is out of town. They bought an alarm system for the flower shop, but Ella shut it off because it was a nuisance with false alarms. She leaves Luke and goes to work early.

SCENE-33

Someone leave a toy belonging to Luke outside Ella's flower shop

Synopsis

DAY 7 Ella goes to work. She locks the door. She loses herself in her work, creating bouquets for a wedding. She take a break and begins crying because she isn't going to be a grandmother. Someone jiggles the doorknob. She calls the police. The stranger leaves in a car, but there is something outside. She gets it. It is a hard plastic and it belongs to Luke.

3) Record Chapter Information

Summary – Insert Keywords

PLOT ESCALATES

SUBPLOT

HOOK

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-17

**** PLOT ESCALATES** Sarah reflects on becoming friends with Anna, her dad touching her inappropriately, and her dad texting the night Anna disappeared.

Synopsis

DAY 3 Sarah is in the hospital, reflecting. Her parents are divorced. She wants to see her older sister, Lily. She doesn't want to see her father. She remembers making friends with Anna in grade school. They became good friends. Anna's house was much nicer than Sarah's, so they played there all the time. Anna included her in everything. When she got her period, her father asked to see her vagina to know if the tampon would fit. She let him do it. It was wrong. She has never told anyone about that. After the divorce, she refused to go see him. He always talked about how beautiful Anna was. **HOOK** - Sarah hasn't told anyone about what happened to Anna in the club the night Anna disappeared. She also didn't tell anyone that her dad texted her that night.

Remember These Questions?

How often should I repeat an important event?

Do I need to end every chapter with a cliff hanger?

How should I structure the novel?

How should I structure the chapters?

How many POVs can I have?

How many subplots do I need?



4) Analyze Chapter Information

How often should I repeat an important event?

Search for specific words: “missing”

Navigation

missing

Result 1 of 6

Headings Pages **Results**

INCIDENT - Introduce Protagonist & Anna goes missing

on TV shows the other girl, Anna, has gone missing.

DAY 2 Henry is the father of the missing girl, Anna. He is distraught. He feels guilty for not

talking to two ex-cons on a train. Anna is missing and Sarah is being questioned. Henry is

thinks about the anniversary of Anna going missing. She remembers that her name was somehow

mom called the police and reported her missing. Lily call her mom to tell her that Sarah is

CHAPTER ONE - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-1

INCITING INCIDENT - Introduce Protagonist & Anna goes missing

Synopsis

DAY 1 & 2 Ella is riding on a train. She is 40 something. She watches two young girls. Two guys with matching black bags get o. They flirt with the girls. Ella thinks it's sweet. Then, the guys say they just got out of jail. Ella immediately wants to worn the girls' parents. She plans to call the girls parents. She follows one of the girls, Sarah, and a guy, planning to warn the girl that she will call her parents. The girl and guy go into the bathroom on the train and have sex. ella is upset. "I thought they were good girls." She doesn't call the parents. The train arrives, and Ella goes to her hotel room. She misses Tony. She wakes up the next day and remembers getting drunk, and she remembers not calling the girls' parents. HOOK - A news report on TV shows the other girl, Anna, has gone missing.

CHAPTER TWO - The Father - Henry 3rd POV

SCENE-2

Henry feels guilty over Anna and her disappearance

Synopsis

DAY 2 Henry is the father of the missing girl, Anna. He is distraught. He feels guilty for not camping with her when she was younger. He listens to his wife try and make Anna's favorite dessert, plum slices. She drops pans. A womand and a man arrive in a cop car. They tell Henry and his wife the girls went to a club. They say a "witness" saw the girls talking to two ex-cons on a train. Anna is missing and Sarah is being questioned. Henry is confused. He wants to go to London where his daughter was last seen. He is feeling guilty again because he was in favor of Anna going on the trip while his wife was against it.

Occurrences:

6

Chapters:

1, 2, 4, 27

Related To:

“Anna missing”

4) Analyze Chapter Information

Do I need to end every chapter with a cliff hanger?

Search for Keyword: HOOK

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-17

**** PLOT ESCALATES Sarah reflects on becoming friends with Anna, her dad touching her inappropriately, and her dad texting the night Anna disappeared.**

Synopsis

DAY 3 Sarah is in the hospital, reflecting. Her parents are divorced. She wants to see her older sister, Lily. She doesn't want to see her father. She remembers making friends with Anna in grade school. They became good friends. Anna's house was much nicers than Sarah's, so they played there all the time. Anna included her in everything. When she got her period, her father asked to see her vagina to know if the tampon would fit. She let him do it. It was wrong. She has never told anyone about that. After the divorce, she refused to go see him. He always talked about how beautiful Anna was. **HOOK** - Sarah hasn't told anyone about what happened to Anna in the club the night Anna disappeared. She also didn't tell anyone that her dad texted her that night.

After the divorce, she refused to go see him. He always talked about how beautiful Anna was. **HOOK** - Sarah hasn't told anyone about what happened to Anna in the club the night Anna disappeared. She also

4) Analyze Chapter Information

How should I structure the novel?

Search for Keyword: PLOT ESCALATES

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-17

**** PLOT ESCALATES Sarah reflects on becoming friends with Anna, her dad touching her inappropriately, and her dad texting the night Anna disappeared.**

Synopsis

DAY 3 Sarah is in the hospital, reflecting. Her parents are divorced. She wants to see her older sister, Lily. She doesn't want to see her father. She remembers making friends with Anna in grade school. They became good friends. Anna's house was much nicers than Sarah's, so they played there all the time. Anna included her in everything. When she got her period, her father asked to see her vagina to know if the tampon would fit. She let him do it. It was wrong. She has never told anyone about that. After the divorce, she refused to go see him. He always talked about how beautiful Anna was. **HOOK** - Sarah hasn't told anyone about what happened to Anna in the club the night Anna disappeared. She also didn't tell anyone that her dad texted her that night.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - The Friend

SCENE-17

**** PLOT ESCALATES Sarah reflects on becoming friends with Anna, her dad touching her inappropriately, and her dad texting the night Anna disappeared.**

4) Analyze Chapter Information

How should I structure the novel?

MORE

CHAPTER ONE - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-1
INCITING INCIDENT - Introduce Protagonist & Antagonist

CHAPTER TWO - The Father - Henry 3rd POV

SCENE-2
Henry feels guilty over Anna and her disappearance

CHAPTER THREE - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-3
Sarah is questioned by the police

CHAPTER FOUR - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-4
Ella was harassed by post cards and the public, and she was called a liar by Sarah

CHAPTER FIVE - The Father - Henry 3rd POV

SCENE-5
Airing Anna's birthday video on TV at Henry's house, Henry is put in a bad position

CHAPTER SIX - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-6
MEETING MENTOR Ella talks to Matthew. She is given the post cards

CHAPTER SEVEN - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-7
Sarah attempts suicide. She lied to the police last year

CHAPTER EIGHT - The Private Investigator - Matthew 3rd POV

SCENE-8
Matthew's place in the story provided. His wife is pregnant, he is a detective, and he is a friend of Sarah's
SCENE-9
Matthew tells Mrs Ballard that Ella is getting Hate Mail

WORK

4) Analyze Chapter Information

How should I structure the novel?

CHAPTER ONE - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-1

INCITING INCIDENT - Introduce Protagonist & Anna goes missing

CHAPTER TWO - The Father - Henry 3rd POV

SCENE-2

Henry feels guilty over Anna and her disappearance

CHAPTER THREE - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-3

Sarah is questioned by the police

CHAPTER FOUR - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-4

Ella was **harrased** by post cards and the public, and she was called a liar by Sarah

CHAPTER FIVE - The Father - Henry 3rd POV

SCENE-5

Airing Anna's birthday video on TV at Henry's house, Jenny is pulling away

CHAPTER SIX - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-6

MEETING MENTOR Ella talks to Matthew. She thinks Barbara is sending the post cards

CHAPTER SEVEN - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-7

Sarah attempts suicide. She lied to the police last year.

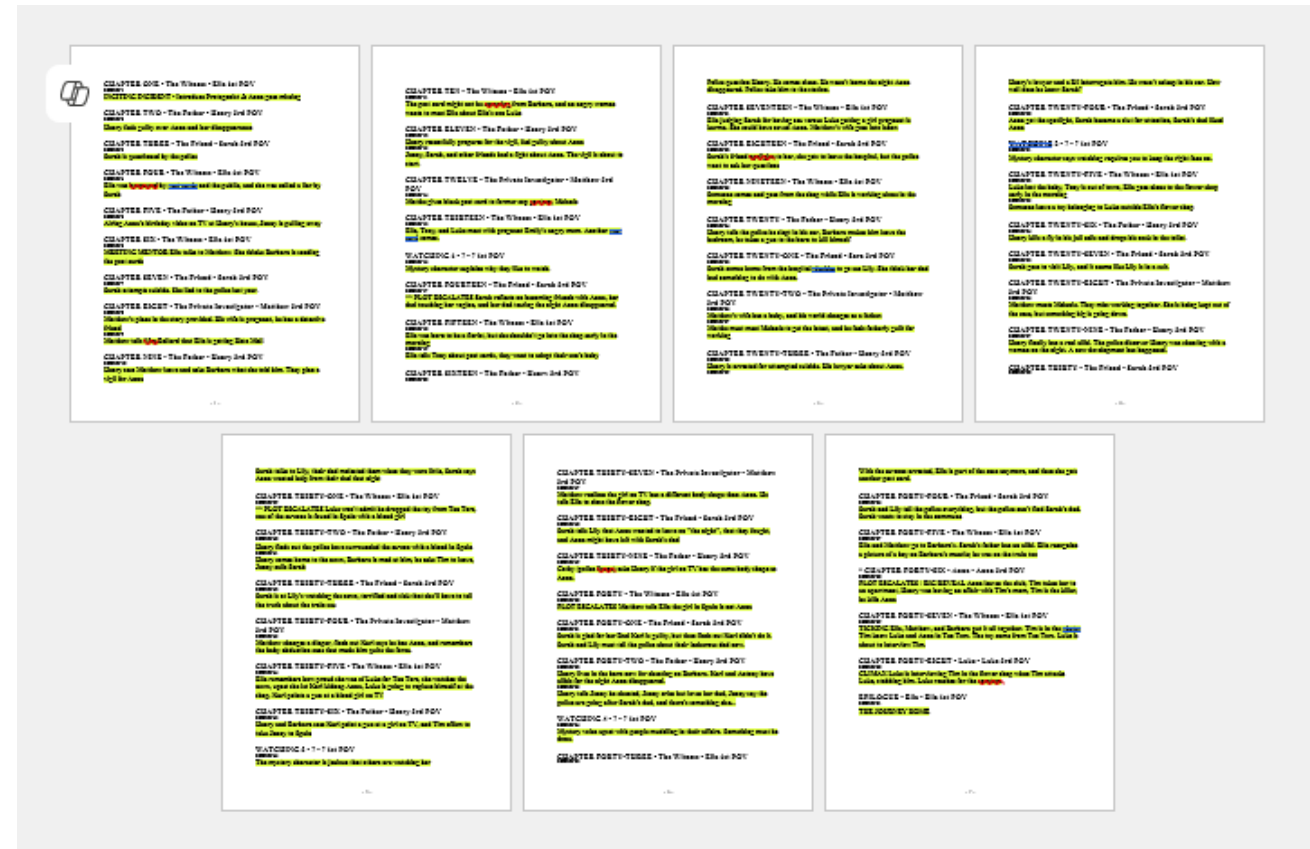
CHAPTER EIGHT - The Private Investigator - Matthew 3rd POV

SCENE-8

Matthew's place in the story provided. His wife is pregnant, he has a detective friend

SCENE-9

Matthew tells Mrs Ballard that Ella is getting Hate Mail



4) Analyze Chapter Information

How should I structure the novel?

Thriller Hero's Journey

Hitchcock Suspense

Multi-POV Weave

The Fichtean Curve

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-55

With the ex-cons arrested, Ella is part of the case anymore, and then she gets another post card.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR - The Friend - Sarah 3rd POV

SCENE-56

Sarah and Lily tell the police everything, but the police can't find Sarah's dad. Sarah wants to stay in the commune

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-57

Ella and Matthew go to Barbara's. Sarah's father has an alibi. Ella recognize a picture of a boy on Barbara's mantle; he was on the train too

* CHAPTER FORTY-SIX - Anna - Anna 3rd POV

SCENE-58

PLOT ESCALATES / BIG REVEAL Anna leaves the club, Tim takes her to an apartment, Henry was having an affair with Tim's mom, Tim is the killer, he kills Anna

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN - The Witness - Ella 1st POV

SCENE-59

TICKING Ella, Matthew, and Barbara put it all together. Tim is in the photo, Tim knew Luke and Anna in Ten Tors. The toy came from Ten Tors. Luke is about to interview Tim.

4) Analyze Chapter Information

How should I structure the chapters?

Three-Act Structure (mini)

Hitchcock's Suspense Sandwich

Scene - Sequel



Action – Reaction – Stakes

Scene:

Goal

Conflict

Disaster

Sequel:

Reaction

Dilemma

Decision

5) Answer Questions

How many subplots can I have? **4**

How many POVs can I have? **5**

How often should I repeat an important event? **19**

Do I need to end every chapter with a cliff hanger? **No**

How should I structure the novel? **Multi-POV Weave**

How should I structure the chapters? **Scene - Sequel**



How to Steal Like an Artist Wrap-up

WORK

Search for Keywords

Major Plot Points
& Reversals



George Orwell

CHAPTER FOURTEEN - The I
SCENE-17
** PLOT ESCALATES Sarah reflects on becoming friends with
dad touching her inappropriately, and her dad texting the night A
disappeared.

CHAPTER
SCENE-17
** PLOT ESC
dad touching I
disappeared.

Nothing is original

"What is originality?
Undetected plagiarism."
-William Ralph Inge

"I steal from every single movie ever

STEAL
LIKE AN
ARTIST



...ter with a cliff hanger? No

...important event? 19

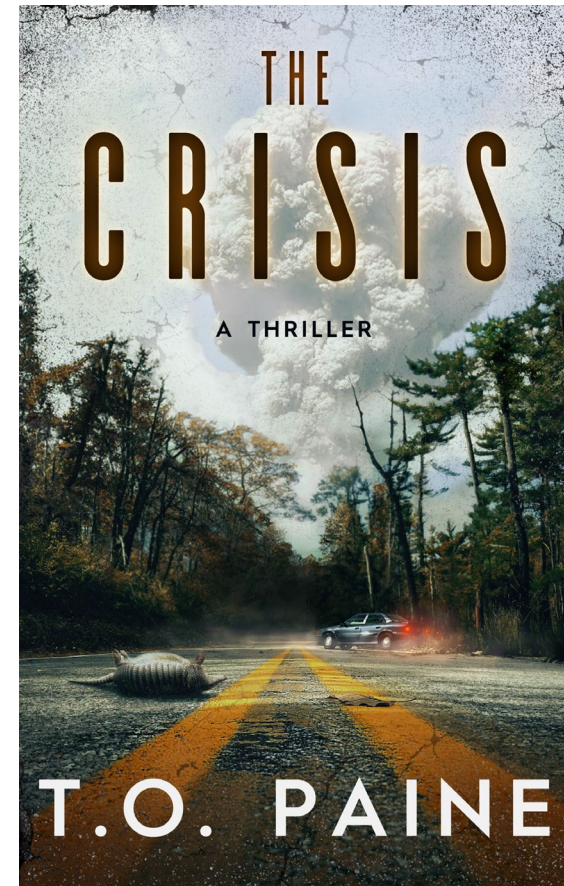
...enes? Multi-POV

ave? 4



Copyright © 2025 T.O. Paine

Nothing is original

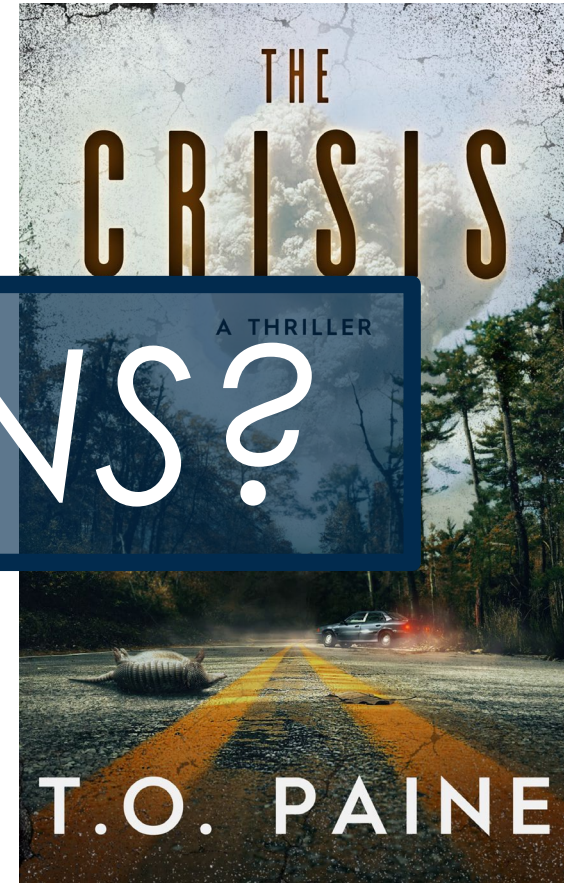


Copyright © 2025 T.O. Paine

Nothing is original



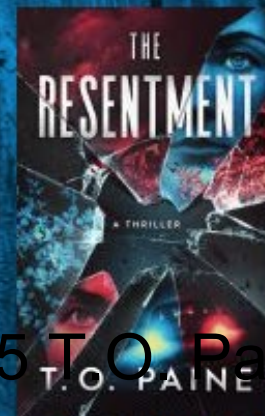
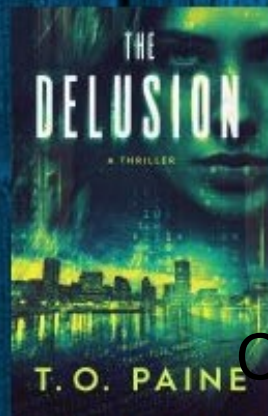
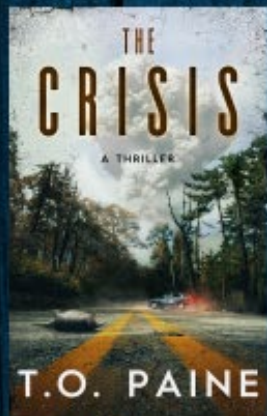
QUESTIONS?



Copyright © 2025 T.O. Paine

Thank You

- T.O Paine
- topaine@topaine.com
- www.topaine.com



Copyright © 2025 T.O. Paine