

WORKING TITLE

GENRE / SUBGENRE

LOGLINE (one sentence — protagonist, goal, obstacle, stakes)

PREMISE the elevator paragraph

THEMES what the story is really about — and the counter-argument it takes seriously

VOICE & CRAFT

POV & TENSE

tone / comps (x meets y)

target length / # chapters

PROMISES TO THE READER

what the opening promises the ending must pay off

SERIES CONTEXT standalone? book N of M? what must this volume set up or resolve?

SETTING OVERVIEW where and when — scale, era, tech level, what makes it distinct

KEY LOCATIONS

LOCATION	WHAT IT IS / WHY IT MATTERS	FIRST SEEN CH.	SIGNATURE SENSORY DETAIL
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CULTURE & DAILY LIFE money, food, customs, taboos, who holds power, what ordinary life feels like

HISTORY THAT STILL MATTERS only the past events that shape the present story

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENED	HOW IT ECHOES IN THE STORY NOW
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SYSTEM NAME

SOURCE OF POWER

COSTS & LIMITS

what using power costs; hard ceilings

WHAT IT CANNOT DO

the 'no' list — this is where tension lives

PROGRESSION LADDER

ranks, realms, or tiers from bottom to top

RANK / REALM

HOW YOU ADVANCE (THE GATE)

WHAT IT UNLOCKS

WHO'S HERE (BENCH-MARKS)

LOOPHOLES & EXCEPTIONS

cheats, forbidden arts, unique abilities — and the price of each

SPINE one line per beat; add the chapter once you know it

HOOK / OPENING IMAGE	the first promise
INCITING INCIDENT	the door opens — ch.
FIRST TURN / POINT OF NO RETURN	ch.
MIDPOINT REVERSAL	everything reframes — ch.
DARKEST MOMENT	ch.
CLIMAX	the promise paid — ch.
RESOLUTION / FINAL IMAGE	what changed for good

SUBPLOTS

SUBPLOT	WHO CARRIES IT	WHERE IT TOUCHES THE MAIN PLOT	RESOLVES CH.

SETUPS & PAYOFFS track every gun on the mantel

SETUP (WHAT'S PLANTED)	CH.	PAYOFF (HOW IT FIRES)	CH.

STORY TIMELINE in-world date or elapsed time — catches the 'wait, was that only two days?' bugs

IN-WORLD TIME	EVENT	CHAPTER(S)	WHO'S ON STAGE	SEASON / WEATHER

ELAPSED-TIME CHECKPOINTS total time passed by each act — sanity anchors

BY END OF ACT I	BY MIDPOINT	BY THE END
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FACTIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

FACTION	WHAT THEY WANT	LED BY	STANCE TOWARD HERO	DOES IT SHIFT? WHEN?

CAST INDEX one line each — deep dives live on the character sheets

NAME	ROLE	ONE-LINE ESSENCE	SHEET #	FIRST CH.

GLOSSARY names, terms, spells — with your chosen spelling, capitalization, and italics

TERM (EXACT STYLING)	WHAT IT MEANS	FIRST USED CH.

HARD CANON facts that must never drift: eye colors, death dates, oaths, distances, prices

FACT	ESTABLISHED WHERE (CH. / SCENE)

OPEN QUESTIONS things you haven't decided yet — so you don't accidentally decide them twice