

Rachelle
Paige
Campbell

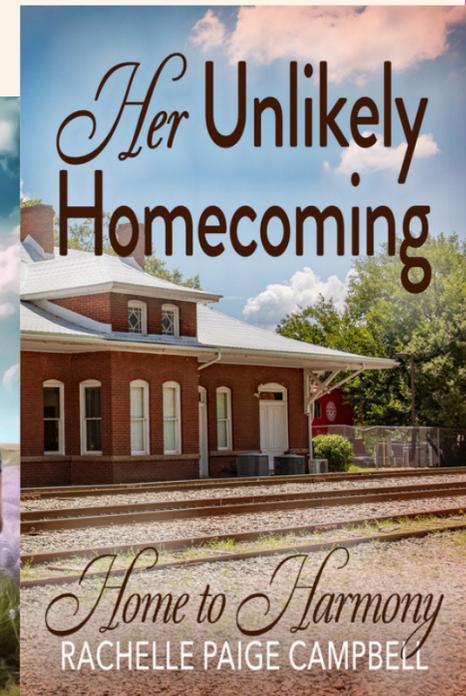
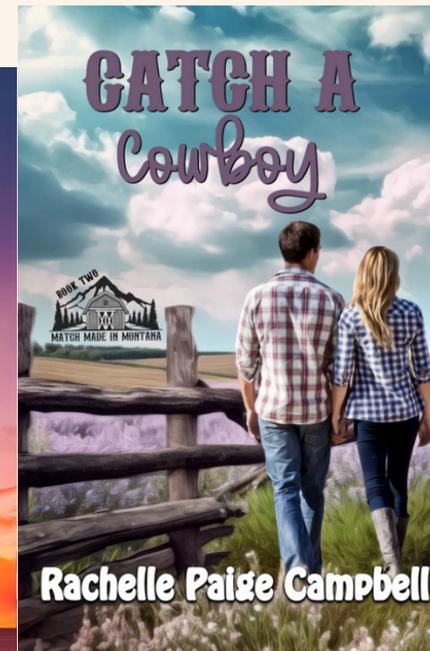
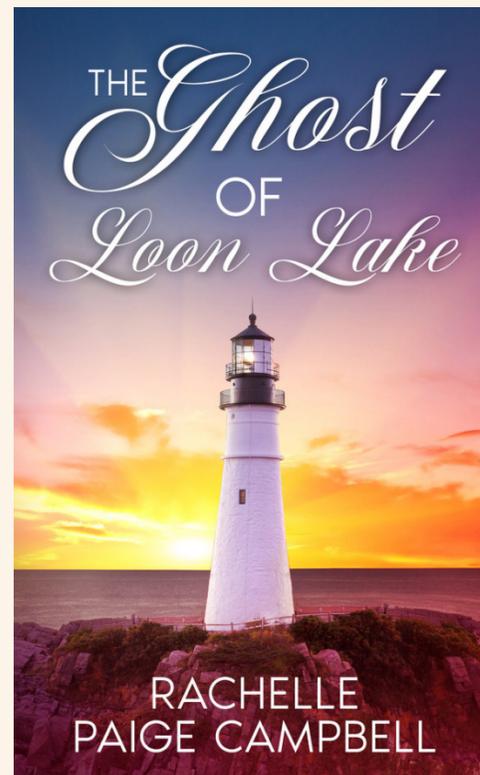
Conflict

More than kiss and make-up



WHO I AM?

- Bestselling author of 13 (and counting) contemporary and Christian contemporary romances
- Published with The Wild Rose Press, Anaiah Press, Champagne Books, Rowan Prose Publishing, and Harbor Lane Books
- Member of Chicago North Romance Writers and Faith Hope & Love Christian Writers





DISCLAIMER



Since 2016, I've taken countless workshops, attended conferences, participated in mastermind sessions, and continued to learn my craft. I'm not the first person to say any of what you'll hear in this discussion today. I've distilled everything I've learned into my own method. Take what works for you (and your process) and leave the rest. Don't be discouraged or compare yourself to anyone else.

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What conflict isn't and
what it is

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01

GMC: THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Goal Motivation Conflict

Chapter 1

GMC OVERVIEW

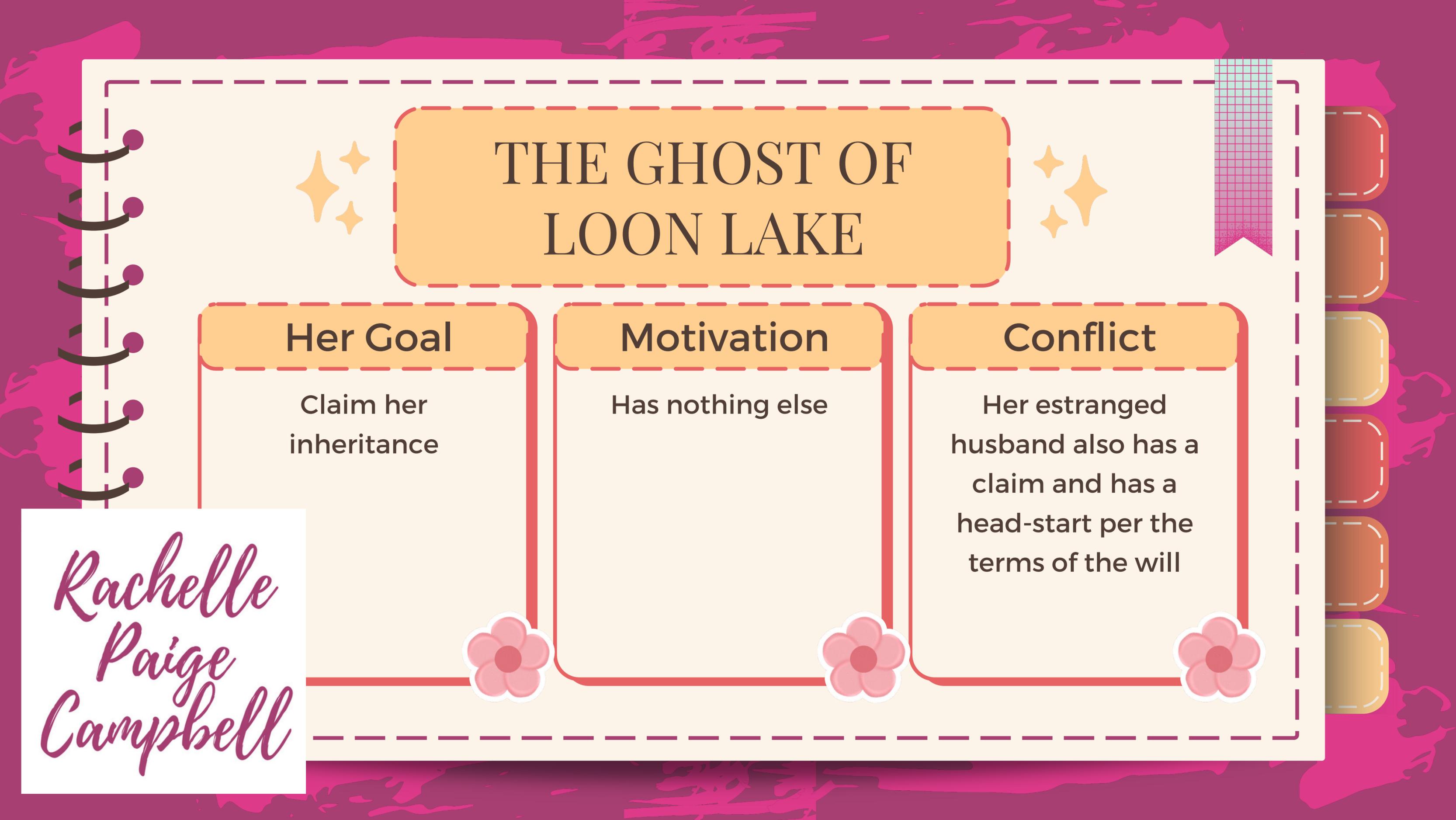
G: What does the character want?

M: Why do they want this?

C: What is standing in their way?

Every POV character needs these 3 things. If you're writing a single POV, it's still helpful to know





THE GHOST OF LOON LAKE

Her Goal

Claim her inheritance

Motivation

Has nothing else

Conflict

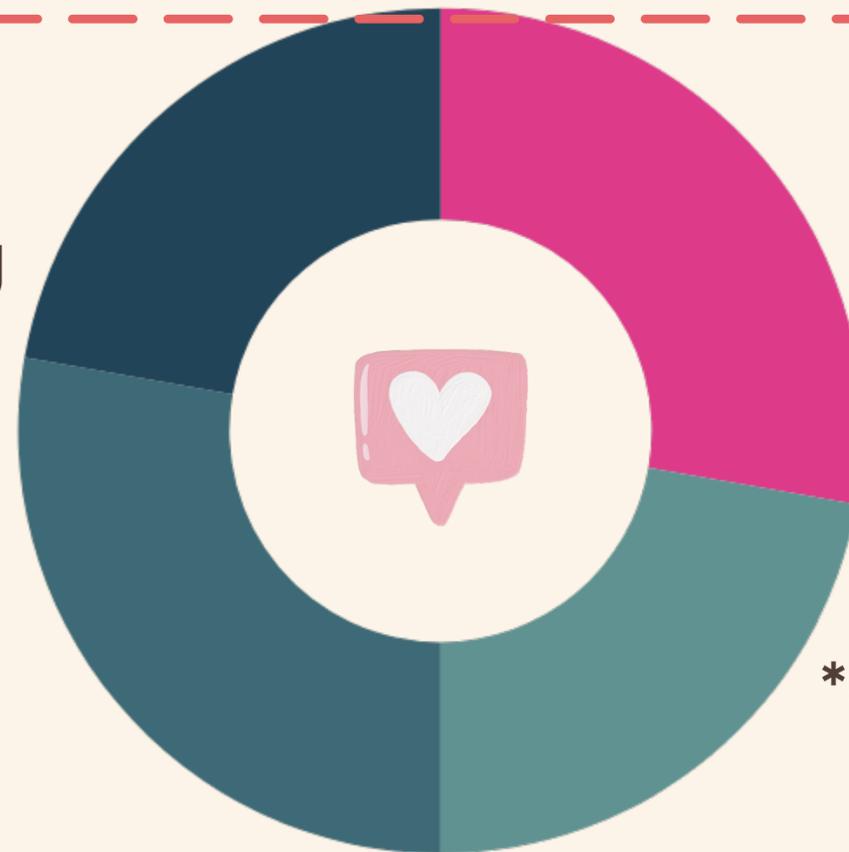
Her estranged husband also has a claim and has a head-start per the terms of the will

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02

WHAT IT ISN'T

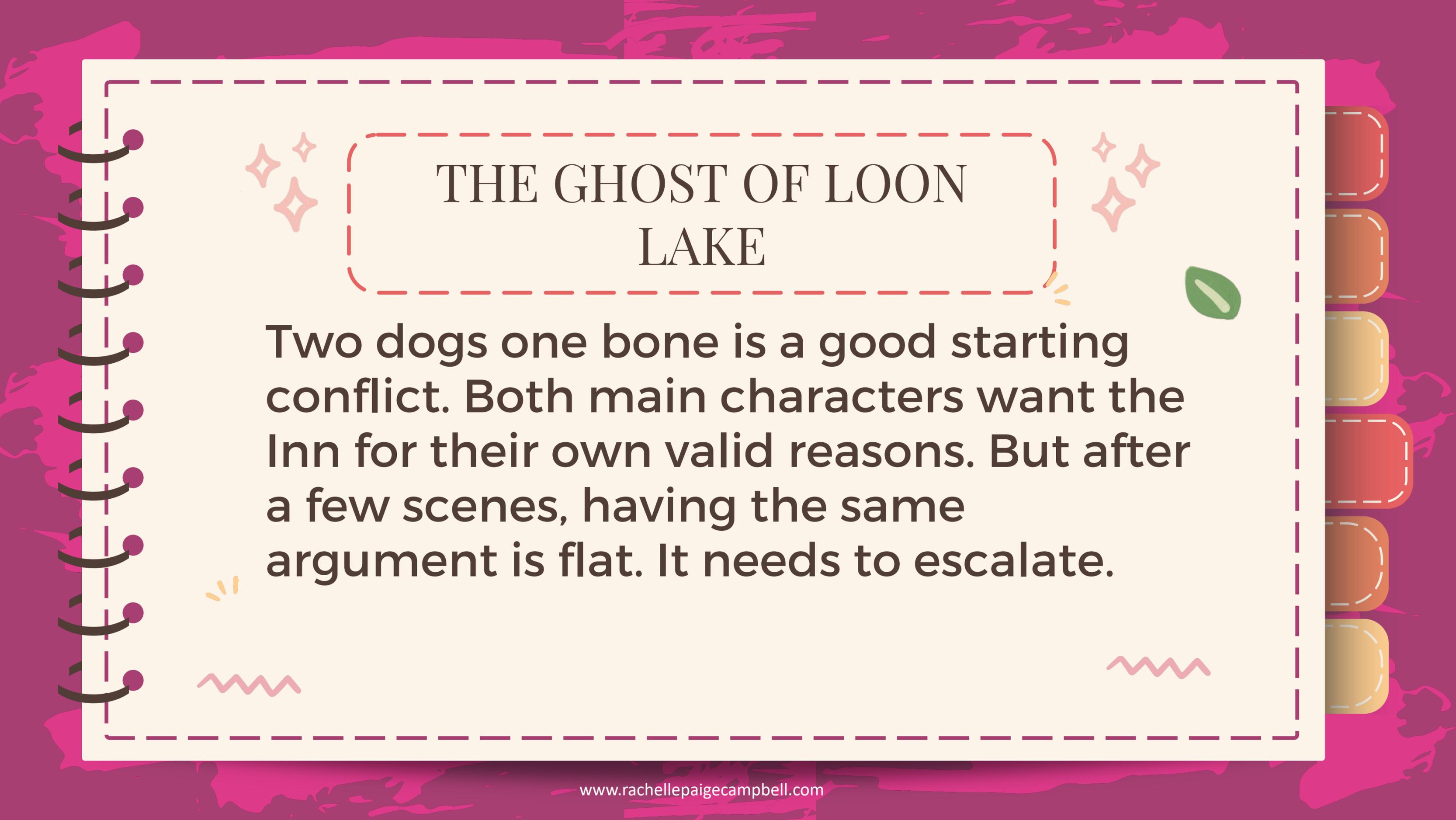
A
misunderstanding
that can be easily
resolved with a
conversation



A single fight or
the big break-up
scene

*quick resolutions before
another fight create an
episodic feeling for the
reader

Chapter 2



THE GHOST OF LOON LAKE

Two dogs one bone is a good starting conflict. Both main characters want the Inn for their own valid reasons. But after a few scenes, having the same argument is flat. It needs to escalate.

WHAT IT IS

ENOUGH TENSION TO SUSTAIN AN ENTIRE NOVEL LENGTH STORY

Your initial conflict is external (situational) and what STARTS the action of your story.

In romance, this is a great moment to use tropes like forced proximity, enemies to lovers, mistaken identity; essentially what is standing in the way of your characters reaching their goals.

Bonus points if you make the characters in direct conflict to each other; one has to lose so the other can win. Make these well-motivated so your reader can't choose!

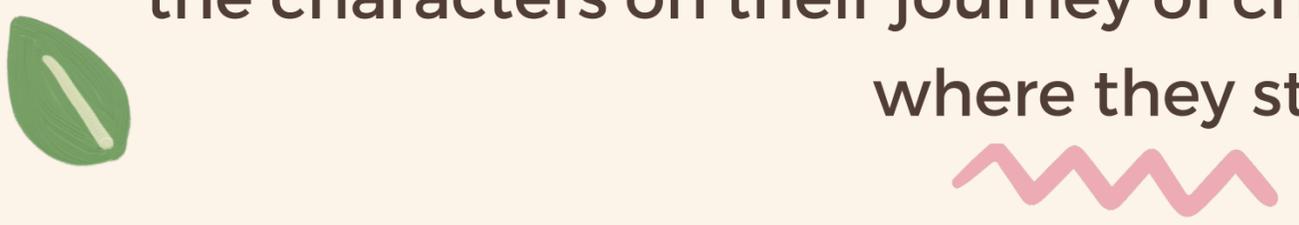
Make these 2 perfect for each other and standing in each other's way.



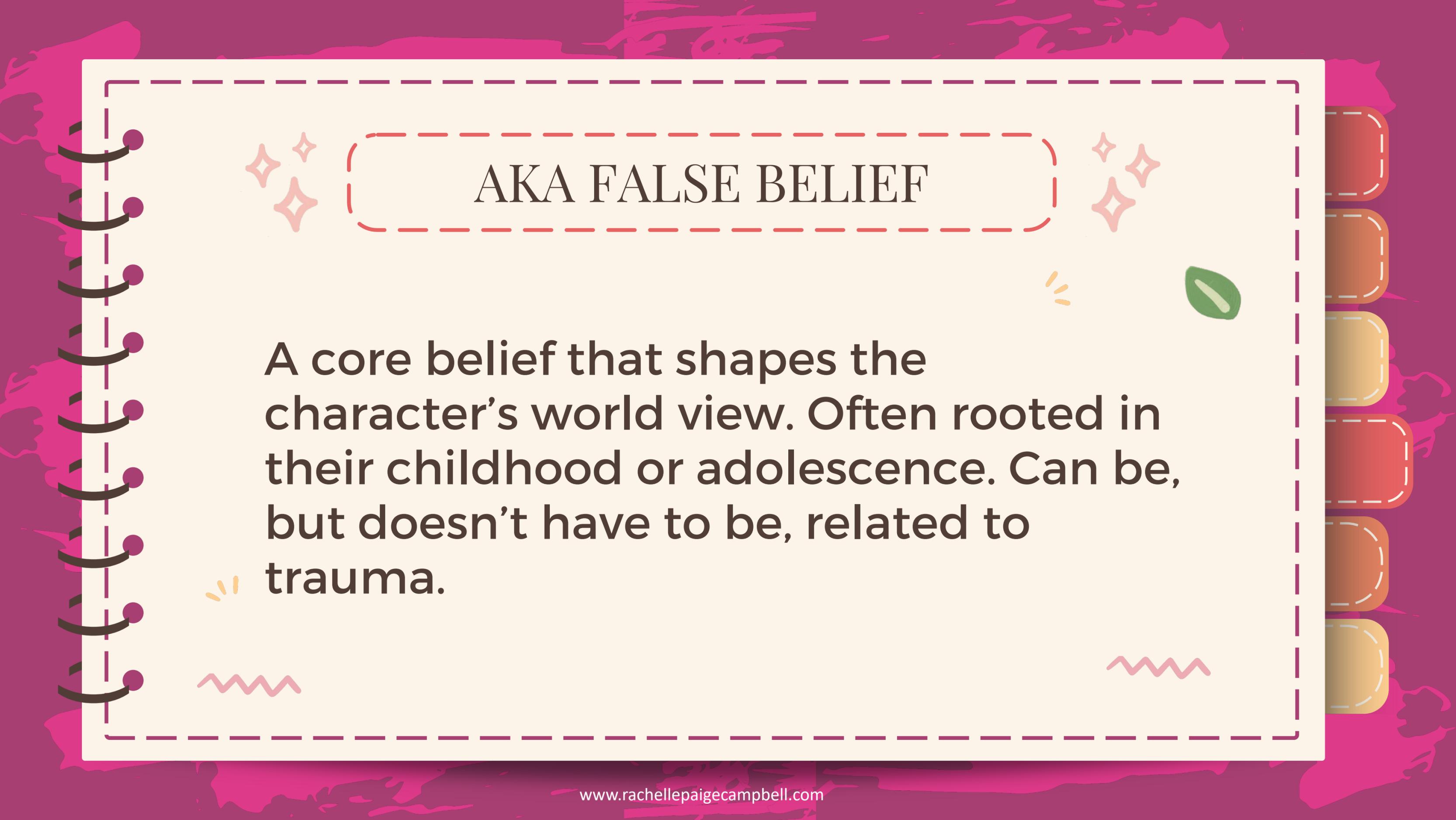
03

THE SECRET INGREDIENT

Conflict has TWO parts in romance. It's also the INTERNAL; what is holding back your characters. Conflict needs to escalate to propel the characters on their journey of change. Where they end is not where they started

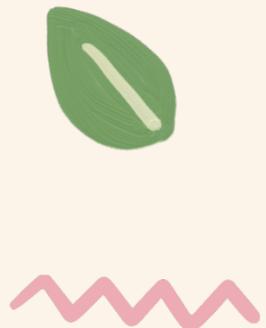


Chapter 3



AKA FALSE BELIEF

A core belief that shapes the character's world view. Often rooted in their childhood or adolescence. Can be, but doesn't have to be, related to trauma.



THE GHOST OF LOON LAKE

Her false belief:

She is never anyone's choice, she is the consolation prize.

Her dad didn't bring her into the business the way he included her husband, she thought he didn't value her--in reality his pride at how far they'd fallen was something he didn't want to own up to her

Her husband didn't choose her when she asked him to--in reality, he thought he did, he stayed to save the business

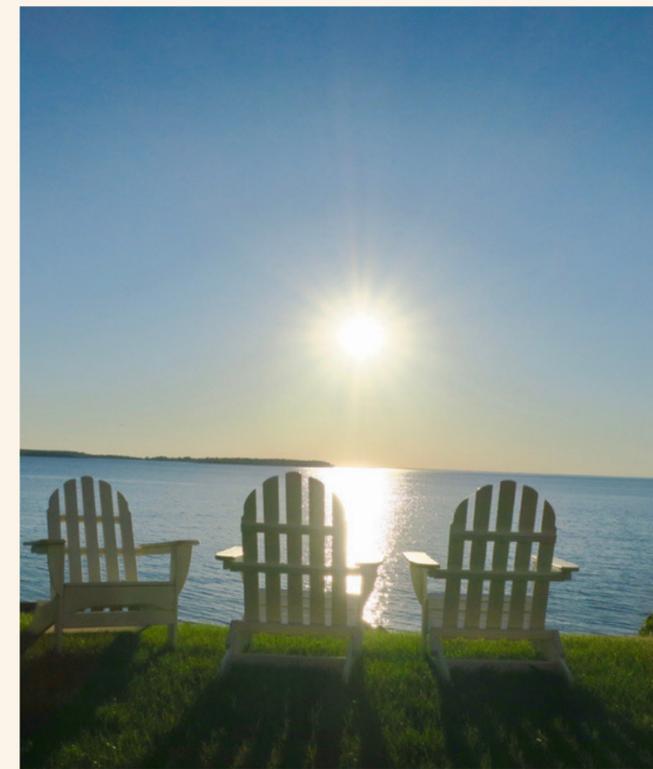
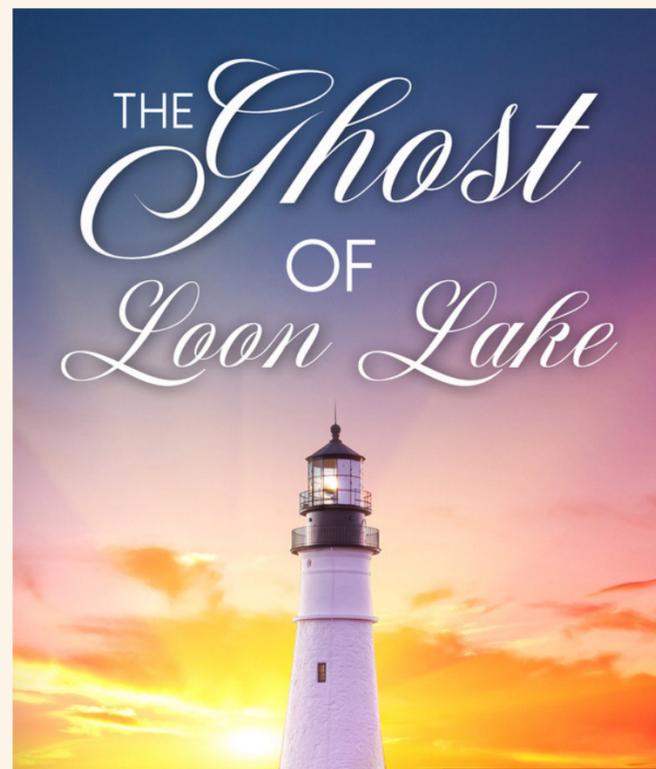
In this story, the external conflict ties directly back to her internal--she wasn't the choice



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FALSE BELIEF COLORS WORLDVIEW



Because she thinks she's no one's choice, she sees that in every interaction. Until it is resolved it escalates.



04

BY THE NUMBERS*

How I breakdown conflict points when I'm plotting

I like to plot out the big moments and then go back and fill in smaller scenes that enhance the story. Every scene has to move the story forward in a meaningful way and constantly seed the story.

Chapter 4



04

BY THE NUMBERS*

*Another disclaimer

Rules are conventions but aren't hard dictates in writing. Think of these as guidelines and adapt where as your story requires!

BY THE NUMBERS



0%	10%
Ordinary World	The inciting incident
Introduce the main characters and their GMCs	Kicks off the action of the story

25%	50%
1st conflict--the change of plans	2nd conflict--the point of no return
despite the hiccup, both characters return to business as usual, but make adjustments	One character can't return to the way things were, the other can

MORE BY THE NUMBERS



75%	90%	100%
3rd conflict--the major setback	Blackout moment--all is lost	Happily Ever After
Neither can go back to the way things were; this can result in a false having it all moment--it's false because the characters have still not faced their wounds	Everything is on the table; now or never; all the skeletons are out of the closet and often the characters let each other down in a big way here (make their worst case scenario happen)	False Beliefs have to be resolved/overcome

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THE GHOST OF LOON LAKE



0%	10%
Ordinary World	The inciting incident
Introduce the main characters and their GMCs	Kicks off the action of the story
Ashley is squatting on her family's property; show how far she's fallen	The lighthouse is on fire and her husband saves her

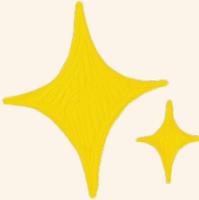
25%	50%
1st conflict	2nd conflict
despite the hiccup, both characters return to business as usual	One character can't return to the way things were, the other can
She starts helping out to learn the ropes and is a disaster at everything	She is convinced a real ghost is on the property after a near fatal accident

The Ghost of Loon Lake



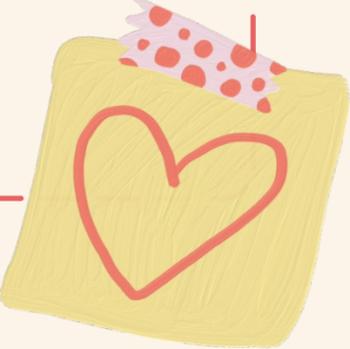
75%	90%	100%
3rd conflict	Blackout moment	Happily Ever After
Neither can go back to the way things were	Everything is on the table; now or never	The HEA here was several parts: she had to accept she'd never get resolution with her dad, had to start choosing the people that count including herself (overcome her false belief—instead of waiting to be picked, chooses)
She doesn't want to give up on him as an innkeeper or them as a couple but nothing has fundamentally changed	This one is life or death; she finds out the truth about her dad but barely has time to process it or her husband's role before she's kidnapped	

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CONCLUSION

Where your characters start isn't where they should finish. Good conflict evolves and constantly raises the stake. Something is resolved, another--worse--problem arises.



Main Character 1		Main Character 2	
Name/age		Name/age	
Physical description		Physical description	

Plot

Main Character 1				
What does she/he really want? (Goal)				
Why does he/she want it? (Motivation)				
How is MC2 standing in the way?				
Internal conflict:				
External conflict:				

Main Character 2				
------------------	--	--	--	--

What does she/he really want? (Goal)
Why does he/she want it? (Motivation)
How is MC1 standing in the way?
Internal conflict:
External conflict:

0%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Ordinary world	The inciting incident	1 st conflict; both can go back to ordinary world	2 nd conflict; she can't go back to ordinary world, but he does	3rd conflict: Neither can go back to the way things were	Black out; everything is on the table, now or never	Happily Ever After

0%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Word counts:						
What happens:						



Don't miss these books:

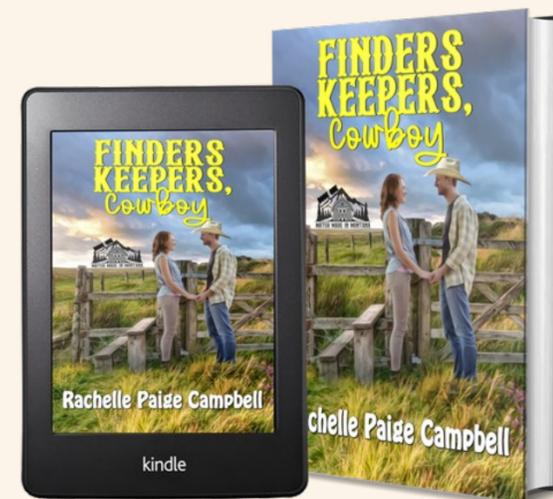
Story Genius by Lisa Cron

GMC by Debra Dixon

Save the Cat! Writes a Novel by Jessica
Brody

Romancing the Beat by Gwen Hayes

Thank You



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