

Plot Thread Tracker

Plot threads are a lot like what they sound like. Woven throughout the story, plot threads act as cohesive anchors that take a starting idea in your story through completion at the end. I find when I'm writing (without an outline) I start several more plot threads than I actually need and several of those turn into frayed ends with no gratifying pay off. This chart helps me keep track of my plot threads and ensure I have proper—plot oriented—reasons for weaving them in. Create one for each plot thread and track it's progression through your story. Ensure each action is 1) prompted by a logical occurrence; and 2) is followed by a logical reaction.

Below you'll find two trackers—one I've filled out as a fictitious example and another that's blank and ready for you to use!

Hope it helps! Happy writing :)

SUB PLOT THREAD: _____	
GOAL How does this thread tie into a character arc or the overall plot?	
FIRST MENTION	
PROMPTED BY What led your your first mention of the plot thread to come about?	
LEADS INTO What's the result of the first mention? What subsequent logical action or occurrence follows?	

This chart starts and repeats on a Mention / Prompted By / Leads Into cycle until you're all the way through the story.

MAIN PLOT: Evan, an asocial forensic scientist, struggles to juggle his demanding job, his new girlfriend, and nosey neighbors. When a pile of contaminated forensic evidence shows up on his desk matching his own blood-type and DNA, he must figure out how it happened before anyone else does.

<p>SUB PLOT THREAD: MYSTERIOUS PACKAGE</p>	<p>As a backdrop to the main dilemma, a seemingly unimportant package is delivered to his local post office and deciphering where it comes from falls between the cracks as he scrambles to make sure he's not implicated in a murder he had nothing to do with. Until he realizes the mysterious package holds the clues to solving the crime he's being framed for.</p>
<p>GOAL How does this thread tie into a character arc or the overall plot?</p>	<p>Paint the main character, a forensic lab specialist, as a gifted problem solver while building intrigue around the central murder mystery plot line</p>
<p>FIRST MENTION</p>	<p>Ch 4: picks up package from mailing facility w/o any idea who sent it. Opens it and finds a note with symbols on it he doesn't recognize and blood spatter.</p>
<p>PROMPTED BY What led your your first mention of the plot thread to come about?</p>	<p>Constant notices on his door about a 'missed delivery' package. But his doorbell camera never sees anyone leaving these notices.</p>
<p>LEADS INTO What's the result of the first mention? What subsequent logical action or occurrence follows?</p>	<p>Ch 8: MC asking his elderly neighbors if they have any idea who left the notices and learns the only person they've seen outside his door the past few weeks is his best friend Nate. But Nate's been dead for 3 years.</p>
<p>NEXT MENTION Similar to the first, revisit the story and look at the next time the plot thread comes up in anyway.</p>	<p>Ch 10: After constant dead ends and being sidetracked by his love interest (sub plot #3) his girlfriend comes over and recognizes the symbols on the paper.</p>
<p>PROMPTED BY What led your your first mention of the plot thread to come about?</p>	<p>Long day at work as MC struggles to analyze the forensic evidence from the murder. Not feeling like a night out, he asks the girlfriend to meet him at his house instead for quiet dinner and a movie. She comes over for the first time since the package has arrived.</p>
<p>LEADS INTO What's the result of the first mention? What subsequent logical action or occurrence follows?</p>	<p>Ch 15: She shows him where the symbols come from and he works out the only person that could have written them is in fact Nate—his best friend that died in a car crash 3 years prior.</p>