Transitions in Fiction

# Types of Transitions

1. **Scene Transition:** Changes physical location and setting
2. **Point of View Transition:** Shifts from one character’s perspective to another
3. **Time Transition:** Skips forward or back in time

# Scene and Time Transitions: Changing Location and Time

**Need to Identify:**

1. Place: Where is the new scene taking place? Establish your setting!
2. Time: How much time has passed? How does the reader know?
3. Change in mood or tone of the story

**Can Identify Key Characteristics By…**

1. Naming the place
2. Describing the place
3. Describing the event
4. Mentioning the time or day or date
5. Showing a character doing something we already knew he’d be doing at a set time or in a particular place.

# Character Transitions: Changing Point of View

**Need to Identify:**

1. Point of View: Who is the new character?
2. Place: Where is the new character?

**Can Change Characters By…**

1. Putting the reader in the new character’s head—show the scene through their eyes, which should be very different from your previous character.
2. Mentioning the new character’s name
3. Showing the new character doing something

**Warnings:**

1. NEVER change Point of View within a paragraph!
2. Give the readers clues or warnings that a point of view change is coming.

# Hooks and Teasers

Use a hook or a teaser to make the reader want to keep reading.

1. **Teaser:** He couldn’t wait to see his brother’s expression when he showed up at the wedding with Paul’s hated ex-wife.
2. **Next Scene:** Mark walked into the hotel’s ballroom, his former sister-in-law on his arm. He smiled when he saw his brother’s smile freeze into a gremlin’s glare.

# Unimportant Details:

Leave them out! Get to the meat of your story quickly. No-one wants to hear tedious details about your character getting dressed, washing their hair, walking to the door, opening the door, getting in their car…you get the picture. **Use only details that will advance your plot, or develop your character.**

# Starting in the Middle

This is closely connected to unimportant details. When you move to your next scene or character, use an interesting entry point. For example, if your character is going into battle, and your next scene is about their battle experiences, don’t start with your character putting on their uniform, eating breakfast, etc. YOUR READER DOESN’T CARE. Start in the battle—throw your character into the scene.

# Your Turn to Practice!

**Your Scene:** Briefly describe a transition you’d like to make between two scenes.

*Example: In my story, I need to transition from a scene where my character is at home, to a scene where they are on the battlefield.*

**Decisions!** Decide if your scene is a transition in time, space, or point of view, or a combination. Write it below.

**Transition Practice:** Now, write the LAST sentence (or sentences) of the scene you are transitioning out of, and the FIRST few sentences of the scene you are transitioning into. Use the techniques mentioned above, then show Lori or Stephen!