

## The Rise and Fall of a Historical Character

Tell the tale of an important person of great wealth, power, and fame who loses everything. Place the story in a historical time period. The more interesting, the better. Whether the character rebounds or spirals into failure is up to you. Below, you will find thirteen challenges that will hopefully inspire you while writing your story. Please make creative choices that solve each of these challenges.

### 1. Choose which perspective you will use in your writing.

- You could write in 1st person (I/me), which is from the P.O.V. of your main character.
- You could write in 3rd person limited (he/she), which is looking over the shoulder of the main character.
- You could write in 3rd person omniscient (he/she), which is looking into the minds of all characters.

### 2. Pick a historical time period.

- The time period can be set in the past, but the time period must be more than 50 years ago.
- The time period can be set in the future, but the time period must be more than 50 years in the future.

### 3. Make the title of your story reflect your story's time period.

- However, your title cannot have numbers.

### 4. Create a main character of great wealth, power, and fame who loses everything.

- The main character cannot be a real historical figure; you must create the character from your imagination.
  - ➔ The character can be loosely based on a real historical figure, but the more subtle, the better. Also, your character should not be fanfiction from a video game, book series, television series, or movie unless you are writing a completely new story that is fully original.
- The main character must have a small detail, symbol, or item that symbolizes his or her success.
- The main character must have a flaw.
  - ➔ This flaw can lead to the character losing everything, which would make it a tragic flaw, but it does not have to. It could just be a regular flaw that makes the character more interesting or relatable.

### 5. Create a supporting character who was born in a different country than your main character.

- The supporting character must need something desperately.
- The supporting character must speak in a different language than your main character at least once.
  - ➔ If you would like to make this supporting character speak a different language than your main character most of the time or at all times, then that is fine.
    - ➔ When your supporting character speaks in a different language, then that language must be represented in italics, because that is the professional way to show that the words are from a foreign language.

### 6. Create a supporting character that has power in a small, subtle (hard to notice; clever; understated) way.

- The supporting character must have a small detail, symbol, or item that symbolizes his or her power.
- The supporting character must be different than the other supporting character.
  - ➔ Decide if this supporting character interacts with the other supporting character.
- The supporting character must interact with the main character in one of the three ways.
  - ➔ Decide if the supporting character helps the main character, serves as inspiration for what the main character accomplishes, or obstructs (gets in the way of) the main character.

### 7. Begin your story after your main character has lost everything. This will be far more interesting.

- Your story should begin in media res and be about what happens after your character has lost anything.
  - ➔ Decide if your story contains short flashbacks to the character's first rise to success.
- Your story should end with a clear tone.

- Decide if your story ends with an encouraging tone, where the main character finds success again.
- Decide if your story ends with a cynical tone, where the main character fails to regain success.
- Decide if your story ends with a bittersweet tone, where the main character's failure is a success for everyone else; this probably means that your character is either a martyr figure whose sacrifice benefits others or an antihero that the reader might root against but still like a little.

#### 8. Include the lyrics to a song.

- The song lyrics can be overhead, thought, or spoken by a character.
- The song lyrics must be six lines; it does not have to rhyme.
- The song lyrics must be of your own creation; the words cannot be from a real song.

#### 9. Include detailed descriptions.

- Describe a fragrance (smell); it could be either positive or negative.
- Describe a sunrise, sunset, or both.
- Describe a street; it could be rural (country), suburban (neighborhood), or urban (city).
- Describe a character's distinctive clothes.
  - The clothes should reflect the time period.
  - The clothes should also reveal a character's personality, social status, or lifestyle.

#### 10. Include specific phrases.

- Use the phrases "blink faster," "shook tremendously," and "fades fast" in your story.
  - These lines can be dialogue, character thoughts, song lyrics, or part your narration.
  - These lines can be used anywhere in your story.
  - These lines can be changed grammatically in any way you need.

### Brainstorming: Thirteen Questions About Your Own Writing

As you are writing, please answer the questions here. For you, it will make sure that you are meeting all the creative challenge requirements of the short story. For me, it will help me better understand your creative decisions. Also, feel free to answer these questions before you begin writing your story, because this list of questions could also serve as a good brainstorming session.

**1. Did you choose 1st person perspective or 3rd person perspective, and what advantage did this give you as a writer?**

**2. Which historical time period did you choose and why? If you need suggestions, I will list some below.**

Suggestions		
Age of pyramids in Ancient Egypt Artists of the Renaissance Assassins of ancient China Atomic scientists and the Manhattan Project Battles of Japanese samurai Birth of Parisian high fashion	Golden cities of Mansa Musa's Mali Empire Greek kings seeking the advice of oracles Hippie revolution of San Francisco and Woodstock Horrors of the Tuskegee Experiments Hun invasion of China Hunts of man-eating lions and tigers in India	Parisian ex-patriot literary scenes Parties of the Roaring 20's Pirate battles in the Caribbean Plantation rebellions of the American Slave Trade Preaching and the birth of megachurches Presidential elections contested in 1800s America

Breaking the color barrier (schools, sports, business) Camel racing in Saudi Arabia Creation of the first automobiles Dangers of NASA's space race Dark ages of smallpox and bubonic plague Doctors fighting against diseases like yellow fever Dogfights of WWII pilots Epic conquests of Genghis Khan Era of factory assembly lines Era of segregation and miscegenation laws Exploits of English knights Exploration of Mount Everest Famous earthquakes, hurricanes, or floods Famous shipwrecks, train accidents, or disasters Feasts and fights of Viking invaders Flights of the Tuskegee Airmen	Internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II Intrigue of kings and queens in European courts Intrigue of sultans in the courts of Baghdad and Syria Invention of the personal computer Invention of airplanes Jazz Age singers and musicians in the '20s and '30s Jousting contests during the Middle Ages Jungle explorers rafting down rivers Kite fights in Islamabad or Karachi Land travels of Ibn Battuta, Marco Polo, or others Marches for Women's Suffrage Monks saving books and scrolls from invaders Movie stars during era of the silent movie Musical heights of Motown Native American coming-of-age rituals Organized crime during the Prohibition Era	Protests of the Civil Rights Era Race car drivers during the early years of Formula 1 Resistance to European Colonization Roman gladiator fights Salem witch trials Sea travel during European or Chinese exploration Secrets of markets and bazaars in Islamic Caliphates Sieges of castles, towns, or cities during war Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Inca Spies of the Cold War Torture during the Spanish Inquisition Traders in the port cities of the East Coast of Africa Unemployment during the Great Depression Volcanic eruption that destroyed Pompeii Wars of the Roman Empire Wild west trains, mines, or boom towns
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**3. What is the title of your story and how does it reflect the time period?**

**4. How did your character gain great wealth, power, and fame? Also, how does your character lose it all?**

**5. One of your supporting characters is from another country. Which country is he or she from? What other language does he or she speak? How did this supporting character's nationality affect your story?**

**6. One of your supporting characters has power in a small, subtle way. What is the power? How is it symbolized? How did this supporting character interact with your main character?**

**7. Did you begin your story after your main character has lost everything? (PS, You should answer yes! If not, look back at the directions.) What tone did you choose to use at the end of your story and why?**

**8. Please copy and paste the descriptions that you used in your short story.**

➤ Describe a fragrance (smell); it could be either positive or negative.

➤ Describe a sunrise, sunset, or both.

- *Describe a street; it could be rural (country), suburban (neighborhood), or urban (city).*

- *Describe a character's distinctive clothes.*

**9. Please copy and paste the song lyrics that you created for the story.**

**10. Please copy and paste the portions of the short story that used the required phrases.**

- *Use the phrase "blink faster."*

- *Use the phrase "shook tremendously."*

- *Use the phrase "fades fast."*