

The Delft Thunderclap - Scene Structure

Scene Structure - using John Truby's model.

This chapter consists of scenes 'nested' within each other in the form 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Scene	Vermeer (Jan) and Catharina
Scene Element	My Notes
Position on character arc	They married young, not long ago and she is pregnant with their second child. It's still the honeymoon period, and she's still getting to know him. It establishes his psychological weakness - that he is ineffectual in difficult real-world situations, and; his moral weakness, that he's interested in his art more than anything else including his family.
Problems (for the author)	This first chapter of the book needs to start with the inciting incident - the explosion: Catharina doesn't have a direct role in that, but it needs to highlight (for her) questions about his priorities. It needs to establish that she is many ways stronger, and more aware than him, and that she is generally supportive to him - though relations here will put that to the test.
Strategy (of the author)	Have Catharina out of the city at the time of the explosion, so that he experiences it without her. Then have the story told by him to her. This means it is his point of view, and the real story and insight into Vermeer gradually unfolds through her questions.
Desire	Jan wants to cover up his failings, and make himself look good in his wife's eyes.
Endpoint	Jan concludes he must focus on his art. His moral and psychological weaknesses that will run through the book, become clear to Catharina. It establishes his emotional dependence on her. She is angry at him
Opponent	Catharina opposes his desire, and (subtly) questions his version of events.
Plan	Jan will catch Catharina early on her return and tell her his story. This nearer to an indirect plan, in the it aims to reduce immediate conflict, but may cause greater conflict on the long run.
Conflict	Jan in this scene is really most concerned about himself - his trauma. Catharina is concerned about her family and his own family and friends.
Twist or Reveal	Jan faced a challenge and failed. he couldn't cope with the explosion aftermath. He didn't come straight to check on his family, and spun the facts in giving the impression the Captain had already checked on them.
Moral argument and values	Ivory Tower V Sacred Fount': Jan thinks the most important thing is the pursuit of the sublime in art. Catharina understands the importance of good art, but ultimately sees it as secondary to people, in particular family.
Key words and images	Catharina pregnant, and also tending to infant. Egbert, distraught, looking for his son. Jan nurturing with Fabritius. Glass with distorted reflection of Vermeer.

Scene	Jan and Antonie
Scene Element	My Notes
Position on character arc	They are friends since childhood, with a close, conspiratorial bond, but this scene triggers tensions between them
Problems (for the author)	Introduce the story-world a ferment of scientific and artistic progress. Introduce the lens as a key story and symbolic element of the story. It captures a moral tension: for Antonie pursuit of knowledge; but for V more pursuit of career. Foreshadow themes of life and death, and the idea of a distant, detached view thereof. The actual process of making the lenses is uncertain. Avoid overshadowing Jan's story with Antonie's discovery. Hint that Antonie's ideas might be heretical, even blasphemous. This scene is interrupted by the explosion and Jan's departure.
Strategy (of the author)	Antonie has invited Jan round to show his work with lenses (he has discovered microscopic life), though Jan is more interested in how they can help him. The scene is told through Jan telling Catharina, and her question of Jan provides conclusion through flashback. repeat panels as Cat teases out Antonie's perspective.
Desire	Jan wants to know how optics, and therefore Antonie, can help him do better paintings.
Endpoint	Jan concludes Antonie can't be much help at this point. Antonie is frustrated that Jan is not interested in his ideas, and a poor friend. help. he is angry (Jan doesn't notice) and packs Jan off to check on his family.
Opponent	Antonie wants to show his work to his friend Jan, and feels he has discovered something important, yet it's so potentially huge he needs a second opinion.
Plan	Jan wants to find out how lenses can help him - it is a slightly indirect plan. But he doesn't bother to even pretend much interest in Antonie's concerns.
Conflict	Antonie gets increasingly frustrated with Jan's failure to take on his ideas, and uses the explosion to 'show him the door'.
Twist or Reveal	Antonie may have discovered something important with implications for both science and religion.
Moral argument and values	Antonie sees his pursuit of knowledge, and study of optics as intrinsically rewarding. Jan sees it as instrumental in gaining a possible competitive advantage in his career. Antonio, ultimately rates his work less important than people.
Key words and images	Lens, light and their effects on panelled window. The furnace as means of shaping the lens - metaphor for the explosion that will shape Vermeer. Life and death seen from a different, remote perspective (as Vermeer will, initially view the explosion). Fascination with sights unseen.

Scene	Jan and the Captain
Scene Element	My notes
Position on character arc	This scene will identify Vermeer's fundamental weakness in dealing with difficult real-world situations: he retreats into his mind.
Problems	Need to capture V's subjective experience of his dissociative episode, and only progressively reveal the effect of this.
Strategy	Jan tells the story to Cat, and her questions unpack it.
Desire	This scene is initially driven by the Captain's desire to help with the emergency, and to help Jan understand life and death, and so grow up. Jan has a desire to impress the Captain, (as a family friend of Catharina's, influential new man in town, and prospective buyer of paintings), but this is quickly replaced by a desire to avoid the carnage.
Endpoint	The Captain confronts Jan with the reality of the situation. in the form of the wounded Fabritius. Jan recognises his own psychological weakness, and the Captain reveals a supportive side.
Opponent	Captain V Jan
Plan	Captain's plan is initially to bring him this scene of life, death and suffering. When the proximity of Fabritius' studio comes to light he tries to get Jan to go in and look. When Jan won't do that he brings the wounded Fabritius to Jan. Jan then uses his relationship to the wounded Fabritius to avoid any wider involvement.
Conflict	The Captain gets progressively frustrated then angry with Jan, and decides if Jan won't go to the action, he will bring it to him.
Twist or Reveal	The Captain is partly motivated by a fatherly relationship to Jan, and he knows and repeats a sensitive man (Leo).
Moral argument and values	Jan's view is that he is called to be artist, and must be that in all things. Captain's view is that to be a man you must face danger, and to be an artist you must know life and death. In order to help people in a crisis you must be detached
Key words and images	Fabritius' wounded. The Captain putting his red jacket over him, and it soaking with blood.

Scene	Jan and Fabritius
Scene Element	My notes
Position on character arc	This is the early key moment which triggers Jan's need to prove himself a worthy painter to the 'ghost' of Fabritius
Problems	Fab is injured/dying and it's a short scene. Want to feature image of Fab's painting The Goldfinch. Need to set up Vermeer's need to prove himself.
Strategy	V is with Fab in his last frank moments. He talks of the intensity of painting - he felt immortal. He tells Vermeer he is better than the others, implying he can carry on his legacy.
Desire	V wants to save Fab, who knows he is going to die, and just wants to experience his last moments with sublime intensity.
Endpoint	Fab dies - V has failed to save him. Fab passes the torch to V, and he recognises it.
Opponent	Fab - He doesn't want to live after this - can't feel his arms. V feels he must save him.
Plan	Fab overrules V's attempts to do anything
Conflict	V ends up slapping Fab to keep him conscious, though he dies anyway.
Twist or Reveal	Metaphorical scenes of Goldfinch. Fab considers V a successor. Thought it might be just the moment.
Moral argument and values	The sublime moments of art are everything. One beats death by living intensely - every moment to the full.
Key words and images	Would Icarus comparison be too much!? Fabritius [painted] Goldfinch, trying to fly away - the metal chain on its ankle.