

# SHADOWS AND SECRETS



MAKING CRIME STORIES ADDICTIVE



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**We have ONE goal:  
Write books that readers  
*can't* put down.**

...SO...

**It's time to dive into our characters'  
vulnerabilities, moral complexities, and  
hidden motivations.**



**IT'S**

marco001

# Knowing Your Characters Shadows and Secrets Helps to:

- Create multi-dimensional characters.
- Create emotional stakes readers relate to.
- Creates a plot with layered conflict and intrigue.

Because...

**You'll have a framework to explore character backstories, integrate subplots seamlessly, and develop character-driven plot twists.**



THATS WHATS UP



# Hey! I'm Dana.

I love to make king-size quilts, knit audiobook sweaters, and food prep because we empty-nesters can't survive on takeout.

I'm a story nerd running on coffee, cotton fabric, and Kindle Unlimited. And I love helping writers become authors of addictive novels—stories your readers can't put down.

One of the ways I do this is through the Addictive Novel Mentorship program, a process I've used for myself while writing over 100 books and for clients—plotting and editing hundreds of novels by Amazon Top 100, USA Today, and New York Times bestselling authors.

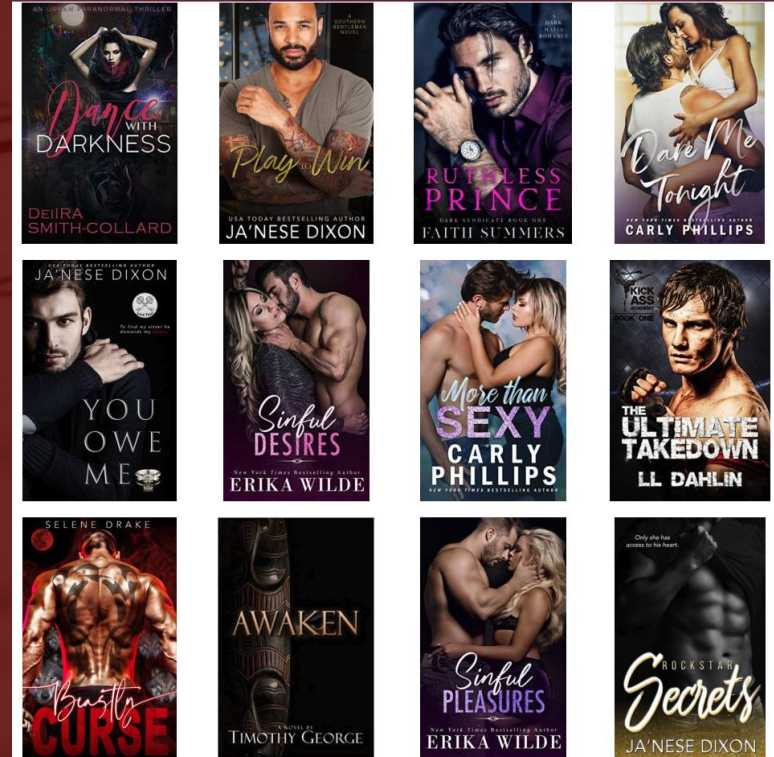
This mentorship walks you through twelve modules to move from an idea to a complete draft of your novel with me beside you.

I want to help you finish your novel with confidence--conceptualize, structure, *and* write. Because *I believe your story and voice matter.*



# Results

- I'm USA Today Bestselling Author.
- Authored 100+ books under several pen names.
- Developmental editor and Publishing Coach.
- Course Creator of the Addictive Novel Mentorship Program.
- Host of Romanced by the Book.



**Let's get started!**

# Crime Stories...

Can feel one-dimensional without  
emotional depth.

**To add depth...**

**We're aiming to humanize your stories to  
make narratives more relatable and addictive.**

**We'll focus on:**

**Vulnerabilities, Moral Complexities,  
and Hidden Motivations**

# Reasons You Should Understand Humanizing Your Crime Stories:

1. Emotional Depth: Making readers more invested in the characters (and your stories).
2. Character Depth: Opportunities for multi-dimensional characters.
3. Narrative Complexity: Introduce new layers of conflict and motivation.
4. Reader Investment: Captivate and retain readers.
5. Broader Appeal: Attract a wider range of readers.

# Overview of Content:

- Understanding Shadows and Secrets
- Exploring Vulnerabilities, Moral Complexities, and Hidden Motivations
- Example Subplots: Love, Redemption, Mentorship

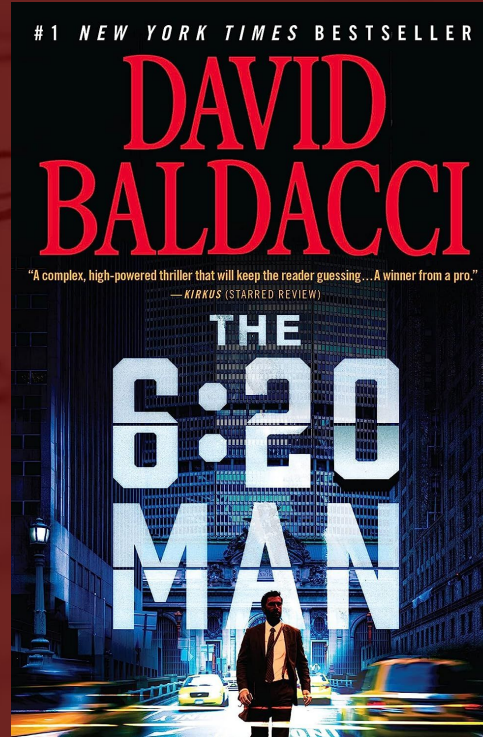


# Identify Core Motivations

Vulnerabilities are the weaknesses, fears, and emotional wounds that make characters human and relatable.

- Understand Psychological Drives: Know the basic human fears and emotional wounds and how they affect behavior.
- Identify Specific Triggers: Pinpoint events or circumstances in the character's life that could trigger these vulnerabilities.

# Example Redemption Subplot



# Identify Moral Complexities

Integrating moral complexities into your characters adds depth and realism to your story, highlighting the internal struggles they face.

- Understand Ethical Conflicts: Know the common ethical dilemmas and how they impact decision-making.
- Identify Specific Scenarios: Pinpoint situations in the character's life that could trigger these moral complexities.

# Example Mentorship Subplot

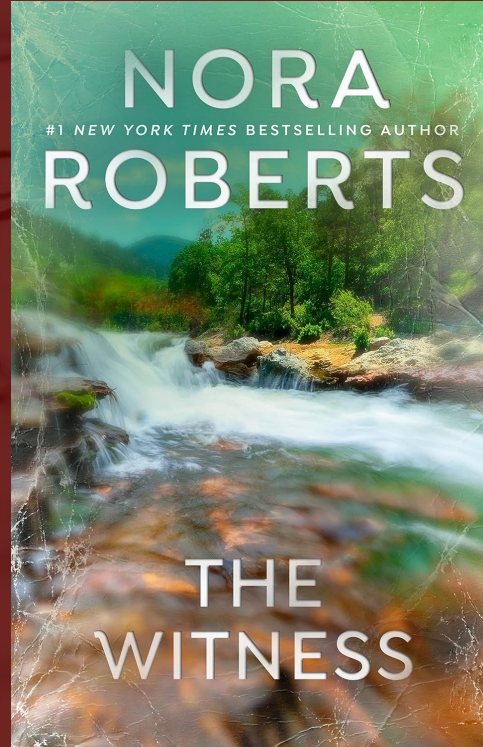


# Identify Hidden Motivations

Uncovering hidden motivations reveals the deeper reasons behind a character's actions, adding layers of intrigue and depth to your story.

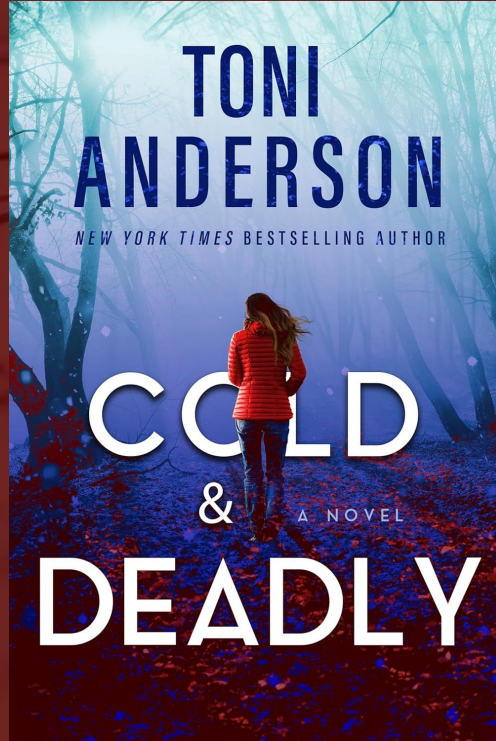
- Understand Psychological Drives: Know the basic hidden motivations and how they shape behavior.
- Identify Specific Triggers: Pinpoint events or circumstances in the character's life that could trigger these hidden motivations.

# Example Romance Subplots



# Examples

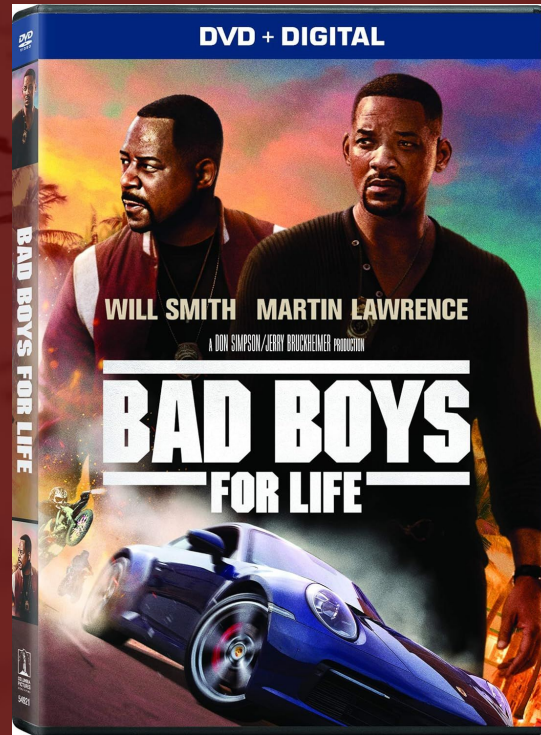
# Detailed Example



SAVE THE NOTION NOTES

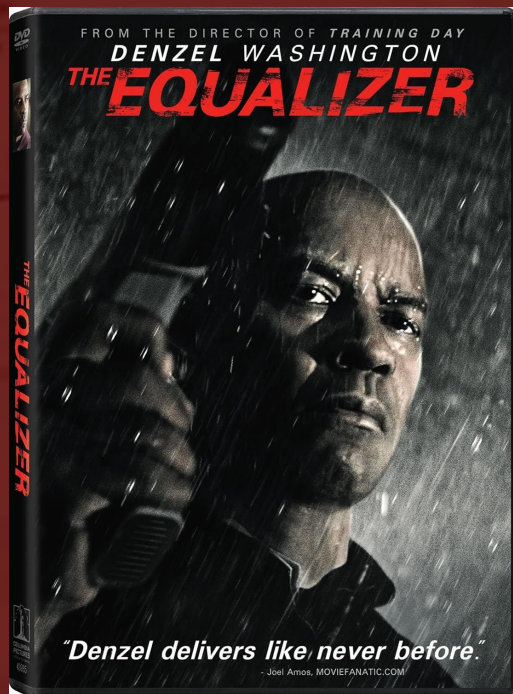


# Detailed Example



SAVE THE NOTION NOTES

# Other Examples





# Write a Vulnerability Profile

Create a detailed profile that lists your character's vulnerabilities, the reasons behind them, and how they affect their actions in the story.

# Write a Moral Complexity Profile

Create a detailed profile that lists your character's moral conflicts, the reasons behind them, and how they affect their actions and decisions in the story.

# Write a Hidden Motivation Profile

Create a detailed profile that lists your character's hidden motivations, the reasons behind them, and how they affect their actions in the story.

## ★ BONUS ★

Consider how you can integrate more than one subplot to create a richer, more compelling narrative. Weave your main characters together through their vulnerabilities, moral complexities, and hidden motivations to add layers of depth to your crime story.

- How can your characters' personal journeys intersect and influence each other?
- What conflicts arise from the interplay of love, redemption, and mentorship subplots?
- How can you enhance the emotional stakes by weaving multiple subplots together?

**"The best stories are those that reveal the complexity and depth of their characters, making them as real and multifaceted as the people we encounter in our own lives."**

**ANONYMOUS**



# Recap

- Understanding Shadows and Secrets
- Exploring Vulnerabilities, Moral Complexities, and Hidden Motivations
- Example Subplots: Love, Redemption, Mentorship

**Q&A**

**Thank you!**