


Plot: It does not need to be an original story. You can retell a classic story through a modern or unique lens. BUT your story should be about the impact of one devastating moment.

Plot: The devastating moment needs to derail the main character's way of life. Whether it's through their relationships, their perspective, or their daily routines, something major needs to change for the main character.

Setting: The main character needs to interact with the setting. The setting must increase the tension for the main character.

Point of View: Be very deliberate in your choice and use it to enhance the story. The reader should be unable to imagine the story working with a different POV. Never use more than one POV for short fiction.

Character: Your protagonist needs to feel the impact of this moment. They should suffer, struggle, and try to overcome. Whether or not they DO is up to you.



Short
story
checklist

Imagery/Description: Show, not tell! Provide sensory details to illustrate relationship, emotion, and heightened stakes.

Dialogue: Always use dialogue, but if you're writing flash, don't overdo it.

Theme: the main character must start out believing in some universal theme (ex - love will prevail) and end with a reversal of that belief.

Ending: circle back, reinforce the theme, but don't over explain. Leave something to the reader's imagination.

Beginning -- don't give a lot of exposition. "Start in the middle," perhaps with a bit of dialogue, or by describing the devastating moment.