

STORY

STRANGE ENCOUNTERS	You may wish to give your story a title
Setting	
<p>He didn't really stand out from the crowd. He just sat there staring aimlessly at the ceiling and thumbing a menu without glancing down at it. His eyes betrayed a boredom that was difficult to suppress and his legs twitched nervously. Even the waiters paid him little attention as he waited for someone to arrive.</p>	<p>Set the scene: where does the action take place? What's the background?</p>
Development	
<p>He must have been there for half an hour before anyone took pity on him – this pathetic, middle-aged man with sweat patches on his shirt from the oppressive heat of the table nearest the kitchen. It was my father who approached him first – sad, I suppose, that a man his own age looked so lost in a dining hall filled with happiness. My father wandered over to his table and whispered an invitation to join us into his ears. He said he was fine. My father, never one to heed telling twice, beat a hasty retreat and smiled apologetically at my mother, who had always thought it was a bad idea of my father's to ask him in the first place. Women seem to have a sense about when men need to be left alone, and my mother's sense was almost perfect. So he continued to sit there. Sitting and waiting.</p> <p>About five minutes later an elderly woman with a dress two sizes too large came over with effort, evidently short of breath as she leant on a chair and gargled words that resembled "come and join me, love". The man kept staring at the ceiling and didn't even register the old woman's plea. She shook her head and stumbled back to her table in a vain attempt to preserve her dignity.</p>	<p>What happens in the lead-up to the main event? This is the main 'plot' of the story.</p>
Suspense	
<p>The evening passed off uneventfully. Our meal was pleasant but uninspiring and we passed our time by talking about all the usual subjects: upcoming exams, family gossip, future plans. But nothing could have prepared us for what happened just as we were leaving. A short buxom woman in her twenties walked over to the man, now drenched in sweat and still staring at the ceiling. No one heard what she said as she leant over and caressed his shoulder. But everyone heard what happened next.</p>	<p>Just as you are about to tell your reader what the main event is, stop. Make them wait. Here the writer has turned the 'camera' away from the man and back to his family in order to make the reader wait.</p>
Climax	
<p>The man let out a yelp like a startled dog and jumped to his feet. The restaurant staff stood to attention but there was no stopping him. Up went the table and glasses flew around in the air, smashing against walls, chiming ferociously.</p> <p>'I don't need your pity!' he screamed, an octave higher than most women. The sound of plates smashing could be heard far and wide and it was all the man could do to throw some cash down on the floor as compensation for the damage and run to the main entrance. Everyone was stunned, scared, silenced. My father went pale and I could see he was worried for us. He grabbed my younger brother's hand and bade us all stand behind him.</p> <p>But the man was gone, leaving behind him only the smashed crockery of frustration and a restaurant full of confused patrons.</p>	<p>This is the main action – the exciting bit. Here, the man causes a commotion in the restaurant.</p>
Resolution	
<p>'What did you say to him?' someone asked the young blonde, just after the man had left.</p> <p>'I just asked him to sit with me. You see, today he found out that he has a daughter and he was supposed to be meeting her here.'</p> <p>'How do you know?'</p> <p>'I am that daughter.'</p> <p>The restaurant emptied quickly and the girl began to sob.</p>	<p>End your story by resolving the story. Tell us the reason why everything has happened.</p>

