*Short Story Title*

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Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra.

Per inceptos himenaeos.

**Reminder of instructions:**

**Consider the following advice when planning and writing your story:**

1. It is encouraged to follow Aristotle’s famous principles of “unity of drama”: 1) unity of place, 2) unity of time, and 3) unity of action. In simpler terms, this means that the short story should aim at one unified plot over, say, one day, within one location, and focusing one particular and important activity. This is a not strict set of principles, and authors break this unity principle all the time. But for novices, it definitely helps.
2. **Conflict drives story.** Remember: what does the character want, and what do they need? What is standing in the way of our character?
3. Consider Edgar Allan Poe’s equally influential principle that short stories should aim at conveying one singular emotion or mood to their reader.
4. Consider Robert A. Heinlein’s (somewhat controversial) claim that there are only three main types of fiction stories:
	1. “Boy meets girl” (or girl meet, boy, girl meets girl etc.)
		1. boy-fails-to-meet-girl
		2. boy-meets-girl-too-late
		3. boy-meets-too-many-girls
		4. boy-loses-girl
		5. boy-and-girl-renounce-love-for-higher-purpose.
		6. Etc.
	2. “The little Tailor”
		1. “Rags to riches”
		2. Fall from grace
		3. Rise and fall
	3. “Man learns a lesson”
		1. Man has opinion or worldview at the beginning of story, faces some “harsh truths” and is transformed as a result.
		2. This is third form is particularly useful for short stories!
5. Ponder on Robert A. Heinlein’s principles that he used in his short stories:
	1. The protagonist finds themselves in circumstances that create a problem for them.
	2. The protagonist’s new circumstances must be essential to the story.
	3. “The problem itself—the “plot”—must be a human problem. The human problem must be one that is created by, or indispensably affected by, the new conditions.”
	4. In coping with the problem, the protagonist is somehow transformed, and the story concludes when the transformation is complete.
6. We strongly encourage you to collaborate outside of class with one or more of your peers: bounce ideas off one another, share drafts, make editing suggestions, offer encouragement.
7. See Neil Gaiman’s 5 essential tips for short story writing in **Appendix 3.**
8. See David Sedaris’s suggestions for how to plot a short story in **Appendix 4.**
9. See David Sedaris’s suggestions for how to start a short story in **Appendix 5.**

**Grading Criteria for the Short Story (both first draft and final):**

1. All story drafts must be complete. Endings are difficult, but they are absolutely necessary. Find a way to finish your draft before you turn it in. We may require a student to resubmit.
2. Story drafts should be proofread carefully. Basic proofreading mistakes jolt the reader out of the dream you are creating.
3. The story focuses and dramatizes, using scene and summary, a central event in a small unit of time. The story should thus reflect class learnings on story theory.
4. The story supplies the reader with the basic, orienting facts of the ground situation that they need to understand the story. (But it need not do so at the beginning; this information can and probably should be given as the story unfolds.)
5. Tension and conflict are developed. The story has a protagonist who wants something, and there are obstacles to what they want, and those obstacles are relevant, maybe even formidable. (In our story triangle, this is called "rising action.") These needs and wants must be articulated in the character outline.
6. The protagonist has a "problem rooted in character" and not in the situation. Again, connect to character outline.
7. The story has a clear turning point, signaling change.
8. Details are concrete and significant (NOT ABSTRACT) and alive to the five senses. See “Writing Well” supplement.
9. The writer pays heightened attention to the theories and ideas provided in class readings.
10. The writer pays heightened attention to language: to active verbs, to sentence economy (OMIT NEEDLESS WORDS!) to diction, to sentence variety. See “Writing Well” supplement
11. **Length: No less than 1.000 words but no more than 2.500 words. This applies to all drafts.**
12. **For grading of, please check TurnitIn in advance to check out the rubric.**