

Whole Scene

From “Heirs of the Living Body” in *Lives of Girls and Women* by Alice Munro, p. 45-46.

Today we are going to write a whole scene. In looking at a whole scene, we can study and flex the muscles of turns, revelations and build. We see the various elements we’ve studied this term—character in action, setting and emotion, dialog and subtext, build, earned telling, and time—at play together.

- 1) **Significant place** incites curiosity: forbidden or mysterious or new or frightening . . .

- 2) **First turn: unexpected character:** question/ threat. Protagonist stays focused on place, on initial intent.

- 3) **Background turn raises the stakes: outside forces.** (Possibly united) response of protagonist and unexpected character.

- 4) **Next action from unexpected character:** focus is random; all aggression is subtextual. Still, tension ramps up.

- 5) **Next turn: the direct threat/ invitation.** Refusal. Insistence. Move from verbal to physical (or from any one approach to any other). Stakes (threat) rise.

- 6) **Response: Protagonist pushed to action.**