Introduction

What exactly is this “outline transcript” thing you’re now reading? And why would you want to read it in the first place?

Two possible reasons:

1. You’re a reader, and you love the idea of getting a behind-the-scenes look at the process of an author (me, in this case!).

2. You’re a writer trying to figure out how best to outline your books, and you want a little insight into how another author (me in this case!) does it. Ever since writing my book *Outlining Your Novel*, I’ve gotten all kinds of requests from authors who wanted to see a full example of what my outlining process looks like. *Outlining Your Novel* contained excerpts, but, as you can see, this full outline is book-sized in itself and simply wasn’t practical as inclusion at the time.

But now, here it is! This is the complete outline transcription for my historical/dieselpunk mashup novel *Storming*. I feel this outline, in particular, is a good example of my process for several reasons:

1. It’s relatively linear and cohesive, so should make decent sense to others.
2. It includes a look at my ever-evolving approach to story structure and character arcs.
3. It’s very similar to the story you find in the published book.

Two Caveats

Before you read on, let me say the obvious: spoilers! What you’re reading here is pretty much the entire book, so you’re going to know everything that happens in the plot after reading it.

That’s caveat number one: don’t read the outline if you want to be surprised by the book!

Caveat number two is: read the book first anyway. I say that not just because I really, really want you to read my book (of course!), but because the random nature of the outline itself will make way more sense if you already have an overview of the actual story. You’ll also be able to recognize the places in which the finished book ended up evolving beyond the outline, for any number of reasons. (For example, SPOILERS *Schturming* started out in the outline as something much larger and more complex than it ended up being in the book, and the female lead started out being the protagonist and only narrator, whereas the male lead ended up in that role in the book END SPOILERS.)

A Few Guidelines and Resources

I write my outlines longhand in a notebook, so what you’re seeing here is obviously a transcription. In the notebook, I use a color-coded highlighting system to help me organize my notes. I’ve mimicked that highlighting throughout this document. For easy reference, here’s the guide:
Green: These are questions: things I wanted to return to in the outline and explore in further depth.

Yellow: These are “keepers”—plot points and other information on which I was putting the stamp of approval for future reference.

Orange: I call these “orange notes,” and they’re simply odds and ends of approved info that won’t go into the actual plot outline, but which I want to keep for future reference. They’re often world-building or thematic notes.

Blue: These are the “official” outline notes. Anything highlighted in blue will be transcribed in full into my abbreviated outline in Scrivener.

Pink: This means “move.” Whenever something ends up being written out of chronological order, I highlight it in pink and indicate whether it should be moved up or down in the outline, with another pink marker to show where it should end up.

You can find the complete list of questions I use for my character interviews in the Outlining Your Novel Workbook. (You can find versions of advancing levels of completion in this post, in my free e-book Crafting Unforgettable Characters, and in Outlining Your Novel. But since I’m always updating the list, the most complete version is in the Outlining Your Novel Workbook.)

For world building, I use Patricia C. Wrede’s incredibly comprehensive Fantasy Worldbuilding Questions.

A Note on Typos and Inconsistencies
I’ve tried to keep the text as close to the original—mistakes, random punctuation, et al.—just so you can get the sense of my creative flow. However, there are bound to be a few weird typos that slipped through (I used Dragon Naturally Speaking to transcribe the text), so please forgive any you may run across.

I hope you find this glimpse into my create process both interesting and useful. And I hope you enjoy both the outline and the book itself, which, by the way, you can learn more about by clicking right here.

Happy flying!
K.M. Weiland
My perceptions of the story right now are more of premise and plot than theme.
What I do know is this:

- Robert “Hitch” Hitchcock is a rakish barnstormer with some deep regrets in his past.
  As a young man, he behaved irresponsibly in his marriage to -------- and left on his barnstorming trips for months at a time. During one of those absences, his wife died, giving birth to a child he didn’t even know about—Walter. I see him as a cross between Han Solo’s cocky hotshot and Rochester’s regretful petulance. His bark is worse than his bite.
- Jael is from Storming. Someone’s after her. She jumps and lands on Hitch’s plane.
- Down below, she charms everyone, including Walter—and eventually softens Hitch and transforms his life.

And that’s about all I do know right now.
I really want the story to be a fun, exciting adventure. This isn’t meant to be dark. Just fun and reaffirming. It will probably end with Hitch and Jael getting together and giving Walter a home.

Let’s talk about characters.
Other than the three primaries, who do we know we need.

- Antagonist
- Walter’s caretaker
- Member of barnstorming troupe
- Jael’s family
- Hitch’s family

I would like to include some fun and colorful townsfolk as well.
- Quarreling brothers/neighbors.

But let’s address the must-haves first.

The Antagonist
What does he want? Why is he after Jael?
I’ve done nothing but white-collar baddies up to now. I’d like to do something different here. But the ramifications of his (or her?) actions have to be big to get the results we need.
Maybe the motivation is as simple as keeping Storming a secret. (Why is it a secret?)
What’s its purpose?
Maybe he’s trying to steal something from Storming. Maybe Jael steals it first to protect it, and the folks in charge believe she’s the guilty party.
Maybe there are family politics involved as well. I see Storming as a colony ship of sorts. The people have lived in isolation up there for generations. I don’t think we’ll use regal nomenclature, but Jael is the daughter of some muckety-muck—unless her being an orphan would be better.

Maybe the baddy wants to use Storming against the groundsfolk and Jael takes a powerful component that renders it impotent.

That’s a start.
So is this person male or female?
Might be kind of interesting to do a woman, since I’ve never even come close to that. But she’d probably have to be white collar to have the power and influence. So let’s start male—and maybe give him a female sidekick. So who is he?
A bloke. Somebody physically powerful and scary. Maybe bonkers.

Best Bad Guys…
- Commodus
- Agent Smith
- Tavington
- Darth Vader
- Falconi
- Baxter
- Uncle

What I need most from him is not humanity—but scariness (and maybe humor?). What if we did a Tom Hardy as Bill Sikes kind of thing? Only make him a little more charismatic and humorous. And I can figure out more about him as I get deeper into Storming.

His name is… Psykes, Psyches, Rawley Zlo, Rawliv Zlo.

Now, what about Hitch’s wife.

She should be a tired, worn, faded but pretty girl. Someone without a whole lot of oomph. Probably a bit of a nag—someone who drove Hitch away as much as she let him go. Maybe she was always claiming illness—and that’s why Hitch paid her no mind when she said she was dying.

Her name is… Elsie Celia Hitchcock.

She has a mother or a sister. I’m thinking probably an older sister. My first inclination is to make her stern and judgmental. But is that too clichéd? She does have to want to keep Walter away from Hitch.

Will what will be her relationship with Jael? Probably, she’s an overworked farmer’s wife, who has a good heart, but who is snappish and resentful at first. Someone who—or is that too much similarity with Hitch?

Okay, so I’m going to go for Emily Mortimer—anxious, concerned, slightly annoying, caring. Mom aspect. Character’s name is… Liz Nan Carpenter. Husband’s name is Hiram. He should be a bluff farmer—good-natured, but short-tempered.

They should have a few children. A boy around 17 Bert. A girl around 15 (who crushes on Hitch) Molly, and twin girls around four.
I’m not entirely sure what I want to do with Nan’s kids. I can’t have them stealing Walter’s limelight, so I’ll have to play them by ear. For now, the twins will be named Evvy and Ginny Milly Amie Annie.

I also want a mad aunt, à la Gillian Anderson’s Miss Havisham—only significantly less diabolical. Her name will be Aurelia Smith.

What about Hitch’s family?
My first instinct is to give him a father with whom he has a difficult relationship—but all my characters end up having daddy issues.

We could maybe flip this one though since Hitch is the black sheep. Maybe it’s his father who disapproves of him. Preacher maybe?

But if he’s still in the area, why doesn’t he stay involved with Walter? For this to work, Walter has to be a little neglected.

What about a brother? Barry Pepper? Maybe. I like the idea of that, but I am not quite sure where to go with it (unless the brother falls for Jael too?—or is that too many shades of Deepest?). I’ll just keep it in the back of my mind. His name could be Griff.

So then what about his barnstorming troupe? His mechanic will be his smart aleck sidekick. How about Tom Sizemore as Earl Harper.

What about a husband/wife team, who leaves, prompting Hitch to hire Jael?

The woman should be a souped-up blonde. Sweet and shallow, from a bad past. A little Marilyn Monroe-ish. Lillian Lilla Malone.

The man should either be obnoxiously good-humored or surly.

Probably work best if Hitch drives them away, in which case the guy should be touchy. Short and pugnacious maybe? Ben Dick Rick Holmes.

Until I know more about Storming, I like the idea of leaving Jael an orphan.

So on to my colorful minors.

I know I want two McCann-like brothers, who live on either side of some significant location, probably the Carpenter farm. They’re feuding with each other.

And their names will be J.W. and Finn Gil Matthew Berringer.

Anybody else?

Better stock them as they come.

All right, so scenes I already know of:

- Jael is running from something up above. She’s wearing a dress. She deliberately leaps from the clouds and lands on unsuspecting Hitch’s plane. After a few tense moments, she catches on fire and drops into Lake Minatare.
- She steals clothes and cuts her hair. Sneaks out of a farmhouse onto a roof.
- Sees Walter while she’s drinking at a stream.
- She asks Hitch to return her home.
• He ends up reluctantly hiring her to be in his show.
• There’s a dance.
• Walter helps Hitch out with the plane.
• Jael (and then Hitch) discover who Walter is.
• Storms increase.
• Jael and Hitch have to return to Storming to save the day.

And that’s about all I know.

Before I go any farther, I should figure out exactly what Storming is.

It can’t just be made of clouds. Too white and fluffy, for one thing. So I’m thinking, it should be something of physical substance—a quaint, wooden, rickety town—built on the clouds, which carry it around.

But the denizens should also be able to split off little clouds (or maybe “harness” would be a better term) for transportation.

I’m visualizing twisty roads packed with pointy-roofed stone houses. Lots of mist. They should be in the mist itself to keep it mysterious and not too sunny.

So I need to know their purpose in being up there:
Who’s in charge?
What did Jael steal?

Storming has some kind of ancient purpose. It’s been up there for a very long time and is only now being discovered because of the invention of the airplane.

I had originally thought it was intended for some kind of benevolent purpose—a divine mission so to speak. But it wouldn’t have to be. The people might have gone up there just to escape something—or to preserve something.

Another thought was that the people of Storming are responsible for making it rain. That means Storming itself is a vast and detachable network. Is that too big?

What if that were the original intent of Storming—either by divine mandate or by some innovative people who wanted to study and control the weather. But over the centuries, tragedy has struck, and the original mission became both impossible and then forgotten. Sort of like City of Ember.

And Zlo and Jael are somehow onto whatever vital piece will restore Storming to working order.

What if Jael works in the engines (shadows of Mortal Engines)? She’s an orphaned, eccentric grease monkey, who stumbles upon the truth ‘round about the time Zlo does the same. Zlo makes a grab for it and Jael takes it in runs. Likely, she doesn’t fully comprehend what it is.

Something tells me his low doesn’t either.
And what does Zlo want with it?

Maybe in his rambles in the underbelly (we’ll have to do something creative with that), he hears rumors about it. It’s something that allows Storming to control whatever clouds it’s attached to. And Zlo wants to—at first—use it to take Storming hostage and extort money from the government, and then, as he realizes more about it, he decides to use it to turn Storming into a pirate ship to raid and threaten the groundsmen.
That’s good—both global and local in its threat.

And what exactly is this thing?
Just some mechanical component will call it the dawsedometer.

**What does Jael do?**

Who’s in charge of Storming?
I’m imagining some sort of mayor dude. And is he good or bad?

He wants
I think he’s relatively good—but greed lets Zlo corrupt him. He comes to regret this though when Zlo turns out to be more than he can handle.

So he’s a greedy politician type with a weak core. But we’ll make him redeemable (and thus likable to degree), since will need someone to run the place after Zlo is defeated.

What if the mayor was someone young, and we used Edmund Sparkler as our model?
What implications does that raise? Are leaders elected or inherited?

Or what if—more likely—the young guy is only standing in for an ill or incapacitated thanks to Zlo—or maybe even Jael? mayor?

Okay, let’s do that—only we’ll make the young guy more naïve and fearful been greedy.

I do have this image of him in a pirate costume, a little torn between honor and excitement.

And then the mayor will be stalwart and wise.
Is he a mayor, a king, a captain, a constable, a father.
They call him the Glavnie Glavni. Jarn Rusk.
In the young assistant will be Seb Sverkaats Verkaats.

Okay, so next question. What does Jael do?

I’m seeing her as an almost forgotten cog in the wheels. Someone who lives and works alone (Jane Eyre?), largely forgotten by the world.
She does something in the mechanics of the place. Some small, relatively unimportant job. But she’s insanely smart, and she picks up all sorts of things just by watching.

Maybe she’s just responsible for keeping one engine stoked. What if she works with someone whom Zlo kills. Is that too heavy-duty? Maybe he just wounds him.

Or does giving her a friend take away from her loner-ness? Maybe she comes to work to help him because he’s crippled or something, and he can’t climb about. So she does the manual labor and learns from his experience. That would let them have a bigger job. Maybe they have to wind clockwork or something to keep it running. His name is Vaska Vasa Yasha Vito Neville-Nestor Vito.

Something else I need to think about is how does Storming supply itself?
They would have to make forages on the earth. Maybe they send people down whose job it is to live on earth for a while and earn the money needed for supplies. Once they’ve done their time, they can come back home (sort of like Mormon missionaries).

That would mean Storming isn’t adverse to going to ground. They just prefer to maintain secrecy in seclusion—probably because their original mandate demands it to protect the technology.
And when was it launched? Let’s say it happened during the Jules Verne era to maintain the steampunk theme. 1850

So does Jael or Zlo injure the mayor? I kind of like the complication if Jael does. So maybe she goes to him for help, is misunderstood, and has to do something that hurts him worse than she intended in order to get away. This should be before the final scramble to escape Zlo.

I’m also thinking Zlo should have a minor sidekick. Someone very inconsequential. A dumb henchman.

First question of the day: Where did Storming launch from. Eastern Europe is the obvious choice, what with the Russian connection, but I don’t want to be confined to historical accuracy. So I think I’ll just say it was peopled by a hodgepodge of mid-19th-century Europeans.

Now as for Zlo’s sidekick. He should be somebody not too bright, someone mostly silent. Or maybe giving him a dog—á la Bullseye—would be better, since with no Zlo POV scenes, I don’t think I really need someone to talk to. Especially since Seb ends up being a sidekick of sorts. So we’ll give him a dog. Or a bird? A bird might be kind of interesting since flying is so inherent to the plot. So what about a steppe eagle named Maksim.

Any other pets? Maybe give Earl a little lapdog, which Hitch hates. Or give Hitch a big dog like Rochester’s. I could even name him Taos, since that’s related to the planes.

What themes to I want to explore here? Obviously, I’ll have a better idea of this when I get deeper in, but for now I know I’m going to be dealing with Hitch taking responsibility for Walter. He’ll start to fall in love with Walter even before he learns who he is. Maybe he blames himself for Celia’s death and has to find redemption for that.

As for Jael, I don’t really know what her demons are. She’s blithe and optimistic, wise but also inexperienced in many things. She’s brave, but she’s also cowed a bit by Hitch’s grouchiness.

I like doing a bit of a Jane Eyre slant upon her. She’s alone and lonely and doesn’t really discover herself until she meets Hitch. Hers is kind of a story of growing into herself.

I think it might ultimately be a story of acceptance, since the town will have to learn to accept her (the Berringers will have to accept each other). If that’s the case then there should be some big prejudice between Hitch and Jael in the beginning. Jael’s pretty accepting of most things—and Walter even more so—so that’s where the others learned.

What about making Walter mute for most of the book? That would definitely save me from awkward child dialogue—and make his character more poignant. But what reason would he have for not talking? He doesn’t remember his parents well enough to miss them. I guess we could just not explain it, like Susan in The Patriot.

Is the mute thing a good idea or not?
I kind of like it. Let’s go with it for now.

So let’s do the old expected/unexpected drill.

What are readers going to expect from this story?

- Jael and Hitch fall in love and give Walter a home.
- Zlo is thwarted; Storming and Scottsbluff saved.

Both of those are important to a satisfying happy ending I think. I did originally think Jael would go back to Storming. But I think Walter and Hitch would have to go with her. Maybe they can return to Scottsbluff for some reason. The government, or somebody is after her?

**Should Scottsbluff be in a drought?**

Could it maybe be something like the local sheriff? Maybe he lumps her in with Zlo—or maybe she really did break the law in the name of getting home. So she has to stay away temporarily until the thing dies down.
Or it could be Hitch who has to go.
So what did they do?

- Killed someone (Zlo?)
- Stole.
- Damaged property on a grand scale.
- Kidnapped someone.

Stealing or damaging seems most likely.
Probably stealing—and something they couldn’t get back. Something big.

**Maybe Zlo killed Aurelia, and Jael and Hitch get blamed.** Is that too heavy? Or what if it were something lighter—like they killed the sheriff’s cow?

**What if we killed Aurelia?**
That might work. Let’s say Zlo has Walter and Aurelia in Storming. Jael and Hitch come after them. He drops them both. Jael catches Walter (and Hitch in the plane catches them in turn), but she can’t get Aurelia too—who falls into the lake and dies.
Jael is very upset by this (which Hitch points out to the sheriff), but he’s still locks them up.

Then maybe the Berringers at Walter’s request spring them.

- It’s expected Hitch knows how to fly, and fly he must.

**What if Hitch has a criminal record for some petty offenses as a young man?** What if that’s why he stayed away from Scottsbluff so long. Griff doesn’t know for certain that Hitch is guilty but he’s on to him.
Maybe, too, Griff likes Jael, so there’s a bit of a complication there. And maybe in the end, he lets her go with a wink and a nod, telling her to stay clear for a while. Maybe he’s a deputy. He does most of the work, but the sheriff is a blowhard.

- It’s expected that the Berringers will make up, but maybe they only do temporarily (long enough to help Hitch and Jael), then go back to it by the end.

And what are they feuding over? Some dumb thing. Maybe over a woman—who both of them are glad they didn’t marry now. Ginny Lou Thatcher.

What if Storming landed. The whole city—smacko—in the middle of a conflict. (Griff could blame them for that too.) Or could it be that Zlo broke off only part (but a sizable part) and landed that.

Don’t forget we gotta have an air show.

So anything else unexpected that’s expected?
Not thinking of anything. So what’s unexpected?

That there’s some kind of past connection between someone in SB and Storming. Aurelia or the Berringers?

Probably not. The whole point is that Storming is a special occurrence in SB.

That an ally turns out to be an enemy.

Nestor?
That would only work if we had some significant scene in Storming prior to Jael’s fall. It could be that Nestor was pulling strings the whole time. Maybe he’s the one who put Zlo on to the trail of the dawsedometer.
  But what does that gain us other than a twist?
  Not to mention it’s kind of clichéd to have the mentor/close friend unexpectedly turn out to be evil.
  So anyway that’s a possibility, but I’m just not too excited about it.

What about intentions?

Jael intends to safeguard the dawsedometer.
She intends to return to Storming.
She intends to prove herself brave and worthy.

Hitch intends to see his family and make a few things right in SB.
He intends to keep his air circus afloat.
Maybe he intends to take another illegal job (smuggling?) to make ends meet.
Zlo intends to fix the dawsedometer.  
He intends to take over Storming.  
He intends to turn pirate.

So a couple interesting thoughts —

Hitch still needs to be redeemed. So even though he regrets his previous actions, he has yet to rise above them. His air show is struggling—hence Rick and Lilla’s departure—so he’s tempted to do something naughty. In fact, he goes so far as to agree to it, before events force him away and make him see the light.

So—
What does he do?  
Who hires him?  
What if Griff were his brother?

The bad guy on the ground might be someone who likes the idea of hijacking Storming and partnering with Zlo. I kind of like the idea of it being Bill Campbell—and having Griff be honest and secretly work at cross purposes with the sheriff.

So Campbell’s a corrupt cop.  
What’s he want Hitch to do?  
Prohibition is the obvious choice. But it would be good if it was something related to the main plot. What could he move that could be used later in the book?

- Alcohol
- Stolen money

What if it was alcohol and it got used to blow something up—maybe even Campbell’s house, as part of a cruel irony?

My only problem with that is that I don’t believe Prohibition was right. So we have to attack something else on, like maybe it was all stolen. Maybe Campbell had confiscated it, then sold it under the table.

So what had Hitch done in 1911? Not liquor. Maybe he did a job for Campbell that involved robbing a mail carrier or something.

And I really like the idea of Griff being his older brother.

One thing I need to know here is Jael’s weakness.  
She’s naïve and vulnerable. She believes she’s not worth much.  
Maybe it’s that she’s too trusting. That’s what allows Zlo to steal from her. And after that she’s more suspicious of others—such as Hitch.

So what do I know needs to happen?

Jael learns Zlo is going to steal the dawsedometer  
  goes to help Seb.
Zlo hurts the mayor and Jael is blamed. Zlo steals the dawsedometer and hurts Nestor. Jael takes a key piece and escapes. She falls on Hitch’s plane. She finds clothes and cuts her hair. She meets Walter. Hitch’s air show arrives in town. She falls on Hitch’s plane. She finds clothes and cuts her hair. She meets Walter. Hitch visits his brother (who doesn’t tell him about Walter?) Hitch is propositioned by Campbell.

25% Jael asks for a job. He turns her down. She turns around and asks again. Something happens that made him reconsider. Walter comes by. The Carpenters give Jael a room. Air show. Hitch takes Campbell’s job. Jael takes Hitch’s. Jael takes a job. Hitch visits his brother (who doesn’t tell him about Walter?) Hitch is propositioned by Campbell.


75% Clamatic storms; dogfights; return to Storming

So it’s looking like I’m going to need Jael’s POV for sure. And my plot points?

25%: Hitch takes Campbell’s job; Jael takes Hitch’s. Jael takes a job.

50%: Storming lands.

75%: Storms and dogfights.

Inciting event: Jael’s fall; Zlo’s attempt on the dawsedometer.

Key event: Jael’s fall

So I think we’re in pretty good shape to start the character sketches (already!). We’ll do Jael, Hitch, and short ones for Walter and Zlo.
Character Sketches

Jael

And today (already!), we get start on character sketches. Jael first, of course.

What I know about her right now is that she’s a bit of a street urchin—an orphan, with an orphan’s insecurities and vulnerabilities, but also a beatific, open, cheerful, enthusiastic personality.

How old was she when her parents died? Pretty young I would say, maybe 11. But I think she had a good family life. She at least had the foundation of parents who loved her.

So we’ll say her father was a poor but respectable working man. Probably he worked at something involved in the engines—and that’s how Jael ended up with Nestor.

Or maybe not.

Maybe she wandered the streets a bit after her father died and finally found herself near the engines.

So what did her father do?

Something physical.

Maybe he was a forgeman—who welded and repaired things, some of which might have been for the engines (here’s the connection with Nestor), but also fine things, such as chandeliers, etc. for the rich (which could be how Jael gained her friendship with Seb).

Her father is a bluff kind man. A gentle giant—although he can throw his punches with the best of them when provoked. And his name is—

Well, first, what last name to I want Jael to have?

Miklaus
Tsara    Jael Tsarana

Jael Sarana

Jael Am

Jael Anastas

Jael Elena

Okay, so the father’s name is

Buchanan Elena

The mother Grier Elena was a lovely if plain woman, a laundress.

How did they die?

In an accident (unless Nestor was somehow responsible?)
What if Buchanan knew or guessed part of the truth about the dawsedometer? He was investigating it when something happened. I’m thinking there was an explosion or a fire—or maybe he fell?

Maybe lightning is extra dangerous up there—drawn to the metal in the walkways. Maybe he used the dawsedometer wrong and called down a storm from a free-ranging cloud—and started a major fire that killed Grier. Maybe he ran into a building to save Jael and died himself.

Nestor knew what Buchanan was working on—took advantage of the situation (in part) by snatching up Jael and taking her with him to the engines. He had vague ideas of his own about using the dawsedometer and that Jael knew something that could help—info or a tool. Such as…

A key. A skeleton key of course.

This is a special key, which Buchanan himself made. And Jael keeps it always close, out of both sentimental reasons, and perhaps a little caginess. Why does she hide it from Nestor if she trusts him?

Either she doesn’t know he wants it or she doesn’t fully trust him.

More likely the latter. Maybe her father told her not to give the key to anyone, so her not telling Nestor isn’t personal—and she doesn’t know that Nestor collects keys and tries them all in the dawsedometer.

Okay so her name is Jael Elena. I don’t think she thinks much about her name at all. She’s not into trivialities or even flights of fancy—for all that she’s a little whimsical. A name is a name—something serviceable to be used.

She was born December 17, 1894. She was born, of course, in Storming, on the Lower End, in Heatside, just off the Engines. Her parents had a small second-level flat of only two rooms. A dark place with only one window, but one she remembers in the cozy glow of firelight—which is sort of ironic since it burnt down.

Her parents were decent, hard-working people, who appreciated life for what it was, were thankful for what they had and lived a life of simple faith.

Her father was very smart. Too poor to attend University, but always reading, always thinking and inventing. He and Grier weren’t soul mates, but they deeply loved each other. The love of family and a joy in the simple things of life were the most important things in life.

No siblings.

Jael’s ancestry is founded primarily in Eastern Europe, although there has been some mixing, since others from other countries were also on board when Storming first took off.

Up until her parents died, she lived entirely in Heatside. Afterward she wandered the Lower End before Nestor finally found her and took her to live with him under the Engines, in a snug little hole of the room.

She went to a formal school up until the fire—which destroyed the school as well as their home. It was just a small school in an attic flat, run by a middle-class spinster who looked upon it as mission work. Jael loved learning but felt the restraint of school, which forced her to sit all day and waste time on subjects she found uninteresting (such as spelling and painting—rather than history, mathematics, and astronomy). She would come home nights and read with her
father, and he would give her small problems and projects to complete, which she loved. She is very much like her father.

After the fire, she discontinued all formal learning, although Nestor made a show of nagging sometimes, but Jael’s education was left mostly in her own head, and therefore came out rather lopsided: she pursued math and mechanics. She can navigate by the stars and sketch remarkably well. But her spelling is atrocious and she’s ignorant of most of society that doesn’t affect her.

She’s always worked with Nestor on the Engines. She doesn’t earn a wage, although Nestor will give her a few coins now and then and often buy her presents. This doesn’t much bother her, since she’s neither ambitious or materialistic.

Storming travels the world, drifting on sails. They usually travel around the world once a year, stopping periodically to pick up their supplies. Jael has never been off Storming, but she has seen much of the world—and is always dreaming about the adventures of the groundlings. She loves Storming, but she does dream of a life that isn’t confined to one city.

Jael lives with Nestor, of course. He’s a Fagin-like dude—a little shrewd, a little compassionate, a little refined, a little grimy. He works on the Engines, maintaining his section, checking gauges, fixing cogs, and stoking fires. He’s an ambitious, cautionary, greedy man, but not overly so. He knows his place in the world, and he would never openly try to flout it—although he would horde wealth and secrets—and live like a king in private.

He’s not overly scrupulous, but he does maintain his own personal code. He took in Jael for selfish reasons, but his heart did go out to her, and he does love her in his own shriveled way. He’s both dramatic (a bit diva-ish really) and a bit possessive, but he cares for her and she him.

She has her share of spats with Nestor—most of which end in her refusing to speak to him or outright disobeying him—or both. But for the most part, they get on fine. She hasn’t many friends, aside from Seb whom she met as a child, when her father would deliver high priced items to the rich end of the city.

Seb’s parents were moderately wealthy social climbers, who bought him a spot on the mayor’s staff. Seb’s not too bright, but he has a heart of gold. His affection for Jael is entirely brotherly and uncomplicated. He knows his duty as an aristocrat and wouldn’t think of doing otherwise. He does and believes as he’s told, so it’s fortunate no one ever told him his friendship with a gear monkey like Jael is highly irregular.

He’s very kind to her and hardly ever thinks to look down on or feel sorry for her. He likes her both out of habit and simply because she’s one of few people who take him seriously. They see each other once every few weeks, when they sneak out for a lark. Their favorite haunt is the Church of St. Kirill’s belfry looking down on the city and feeding sweetbread to the pigeons.

Who does she wish to spend time with? Jael isn’t particularly ambitious. She’s much more interested in genuine relationships than society. But she also doesn’t take very high stock of herself as being someone worth knowing. She is in contact with very few people, outside of Nestor and Seb. Most days, she works all day in the Engines and goes straight home. She’s not strictly speaking, supposed to be in the Engines, so she is in the habit of keeping a low profile.
She and Nestor sometimes go out to a pub, where most of the people know them and keep their secret: Vasily’s.

Really, the people she would most like to spend time with are her dead parents, who loved her. Romantic love isn’t something she knows a whole lot about, so she doesn’t think on that much except in generalities.

Nestor depends on her to pull her weight in the Engines. Seb depends on her in a more vague way—and she does leave little presents semi-anonymously as a sort of game with some children in the tenement across the street from the Engines.

Her father, of course, was her hero. She adored him and still does. She admires Nestor in smaller, more qualified ways. And she does have an untarnished admiration for the beautiful women she sometimes sees on the street. It’s an admiration without envy. She admires them as she would a beautiful bird.

For the most part, people don’t notice her at all. She is quiet and unobtrusive, without being mousy, and she doesn’t draw attention to herself, even when she is out and about. But those who do notice or know her view her as a sweet, smart, pretty young woman who brightens their day—and who deserves a good life.

Who would Jael have as an enemy prior to Zlo? No one knows her really. And those who do know her, like her. The Engine Masters are technically opponents, of a sort, since they would kick her (and Nestor) out if they knew she was there (because the Engines are a closely guarded secret and no one who isn’t approved is supposed to see them). We’ll give her one nosy, growly Engine Master in particular—Nestor’s direct overseer, who knows something is afoot but isn’t concerned (or bright) enough to catch on. But Jael has to go out of her way to avoid him, particularly when he’s at Vasily’s. His name is Ivan Turvey.

She’s never had a boyfriend or any romantic experience. Sta Stephan, Vasily’s son, who is a cocksure little punk (but likable for all that) has a crush on her and is always clumsily (he thinks suavely) trying to get her to pay attention to him. But he’s only 17, and she’s known him since he was a baby.

Her dreams of love are very vague. She wants to be loved—and she sometimes envies the love she and Seb watch on the streets—but she has no real notion of that ever happening since new people aren’t really part of her life.

She likes children, but hardly ever has the opportunity to be around them. She wants children as a part of her idealized happy home picture, but she has no real concept or thought of the realities of pregnancy and giving birth.

But, so as not to give the impression of total naivety, she’s no fool. She has eyes to see and ears to hear—and she knows more about life than most give her credit for at first. She has a shrewd edge that serves her well.

She is primarily a positive, hopeful person. She lives in the moment, and lives it to the hilt with exuberant joy. But she has seen enough of the dark side of the world to be a little wary, a little suspicious.
Her parents had a simple profound faith, and she carries that with her. She’s not deeply concerned or learned in theology. But she unquestionably believes in a loving God Who cares for and watches out for her. Nestor doesn’t share that faith, so she keeps it mostly to herself.

She is comfortable with herself for the most part—but she also harbors a lot of insecurities. She isn’t truly confident of her worth, her parents, her manner. She’s outgoing enough that she usually acts right past her insecurities, but she will often stop herself or think back and doubt herself or feel embarrassment.

She would love to be free to roam and explore—both Storming and the world beneath, although she would always come back home. She’s not discontent where she is, so much as cramped.

Her demons are primarily her personal insecurities—but also her parents’ deaths. She is mostly at peace with it, but it still aches her.

She’s no fool. She sees most things for exactly what they are. She knows what Nestor is. She knows what the Engine Masters are. She has a quick, intelligent mind and she doesn’t allow herself to believe nonsense.

But she does undercut herself:

She is, of course, optimistic—perhaps even more than realistic.

For the most part, she’s very real, although she can retreat behind a protective mask when she starts doubting herself in public.

She’s a very moral, conscientious person. But beyond that, she’s a kindhearted person. She’s good at empathy.

Her confidence is very high in some areas—her intelligence, her skill set. And low in others—her personality, appearance, bearing.

Her days began around seven, when she naturally wakes up. Nestor’s already gone to the Engines by then. She fixes breakfast and reads while eating. Then she gets dressed and goes down to work on the Engines. She has a knack for fixing things, so Nestor always has her working on repairs. If she happens to have no repairs, she works on her own inventions. If she forgets to surface for lunch, which she often does, Nestor will bring her something.

Then she goes to mind the Engines, while he naps or goes out to run errands or go pubbing. If all is well in the Engines, she leaves them for a few hours, and she and Nestor either eat together in the room or go out to Vasily’s. Evenings are either spent at Vasily’s, reading at home, or roaming the streets, either alone or with Seb.

She goes to chapel on Sunday when she can, but she has no real day off.
She is really a lovely woman. She has a soft, almost ethereal beauty, so transparent you almost miss it, but once you really look, she’s stunning.

At 5’8”, she’s tall, willowy. Very slim, almost too slim and all legs. She carries herself with a billowy grace, always fluid, always moving, dancing, skimming, bouncing.

She has a long, oval face, high cheekbones, and a gently sloping jaw.

Her eyes are a smoky gray, almost silver.

She has a lush, delicious mouth, a little wide, but utterly captivating and innocently kissable.

Her nose is longish and straight. No freckles, since she stays indoors almost all day.

Her hair is a tawny, reddish golden blonde. Noticeably long. She usually wears it carelessly pinned up in back.

Her skin is pale, milky almost. She sunburns easily. No tattoos or piercings. Her hands are scarred from working on the machines—fine little white scars.

She has a quiet, sweet voice, and a bubbling infectious laugh.

Mostly, she wears jumpsuits and long vests, jackets, boots. She hasn’t owned a dress since her parents died. To church, she wears the same thing—only clean.

Most people don’t give her too much notice. She has a knack of just slipping in and out of sight. But if they focus, they would probably notice first that she’s a poor laborer—and then that she’s lovely.

She has no idea she’s beautiful, so she would describe herself as a grease monkey with peaked features and disastrous hair.

She enjoys excellent health and has no disabilities or handicaps.

She’s melancholy, with some secondary traits of choleric—although they’re not super strong. She’s analytical—a thinker. And although she’s very optimistic, she does have mood swings and lows in which she doubts herself. She loves people, but she’s forced to be on her own for days—even weeks at times. She’s very private in her work.

Her strongest character trait would be her positive mental outlook. Flipside of that would perhaps be a tendency to see good in things where there aren’t any—then fooling herself in the blind naivety.

Her weakest trait is her lack of confidence in herself and her own worth.
She’s very controlled and disciplined, almost to a fault. She’ll hold back emotions to the point of repression. But only when she feels threatened or uncomfortable—which is around most people. Around Seb (and Walter), she’s very open and unguarded. But when she’s not comfortable, she clams up. So around others, she’s very quiet. But she never lies about how she feels or what she thinks. If you ask her point-blank, she’ll unload on you.

Injustice, cruelty, stupidity (and most people are stupider than her) make her angry. She hates being taken advantage of. She hates it when people make her feel less—even when she believes them. She despises laziness and deceit.

Memories of her family can make her cry.Loneliness—or the feeling she’s stuck and her life is going nowhere can make her cry. She’s very empathetic, so the pain of others, even if she doesn’t know them, touches her.

She has a healthy fear of the Engine Masters, since they could arrest her for living with Nestor. She’s also very wary of people in general. She loves children, but grown-ups always put her on her guard.

She’s not in any sense a physical coward. In fact, she’s brave almost to the point of recklessness. She loves being up high—hanging off things as far as she can, so she’ll feel like she’s flying.

By extension of her fear of the Masters, she’s always avoided the Machinery Government Building. Higher-ups she’s cautious around, but she’s unlikely to be recognized there, and Seb’s presence makes her comfortable.

Aside from being a numbers whiz and a mechanical prodigy, she doesn’t have many talents, per se. She has a fabulous memory, and is a good whistler.

Those who know her love her sunny spirit and her kindness.

She’s not tremendously political, but her father’s legacy, and her friendship with Seb means she is pretty up on what’s going on. She likes Glavni Reesk, but she disapproves of the iron grip the government and particularly the Engine Masters keep on the populace. She wants more freedom, although truthfully, she probably wouldn’t know what to do with it.

She collects books—mostly math and science—and mechanical thingamabobs. Also, colored handkerchiefs, which people who know of her like for them collect for her.

Favorite food is chocolate mousse, which she only ate once, when Seb snuck one out to her after a party. Practically, her favorite is a beef and mustard sandwich. Favorite drink is tea, of course—although she likes hers lukewarm, almost cold.

She’s not up on refined music, but she loves the street ditties played by organ grinders.

Favorite books are math, science, and history. History books are hard to find, since there really aren’t that many of Storming—and those from below are discouraged.
As a child, she loved action games, football, cricket, and the like. She hasn’t played since living with Nestor, but she still loves to run and climb, much to poor, panting Seb’s chagrin.

Favorite color would be red—she loves anything bright and vivid.

Her daydreams, from childhood onward, have almost always been about traveling and having adventures—pirates, explorers, and royal caravans. She wants—in a vague, safe sort of way—to go to ground and see the world.

She spends her day off reading, exploring, and hanging out with Seb.

The best gift for her would be a book, a mechanical tool, or a handkerchief.

She has a pet mouse named Meesh.

No vehicle.

Her typical expression when happy is a sparkly-eyed smile. She’s either tranquil and content or busting so that she has to run and jump and laugh. When she’s truly happy, she’s usually very effusive.

When she’s angry, her face is like stone. She glares and gets so shook up that she scarcely talk straight. She trembles, and red spots appear on her face and neck. She doesn’t get that way often though.

6-12-12

Jael has a very open, pitiful face when she’s sad. Her eyes get huge and she looks at you very reproachfully, then away. She gets very quiet, because if she talks she’ll cry. She has a very tender heart and can bruise easily.

When she’s afraid, she pulls back into herself and tries to melt into the woodwork. Her eyes get big, but she looks straight at what she’s afraid of. She keeps her eyes on it and doesn’t turn and run.

She has a way of turning her head away from whatever she’s working on/reading, when trying to shift her attention.

Her hands are very expressive in a languid sort of way. She chews thoughtfully on the tip of her forefinger. Scrunches her face while thinking.

Idiosyncrasies include laughing and talking to herself. Organizing things according to size. Blowing on each finger in turn before getting to work. Tapping her teeth with her fingernail mindlessly.
She laughs and jeers at people who are full of themselves. She has a spontaneous sense of humor and loves the ridiculous. But she would never laugh at someone whose feelings she might hurt.

You can cheer her up by loving her. Seek her out, give her a hug or a small gift (bit of food, etc.). Sit with her and talk her out of her depression.

She’s generally a pretty patient person. But you can annoy her by intruding on her concentration repeatedly. Loud, repetitive noises irritate her. She doesn’t like obnoxiously loud people.

Most of her dreams are pretty vague. She wants to travel and have adventures. She wants to fall in love and be loved for the rest of her life. But those are all unreachable right now, for the most part. More specifically, she wants to build newer and better engines and earn the right to live with Nestor without fear of the Masters.

She’s not a bad person. In a fit of pique once she told Seb he was stupid. That’s always preyed on her, though she’s long since apologized for it, and Seb, of course, has forgiven her. Greatest success was fixing and improving the coolant system on the Engines. Nestor, of course, got credit for it, but she doesn’t care about that.

Biggest trauma was the fire and her parents’ deaths.

Most embarrassing thing to ever happen to her was being cornered outside a house party where she was waiting for Seb. A group of catty debutantes mocked her appearance, about which she was sensitive anyway. She finally, on the verge of tears, punched one of them smack in the nose, just as Seb came out. There was quite an uproar, and she had to make a run for it, while Seb smoothed it over.

More than anything in the world, she cares about Nestor and Seb—and then Meesh, and then the Engines.

Her biggest secret, of course, is her life with Nestor. Other than that—and her private dreams—her only true secret is her father’s key, and even she doesn’t fully know what that’s about.

If she could do one thing and succeed at it, it would be building a little engine of her own that she could use to secretly visit the ground. But that’s just crazy talk.

What I love about her is her sparkling wide openness to life, her feistiness, and her physical courage.

I think readers will immediately sympathize with her because of her optimism, kindness, and her difficult life with Nestor in the underbelly of the Engines.

She is an extraordinary person in her intelligence and her wonderful spirit. Other than that, she’s very ordinary.
Her situation is extraordinary both because of Storming in general and because she lives a hidden life, shadowed by her father’s work and her parents’ deaths.

Her core need is to be worthy of acceptance, respect, and love.

One of her defining moments was exploring deep into the Engines to discover how they work. It was both physically dangerous and risky because of the Masters and other Engine workers. But she emerged triumphant with the info she needed.

Hitch

6-13-12

Robert “Hitch” Hitchcock. What I know about him is that he’s a pilot, a barnstormer. He’s a grumpy, slightly petulant, rash, brash, regretful, cocky guy. He was never too good at responsibility. He grew up loving adventure, and early aviation got into his blood. He got married young—around 20—to Celia Crawley Smith—which was a mistake. He ran off to do an air show, not knowing she was pregnant. He stayed away for almost a year, always intending vaguely to get back home to her. But then he got a letter from her sister Nan Carpenter, telling him Celia had died—but nothing about the fact that he had a son. So Hitch just never got around to coming home. He traveled about, from show to show, usually just scraping by, until he was able to put together Capt. Hitchcock’s Flying Circus, with a few other performers. And that’s when he finally drifts back home.

He’s cocky and full of himself, but he has a good heart under it all. It’s to his credit that he understands and (more or less) acknowledges his mistakes. And he regrets them, although he doesn’t really see a way clear to redeeming himself.

He was named Robert after his father and Elias after his maternal grandfather. He never had a great relationship with his dad, so he’s not too fond of his first name. And Elias is too old-fashioned. He’s been known as Hitch ever since he was of school age. Fellow students started calling him that, and his family picked it up, mostly to differentiate him from his father.

He was born March 22, 1889, in Scottsbluff, NE.

His parents were corn farmers. Robert and Elsie (Griffith) Hitchcock. His father was a strict, hard-working, taciturn man. He was hard on Hitch, never put up with his dreams or his high spirits, and Hitch fought him every step of the way. So animosities were always high between them. Robert never forgave Hitch for leaving Celia. He died three years after she did, at the age of 51, of a heart attack.

Elsie was a beautiful pale redhead. She died of influenza when Hitch was eleven (and she was thirty-one), but he remembers her as a ray of sunlight in his life. She was a soft-spoken, kind, sweet woman who embraced life with joy. Jael kind of reminds Hitch of her.

His parents were both hard-working, church-going people. They loved the land and gave their lives to it. They maintained high standards of integrity and work ethics and expected their boys to hold to them.
They had one other son (younger than Hitch by two years)—Griffith Lucas. He was a sweet-tempered, obedient kid, who always tried to make up for Hitch’s lapses—both to protect Hitch from punishment, and to make it up to their parents.

He adored Hitch’s wild bravery and brains, growing up. But he could never get over what Hitch did in leaving Celia and never coming back for Walter (he didn’t know Hitch had no idea of Celia’s pregnancy). In a way, he’s spent his life trying to make up for Hitch. He doesn’t have a whole lot of time for Walter (as deputy under a sheriff whom he also has to make up for), but he does stop by and try to be friends every now and then. But Walter has just never taken a shine to him. He lives with Grandpa Elias Griffith on the old farm.

Growing up on a Nebraska farm meant Hitch’s family was land rich and cash poor. They never truly wanted for anything vital, although some of the drought/hail/tornado years left them pinching pennies pretty hard. As farmers in a farming community they were pretty average socially.

For all his restlessness and big dreams, Hitch never had any problem working hard on the farm. He regretted the inability to buy certain expensive things (mostly machinery), but being rich was never a concern. He just always wanted something more exciting than farming. Griff was the one who liked the steady work of the land. Hitch liked variety.

His family comes of English stock on his father’s side and Welsh on his mother’s. They’ve been in America for five generations.

Hitch spent all his growing-up years in Scottsbluff. He left for a few years when he was eighteen. Hoboed around the state, as well as Kansas and Missouri, working random jobs until he earned enough money to buy a plane. He went back home for a bit, married Celia on impulse, then got restless. Took the illegal smuggling job for Sherriff Campbell and had to get out of the state for a while. Took a job with a flying circus—Col. Livingston’s. When word came of Celia’s death, he never really slowed down long enough to feel it. In the nine years since, he’s travelled the country—spending a lot of time in Louisiana, Texas, and California. But he’s rarely in any place longer than a few months. Eight months in Pasadena, where his plane was impounded for a debt and he had a brief fling with a girl, was a record.

He was never much for school. He was plenty smart, but book learning bored the heck out of him. He was always causing disruptions, always turning in subpar work (albeit with flashes of genius). He was best at math and was a good speller, but he had atrocious handwriting and hated reading.

He was always good with animals and machines—although he was more of a work-around than a by-the-rules guy when it came to repairs. His greatest skill, of course, is his piloting.

Aside from farm work as a kid, he worked side jobs out at the airport and the local livery stable. The Berringers would sometimes give him odd jobs—and outbid each other. Hitch was good at getting their prices up.
He worked quite a few physical jobs over the years, but his vocation, of course, is flying—whether it’s mail or entertainment. He’s never made much money. Most of the time, he’s just scraping by.

But the upside is he gets to travel all over the country. He gave a try to joining the war. But he then got caught up in some experimental plane design, a girl, and a little scrape with the law. And one thing and then another kept him out until it was over.

At the moment, his traveling companions are Earl Harper, Rick Holmes, and Lilla Malone. Earl is his mechanic. A stocky, dark-haired man with a rough manner and a soft heart, Earl isn’t the best airplane mechanic running (he gets sidetracked by experiments, for one thing), but he’s true blue.

He and Hitch hooked up during a stopover in a little Texas town six years ago. They both got falling down drunk and emerged from their hangovers best friends. Earl is steadier than Hitch and seven years older—so he kinda (tries to) keeps a watch out for him. He’s the usually unheeded voice of caution in Hitch’s windblown plans.

He likes Hitch. They have common interests, and Hitch brings adventures Earl would never find on his own. But Hitch does drive him crazy frustrated. He’s always shaking his head over Hitch’s wild ideas. He often thinks about leaving the circus to settle down somewhere, but it would take a lot to get him to abandon Hitch.

Rick Holmes is a parachutist Hitch picked up less than a year ago in Oregon. Rick is a dapper dude. A little arrogant. He and Hitch have never been buddy-buddy, and they would never have lasted so long without Earl’s mitigating effects. Rick has plans of his own, which involve lots of get-rich-quick schemes.

Lilla Malone is a relatively recent addition. She stumbled into the circus in Denver a few months back. She’s a sweet girl—a little dumb. She didn’t have a job, so Earl and Rick talked Hitch into taking her on. Her dumbness has always irritated Hitch, but he takes care of her—and she’s been good for business, taking tickets and just waving from the plane’s backseat.

She and Rick are engaged and planning to leave the show.

Hitch is an extrovert who seeks company when he wants company, but, for all that, he’s a pretty lonely person. Earl is really the only person in his life who cares about him, but he doesn’t let even Earl in too close. He couldn’t put a wish for companionship into words. But, deep down, he does want a companion.

In a shaky sort of way, his crew depends on him, although they all know it’s a feast or famine lifestyle—mostly famine. Everybody else has long since given up depending on him.

He most admires his grandfather, his mother, and anyone else brave. He admires fearlessness in people. He doesn’t like clingers or people who are unnecessarily dependent. He admires courage and resilience and, ironically, dependability.
He has no real enemies, per se, although there’s a lot of animosity between him and Griff and Nan—mostly on Griff’s and Nan’s parts. Bill Campbell isn’t an enemy, but he holds power over Hitch, and they both know it—which is one reason Hitch has never come home.

He and Celia Smith—a plain-looking, earnest girl, who ended up being both a bit of a nag and a hypochondriac, mostly as a means to try to get the effects she wanted from him—had a brief summer romance when he returned home after his first bout of wanderlust. They got married without too much consideration. But it only lasted about a year before Hitch realized it was a mistake.

Celia was nice enough, but very passive-aggressive and manipulative. She wanted him to settle down, quit flying mail, and get a good town job. He hated that she tried to change him. When the opportunity to make some fast cash smuggling liquor for Campbell happened along, he grabbed at it, and took a job in Col. Livingstone’s Flying Circus. He fully intended to return home, eventually—but then word came of Celia’s death. He mourned her, but it was also a relief. Still, he always felt a deep sense of regret and responsibility for leaving her—another reason he never came home.

He knew Celia all his life. They went to school and church together. But they never saw or spoke much to each other personally until they met again after his first return. They reconnected at a square dance. Celia was very attracted to Hitch (with the fervent intent, of course, of changing him), and Hitch responded without too much conscious thought. He was in the mood for love that summer and one thing just led to another. Without ever truly considering the ramifications, he married her. But her intent to change him and settle him down rubbed raw finally. He was spending a lot of time away from the house, even before he took Campbell’s job.

As for children, he had no idea Celia was pregnant—or ill. He likes kids well enough, although he’s hardly ever around them. He has a pretty awkward, brusque manner with them at first, but his natural ability to charm people and put them at ease puts him in good stead with kids most of the time. Like as not, he’ll have a troop of them constantly trailing him by the end of every stop.

He grew up in a conservative churchgoing town, so he was brought up to believe in and respect God. He’s wandered more than a little, and he feels his mistakes have put him at a remove from God. But he holds to a deep, if simple, belief in a divine being who manages the world for His good pleasure. He feels his own lack of worth in comparison; it’s one of the few areas in which he is truly humble—if not very motivated.

Despite a healthy dose of cynicism, Hitch is a dreamer. He’s always seeing big possibilities over the next horizon—which makes it tough for him to stick out things (or places) very often. He’s only stuck with the planes (and Earl and Taos) really because they fly with him.

On the surface, he thinks he’s awesome. He knows full well he’s handsome, charming, brave, and talented. On these scores, his confidence knows no bounds.
But deep down, he is honest enough to think pretty poorly of a few of the decisions he’s made. He knows that, all in all, he’s led a pretty worthless life—but he has no idea how to go about changing it—or how to let it go.

If he could change anything about his life, he’d own a decent-sized circus that would make decent money and provide stability for him and Earl and any other dependents.

His demon centers around his moral lapses—leaving Celia and Griff, taking illegal jobs. He regrets them all, even though he makes no real effort to change his ways.

He lies to himself about a lot of things—that he’s not such a bad guy—that respectability and a steady income are right over the next horizon. That he’s happy. That he’s fulfilled.

He’s grumpily optimistic. He’s decidedly contrary, so if someone else voices a positive outlook, he’ll most likely counter it. But, really, he’s always seeing big possibilities in things. He’s only a realist after the fact.

Real/Feigned: He’s a little of both. His aggressive, personable nature usually reveals his true self without his even trying. But his charmer side is a bit more put on. He knows how to work people to get what he wants. He doesn’t really mean to be manipulative. It’s just a natural output of his charm. But he has to be calm and patient to be charming. Otherwise, he’s a bull in a china closet.

He’s not a supremely moral person. He lies, cheats, imposes on people without too much thought—but also without any intent to hurt anyone. Deep down, he knows what’s right and once (if) he recognizes it, he almost always regrets his bad behavior. But he’s really too selfish to hold himself back before it’s too late.

He’s very confident. He knows full well his good qualities. He even goes a little beyond them and can tend to glorify himself if no one (Earl) is around to keep his feet on the ground.

Most people see him pretty much for what he is—a handsome, devil-may-care, charming rogue, who leads a gypsy lifestyle with no roots.

Hitch’s days really aren’t too typical. He likes to mix things up—be spontaneous. But he is responsible about taking care of his plane and his people, so that does impose some order.

Hitch is 6’1”—well built. Broad shoulders, muscular arms, chest, etc. (of the period, of course).

He carries himself with a swaggering looseness that both irritates and attracts most people. He’s a hotshot, but he’s a nice hotshot.

Face is a long oval. Square, prominent cleft chin. High cheekbones and broad forehead. For all that he’s an attractive guy, he’s really not that handsome when you look close.

He has blue eyes that aren’t all that noticeable (too pale) until he’s mad, and then suddenly his glare just blinds you with blue.

Nose is long—a little too long.
Mouth is very pale—almost no lip color and a little on the short side. But he has a laughing, teasing, infectious grin that shows off a very nice set of teeth.

His hair is very curly, usually very short, ruddy brown that can look dark in some lights and reddish in others (usually directly sunlight).

He has very fair skin that freckles like crazy. Not a whole lot of body hair.

He has a good-sized scar at the corner of his right eyebrow from a plane crash he was in at 27.

He speaks in a slow easy drawl (part of his charm) that can quickly turn into a very intense, very intimidating growl if you get on the wrong side of him.

He usually wears button-down shirts, trousers (sometimes, usually for the show, jodhpurs), a leather jacket, scarf, boots, and a leather helmet and goggles.

The first thing most people notice about him is either his pilot’s outfit or his attitude, usually both. Most women are very attracted to him. Men are either envious or threatened.

He would describe himself as the best pilot in the country—and also a charming, handsome son of a gun.

Hitch has a few old wounds from various misadventures. An ornery old cuss took after him with a shotgun after Hitch supposedly scared his hens from laying with the plane—and Hitch came away with a calf full of buckshot (not all of which they got out) from that one.

He also got a couple busted-up knuckles from fistfights, and a stiff shoulder and collarbone from old breaks he picked up in a plane wreck.

He’s a definite choleric. He’s loud, brash, confident, take-charge, annoying—all that jazz. He’s not a decided extrovert. He likes his alone time. But he does enjoy being around people. He doesn’t have a shy bone in his body. He’s not necessarily the life of the party, but he’s definitely the loudest one in it.

His love language would be deeds.

His strongest trait is probably his confidence and his ability to accomplish great things through sheer force of will and personality. It may not be pretty, but it will get done.

But, by the same token, he tends to leap before he looks, and he’s gotten himself into more than one regrettable situation as a result. For all his formidable willpower, he often shows a lamentable lack of moral fortitude. He’s just never been to inspired to kick himself into gear when it really matters.

When he wants something, nothing is going to stand in his way. In those instances, his control and discipline are unrivaled. He’s a whirlwind of efficiency and manpower—and onlookers stand in awe. But if he’s not inspired, forget about it. Then his self-control and discipline go down the tubes—which is largely the reason for his moral lassitude.

He isn’t long on patience, which makes him easily snappish and cranky (he tends to expect people to read his mind), but he doesn’t have a short temper. It takes a lot to get him truly riled.
Usually what pushes him to the brink is people who won’t lay off—people who falsely accuse him. He’s fiercely loyal, so he’s more likely to take offense on someone else’s account than his own. You mess with his plane or his dog, you pretty much die.

He’s not a man easily moved to tears. He probably hasn’t cried for years. It would take an overwhelming flood of emotion—grief or regret—to make him submit to tears.

He’s not a man much given to fears. He’s just as likely to face and overcome his fear as not. Fear is a red flag, urging him on.

But people who hold sway over him are something he would prefer to avoid—Bill Campbell and the like. Staying in one place too long, that scares him. Getting old or crippling himself. Being indebted to people.

He’s a very talented guy in a bludgeon kind of way. And what he does lack in talent, he makes up for in sheer grit and willpower.

Most of his talents lean toward mechanical and physical feats. He has insanely good vision. And he has a knack for making little baubles out of carving wood.

He doesn’t care too much about politics. As long as they stay out of his way, he’ll stay out of theirs. So, basically, he’s no fan of government—particularly the more obtrusive it is.

His life travels with him in his plane, so he hasn’t much room for collections—although he does keep a map on which he marks off the places he’s been.

Favorite food would be chicken and dumplings—though it never measures up to the way he remembers his mother making it when he was a kid. Favorite drink would be a cold beer, although he also likes orange soda pop.

Music isn’t something he has much exposure to—although it’s a habit of his to always be singing some little ditty—”Old Susannah,” “Onward Christian Soldiers,” and lots of drinking shanties.

He likes pulp fiction—adventure novels and whodunits. He actually reads quite a bit, and he does dip into the classics (like Dickens) occasionally.

He doesn’t see too many movies. He hasn’t much patience with melodramatic adventure. He does think Clara Bow is a bit of a dish.

He loves physical recreation. Baseball was a huge favorite (even obsession for a few years there before aeronautics took over) when he was a boy. He was always very athletic and good at anything that required speed and nimble feet.

Favorite colors would probably be red, blue, and yellow. He likes them bright and bold, although he isn’t likely to give it much thought.

Most of his childhood daydreams were of seeing the world—being a pirate, Captain Cook, a knight, a cowboy, a soldier, anything exciting.
Nowadays, his dreams are of the next big aeroplane stunt and the next horizon.

He loaf's his life away anyway, but his perfect weekend would probably consist of giving a bang-up air show, then drinking, swimming, dancing 'til the wee schmas.

A gift is likely to please him. Food, books, clothing (if it’s appropriate), or mechanical gizmos would go over well.

His dog Taos is a brown border collie. He picked him up as a puppy, mostly on impulse, in Taos, New Mexico, about seven years ago. The dog loves to fly and was good company before Earl came on board. He follows Hitch everywhere.

His plane—a red one—is his only companion. He calls her Genevieve.

He’s a pretty exuberant person in all his moods. When he’s happy, he goes around hollering, slapping backs, singing at the top of his lungs, and taking stupid risks. He’s more likely to be forgiving and generous when he’s happy.

His anger is also bombastic. He shouts at everybody who gets in his way even if they’re not to blame. He’s easy to manipulate or pick fights with in this mood.

His frustration, even when it’s with himself, is likely to come out as anger.

Sadness has him lashing out defensively. It starts out looking like anger, but then he’ll retreat into himself and head off some place where he can be alone and quiet.

Fear usually makes him quiet down and take notice. He can be very serious, very calculating when afraid. If he wants to cover it up, he’ll mask it as anger.

He has a way of looking at people that is both challenging and almost intimate as if he’s reading their thoughts. He’ll drum his fingers when impatient. He runs his hand through his hair a lot and rolls the stiff shoulder. Both his cocky grin and his impatient scowl are frequent expressions.

Idiosyncrasies: He’s a fidgeter, especially when he’s bored, impatient, or uncomfortable. He fiddles with anything handy. He scratches his hand through his hair a lot.

He’s a pretty jolly guy, always laughing or at least guffawing. He sees the humor in most situations, although he takes himself a wee bit too seriously to fully laugh at his own expense. He likes wit and physical comedy. He jeers at others pretty easily although he usually means it only in good fun.
If he’s far gone enough to need cheering up, good luck. Buy him a drink, maybe say a few words—but mostly just stay out of his way. He’ll work through it on his own—either healthily (flying or walking with Taos) or unhealthily (with drink and dance).

He is pretty easy to annoy thanks to his general lack of patience. Distract him when he’s busy, mess up your job, cause him trouble (even slightly), and he’ll probably get grouchy and snappish—although he won’t hold the mood over long.

He’s pretty much living his dream. But deep down he does want something more—stability and people who love him and he can love in return. But he doesn’t go there hardly ever. Achieving that dream involves a scary amount of hard work and responsibility. Plus, there’s an unspoken part of him that feels he can never deserve a family after what happened with Celia.

On a more practical level he’d like to make enough money to expand the air show into a true circus.

The worst thing he’s ever done to someone was leaving Celia.

His greatest success would be his excellence as a pilot and specifically some record for flying that he holds.

Biggest trauma was his mom’s death.

Biggest embarrassment was one of his first flights when he was eager to impress a pilot from whom he wanted the job and instead ended up almost crashing through a simple mistake, thanks to sheer nerves.

More than anything in the world he cares about his freedom—and by extension his flying.

His secrets are mostly his regrets: leaving Celia and his smuggling job for Campbell. Otherwise, he’s a pretty open guy.

If he could do one thing and succeed at it, he would open an honest-to-goodness flying circus and tour the world with it, making oodles of money. He doesn’t really care about money as such; he just doesn’t want to have to worry about finances.

The thing I love best about him is his openness and his cocky charm.

Readers should sympathize with him because of his amusing nature—and then his desire to put his life back on track to do the right thing.

Save for his skill as a pilot, he’s really pretty ordinary guy. It’s his gypsy lifestyle that’s unique.

His core need is to find something of worth for which he can live his life—something other than just himself.
He kind of oozes defining moments, since he wears his personality on his sleeve. But certainly his daredevil feats in the sky are defining moments.

Zlo

As for Rawliv Zlo, he’s a gutter rat from childhood—brought up in a den of thieves in the Underbelly of Storming. He grew up to be a professional breaker-and-enterer. He’s a man of limited scope and base passions. He doesn’t raise his eyes much higher than his glass of vodka and the wenches in his lap—and the gold in his hand.

He wants to be rich. He wants to live in leisure and have everyone he knows kiss his boot. So he’s always scheming about how he can make his big break.

He’s not particularly blessed with brains, but he’s casually cruel (not sadistic—he just uses its strength to get what he wants from those weaker). He hates authority.

He lives alone with his hawk Maksim, whom he uses to fetch things (keys and the like) that he needs for his work.

When he hears about the dawsedometer, he seizes on it as a likely opportunity for bettering himself—and the plan grows bigger and bigger until he becomes a little megalomaniacal.

World Building

I see Storming as a colony ship of sorts. The people have lived in isolation up there for generations.

It’s a quaint, rickety city, built on the clouds, which carry it around. Twisty roads packed with pointy-roofed stone house. Lots of mist—to keep it mysterious and not too sunny.

The denizens are able to split off and harness little clouds for transportation.

Storming has some ancient purpose. It’s been up there for a very long time and is only now being discovered because of the invention of the airplane.

Storming was created by some innovative people who wanted to study and control the weather. But over the centuries, tragedy struck, and the original mission became both impossible and then forgotten.

The dawsedometer is integral to making Storming work. It allows Storming to control whatever clouds it’s attached to.

Storming sends foraging parties to earth. They send down people whose job it is to live on earth for a while and earn the money needed for supplies. Once they’ve served their term, they can come back home (sort of like Mormon missionaries).
Storming isn’t adverse to going to ground. They just prefer to maintain secrecy and seclusion because their original mandate demands it to protect the technology.

It was launched in 1850 and populated by a hodge-podge of Europeans.

**Places:** Engines, Lower End, Heatside (in the Lower End), University, Church of St. Kirill’s, Vasily’s Pub, the Verge, Quadrants, University, Hospital, Capitol,

- **How does the cultural and ethnic diversity of this world compare to the real world?**
  It’s made up of primarily Eastern European descendants, as well as some from the Mediterranean.

- **How long have there been people on this world?**
  Storming was launched in 1860, so it’s been around for 60 years. That means that Jael is second-generation. Her parents were born on Storming. The founders have all died, but there are some young passengers who would still remember the launch.

- **How many people are there in this country? How does this compare with world population? What is considered a small town/large town/city in terms of number of people?**
  Storming is approximately four square miles (or 2,560 acres). It has a population of a little over 50,000, packed into the city. They started out with 400 colonist couples.

- **How similar are the history and culture of the alternate earth to real history and culture? Why is it so similar/different?**
  Having started from the basis of 1860s Eastern Europe and having stayed in touch with the groundworld in a controlled, distant sort of way, their history isn’t radically different. But they have certainly developed their own social quirks.

- **Is there a specific historical point where this world split off from ours?**
  They split was in 1860, so they missed a bunch of wars, most notably WWI and the Eastern European revolutions.

- **How does this world differ physically from earth?**
  It floats high in the sky. So the air is the thinner, and there’s a constant breeze. Still, it’s in the midst of the cloud, so it’s foggy most of the time—more smoggy, really, since there’s quite a bit of industry, from the Engines and what not.

- **How much land is there, and how much of it is habitable?**
  2,560 acres of land, and the vast majority is inhabited. The city has reached its outer boundaries and had to start building upward. The edge of the city is fenced off for two-hundred feet or so, since it’s obviously dangerous. The Engines and other government-controlled buildings take up that area, so few regular citizens venture out there. It’s called the Verge.

- **Does the world have the same seasons and same length of year as Earth?**
It’s seasons are relatively irregular. They circle the world three times a year, so they experience the seasons three times over. Their journeys are regular, so citizens know where they’re at by the seasons.

- **Which animals, birds, fish, and other wildlife are commonly found in which areas?**
  Geese and hawks and other high-flying birds are the only wildlife that comes and goes. Domestic animals, such as cows, dogs, cats, mice, rats, goats, pigs, chickens, etc., live on Storming, but they’re much contained due to space constraints. There is no pasture land.

- **Which resources (e.g., coal, oil, iron ore, gold, diamonds, limestone, etc.) are particularly abundant, and in which areas? Which are scarce?**
  Water is really Storming’s only natural resource, since the clouds manufacture it themselves. Everything else, they have to import. They bring in raw materials and manufacture most of it themselves, in their own factories. Heavy supplies are the hardest to get, so they’re most precious and expensive. But, that said, Storming *does* have access to pretty much whatever it wants.

- **How much conflict has been or might be caused by these imbalances in resources? How much active, peaceful trade?**
  The descendants of the higher-ups in the original colony primarily control trade. They’re the ones who distribute (for a price) the imports and they’re the ones who order and control what is imported. It’s pretty much a monopoly up top, though there’s plenty of healthy competition down lower.

- **What water resources available, and for what uses?**
  Water is generated in the cloud beneath Storming and collected by means of great burlap nets. This water is freely available to the city, pumped in from below. People also put out their own buckets and pipes to collect water from the smog, but this is only profitable along the outer regions, since the inner city is so smoggy and polluted.

- **How far back are there records or tales of historical events? How widely known are these stories?**
  Most world history prior to Storming’s launch is vaguely known. Events since (such as the war) are known only in rumors from what they can see from above and the tidbits brought back by the Foragers. The government discourages interest in and knowledge of the groundworld. Only approved Foragers are allowed to disembark. Maintaining secrecy about Storming’s existence and purpose (although the later has been largely lost) is enforced by corralling the population. However, the population is straining at the city’s edges, so the government is considering either building a new ship or recolonizing some of the people back onto earth.

- **Do average people believe old tales, or do they dismiss some that have a basis in fact (e.g., Troy)?**
  Even much of what isn’t so old (things that happened just shortly before the ship’s launch, such as the Napoleonic Wars) have faded into legend.
• Which peoples/countries/races have traditionally fought, allied, traded, or been rivals? Where are there still hard feelings about old events?
The Russians and the Austrians have never gotten along, but it’s more tradition now than anything. Old boundaries have been stripped away with time and replaced by new ones, most of which are class differences. The higher-ups are viewed by the lower (grudgingly, if apathetically) as tyrannical. The higher-ups in generally are pretty suspicious and backstabbing toward each other. The lowers are divided into neighborhoods: the Engines, the Church neighborhood, and the more pastoral (if you can call them that), where the buildings are packed quite so tight and livestock is more prominent.

• Which peoples/countries/races have been in conflict in the recent past? Why? When and why was the most recent war? Who won?
There are occasionally street wars. Catholics and Orthodox occasionally clash. And every once in a while political unrest turns into a terrorist attack.

• Which peoples/etc. are considered the most civilized? Which are most technologically advanced? Why?
The higher-ups who run the trade and the government are definitely the more civilized. They live and dress in luxury and have time to attend social functions. They also get all the latest advances in technology, both from Storming’s own inventors and those from the groundworld. Those in the Underbelly are the worst off. They live on the dregs of society, scraping and stealing just to put food in their bellies.

• Is there a single, generally accepted calendar (including time measurements), or do different countries or peoples or races have different ones?
They still follow the Julian calendar. If the story begins on July 14, 1920, Storming’s date would be July 1, 1920.

• How many languages are there? Which ones are related (e.g., the Romance languages) and why? Which languages borrow words or phrases from other languages? Which is likely to be most widely spoken?
The lingua franca is a homogenization of several Eastern European dialects, mostly Russian. But certain neighborhoods and sects still speak their own dialect privately.

• Is there a “trade language” that facilitates commerce between countries that don’t speak the same tongue? Is there a “universal language” spoken by educated or noble persons, as Latin was in the Middle Ages?
Only the Foragers are taught the various languages of their scheduled drop points, including English. These are taught from books, which are added to as thought necessary by the Foragers themselves. They’re not forbidden to the populace, but they’re not disseminated either. Most people have no interest; indeed, most people don’t even realize the groundworld speaks other languages. (Perhaps Jael, through her father, got her hands on an English book, so she knows a little of the language.)

• How accessible is this area?
The only way on or off Storming is via the cloudboats, smaller clouds harnessed into passenger ships (usually no bigger than a semi, and some as small as a motorcycle). Only designated people have access to these vehicles.

- **What natural features mark the borders?**
  The wood, stone, and steel bottom of the ship ends in a five-foot lip. Beyond that, there is only wispy clouds and the great sails used to steer the ship. On the inside of the lip, a two-hundred-foot boundary is roofed in and separated from the city by towering stone walls with spiked and guarded parapets.

- **Why did people settle in this country in the first place? Have things changed much since, or do they still depend on whatever brought them in the first place?**
  Storming’s advent was largely a science venture. A group of scientists, of various fields, thought it would be grand to build the ship and tour the world, but, even more, they designed it to experiment with the weather. The idea was that if they could control the rain, they could end drought, etc.
  However, in the years since, the original mandate has been largely lost. Most people don’t even know about it. Bigwig scientists at the University are still working on it, but it’s become a top-secret project, at the behest of the government officials, who want to control it.

- **How do the weapons of this country compare with those of surrounding cities and countries? Have there been recent innovations that may upset the balance of power, or is everyone more or less equal?**
  Most weapons are limited to what was known at the time of the launch. Muskets and revolvers are the order of the day. Newer weapons have been brought in, but these all belong to the constabulary and the government—hence the law-keeping is quite efficient, although enterprising souls have built new weapons of their own along the way, using some of the groundworld weaponry for inspiration.

- **Who are the rivals or enemies of this country? How close are they physically? How powerful?**
  No rivals, since no one knows of Storming’s existence.

- **Who are the heroes and villains of each country’s history (e.g., Washington and Lincoln in the U.S.; Henry V in England, etc.)? Why are they heroes/villains and what do this say about the country and the people who admire them?**
  Many of the founding families, especially those highest up in the hierarchy, are revered. The common populace’s opinion of them is mixed, since they’re both proud of their heritage and annoyed with the higher ups’ current legacy. The leader of the ship in the beginning was a man named Aleksandr Vagin. He’s revered as their founder. Less revered are certain of the subsequent mayors. In the 1900s, one particular corrupt mayor Lev Poolya loosed a deadly gang war onto the city. He was finally deposed by a suspicious “illness” that turned him into a paraplegic, but he’s almost universally despised.
- Is population shifting from rural to urban, south to north, mountains to coast, etc.? Why—invasion, plague, gold rush, etc.? What effects has this had on the places being left? The places gaining people?
  There’s really no place to shift to. The inner city is growing taller and taller and more and more packed. The most crowded areas are little worse than tenements, with a thousand people crammed into one building and families living in one or two rooms. But new advances in architecture are allowing people to build upwards more safely, so the outskirts, where things aren’t so crowded, are growing in a safer and more comfortable way.

- What does this country import? Export? How important is trade to the economy? How is currency exchange handled, and by whom? What is the system of coinage, and who mints it?
  They import almost everything, most of it raw goods. Sugar, salt, wool, oil, vegetables, fruit, you name it. They don’t export, since that would endanger their secrecy, but in the last fifteen years or so, they’ve started shipping goods. They’ll buy up goods in one country and ship it around the world and sell it in another country. This supplements the money the Foragers have to earn to buy necessary goods for the city.

  Inner-city currency is called the ruvle and takes a surprising number of shapes, having never been formally universalized. It could be a coin, a paper, a stone, a glass shard. But whatever it is, it must be officially engraved with the city’s seal of authorization, in the shape of the current mayor’s signature, and the date.

- What wild animals, actual or imaginary, live in this area? Are any of them potentially useful—e.g., for fur, whale oil, hides, magical ingredients, hat feathers?
  The only wild animals are the high-flying birds. But they’re hunted for fresh meat. Hawks are trained to hunt down and bring back prey.

- How do most of the citizens make their living—farming, fishing, trade, manufacturing? Are they legally limited to certain trades?
  Trade is limited to certain higher-up families, but other than that, there are few regulations. Most people are involved in some sort of industry, either working in the factories to refine the raw goods shipped up from below, in the Engines, or in any number of jobs required to keep the city running.

- Do wild and rebellious young people dress any differently from anyone else? Are they allowed to?
  Working-class women will wear jumpsuits, but this is considered quite wild in the middle classes. On a rare occasion, female pants will jump into vogue in the upper echelons, but even there, only the most daring wear them.

  It’s become common to see politically angry young people aping the upper class fashions in a way that is more a mockery than an adulation. This is discouraged, but has to be formally censured.
• **Does the weather or climate contribute any habits or customs, such as the mid-afternoon siesta in hot countries?**
Nights are very cool, and they usually frost, even in the summer, so few people stay out of doors after dark unless they need to for some reason. Because of the foreshortened seasons, all small gardens must be kept inside a greenhouse. Because of the constant wind, most higher-ups, including men, wear a face shield of glass (two plates joining in front of the nose) to protect their skin from chapping.

• **What is considered a normal family unit? How extended is an extended family? How important are family connections and responsibilities?**
In the early days, it wasn’t unusual for families to have as many as ten children, but with the swell in population of late, families are discouraged from having more than one child. Higher-ups stop childbearing as soon as a son is born. It’s unusual to see family units with more than three children, even among the poorer classes. There are laws currently being passed to limit one in five couples from having children, but these are strongly contested and expected to be refined to one child per couple.

• **What are the rites of passage in this culture? Are they formalized rituals, such as being dubbed a knight, or are they informal? Are they different for men and women? For nobility and peasants?**
The taking of communion on the twentieth birthday, within some sects of the Orthodox church is about as formalized as it gets. However, there are informal celebrations, such as “coming out” parties to announce grown children as available for marriage. These are celebrated with much pomp and circumstance among the higher-ups, but even the lower classes nominally acknowledge the age (which can vary from family to family and child to child) with at least a round of drinks at the local pub.

• **What customs surround a birth and the introduction of a new child to the family? Is the mother sequestered for some period? Is the child? Is there a formal presentation of the new child to parents, grandparents, overlord, priest? Is a feast and celebration declared, or does everyone keep a low profile to keep from attracting demons or bad luck?**
The first child of either sex and the first son is always a landmark. The child is paraded through the streets in front of the family’s church. Other than that, there isn’t much out of the ordinary acknowledgement.

• **Who is normally present for births? Is it strictly a matter for women, or are men involved, or is the only woman present the expectant mother?**
Mores in this area are very plebian and Victorian. Midwives take charge of the birthing, and doctors are only called in emergencies.

• **Who raises the children?**
This depends on the family. Wealthy families hire governesses. Poor working families often pack their babies on their backs when they’re off to work. When the children become too big to carry, they’re left at home—until they too are big enough to work.
• **At what age do they begin to be educated or trained?**
  Formal schooling begins at six. But if the family is poor, the child goes to work as soon as he’s tall enough for whatever chore is laid before him.

• **By whom?**
  Wealthy children are tutored privately. Middle class children attend large schools, run by enterprising men and women. Only the university is government run, but only the brightest and richest get in there.

• **Do they dress differently from adults? If so, when do they change to adult dress?**
  Pants and skirts are short until puberty.

• **What customs surround death and burial? Is there a special class of people (doctors, priests, funeral directors, untouchables) who deal with dead bodies? What things must be done and why (burn hair to free spirit, burn body to prevent necromancy, coins on eyes for ferryman, etc.)? Are the dead feared, revered, or ignored?**
  The dead are revered, and the common belief is that the dead watch over the living, for better or worse. But this is not a superstition large enough to control lives or demand worship, etc. It’s just a mild, usually comforting, belief.

  Since there are no burial plots, bodies are either dumped into the sea (if Storming happens to be over a sea at the time) or cremated. The church usually takes care of these things, although they’ve begun to charge a hefty penny for the cremating, causing some people to secretly dump their dead, even when they’re not over the sea (although this is strictly punished).

• **What personal weapons are available to anyone who can afford them? Are some considered “for nobles only” either by custom or by law? Are there laws forbidding certain classes from being armed at all?**
  New technology among weaponry is strictly prohibited, which can cause some problems when enterprising people start inventing their own improvements to the old weapons. Most people in the lower regions carry at least a knife, and most households own a firearm. Illegal weapons abound in the Underbelly.

• **Do men and women, parents and children, servants and master, eat separately, or does everyone eat together? How is status displayed at the table (seating above or below the salt, near or far from the head, etc.)?**
  High society segregates meals, with children eating with the servants until puberty. High ranks sit at the ends of the table, with the lower ranks in the middle.

• **What dishes are considered holiday food? What foods/drinks are associated with particular holidays, events (e.g., funerals, weddings) or times of the year?**
• What distinguishes a formal, high-court dinner from an ordinary meal, besides quantity and variety of food? How do high-court manners differ from everyday ones?
  High society never cleans its plate. It’s a sign of wealth if they can afford so much food they don’t have to worry about scraps. By contrast, lower classes deem it a tremendous social gaffe to leave any food on a plate. Even bones are scraped off the plate, onto a central “scraps” plate.

• Is sanitation good enough for untreated water to be safe to drink? If not, what do people drink instead?
  The water is wonderful, since it’s always gathered fresh, right from the clouds. Waste water is treated, then dumped, so it could return to Storming only through natural means.

• When meeting someone, how are they greeted—wave, handshake, bow, some other gesture? How did the greeting gesture originate (example: shaking hands to prove one’s weapon hand was empty)?
  The bow is common, with various gradations for various social combinations. It’s polite for the lesser person to avoid eye contact until the higher-up directly addresses him.

• Is there a difference between the greeting offered to an equal and that offered to a superior or inferior? Is there a difference between the greeting offered a man or a woman?
  Women kiss each other’s cheeks if they’re already acquaintances. Men and women do not touch upon initial acquaintance, and then the man must make the first move.

• Is there a way of changing a greeting gesture to make it insulting?
  Refusing to look at a superior even after he has made eye contact is a subtle insult, since it appears to offer abasement but has become a decided indication of scorn among the lower classes—even among themselves.

• How are two people who have never met normally introduced to each other? What is the order of precedence when there are several people of differing sex or social status present, all of whom need to be introduced to each other?
  Lower is always introduced to higher, women to men.

• Are there customs involving the way in which someone is named when being introduced?
  Common titles are never used. People are addressed respectfully by their last names, personally by their first names, and in censure by both names. Titles are only used in introductions.

• Are gestures and body language in this society generally subtle or not?
  Generally, subtlety is not a hallmark of Storming society. They are a vocal, gesticulating society. The exception is body language on the streets among strangers, which is usually introverted as a protective measure, due the crowding.
- What is a comfortable and polite speaking distance for people in this culture? Other cultures/countries/races? How aware are people of these differences?
  They stand pretty close due to the space constraints. Standing toe to toe isn’t considered rude or unusual. People are generally very tolerant of others in their personal space.

- How do gestures and body language differ between countries?
  Higher-ups are much more protective of their personal space, and it’s become a sign of high breeding to modulate tone and limit gestures when speaking.

- What are the ways of showing respect (bowing, saluting, etc.)?
  Highest respect is shown by touching forehead, then heart, indicating a symbolic offering of both intellect and emotion.

- Are there questions that must be asked or avoided (how’s the family, how’s the business, never talk politics or religion, etc.)? Are there topics that can only be raised by the host? The guest?
  It’s considered impolite for guests or inferiors to speak about themselves, unless prompted by the host or high-up. They are allowed to ask general questions about the host.

- How seriously does the culture take the responsibilities of host and guest? What rules define when someone becomes a host or guest (e.g., in mid-eastern countries, giving bread and salt to someone makes the person your guest; giving a 5-course meal without bread or salt doesn’t)?
  Cordiality in hospitality is valued, but the responsibility is on the guest not to overstay his welcome. This is the result of the general overcrowding within homes, but it applies to the higher-ups who live in more luxuriant space.

- What things are considered courteous to offer a guest: food, reading material, personal guards or attendants, music/entertainment, a person of the opposite sex to sleep with?
  Guests are always given a token glass of beverage (water among the poorer, wine or vodka among the rich), which must be sipped at least once. Except among the rich, guests are expected to bring their own towels and bedding.

- What is the most desired/most valuable stuff in this society—gold, jewels, drugs, money, furs, reindeer, etc.?
  Fresh food, particularly vegetables and fruits, are always coveted. Rich people even go so far as to wear kumquats and the like as jewelry to show off their wealth.

- What are attitudes toward ownership? What constitutes “theft” and what can be stolen? Are thieves independent criminals, members of an illegal guild, business people licensed by law, or what?
  Most people view the city itself—buildings, etc.—as not belonging to anyone in particular, which means they turn a blind eye on thefts of things like shingles and sidings and cobblestones. Beyond that, possessions are personal. Thieves range from child
pickpockets at the bottom of the rung, up to professional housebreakers, up higher to organized crime that has infiltrated the government (or, more often, started there).

- **Who is considered a citizen, with the rights and privileges thereof? What are those rights and privileges (voting, protection from thieves, the right to a hearing in Rome) and what responsibilities go along with them (jury duty, providing funds or knights for the lord’s army)?**
  Everyone in Storming is considered a citizen, but there is no voting. The upper class appoints members from among themselves, rather like cardinals appointing the pope. And like the cardinals, there is much nepotism involved. Lower-class citizens appoint their own burghers to represent them to the leaders. Only men are allowed to hold office. Citizens aren’t taxed, but they’re required to turn out a set amount of work per day and to sell that much of it at established rates. Beyond that, they’re free to do work as little or much as they like for themselves and their own families.

- **Are there certain classes of who have fewer legal rights or less recourse than full citizens?**
  Women can’t hold office or directly appoint, but otherwise they hold full citizenship rights.

- **What are the controversial subjects in this culture? What things can you start a friendly argument about in any bar? What things will automatically start an unfriendly argument?**
  In general, the residents of Storming are a congenially argumentative lot, who’ll fight about everything and forgive each other the next morning. But one of the hush-hush topics is getting off Storming and going groundside. There’s a growing movement pushing for it, due both to the overcrowding and the corruption of the government, but it’s only spoken of in hushed undertones. Not only are people worried about the government overhearing, they’re also just generally suspicious and superstitious about the groundworld, since they’ve largely forgotten it.

- **What is the ideal life that people aspire to?**
  Ideally, you manage to make enough money to buy a top-floor flat in one of the newer buildings. It’s difficult for the poor to enter into rich society, both because money does not flow that direction very often, but also because the higher-ups are such a tight-knit society of related people. So the highest life the lower classes can aspire to is to be a comfortably provided for head of a factory or personal business or such and to have early dibs on new imports and access to recreation such as theaters and the like.

- **What kinds of people are the rebels and outcasts of this society? How does society deal with them? What actions or ideas will get you made an official outcast/exile?**
  Criminals and radical students who want to alter Storming’s purpose or go groundside are the rebels and outcasts. Most people, even the criminals, just laugh at the radicals though. There’s very much a social sense of ennui. What will be will be—and it will likely be what’s always been. They’re not a highly ambitious society.
- Which ethical/moral decisions are considered the province of religion, and which are not?
  The church is followed pretty devoutly, especially by the middle class, but it stays almost exclusively out of government.

- Where is scientific and/or magical research done—universities, private labs, under the auspices of the ruler/government, etc.?
  Science and technology are censured by the government. Anyone wanting to do something along those lines must register with the government, and anything big must be done at the University. Still, some few mess around outside the law, both intentionally and unintentionally.

- What are the various ranks and titles and proper forms of address for the aristocracy/nobility? Is everybody “my lord” and “my lady,” or are there more distinctions (your grace, your highness, your majesty, your holiness)?
  The mayor is called “glavni.” The government folks are referred to by either their specific titles, or generically as Gospodin (male) and Gospozha (female).

- What occupations are respected? Looked down on? Why?
  Those that are clean are always respected more. Students, professors, and scientists are well looked upon, if a little warily. Those who supply the wealthy are on the up and up. Those at the bottom of the rung—garbage cleaners, chimney sweeps, engine keepers—are looked on as dirty grubbers.

- How many levels are there in this society: peasant, bourgeoisie, warrior, noble? How difficult is it to rise or fall from one social level to another? How firm are the divisions between social classes—is it disgraceful for a noble to engage in trade or for a warrior to help with the harvest?
  There’s the Founders Council (who are descendants of the real founders), the Mayor and his government, the Traders, the Industrialists (who own and run the factories), the Bourgeoisie (who either work in the factories or own their own small businesses, such as Buchanan Elena), and the Rats from the Underbelly. There’s very little movement from caste to caste, although all but the upper class mingle freely.

- What is the basic style of government: feudal, aristocratic, oligarchy, absolute ruler, democracy, what? What forms are used in neighboring countries, and why are they the same or different?
  They’re basically a feudal serfdom, with the higher-ups secure in their positions, and the lower-downs laboring to support them.

- What services does the government or head of state provide: schools, wells, courts, an army to protect people from the Vikings? What services are provided locally or privately?
  Aside from supplies from the groundworld, the government keeps the Engines running, manages the University, and just generally maintains the city.
• **Who provides support services for the head of state?**  
The Mayor’s Council is nominally appointed by the mayor, although there are all kinds of internal politics that pretty much choose for him.

• **What are the easiest/most common ways to advance in status—amass more money, marry well, get the ruler’s eye, etc.? How much resistance is there to someone advancing in social status?**  
Make lots of money, marry well, generally bootlick.

• **Who will take over running the government if the current head of state is incapacitated? How is this determined? Is there an heir apparent (either actual or political)? What happens if the heir is a minor? Who gives orders? How are they picked?**  
The Glavni’s head of council will take over until the Founders Council can appoint a new glavni.

• **Who is responsible for protecting the head of state? His personal guard, the Secret Service, an elite group affiliated with the regular military? What safeguards have they got against assassins, poisoning, direct assault, magical attack?**  
Storming’s police force, known as the Enforcement Brigade (or, more commonly, just Enforcers) patrols the entire city, with a special task force assigned to important higher-ups. These are known as the Glavni’s Personnel.

• **What are the major political factions at present? How long have they been around? Which factions are allies, which enemies? Are there any potential new forces on the political scene (e.g., a rising middle class, a university gaining unexpected power because of certain magical discoveries, etc.)**  
Factions are very much family based (think of the Medicis).

• **What are the controversial political issues of this day/time/country? What positions on these issues are considered conservative? Liberal? Unthinkable?**  
What to do about the overcrowding is the chief issue, supplies are always a big issue, and what and how to achieve the manifest is also important, although hush hush. A few of the leading families concern themselves with such notions as equality, but they’re either laughed at or relegated to the sidelines as much as possible. Glavni Reesk is one of these, and he’s actually done much good (through much compromise), but he has to do a lot of bootlicking to get any real reform accomplished.

• **How much influence do “special interest groups” such as merchants, wizards, or various religions, have on court politics? How do they exercise their influence—indirectly (by talking nobility or council members into taking their sides) or directly (by bribery, coercion, having their own representatives on the council)?**  
The Traders hold tremendous sway. Because they control the supplies, they largely control the city, and everyone with any brains knows it. If someone fights them too hard, they usually get pitched over the side. But that doesn’t happen too often.
What are considered normal and legal ways of gathering evidence and determining guilt? Is torture allowed? Are arbitrary judgments by the lord or landowner allowed, or is there an independent standard of justice? The courts make an attempt at fair play, but they’re really pretty arbitrary and corrupt. The richest person usually wins. The lower classes usually stay away from the official court and unofficially settle their disputes in a burgher’s court. These aren’t legal, but they usually (but, of course, not always) dispense better judgments.

What things are considered truly serious crimes and why? (E.g., in a trade-oriented culture, counterfeiting might be a death-penalty crime, while in a place where life is cheap, murder might be something you pay a small fine for.) Theft of food is always viewed as a horrific crime, particularly if the food comes straight from the raw imports. Human life is pretty cheap these days, since the courts look upon a little culling of the population to be just the ticket for reducing the overcrowding problem. In fact, there are rumors that the government has been deliberately inciting street violence to accomplish just this. Anything to do with the Engines is punished swiftly and firmly by the government. They like to keep all that close to their vest.

What are the normal punishments for serious vs. minor crimes? Are there prisons, or are people punished and released? Are there degrees of punishment—branding vs. cutting off ears vs. cutting off a hand vs. decapitation—or do they just hang everybody? Stealing food, murder, rape, and treason are all capital offenses (usually punished by tossing someone over the side). Whipping is common for misdemeanors, as are the pillories. Very occasionally, a felon will be branded on the cheek as an example to others. This often happens when there are dealings going on under the table. The crook pays to be let off, but the case is too big for the judges not administer some decided punishment.

How are the police organized—into independent police precincts, or into overlapping districts, or just according to whoever wants to hire them? What sort of facilities do they have? What arms are the allowed to carry? The Enforcers work out of four quadrant precincts, with the jails on the uppermost floors. Their buildings are sturdy, but old and usually dark and grimy. They are the only members of society allowed to legally carry new technology in weapons. Webleys are popular.

Are there lawyers or advocates? Who can afford them? Lawyers are almost exclusively found among the rich, and even then it’s all a lip game.

Are people guilty until proven innocent, innocent until proven guilty, or does it depend on the mood the lord is in when they bring the case before him? Your degree of presumed innocence pretty much depends on your degree of wealth.

Are there judges other than the ruler, lord, or landowner? If so, how are they chosen, how are they paid, and who pays them? Are appeals possible, and if so, to
whom? How often are outlying areas likely to see a judge? Is “mob justice” common or uncommon? Approved of or disapproved of?
Judges are appointed and paid by the government. The highest court is the Founders Council itself, but very few cases (maybe one every two years) makes it that far.

- How are alleged criminals treated before and after their convictions? Do the police/military/city guard make a practice of roughing up suspects, or is this frowned upon?
  Enforcers and their like (such as the Engine Masters) are pretty rough characters generally. They have exemption for most of their actions, and it shows in their swagger and their general corruption.

- What are typical money denominations?
  The ruvle is the standard denomination. Beneath that you have the halver ($0.50), the qis ($0.25), the shun ($0.10), and the sliv ($0.1).

- What is the process a young person goes through to enter a craft or trade? An apprenticeship? Four years of college? Are the craft requirements for various skill ranks (such as apprentice, journeyman, master, or med student, intern, doctor, specialist) standardized, or does rank depend more on the good favor of a master craftsman than it does on skill?
  People go to college to learn science and technology. More prosaic crafts are learned via apprenticeship (which is paid for by the family, with the full price gradually refunded as the apprentice proves his worth).

- Is this a money-based economy, or mostly barter?
  A little of both.

- How much smuggling is there? Of what, from or to where?
  Although it’s tremendously illegal, Foragers will sometimes hoard back some of their goods and sell them on the black market.

- What are the common domesticated animals used for transportation at various levels of society—e.g., oxen, horses, donkeys, camels, etc.?
  Because of the difficulty of keeping large animals, they’re rarely used for transportation. Occasionally, you’ll see a donkey pulling a cart, but big dogs are used more often. Rickshaws are prominent.

- For traveling short distances within a city, what are the alternatives? Can people hire a cab, a litter, a rickshaw, or do they have to walk or rely on their own servants or horses?
  Litters and rickshaws are the general means of transportation for those who can hire such. Most people walk, since the distances aren’t that far. There is a public cable car (for a fee) that runs on a track through the quadrants. This is run on steam engines. It is strictly forbidden, due to space constraints, for private citizens to build motorized vehicles.
• How are messages sent when necessary? Is there a public/private postal system, or does everyone of importance have to send messengers? How fast can news get from A to B?
The telegraph is used frequently. The post service is generally reliable and fast. It is privately run by various individuals, with all of them competing for speed.

• What is transportation like? Are there good roads? Who built them? Who is responsible for maintaining them?
The streets are all cobblestone, and in varying degrees of decomposition.

• How do people find out what is happening in the world—rumor, town crier, newspapers, TV and radio? How slanted is the news they get this way, and in what direction? Is there freedom of the press? If not, who controls/censors it and by what means?
Newspapers are usually operated right out of the post offices. People are allowed to print what they want for the most part, although the government will squash printers if they get too bigety. There are actually an inordinate number of newspapers for the size of the city. Reading the news is a bit of a hobby for most Storming residents.

• How are books produced? Are they common (has the printing press been invented) or are they rare, valuable, expensive, hand-written objects? If the latter, who has the time and skill to produce them?
Books are printed up and distributed, mostly by the University presses, but the selection is comparatively limited. A few approved books are brought in from the ground, but these are usually on generic subjects.

• Where are the great libraries or collections of books-scrolls/manuscripts? How accessible are they to scholars, wizards, the general public? Who supports them?
The only official library is in the University.

• How accurate is the diagnostic process? Do healers have ways of telling two diseases with similar symptoms apart? Do they depend on standard physical medical tests—reflexes, temperature, contracted pupils—or do they normally use spells for diagnosis?
Medicine is relatively behind the times. Bloodletting and leeches are still common, although most doctors in the hospital do know about basic drugs such as laudanum and crude surgery. Medicine isn’t much pursued for mortal cases, since life is viewed rather cheaply due to the overcrowding.

• How expensive is a healer? How available are such services to ordinary people?
Hospital doctors are quite expensive and there’s a long waiting list. Common medicine men are generally very reasonable, although considerably less skilled. They’re stereotyped as alcoholics who hide their liquor in their medicine bottles.

• How much need is there for healers—how much sickness, plague, injury, etc. is there in this society? Are there enough healers to meet this need?
Illnesses are usually the result of being crammed into small houses with poor sanitation (in the center of town, where the crowding is worse). Injuries are more common, due to the industrial labor most people perform.

- **What is the status of the arts (dance, music, theater, etc.) in this society? Are artists revered or mistrusted? Are they considered noble or immoral? Who supports the arts? Which arts are most highly valued and why?**
  The theater is much loved, among all classes. Dancing (especially the riotous peasant dances) is a common pastime, and ballroom dancing is shown in the upper-class theaters, rather like ballet. Joy and laughter is considered a tremendously important part of life, so anything that brings that is a good thing.

- **Are there permanent theaters or concert halls for the performing arts? If so, who owns and runs them? Are they profitable? Are there also traveling troupes of players/musicians/dancers? How do their performances differ?**
  The upper-class have a few theaters, most of them run by nobility who have nothing better to do and look upon as a genteel hobby. In the poorer sections, the theaters are often nothing more than street-side platforms run by anyone who thinks he has talent.

- **What do people at various levels of society do for fun?**
  Other than dancing, they’re keen on rugby and other rough sports, though their versions are constrained to the limits of the streets. Young women play too, although most of them pursue quieter entertainments such as charades or a version of Pictionary. Mostly, though, the lower classes are content with a drink and a tumble. Life’s too busy for much less.

- **What is the most common building material? Why is it used (availability, cheapness, legal requirement)? Does it have any major drawbacks (e.g., the Great Fire of London)?**
  The original buildings were made primarily of stone. Nowadays, the lightest materials are the most favored, including plywood. There is much experimenting with creating solid building materials from paper products. The flimsier houses are often burning down.

- **How tall a building can be constructed at a reasonable cost and in a reasonable time?**
  There aren’t many taller than five stories. Three is pretty average.

- **What are typical floor plans like—can people afford to waste space on hallways, or do they just have a series of rooms opening into other rooms? Are buildings normally built square, triangular, domed, what?**
  Space is maximized wherever possible. Hallways are cramped, roofs are very peaked to allow for more space in the attics.

- **How many people usually live in a typical house? How large is a typical house?**
  There are no houses, per se, just block on block of flats. A thousand people can easily live in one tenement.
What are the differences in materials and appearance between a lower-class, middle-class, and upper-class type house?
The upper classes can afford better building materials. Most of their houses are build of stone.

How do people decorate buildings (e.g., carvings vs. paint vs. patterns resulting from the use of different building materials)?
In the lower-class sections, there’s not much decoration going on. Someone may put out a pot of flowers or something, but the houses themselves are extremely functional. Wrought iron on the eaves is about the extent of it. But the wealthy like their houses painted bright colors and the facades carved with bas reliefs.

Are there differences in ornamentation depending on the purpose of the building (e.g., gargoyles and carvings of saints used mainly on cathedrals)?
Official buildings and churches are usually neo-gothic in appearance. Soaring rafters, lots of windows, etc. But the ones in the lower-class sections do get run-down. E.g., the Engines are grungy and cracked.

How are living quarters arranged? Are bedrooms on the top floors for privacy or on the ground floor for convenience? Are parlors or libraries common? How are houses heated/cooled?
In the tenements, most families only have one or two rooms, so everything’s grouped together. If there’s a choice, bedrooms would be in the back, but they’re usually in the same room as the stove for warmth. The wealthy keep their bedrooms on the second floors.

Are wars and insurrections common enough that castles and cities are built with an eye to military defense first and appearance later, or are palaces and wall-less towns the rule?
Only the government buildings are built with an eye toward keeping out intruders—thick walls, locked doors, barbed-wire fences.

Are there public or private parks in most/any cities?
There is one very small park, with a fountain in the center, in front of the Mayor’s Office, but that’s it.

Are cities generally laid out on a square-grid system of streets, or do they just grow? How wide are the streets and alleys?
Streets are understandably cramped, sometimes to the point where two people can barely pass abreast. The streets are pretty scattered and haphazard.

What are the landmarks in each city? Where are the interesting neighborhoods, like Chinatown or the dwarfish section, and what gives each its special character? Do the neighborhoods have names?
The town is divided into two lopsided halves, Highside and Lower End, then further into Quadrants. Highside and the Buffers make up one quadrant, then you have Heatside and Creasish (both of which include some of the Underbelly) in the second quadrant, Holywell in the third, and Furthering in the fourth.

Highside includes all the government buildings, the university, and the hospital.

Buffers is a narrow strip between Highside and Heatside, made up mostly of nice shopkeepers.

Heatside is where the middle working class lives. Iron mongers and the like. This is where the oldest buildings in Storming can be found. Thus, it’s also one of the most crowded sections, especially as you creep into the center of the city, where the Underbelly takes over completely.

Creasish is a poor neighborhood, made up mostly of those who work Heatside’s factories. Of late, it’s been given over more and to the Underbelly. This is where the bulk of the Engines are found.

Holywell is where St. Kirill’s church is. Lots of food production happens here. It’s a pretty nice neighborhood, although it has its share of street gangs at night.

Furthering is the least populated (although that isn’t saying a ton). Those who keep animals, such cows and chickens, live out here, where there’s a little more room to house them. Buildings aren’t so tall out here. This is where the Pier is, although, of course, it’s fenced off from the people.

- **Where do people go to shop?**
  Shops are scattered throughout, but most of the worthwhile ones are in Heatside.

- **To eat?**
  Except for a few fancy digs in Highside, the restaurants are almost all pubs. They’re scattered throughout as well, although you don’t find too many in Furthering. Some of the nicest in the Lower End are in Holywell.

- **To have fun?**
  The pubs are the fun for most people.

- **Are peasants/farmers/yeomen/serfs tied to their land by law or custom, or can they move to town if they feel like it? Can they own their farms and property, or is it all “common land,” or is it rented from a lord or landholder?**
  People can move anywhere they want, but most don’t, since vacancies are rare and most aren’t that much better than wherever the people are at to start with.

- **Given the state of roads and transportation, how much food is it possible to ship to a given location before it spoils? (This limits the size of cities.)**
Fresh food is a tremendous luxury, due to the importation difficulties. Most fruits and vegetables and the like are either grown in little greenhouses on the rooftops or are dried to last.

- **Are rural areas primarily farms, forests, fields for grazing, or “waste land”? In outlying areas where there aren’t many people, how many roads are there, who builds them, and who maintains them?**
  What little space there is between the city and the Verge (mostly in Furthering) is devoted to small animal pens, rather like a stockyard, although better kept.

- **What kinds of catastrophic weather are common—tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, waterspouts, dust storms? How do people cope? How do non-humans cope?**
  Because Storming can move about, it can avoid much of the bad weather. But they do run a risk of fires from lightning storms. Winds are the worst. Occasionally, if they get stuck in a cold area, things can freeze up fast and furious. But, for the most part, the weather is uniformly cool and breezy.

- **How do ordinary people feel about foreigners? Non-humans? How ready are they to accept different ideas? How cosmopolitan are they?**
  There are no foreigners in Storming. They generally view the groundworld with hostility. They’ve been indoctrinated to believe that the groundpeople are dangerous and selfish and that they would tear Storming should they learn of it. So Foragers are looked upon as very brave for venturing below. They would be both highly shocked and more than a little afraid by the arrival of a groundperson. But they wouldn’t be inclined to panic. They would take it phlegmatically after their initial shock.

- **What do people generally look like?**
  They have very Eastern European features. Dark hair for the most part, with strong, solid features and wide-set eyes.

- **What are accepted norms of personal hygiene? Do most people bathe regularly, or is bathing considered a health hazard?**
  Baths are a daily occurrence among the wealthy, but the lower classes aren’t regular, due to the simple inconvenience in the crowded spaces.

- **How is garbage and other waste material disposed of?**
  They burn whatever they can. The rest is stored until they’re over the sea, where they dump it.

- **What is furniture like—big and blocky, delicate, simple, elaborately carved, painted? What is it mostly made of—cloth, wood, stone? Are certain things (like chairs with arms) reserved for high-status individuals?**
  Most furniture is made from light wood and cloth. The nobility occasionally will have heavier pieces, but often they just paint the lighter stuff to look richer.

- **In what ways does furniture design reflect the customs and lifestyle of the people?**
There are lots of space savers among the common people: beds that turn into chairs and couches or fold away, tables that are hoisted up to the ceiling to make room for sleeping pallets, etc.

- **What are the plumbing and sanitary systems like? Who builds and maintains them?**
  Flush toilets are found in Highside, but most people in the Lower End use chamber pots and outhouses that sit right over the main drain pipe in the foundation. Everything is washed into a great holding tank, where it is distilled and packed for eventually dispersion over the sea.

- **How do people cope with various disasters—fire, floods, tornadoes or hurricanes, blizzards, plague, etc.? How common are such disasters?**
  Lightning fires are by far the most common disaster, and the city has a decent volunteer fire department, who can hook their hoses into the main pipes and pump it out. Bucket brigades are a formal requirement in every street.

They also deal with winds on a frequent basis. Pretty much everything is battened down. If you put it outside, you secure it so it won’t blow away.

- **How early do people get up in the morning in the city? Country? Are clocks common, or do people tell time by the sun or by listening for church bells?**
  The church bells wake most people up. The working classes pretty much rise with the sun. They’ll often be out after dark, socializing at the pubs, or attending church services. But they keep regular and sensible hours. The unemployed rich are somewhat less so.

- **What do people wear? How expensive is it? Can the material be produced locally, or must some or all of it be imported?**
  Styles are pretty antiquated in comparison to 1920s America. Women dress is long gowns (although pants are acceptable in certain circumstances) with tight waists and layered, bustled skirts. They wear top hats, fingerless lace gloves, and colored glasses.

  Men wear coats with long tails, bloused trousers in high boots, and cravats. They carry their leather wallets on a cross-body “bandoleer” strap, and wear their watches in a thumb ring. Working men wear long apron-like vests.

- **Are weapons a standard part of dress for any/all segments of society?**
  Only Enforcers and Engine Masters. They carry billy sticks and, occasionally, firearms.

- **Are certain clothes customary for certain occupations—e.g., military uniforms, judges robes/wigs, sports teams uniforms, etc.?**
  Enforcers wear dark gray uniforms with white epaulettes and a black cape. Matching helmets.

  Engine masters wear long black leather coats when on the streets and long black leather aprons inside the engines. A iron-spiked cane is a common accessory, as well as a lantern on their belts. They wear black skull caps.
Judges dress like nobility, but with a special hat of office, much like a bishop’s.

University professors wear long robes and fez hats.

The mayor has a gold medallion of rank.

Hospital workers wear sleeve guards and aprons.

- **How many changes of clothes can a normal person afford? A noble person? A peasant?**
  Most people have half a dozen changes of clothing at most. The wealthy can have closets full, but even they practice general moderation.

- **What materials are appropriate to the climate?**
  Long sleeves and jackets are almost always worn, due to the cool weather. Men keep their hair short and women wear theirs up to keep it from the wind.

- **What things are considered tacky and vulgar, and what things are stylish?**
  Makeup is decidedly out, as are piercings. Tattoos are a bit of daring vogue, but they’re already beginning to fade out.

- **What types of decorations and accessories are common?**
  Colored glasses, hats, parasols, face screens, watch chains for women and rings for men.

- **What physical types and characteristics are currently fashionable—tan vs. pale skin, the “consumptive look” vs. robust good health, fat vs. thin, blonde vs. brunette, muscles vs. “dead poet”, etc.?**
  Skinny-waisted women are in. Pale skin is in, red hair highlights are in. Women are just starting to show a little ankle, so fancy shoes are in.

- **What foods are considered peasant food? What foods are staples, commonly eaten every day? What foods are rare? What foods are normally eaten cooked/raw?**
  Fruits and vegetables are rare, especially fresh fruits. Beef is rarely eaten. They eat a lot of bread, and soups, and goose meat.

- **What is the food like? What herbs and spices are readily available, and what must be imported? How common/expensive are imported foods and spices?**
  Spices are very rare. Salt is available, but it’s used more for preservation than flavor.

- **How much does it cost to get various levels of education?**
  Grade level education is relatively cheap, particularly the more students there are in a class. But each child must be paid for. When they reach university age, the college grants scholarships to a handful of very smart children, mostly boys, but occasionally girls as well. To get in otherwise, you have to pay an exorbitant amount *and* be sponsored by someone within the University.
• **What is the level of literacy in the general population?**
  Most people can read and write on a basic level, but the working class has little time for literacy beyond that.

• **How do people tell what time it is? Are there clocks, watches, sundials, etc., or do people have to just listen for bells from the castle or church, or just eyeball the sun?**
  Clocks aren’t common among the working class. They tell time by listening to the church bells. The gentry use watches commonly as a sign of wealth.

**Theme**

8-11-12

Before I go any farther with this, I need to get a few more things sorted out: POV, theme, and setting.

I’m a little conflicted about POV. I would really like to do this all in one POV, but I totally hate to miss out on either Jael’s or Hitch’s narrative. If I nix Jael, I lose a ton of Storming stuff—and, really, it’s her and her relation to the dawsedometer that drives the story.
  But I adore Hitch and all his thorny inner problems. I could probably tell the whole story without his POV, but the truth is I don’t want to.
  I feel like Hitch has more internal conflict and theme-related stuff to provide.
  Let’s look at that the thematic question for both their perspectives.

**Weakness:** Jael is insecure and doubts herself and her self-worth.

**Who is she hurting:** Herself, possibly Storming in general since she’s not believing in herself enough to fight back against Zlo (or the Engine Masters’ oppression), maybe Seb in the sense that she’s not standing up for him.

**How can Jael “hurt” the people on the ground?**

**What does she want?** Freedom to have adventures outside Storming and to be loved—and worthy of love.

Maybe she decides to stay ground side and abandon Storming because that’s how she gets what she wants.

**What does she need?** To be brave, to seize her opportunity to live up to her potential and go after her dreams. (She’s physically very brave—just not emotionally.)

**What does she know at the beginning?** That the world is a dangerous place, and that she is young and inexperienced and not good enough to handle it.
What is she wrong about in the beginning? She thinks her self-worth is tied up in externals and that her personal value and worthiness of love is based on her actions and her ability to excel.

What will she learn at the end? That she’s more capable than she knows. That she can be as big and brave as she needs to be. And that she is someone worth loving.

Her central problem: The realization that this ability and responsibility to act bravely and righteously isn’t a gift but a choice—and that she can do whatever she sets her mind to, under God.

Thematic principle: Force an insecure, sheltered, lonely young woman into a position in which she must act responsibly and bravely—or prove to herself that she is just as worthless as she’s always believed.

Theme: The ability to act responsibly and rightly is a choice we all have, not a gift only some of us are given.

And now Hitch…

Weakness: He’s an irresponsible wanderer, who has always put himself before his responsibilities to others. He lacks the moral fortitude to stick with the hard things.

Who is he hurting? Celia, Walter, the Carpenters, Griff, his dad.

What does he want? He wants a successful flying circus.

What does he need? To find something bigger than himself for which to live his life.

What does he know at the beginning? That responsibility is a chain that holds him down—and that he’ll inevitably break it and in so breaking, hurt others.

What is he wrong about in the beginning? That freedom is more fulfilling than the hard work and responsibility of loving relationships.

What will he learn at the end? That to find a life worth living, he has to stop running and risk everything by committing to a cause worth dying for (saving Storming and being a father and husband).

Central problem: The conundrum that in order to find true freedom of spirit (including redemption) he has to stop running and embrace the anchor of responsibility.

Thematic principle: Saddle a chronically irresponsible flyboy with a son he didn’t know he had and force him to choose between abandoning his son again and committing himself to a lifestyle of responsibility.
Theme: Responsibility is more fulfilling than freedom.

- Jael’s internal conflict is going to be her being torn between taking the easy route out and abandoning Storming—and pursuing her own dreams—or finding the moral courage to do what’s right.

  Same for Hitch more or less. He has to choose between continuing with his freewheeling barnstorming lifestyle—or doing the right thing in taking responsibility for Walter.

- Jael’s views of herself and her abilities and limitations will change.

  Hitch’s views about his responsibility to others will change.

- Jael will realize, once Zlo’s attack escalates, that if she doesn’t put up a fight, no one else will.

  Hitch will fall in love with both Walter and Jael. Jael’s courage and commitment will influence him, even as his bravery will inspire her.

- In the beginning, Jael will be timid and uncertain of herself (helped by her limited English). She will be content to stay safe with the hidden dawsedometer in Scottsbluff, rather than take the fight to Zlo.

  Hitch will be cocky, self-centered, and snarky—and intent on doing things the easy way (taking Campbell’s job and ignoring his family).

- At the end, Jael will have risked her life to save Storming, Scottsbluff, and Walter. In so doing, she will embrace her own abilities and her responsibility to use them.

  Hitch will have stuck with Jael in her life-threatening battle. And he will remain in Scottsbluff to take care of Walter.

- The dawsedometer could be symbolic of Jael’s responsibility to take down Zlo.

  Her key pendant could be symbolic of her memory and duty to her father.

  The sky could be symbolic of freedom, and the ground could be symbolic of responsibility.

  **Don’t ever refer outright to freedom or responsibility.**
Okay, so what’s my hook?

I don’t want to waste too much time getting out of Storming into Hitch. I think that’s something I’ve taken too long to do in previous books—in both Behold and Dreamlander, the key relationship doesn’t begin until 25% in.

But, by the same token, we have quite a bit to do before she leaves.

We have to…

- Introduce key characters (Zlo, Nestor, and Seb for sure—and Ivan Turvey, the Engine Master—and maybe Vasily and his family).
- Introduce Storming in some depth. Because it’s so unfamiliar (and awesome), I can’t afford to just brush it off.
- Introduce at least a tease of the dawsedometer backstory and Jael’s connection (although most of her familial backstory can wait for later discovery).
- Touch upon Jael’s insecurities and her desire for adventure outside of Storming.

If we weren’t going to include Hitch’s POV, it wouldn’t be so important to get her out of Storming quickly. But, beyond even that, there’s the concern of losing the framing by establishing Storming to fully, then jumping ship (literally). All the characters I said appear are decidedly minor and will not show up again until the 50% mark (briefly) and probably not for any length of time until the Third Act.

Is that a mistake?

After all, Storming is what makes the story special.

I think it will be all right to keep the First Half the Second Act in SB, but we’ll have to get Jael and Hitch into Storming before the Third Act.

So I do think it’s good to spend enough time in Storming in the beginning to properly introduce it. But it can’t be so long that it lopsides things. And we can help prevent that by heavily foreshadowing Jael’s desire to see the groundworld.

Try this…

1. Open with Jael hanging out at the Verge, trying to evade Turvey and fantasizing about the ground world (and maybe she sees a plane go by). Then through the mist, she hears Zlo talking to someone (?)—Or maybe he comes directly to her. She hears him talking, and then he emerges from the mist and it becomes evident he’s talking to her.

   So he indicates he knows about the dawsedometer and that she has the key.

   She doesn’t know what he’s talking about at first, but she plays along.

   The Engine Master comes along, and she runs for it. Zlo confronts him, smiling jovially, then caught him on the head with his cane—impressing Jael with his guts and his craziness.

2. So she flees to the church to meet Seb and get his help. Maybe he helps her figure out that the key she always wears is the one Zlo was talking about.
So then she goes home—or maybe through Vasily’s (or is that introducing too many characters? probably) and picks up Nestor. She quizzes him a bit and gets enough info to know to go looking for the dawsedometer. I don’t think she finds it.

But the next day, she goes to Seb for help. She learned enough from Nestor to know what the dawsedometer is capable of. So she wants Seb to help her convince the Glavni to do something to guard the dawsedometer and stopped Zlo.

They talk to the mayor, but he dismisses their fears. He’s kind, but toward the end of the conversation, he gets wind of Jael’s illegal presence in the Engines. He gives her a general warning—or maybe he (kindly) puts both her and Seb under guard.

While they’re waiting (and freaking out), they see Zlo slip in. Or rather Jael sees him slipping. Seb is clueless (we need to emphasize that, so his cooperation with Zlo later on won’t be held against him). She starts freaking out and making the scene, trying to get somebody to stop Zlo.

He whacks the mayor hard enough to crack his skull and escapes.

The Enforcers immediately jump to the conclusion that Jael is his partner and made a row on purpose to create a distraction.

Seb is just generally bewildered. He doesn’t believe Jael had anything to do with it. So he bumblingly tries to take charge. But the Enforcers sneer at his incompetence and ignore him.

Jael escapes and flees back to the Engines. But when she gets there, she finds Nestor unconscious on the floor: Zlo has preceded her.

Okay, so at this point, it would be pretty stupid to go running for the dawsedometer… Or maybe that’s what Nestor groggly tells her to do.

So she runs into the Engines, looking for the dawsedometer—deeper into the Engines than she’s ever been. Zlo makes his presence known and dogs her through the shadows.

She finally finds it. Zlo attacks.

Or maybe—before she finds it, she sneaks up on him and beans him.

So, thinking he’s incapacitated, she finds the dawsedometer and start investigating. She unlocks it to see its inner workings—and then, whammo!, there’s Zlo. She grabs some crucial piece and flees—leaving her key.

She flees to the Engines and surfaces in Holywell. She runs through the worried, murmuring crowds (who are worried about the Glavni), all the way to Furthering and the Pier.

Zlo surfaces, Maksim dive-bombs her, and with a wish and a prayer, she jumps…

So how’s that hang together? And how many scenes/chapters will it take?

Pros of Hitch’s POV

Stronger character arc
Better perspective of Jael
Storming’s more mysterious
Stronger hook

Cons

Jael’s limited dialogue
Storming’s more limited
Pros of Jael’s POV
More Storming
Backstory explained dramatically
Her mindset evident w/o dialogue

Cons
Weaker hook
Misleading frame?
Loss of humor because of narrative
Loss of lots of SB
Antagonist introduced late

So Hitch has more pluses, but Jael has more negatives.

Okay, I think we’re going to go entirely Jael’s POV.
Gulp. First time for everything.

So do we want to go back and add any scenes at Vasily’s?
The University?
Cable car?
Underbelly?

Move up.

I would like to introduce the Stephans, but I’m not sure that they do anything but provide color. That would be fine, except something of import would have to happen in the pub.

Jael could meet Nestor there, but it’s really more important to introduce the Engines. But some subplots and contextual depth would be nice. We could use the chatter at the pub to present more of the setting: the government’s controlling secrecy, the refueling pit stops, the last mandate, the secrecy from the groundworld, the overcrowding, the rising unrest, and the gang wars. That would be really good.

But what would be the point of such a scene?
If we stuck it in between Seb’s and Nestor’s intros, we would really be dragging out that sequel.

So how could Vasily’s be a plot point—and how could it lead us to the Underbelly, the University—or both?

She would have to pick up some new information at Vasily’s.
But what info will she need that she won’t get from Nestor?
Maybe her first instinct is to research her father’s work regarding this key. That would explain the University trip (and she would have to ride the cable car through the Underbelly to get there). But what info is she looking for that Nestor couldn’t just give her—and how does she glean a clue about it at Vasily’s (from Maiu maybe? She seems shrewder than Vasily or Sta—and it would be nice to have a strong female character).

She goes to Vasily’s looking for Nestor—but Maiu is the one who shrewdly and circumspectly points her toward the University.

Maybe it’s something about the Last Mandate. Maybe the usually tightlipped Jael betrayed her anxiety by letting something slip amidst all the chatter (and Sta’s attempts to impress her with his manly drinking and making a lot of noise), she says something referring to the dawsedometer.
No one pays her much mind, but Maiu catches it and, as she’s polishing glasses, says something about Jael’s father (?) And all the info being in Highside.

Move up.
4. So from there, depending on how it flows, we’ll either (probably) go to the University (by way of the Underbelly).
   Is she alone?
   Dialogue scenes are always best, but were already done with Seb—and Sta isn’t important enough to go along. So I expect it’ll have to be alone. Maybe she can’t shake the feeling she’s being followed.
   She sneaks into the University (allowing us to glimpse the incongruous luxury of Highside and the corruption). While there she finds references to the Last Mandate. And just as the night guard is coming, she catches a reference to her dead father’s work—which she steals.
   From there, it’s home to Nestor—and then on to the Mayor the next morning.
   Maybe on the way home, she’s reading the articles about her father, when the cable car is held up by street violence in the Underbelly. She gets out to make her own way—and thinks she catches a glimpse of Zlo. But when she looks again, he’s gone.

________

First Act

8-20-12

After a long weekend in a little prompting, I’ve decided that this story truly needs to be told from Hitch’s perspective.
Not only does he have the strong character arc and the stronger hook (not to mention more suspense and mystery), he also allows us to access Jael’s fish-out-of-water strangeness and humor.

So, with that said, everything I did last time becomes backstory. The story proper begins today, and for one of the few times in my life, I actually know exactly where it begins—and I get to began with my inciting event. :)

1. The story opens with Jael’s fall from the sky.
   Hitch is flying along, when—whammo!—his plane gets smacked by a woman.
   So first question—what’s he doing out there?
   The troupe is going to need two planes to transport everybody, and I want Hitch to be alone in the scene, so they’ve presumably already arrived in Scottsbluff.
   It’s nighttime. Hitch is off for a solo flight (with Taos). He’s doing it partially for enjoyment, partially to scout out likely areas for the show, but mostly to reacquaint himself with his home area. He flies over the Hitchcock farm, etc.
   But all that can be told briefly, just enough to present his mindset and offer a little hook regarding his rocky return.
   I think we’ll start the very first sentence with Jael’s dropping in.
   He shocked, of course, but also reactive.
   She needs to catch fire somehow—without the engines being endangered…
Maybe he lights a match or something, trying to see (and she could be covered in grease from the Engines). She catches dramatically on fire, loses her grip on the plane and topples off, landing rather conveniently in Lake Minatare (or possibly some smaller pond, as the geographic needs dictate).

So Hitch takes a few minutes to get a grip on himself. Then of course because he fears for the life of this strange woman, he buzzes low over the lake and trying to find her. When he sees her swimming for shore. He follows her for a bit, before she ducks into the trees. Then he has to move on and find some place to land.

By the time he and Taos get back to shore and find her and Zlo’s footprints, they are long gone. He follows the tracks until he loses them in the brush, but he’s convinced from the sight of them that she’s okay.

So he heads back to camp—or wherever they are staying.

As for how Jael knows how to swim—I think we’ll just leave that alone and hopefully no one will think about it. Maybe she figures it out as she goes.

Goal: Find a place for the show.

Something a little stronger would be good here—something that gets deeper into the heart of his character.

- We could illustrate his irresponsibility.
- Maybe something particular about doing a show here is going to help him achieve his dream of a circus. Maybe that, specifically, is why he came back at this point.

Like what?
Campbell’s money, for one thing—but I’d like that to result from plot complications.

Maybe there’s a respected barnstomer—a Buffalo Bill type—whom Hitch knows is going to be at SB right at that time. This guy (Col. Livingstone, maybe?) is rumored to be returning and Hitch is hoping to impress him into giving Hitch management of the circus.

So would we want more than just Hitch and his show in town?

Would probably be more exciting—and might open up some opportunities for conflict with the other flyers. Rick and Lilla could be trying to hire out to Hitch’s competitors.

Okay, so how can we tie this in with Hitch’s nighttime flying in the scene.

Since it’s nighttime, it doesn’t really make sense that he’s looking for something/place so maybe he’s 1) practicing a new stunt, or 2) testing something on the plane. Let’s say it’s the latter (and we’ll fill in the blanks during research). And when Jael smacks into the plane, she damages it in some significant (but not too mortal) way.

Conflict: Jael smashing into and breaking the plane.

Disaster: Generally, Jael’s disappearance and, specifically, the broken plane.

2. So let’s do a scene (sequel) with Hitch’s homeys.

We’ll use this scene to introduce Earl, Rick, and Lilla when we can. We’ll touch upon Rick’s dissatisfaction—probably he’s wanting more money or something to convince him to
stay. And Lilla’s just going along. And Hitch needs Rick’s parachute act to make his impression on Livingstone. So we have conflict there. I think we’ll set up camp out by the airport. Kind of a spattering of flying gypsies. Livingstone’s circus hasn’t yet arrived. So it’s just Hitch, the locals, and maybe one or two other lone pilots and their acts. They have a big bonfire, and are enjoying each other’s company. Maybe Hitch catches a glimpse of Walter hanging around, but doesn’t yet give it any more thought. So he comes limping in (or rather the plane does). Earl is not going to be happy that Hitch has already busted up his modifications. But Hitch is visibly shaken, enough that it catches Earl’s attention. Hitch tries to explain what happened and of course Earl accuses him of hitting the hooch.

Do we want Rick and Lilla to overhear? Rick would mock Hitch for it, and maybe use it as leverage against Hitch. Hitch’s sanity is not really in question here. But it might be a nice intro for Rick’s character to have him overhear and make some kind of cutting remark in passing. As for Lilla, I think we’ll just have her greet Hitch as he comes in, fondle Taos, and say something characteristically dumb.

So we can cover the reactive phase here by showing Hitch trying to explain what happened to Earl, Lilla, and Rick. Then he has the dilemma of what to do about both his damaged plane and the poor woman he ran into. Should Hitch tried to blow it off or not? That would exemplify his general irresponsibility. But he’s not a cad. If he knew Jael was out there wounded, he would unquestionably go look for her. Right now, I think, he’s more torn between wanting to believe he imagined the whole thing and dying of curiosity to find out what it was really all about. So we’ll let him waffle just a little bit, fighting both his conscience and his curiosity. He tries to head right back out to look for her (even though he doesn’t have a vehicle—unless Rick drives a car instead of a second plane?). But the others’ ridicule draws him up short. So they mess around with the plane for a bit and Hitch calms himself down until he’s at the point where he knows exactly what he saw and he’s now wondering what the heck it was. So he indicates he’s going out to look for her, but Earl again draws him up short. And Hitch admits it’s all crazy, but whatever it is, he needs to find out what it is. He backs off on the idea that it was a woman—but he clings to the truth that it was something. I think we should have him completely talk himself out of the truth that it was a woman. When he meets Jael, he’s not entirely sure she’s what fell on him. He’s in denial even though she’s obviously not from anywhere local. So anyway he brushes off Rick and Earl and makes the decision to go looking for whatever it was the next morning.

Reaction: Disbelief, conscience, curiosity. Dilemma: What to do about the fallen “thing.” Decision: To go looking the next morning.
Should we also include what to do about the broken plane in this dilemma or save it?

Might be a nice extra layer to include it, esp. since it would distract Earl.
So what’s the resulting decision? That Earl will have to fix it and make it better before Livingstone arrives.

(Move #1 From Below Here.)
Next, we have the bit where Jael finds some clothes, and Walter sees her at the stream.
Originally, Hitch wasn’t going to be around for any of this, so I need to figure how to rework it to include him and show all this from his POV.

This is an important scene, since this is where Hitch and Jael officially meet. And also, probably where Hitch meets Walter.
At this point, no one knows Hitch is in town, so we could either use this scene or one leading up to it to introduce some townsfolk and to spread the word about Hitch’s arrival.

Setting plays a role here. Where is Jael when she steals her clothes? Where does Hitch take her afterwards? Or does he? He and Jael don’t really connect until he gives her a job.

Let’s just sketch what we know first.

4. Hitch gets up the next morning and goes looking for Jael.
   Does he take the plane?
   Seems like it would be more convenient (and subtle) if he doesn’t. I’m not sure.
   No, wait, Earl has to work on the plane, so Hitch either borrows Rick’s car or hitches (ha!) a ride with him.
   He goes to the lake, finds Jael’s tracks (and Zlo’s) and follows them.
   I really like the image of her shedding her dress for the new clothes and cutting her hair, then bounding fearlessly about on the roof. But is Hitch just going to stand back and watch all that?
   It makes more sense for him to be the one who sees her across the stream.
   But where does that leave Walter?
   Would it be better for Walter to come before or after Jael?

   She’s going to nab a jumpsuit, but she’ll need to get the jacket and shoes elsewhere.
   So she’s barefoot in the jumpsuit with her fancy gown hung up in its place on the clothesline when Hitch finds her.
   Might be nice imagery to have him walk upon the blowing gown first. Then he sees this barefoot waif chopping her hair off with a knife.
   There should be a little aura of danger around her, especially with that knife in her hand.

   What if Hitch picked Walter up earlier?
   Well… we don’t want them to hit it off too well in the beginning. It should be a gradual thing of Hitch earning Walter’s trust and incrementally becoming more interested in him.
   But I would really like Walter to see Jael at the stream.

#1: Move Up
3. What if we did give Walter a little POV. If he’s mute, then it would give him a voice and also add a little outside perspective.
So—tentatively, that could be the stream scene. He sees this strange beautiful woman. She looks up from drinking and grins at him—and he instantly loves her. Maybe she pantomimes a question about finding new clothes, and he’s the one who (unwittingly) directs her to the farmhouse.

Whose farmhouse?

The Carpenters
Matthew Berringer
J.W. Berringer
Griff
Campbell
Ginny Lou Thatcher

One of the first three is the obvious answer. I don’t think I want Jael stealing from the Carpenters (although that would explain Walter’s presents). So one of the Berringers? How will they tie in?

Something happens to spook Jael. Or maybe planes fly over, and she climbs atop the house in a futile attempt to flag one down (and, in so doing, impresses Hitch with her wing walker potential).

That’s good.

So what’s the conflict and disaster here?
We have the immediate potential for conflict between Hitch and Jael. Nothing too serious though.
And the disaster?
Matthew or J.W. arriving?

Hitch’s goal here is to find answers, so the conflict could arise over that. They can also conflict over Hitch’s disapproval of Jael’s stealing the jumpsuit.
Maybe she does something to screw up Hitch’s chances with Livingstone’s arriving troupe?

Let’s play it out.
He comes around the corner and finds her in the stolen jumpsuit, hacking off her hair. He might misunderstand her intent and say something.
Or more likely she hears him coming, turns on him, and threatens him with the knife. She’s going to be shocked, scared, and lost herself. She’s always been on the defensive—hiding and the like—so she’s going to take that route now.

But she’s not trained in self-defense, and Hitch knows his way around a fight. So he could easily disarm her if it came to that.

He tries to talk to her—tries to ask himself around the real question of “how did you come to fall from the sky?” Instead, he asks where she got the dress, if it was hers, if she lived here, and if she knew the Berringers.

She of course doesn’t speak much English. She mumbles enough for him to get the idea. Maybe he finally breaks down and asks, “Where are you from?”
Once she gets the idea, she looks up into the sky—and that can be when they see the planes fly over.
So they should have a little tussle before that, in which he disarms her on the second try.

So what’s the disaster?
Could be a Berringer comes back and blames Hitch for stealing his jumpsuit.
But if I introduce one Berringer I need to introduce two—and their relationship.

So is Jael just going to run off after this—or is he going to grudgingly help her get some clothes, etc.? Maybe Berringer give them breakfast.

What if Hitch is there, not just to find Jael, but to get something from Berringer?
Something that will help him in his overall goal.
After his plane broke down, he’s going to need some money to fix it. So he goes to see some old friends.

Why would he go to the Berringers first off? What’s his relationship to them of old? They might have been avuncular.
To the point he could ask for a loan after not seeing them for eight years?
Maybe he doesn’t want an outright loan. Maybe he wants to sell something or do a job.
So what?
His plane?
Some trinket?
A gun?

What kind of job?
Farming?
Fixing?

Whatever it is, he’s not going to get it.

Instead of having the Berringers get mad over the stolen jumpsuit, let’s have them reject Hitch’s request because they don’t like how he manhandled Jael. Let them side emotionally with Jael right away—it will make them both more likable.

Maybe Hitch has a necklace or something he picked up somewhere and his pitch to the Berringers is that they can use it to woo Ginny Lou—which could introduce their backstory and conflict.
But they reject it out of hand because they like Jael.
That’s all good.
But how is this set up?
How do both of the Berringers come to be there?

Try this:
After their feud over Ginny Lou, J.W. moved out of the family house, leaving it to Matthew (or maybe Matthew kicked him out). They split the farm—after much wrangling—and J.W. built his own house, right across the property line from Matthew’s. He built a gable-ridden monstrosity of a house, making sure he completely blocked Matthew’s view of the Bluff (or whatever). And he paints the whole thing bright blue—and the shingles bright red.

Okay, so Hitch and Jael are squabbling over the knife, when Matthew comes out. Or maybe a shot zips overhead—from J.W.’s house. He thinks Hitch is Matthew. So both Hitch and Jael duck and cover.

Matthew comes out, shouts at J.W. Jael tries to run, Hitch grabs for her, and the next thing he knows, both J.W. and Matthew have their guns on him. They express their surprise at seeing him (but pretty much take the whole thing in stride) while they berate him for manhandling Jael and keep arguing with each other.

Hitch points out that she stole the jumpsuit but they promptly forgive her.

Then the planes go over. And Jael shocks and impresses them all by scaling J.W.’s house.

So then we’ll have to work in the disaster of both Berringers promptly turning Hitch down on his quick money hopes.

And then breakfast?

The question is whether we want to use breakfast for the sequel or not. It would seem to be the logical progression—unless it ends up being too stationary.

Okay, to sum up the previous current scene:

Goal: Raise money from Berringers to pay for plane repairs; find the fallen woman.
Conflict: Berringers, Jael defends herself w/ knife, Berringers interject w/ rifles.
Disaster: Berringers side w/ Jael and refuse to buy Hitch’s trinkets.

5. The obvious dilemma for our sequel is “What to do with Jael?”

I like the idea of the Berringers having Hitch and Jael to breakfast and trying to set them both straight, according to their own (probably conflicting) views.

Matthew’s more gentlemanly than J.W., so it makes sense for him to do the inviting. But J.W. would immediately contest that.

So… they could eat outside in between the houses.
They could each make a dish.
They could each take a guest.
Matthew could host, while J.W. shouts through the window.

Let’s work the problem a little farther.
How does everyone react to Jael and particularly her roof-climbing escapade?
And how does she react to them?
They’re probably going to be talking to her like she’s a nutty squirrel, trying to talk her gently down from the roof. She of course is unfazed by the height. She climbs down just as nimbly and unconcernedly as she went up.

So she gets down and they’re all the little speechless. J.W. has some gruff remonstrances. And then, after Hitch tries to explain a little (leaving out her fall onto his plane), Matthew graciously invites them to breakfast—to which J.W. objects that Matthew can’t hog the company.

I would really like to keep the brothers together, since that’s infinitely more interesting. I think we’ll have J.W. stay outside and holler through the window.

So they all sit down to eat sausages, flapjacks, and scrambled eggs. They try to talk to Jael, but don’t get too much out of her. She can communicate a little. Her language is going to be a bit of a problem. I like the humor in her inability to fully communicate. But too much will limit her character.

So she needs to pick it up fast. Jael knows English pretty well from studying it in books, so she can pretty much understand what’s being said. But it will take her a little longer to be able to speak it.

So she makes it clear—through delightedly recognizing some word—that she can understand.

She sets to breakfast with a will and devours it. Hitch and Matthew learn by increments that she has no travelling companions, no idea where she is (she keeps calling it the groundworld), and no place to stay. When Matthew offers to let her stay there, to which J.W. objects (through the window), saying he has more empty rooms (to which Matthew can reply to the effect that that’s J.W.’s own fault).

In the end, Hitch intervenes to stop the argument, and both brothers admit it’s not a good idea for a young woman to stay with an old bachelor anyway.

So that leaves Hitch (a little to his surprise, when the brothers make clear their expectations) to find a place for her. Plus, he’s still got to find some money.

So he needs transportation into town.

He needs to get rid of Jael.

meet the Carpenters.

see Griff.

I’d like to introduce the town, and it would also be good if Jael got to see the air show—and probably see Hitch fly. And we probably need to bring Walter back into it.

We also need a little hint of the stakes—foreshadowing of Storming’s advent.

I still don’t have a solid 1st Plot Point.

What can happen that will—
—dramatically alter the landscape?
—involve Storming?
—force Hitch into a mad scramble of reactions?
It could be his finally and decidedly allying himself with Jael (even though he doesn’t entirely believe her?).

Maybe the stakes become life-threatening.

**What could Storming do to begin making its presence felt?**

- Lightning.
- Tornado.
- Hail.
- Torrential rain.
- Wind.
- Small landing force (Zlo—or Enforcers).

I like the idea of introducing Zlo (and Seb) early. But why would he come down and how will that build into his landing later?

What if he takes the key at the First Plot Point?

**What if Storming was damaged in Jael and Zlo’s fight. What if they have to make an emergency refueling stop. So they send down a team to gather supplies. Their strangeness could take Scottsbluff by surprise. (Not a whole lot of people—just a few old codgers and the like).**

And Zlo and Seb come down as well. Zlo controls the dawsedometer well enough to call down lightning—and strike Jael? And how does this directly affect Hitch?

And why does Zlo come back later?

What if Zlo fell along with Jael? So they’re both in Scottsbluff. Then the Enforcers drop for emergency refuel and that’s how Zlo gets back.

Hitch needs
- money for repairs
- Livingstone’s approval
- Rick and Lilla to stay on
- Griff’s forgiveness (and the Carpenters’)
- Campbell off his back

Why does Hitch need Livingstone’s circus so badly?

Money?
Protection?
Some trade secret or patent?

Maybe he wants to sell Livingstone’s circus to pay off Mafia debts.
Maybe Campbell is going to send him to prison unless Hitch pays him back for the botched job (or takes on a new job).

So Hitch’s first instinct is to try to win enough money—and Livingstone’s Circus—to pay off.

If he knew Campbell was after him, why did he come back home?

Griff asked him?

Hitch comes home because that’s where Livingstone is hosting the year’s biggest, highest-paying air rally. He hopes Campbell is dead and/or remains oblivious. He needs money to repair his plane to fly in the rally. Then he needs to win the rally prize to pay off a threatening Campbell—and avoid having to work for him again.

So the 25% could be what tips Campbell off to Hitch’s presence.
Could be what causes Hitch to need more money (Jael’s hospital bills?).

I think Campbell has to know beforehand. He needs to be introduced prior. But it changes everything. Prior, Hitch thinks he has everything under control. The 25% changes everything.

Maybe the 25% wrecks Hitch’s plane. He has no way of making the money to pay Campbell. So he takes the job on the condition that Campbell fixes the plane.

What action of Hitch’s sparks the 25%?

- He fights Zlo.
- He rescues Jael.

Zlo comes for Jael.
Hitch intervenes.

Something personal needs to happen between them.

Hitch has to more or less cause what happens to him at the 25%.

How can we involve Walter?

The 25% mark has to totally alter Hitch’s goals and priorities. It has to cause him to take Campbell’s offer and give Jael a job.

This should be the changing of the scene when Rick quits, Jael (and to a lesser extent Walter) come on board, and Jael begins to be accepted by the townspeople (exemplified by the Carpenters taking her in).
It doesn’t have to be tremendously traumatic—i.e. slaughter and tragedy. But something decisive has to happen. And it should be something with Storming and Zlo.

I’ve really envisioned this story as taking place mostly in SB, but Storming is easily the more interesting setting of the two, and I can’t afford to shortchange it.

Is taking Hitch up there at the Midpoint too late?
Does that change the story too much?

**I would really like to keep Hitch a skeptic for at least half the story (think Dastan).**

And anyway this was always much more a story about a strange young woman in Scottsbluff than it was exploring a strange new land.
That’s the story I want to tell.

Which means what I really want to do is just some foreshadowing. I like this idea of a lightning storm. A strange sightings of strange intruders—and particularly Zlo.

Maybe Zlo is in a bar, and he and Hitch get into it over something unrelated—so there’s some personal animosity there.
The Quarter Mark doesn’t have to have a huge effect on all of SB—just Hitch.
It has to personally wake him up to the fact that something crazy out of the ordinary is going on—and it all centers around Jael.
The big question is how to make it personal to him.
His whole goal has to shift. He has to have a bigger, more important goal than just making money to float his plane repairs, win the circus, and get out from under Campbell.
Something to do with Campbell.
Maybe he wants Storming’s secret for himself?
Maybe it’s his last horizon?
Maybe he’s just driven—obsessed really with discovering the next mystery over the horizon—an aerial Indiana Jones, of sorts?
Maybe he thinks finding the truth about Storming will impress Livingstone enough to give him the circus?

(So he helps Jael not out of altruism but because he knows she has answers.)

How can the Quarter Mark make it personal for him?
How does it make it so he can’t walk away?

1. Death of a loved one.
2. Guilt over something horrible happening to someone else.
3. Bad guy laying down the gauntlet.
4. Job promotion.
5. Arrival of a new character.
7. Tragic or dangerous entrapping circumstances (capture)
8. Personal change
9. New mission

Re:…

#1. I don’t have anybody to kill—and don’t really want to. **We could kill one of Jael’s people (e.g. Nestor dropped from the sky).** I like repeating the people dropped from the sky motif. But that’s both (hypothetically) heavier than I want to get and personal to Jael not Hitch.

#2. Hitch is dealing with some guilt already, so that could easily work. But what’s he going to feel guilty for? Celia is too long past and too unrelated. He would need to either **feel guilty for something Storming/Zlo did—or for something that happened to Jael.**

#3. This one is actually very accessible. Zlo is in SB. Zlo is spoiling for a fight—and Hitch is no chump. He’d take up the gauntlet, particularly if Zlo gave it a personal twist.

#4. **Livingstone could make Hitch investigating Storming the contingency of Hitch earning the circus.**

#5. Jael is the important arrival here. Save for Zlo, I don’t really want to have anything compete with that.

#6. Hitch could get close enough to Storming (maybe he chases after Zlo) to believe at least a part of the truth.

#7. **The Enforcers or Zlo (and Seb) could briefly capture Hitch.** But that really goes more hand-in-hand with #6. I don’t want Hitch enmeshed in Storming until the Midpoint.

#8. He gets hit by the lightning and gains special powers? Actually, I really like the idea of **Jael getting hit in this aureole of light—and miraculously surviving.**

#9. This kind of goes along with #4. Could be too that Campbell wants him to go after Storming.

Lots of good stuff there. I like how many layers we could give this thing. But we still need to figure out the event itself. It’s something Zlo prompts. Maybe this…

I was going to start with Nestor falling. But how’s he fall? Seb’s not going to push him. Ivan could do it, but that’s going to dilute the antagonistic force. So maybe we’ll just save that for a later possibility.

So it all starts with the strange Stormers coming to town for supplies (and maybe to surreptitiously look for Jael). Zlo has been around before this, but he and Hitch meet up and Zlo makes it personal by… something. TBA.

The storm comes.

Jael stands in the wind, eyes far away, and whispers, “They’re coming.”

Zlo and Jael tussle over the key.

Hitch goes after Zlo—mostly on cocky instinct I suppose.

Jael hops aboard, but is hit by lightning—or no, hold that. Zlo somehow directs the strike at Hitch’s plane. They’re still flying, so Jael jumps off and uses her piece of the dawsedometer to pull the lightning to her—thus protecting Hitch.

#3 Move Down.
Hitch continues on. He crash lands the plane in the Verge. He gets enough of a concussion to fade out, but he catches glimpses, through the mist of Storming and he hears snippets of Zlo and Seb’s conversation. Maybe they’re ransacking the plane and trying to get him out, when he wakes back up, maybe shoots one of them, and gets out of there. The plane could be damaged or not, as we need. Maybe Taos gets kidnapped.

He goes back to ground, feeling guilty for Jael’s getting lightning struck (not to mention falling off the plane again), only to discover she’s basically fine (maybe with blonde streaks in her hair now).

Livingstone makes a public challenge for the discovery of whatever’s going on up there—and Campbell makes a private one, in exchange for (possibly, if needed) fixing up the plane and canceling Hitch’s debt—or maybe that’s just a sideline to Hitch taking the job to save his skin and get his plane repaired.

That’s all pretty good. It means we’re going to need the following points set up or introduced prior to the Quarter Mark.

1. Zlo introduced and foreshadowed
2. Livingstone
3. Campbell
4. Jael’s key
5. Walter
6. Griff
7. Carpenters

Settings to introduce?

Up to the Quarter Mark Hitch is going to be keeping Jael at arm’s length. He’s attracted to her, and he thinks she’s interesting and enjoyable, but, for one thing, she smacks too much of something he has to be responsible for—since he found her, twice. Second, he resists the impossible possibilities she suggests.

She’s going to latch on to him, and try to get him to give her a job, but he refuses.

He won’t warm up to Walter during this period either. Walter keeps hanging around (both the planes and Jael), but Hitch will be initially gruff with him. It’ll be a gradual warming up, but it won’t really get rolling until the Quartermark.

We’ll set up the stakes with Campbell, and we’ll keep things very frosty between Hitch and Griff—although they should have plenty of opportunities to see each other.

Back to Scene #5

Dilemma:

Reaction: Shock and surprise over her climbing.
Dilemma: What to do with Jael?
Decision: Hitch takes her with him to find her a place to stay.

6. Hitch’s goal in this section is going to be twofold: get some money and get rid of Jael.

   I like the idea of Hitch taking Jael through town.
   I’d like to bring Walter in soon, but not at the same time as Nan.
   Hint at Hitch’s connection with Campbell, but don’t introduce him yet.
   Have Hitch hit Nan up for a place for Jael, and Nan turn him down.
   How does Walter fit in without Nan knowing Hitch has seen him? Or would it be better
to delay him until Hitch and Jael get to the airport?
   If Jael can’t stay with the Carpenters for a day or two, where does she stay?
   How is Hitch going to go about looking for money—and should he get at least a nibble?

   Jael’s unwitting strangeness could perhaps cause part of the conflict (along with Nan’s
anger). And the disaster will be Nan’s refusal to take Jael in.

   I think it would be good to introduce Zlo in this scene—at least obliquely—in addition to
the above stuff.

   Okay, so I’m seeing Hitch and Jael walking down the road. They would probably be no
closer than 6 miles to Scottsbluff. And that’s a couple hours walk.
   Where are they going to end up?
   I see them meeting Nan in a grocery store—or possibly a café.
   Hitch is going to need to try for money someplace.
   What about Walter? Now or later?
   We’re going to be introducing several characters in this scene, so maybe it would be
better to postpone Walter for a bit.
   So we could do two steps—the café, where he tries to sell stuff and where we get our first
inking of Campbell—and the general store, where we run into Nan. I think running into Nan
needs to be entirely incidental, because Hitch would never go voluntarily looking for his sister-
in-law.
   So they go in and Nan is at the counter, turns around, and she and Hitch are both
awkwardly shocked to see one another.

#2 Move Down (Spread this out among the next few sequels)
   We’ll want to start out with an opportunity for Hitch and Jael to talk. What will they talk
about?
   Zlo, for one.
   Hitch isn’t going to ask for outright about her fall, since he’s still kind of in denial about
that.
   Where are you from?
   Where is your family from?
   Were you going to a party?
Do you have a money?

She would have questions too. She’s going to be scared and worried about Zlo on her trail. But a part of her is also thrilled about seeing the groundworld. He might ask her about the second set of footprints at the lake, and that would lead to her making some explanations of Zlo’s presence and her concern about him. Hitch would just get the gist.

She would also want to know—
Where was she?
What are the planes?
Small little curiosities.
She probably wouldn’t know (until she sees the plane) that Hitch was the one she fell on. Maybe a plane goes over, and she explains about it.

They finally make it to town, probably in time for lunch (and Jael is starving again). They go into a café. Hitch starts to go into a bar, then realizes he can’t take Jael, so they switch to a café, where they both catch lots of glances.

Maybe Lilla is there (cheerfully flirting) and flags them in.
Jael too attracts her share of attention. She’s going to be pretty shy at first. Someone says something to her, and she doesn’t understand. Maybe someone touches her, and she freaks out and flips out a knife.

Too heavy?
We do want the town to like her, after all.
She could additionally cause a kerfuffle, break a window or something (which Hitch would have to pay for). And of course messing up Hitch’s chances for earning any more money (maybe he trades whatever he was trying to sell to pay for the window).
So he finally sits her down and they eat. Lilla is cheerful and sweet and tries to make friends with Jael.

Many of the old-timers recognize Hitch and express surprise over his return. Someone mentions Campbell and his surprise Hitch would come back with Campbell still there. And that gets Hitch fretting.

So they leave and head for the greener pastures of the grocery store (since no one at the café is likely to give Jael a place to stay after her stunt with the knife).

Who shall the characters in the café be?
1. Café owner (Toby Jones) and wife (Rosie).
2. Old codger #1
3. Old codger #2 (Stan Lee)

So Hitch hustles everybody on out, and they head down to the grocers. He tries to take away Jael’s knife (and Lilla proves no help by ignorantly siding with Jael, saying, “a girl never knows when a knife will come in handy”), but she refuses. He does get her to promise (as much as possible with their language barrier) to put it away though.

So they go into the grocer’s, and there’s Nan and the grocer—and Molly and Aurelia as well.

The grocer will be middle-aged and exceedingly dapper. His name is—Chipper Fallon.

Nan of course is flabbergasted to see Hitch. And he’s pretty surprised himself.
She’s always been angry with him for not coming back, but now she feels fear, because she doesn’t trust him to do the right thing for Walter. In fact, she resolves on the spot that Hitch can’t know about Walter. Plus there’s all her bitterness over Hitch’s leaving Celia—which will have to be touched on in this scene.

I think we’ll introduce Molly in this scene as well. She’s young (15 or so), in that restless, innocent, oversexed age, and she crushes on Hitch in an unsophisticated, embarrassing sort of way. She’s really just background.

So there will be some curt words exchanged between Hitch and Nan. She’s not impressed with the company he’s keeping—particularly Lilla and her oblivious floozy attire.

What’s the point of their conversation? We’ll introduce the backstory element of Hitch’s relationship with Celia. But the main point is his asking for a place for Jael to stay.

I can’t see him just outright asking her but he might mention that’s what he’s doing—and then fling it at her as sort of a challenge—which she’ll turned down in a general huff at this point.

What’s her reaction to Jael?

Nan is so caught up in her surprise and anger over Hitch that she’s not likely to really look at Jael at first. But she needs to get enough of a feel for her to prompt her to change her mind later.

(And maybe Hitch is upset when Jael does move in with the Carpenters, since it makes things more awkward for him—and Jael doesn’t get it, since he’s the one who asked Nan in the first place.)

So there’s Jael in rolled-up dungarees and a man’s shirt—barefoot with hacked off hair. And radiant and bright eyed for all that. Nan’s first thought is going to be to lump her in with Hitch and probably brand her a floozy. So Jael needs to do something to convince her otherwise.

Jael and Aurelia could be standing in the background, with Aurelia randomly holding up clothes and bolts of cloth to see how they would look on Jael. Jael is attentive to the conversation. It can be a reference to Hitch as a pilot with a red plane that gets Jael’s attention—since she really has no way of knowing that Hitch was who she fell on the previous night. Or maybe it’s Nan who focuses on Jael—one time her strange costume registers. She tells Hitch (once she hears more of the particulars) to get her some decent clothes. He tells her Jael needs a place to stay—and probably puts a brusque end to some of Nan’s insinuations—and Nan tartly refuses.

On the way out she makes some comment that Jael shouldn’t hang around Hitch, and Jael responds in some strange and beguiling way.

So…

Goal: What about Hitch trying to sell Chipper whatever it is he’s selling? Chipper agrees to buy something, but all the money goes for clothes for Jael and repairing the café window. Aurelia could pick out clothes for Jael—which Jael could later reject. (It would maybe a nice touch to
have Jael scandalized by the short skirts, while everyone else is scandalized by her wearing pants.)

Do I want Hitch taking responsibility for her so soon? He’s going to spend the section trying not to take responsibility for her.

Maybe Nan pays?
Lilla?

Best see what happens in the next scene.

Goal: Find a place for Jael and make some money.
Conflict: Jael’s strangeness alienates everyone.
Disaster: No one will take in Jael, and Hitch loses money on his deal to pay for her broken window.

Okay, here’s the thing I’m seeing in reviewing this scene: Basically, I have three scenes:
1. Hitch and Jael talking on the road.
2. Café.
3. Grocery store.

#1 feels more like a sequel, and 2 and 3 feel repetitive.
We could move #1 to later.
Could we combine 2 and 3?

Maybe after the window broke in the café, Nan, who’s passing by, comes in, takes Jael’s part—and then sees Hitch and backs off, since Jael is associated with him. Her dialogue exchange with Hitch could be very short and terse. That’s good.

Okay, so if we move Hitch and Jael’s conversation to the next scene, we’ll have Lilla tagging along (?). And we can introduce Walter.

What’s the dilemma?
Does it work to have it still be “What to do with Jael?”
That would seem to indicate the plot hasn’t advanced.
So how is where we’re at now different from before the last scene?
Hitch has exhausted possibilities about what to do with her—and he’s lost money.
The lost money is really how we’ve advanced.
And yet the conversation scene focuses on what to do with Jael.
What if part of the previous disaster was Jael starting off on her own—to find the planes.
She’s not dependent on Hitch. She doesn’t even completely trust him.
So why wouldn’t Hitch just let her go off? Why is that disastrous? That would seem to solve his problem—and that’s fine as far as it goes, except I need Jael to stay with him until she sees Livingstone’s circus.
Why would he stick with Jael if she didn’t want to?
She has money?
He felt responsible?
Maybe staying with her protected him from Campbell or some such?
If they split up now, it’s too coincidental for her to immediately show back up at the airport.

So why would he take her there? Unless he was taking care of her, he wouldn’t want her around. Although he does find her interesting and attractive. He’s not going to give her a job until after the Quartermark, so she’s not a moneymaker for him yet.

Maybe it’s Lilla’s idea. Maybe she thinks someone at the airport will take care of Jael—give her a job, etc.

So Hitch could take her out there as a way of getting rid of her—only to have her end up not leaving.

Maybe her stunt with the knife inspired something. I think we should stick Zlo in here.

What if the previous scene ends with the disaster of the law—either Campbell or Griff, or both—coming to deal with the disturbance at the café.

So Hitch pulls out pronto. And, under duress, agrees to really bad terms for his sale.

What if we had them visit the airport before they went to town. She’s got to see the planes—and Walter. Then Hitch hustles her off to town to try to get rid of her.

And then what?

Where she going to stay? No one takes her in until the Quartermark.

Maybe Walter hides her in his barn?

And how’s Zlo figure in?

What all is going to happen between now and the Quartermark?

- Livingstone’s arrival.
- Hitch has a nice interval with Walter.
- Hitch meets Zlo (on the way back from Griff’s?)
- Hitch visits Griff (Why?)
- Hitch meets with Campbell

Okay, so maybe Hitch is all set to pawn Jael off, when she says something about Storming.

He sends Lilla off to get Rick at the car.

- Sees Zlo.
- Get the lowdown from Livingstone.
- Goes to see Griff (Why?).
- Meets Zlo on way home.
- Next morning, interval w/ Walter.
- Campbell drops by—insinuates about Walter.
So far, all of this is about Hitch. We really have to foreshadow the Stormers’ arrival. Jael needs a definite mission—preferably one at cross purposes with Hitch. She knows what Zlo is planning. She’s mostly worried about Storming but also about what could happen to the groundworld. So far she’s just kind of been wide-eyed. But she needs to be determined and focused (for all that she’s scared and a little bewildered).

She doesn’t want a place to stay. She’s not just following Hitch around like a puppy dog, waiting for him to take care of her. She wants some definite thing.

1. To avoid Zlo.
2. To get Zlo arrested, when she realizes that’s a possibility.
3. To return to Storming.

For her, at this point, Hitch is both a help and a hindrance.

So she’s babbling about going home to the clouds—and everyone thinks she’s bonkers. Only Hitch gives her an inkling of belief.

So part of the town café scene can be her catching sight of Zlo and going ballistic. Maybe that’s why she takes out the knife—and then the people in a café take it personal. She wants to tell Campbell/Griff about what happened, but Hitch hauls her off. Maybe he promises to keep her safe for the night from Zlo.

So they start hiking down the road, ahead of Rick’s car, which Lilla went to get. And Hitch’s new dilemma is how to keep Jael quiet about him until later. So he keeps her close to keep her away from Campbell and, to a lesser extent, Griff. That could also be why he goes to see Griff now knows he’s in town, so he just bites the bullet and goes to see him—maybe partly in an effort to keep Campbell away, maybe partly to tell him about Zlo to pacify Jael.

That works, I think. Plus, we’ll really start being portentous with the weather.

Move #2 (from above) to here.
7. So now our sequel scene will focus on Hitch finding out more about Jael—and vice versa. Only there’s a lot more attention in this conversation.

She’s obviously scared and upset.

Hitch wants to know who she’s afraid of.
She wants to go home.

The dilemma here, for Hitch, is to keep her quiet and to keep her away from Campbell. In the decision he comes to—after Rick and Lilla catch up in the car—is to keep her at least until the next morning when he can talk to Griff.

Should Livingstone be a part of this scene sequel—or a new scene?
The goal for the Livingstone scene wouldn’t directly tie into the previous decision. Is that bad?

If you have several subplots, they don’t have to directly tie in consecutively, do they? And yet, it does seem like shifting gears pretty dramatically. Livingstone would tie in better right after Jael sees the planes come in.
Unless she sees more now, Livingstone would lead directly into Hitch needing money. But once Jael sees the airfield, how is Hitch going to get her to leave? What if Livingstone dismisses Hitch’s charm, so Hitch borrows a plane and shows him a thing or two? What if one of Livingstone’s pilots or Livingstone himself (unknown to Hitch) lands in town as a promotion stunt and Hitch takes the plane (along with Jael), both to make his escape—and to try to show off to Livingstone?

That last idea is a little wild, but it’s supposed to be a wild and fun story. So they hijack the plane, and then what? They can’t really talk while flying, and he has no reason to stop before the airport. So they get to the airport. They have a quick-ish chat—see Earl. Then Livingstone shows up, wanting to know about his plane. Maybe the bereft pilot comes roaring up, belatedly in a car, along with Rick, and maybe a bunch of excited townsfolk as well. (Maybe Hitch buzzes low over a field in which Walter’s meandering, and Walter waves and runs after the plane.)

So Livingstone is less upset than he would be due to the publicity Hitch brought in. Okay, let’s play this out… Hitch steals the plane. Jael loves it. Maybe she further proves her fearlessness by standing up in her seat or something, spreading her arms, and laughing with joy. They fly over Walter, etc.

They land, and Hitch reacts to Jael’s general craziness, both at the café and in the air. Earl comes over, learns what happened, and fluctuates between bawling Hitch out for taking Livingstone’s plane and thinking maybe he’s a gutsy genius. Earl is probably going to be a little askance at Jael’s at first—especially after he hears what she’s done. Maybe she’s so excited about the plane that she immediately jumps down and starts looking at the engines, etc., to see how works. Earl is originally irritated, but then when she proves she knows what she’s doing, he is impressed and softens toward her a little bit. So I suppose their dilemma is what to do about Livingstone, since they’ve presumably torqued him off.

And they decide?

First, am I going to be able to work Hitch and Jael’s conversation into this scene? Things are moving pretty fast, so maybe it would be better to be where I originally had it? I think we’re going to need to weave in the conversation at the beginning of the town scene (#6), this one, and probably the next sequel as well.

Remember: Never be afraid to string out juicy info. Start out asking questions, then don’t answer them for at least a few scenes.

Okay, so what do Hitch and Earl decide to do about Livingstone?
First, how is Livingstone going to react? He’ll be angry (blustery angry, at first), as much out of principle is anything. Then he recognizes Hitch—who he has respect for as a flyer, and more than a little irritation as a man. Once he realizes the plane is safe—and that the stunt was fabulous publicity—he’ll cool off some.

So what’s Hitch’s plan of action?

**Probably to emphasize the good turn he’s done Livingstone—maybe to make it sound like he did it on purpose to bring in a crowd. All cocky arrogance.**

**Reaction:** Disbelief over what he just did, fear that he’s blown his chances of w/ Livingstone, and incredulous anger/annoyance over Jael’s crazy behavior.

**Dilemma:** How to diffuse Livingstone’s anger.

**Decision:** To play like it was all a stunt to gain publicity.

8. Everybody—Livingstone and Rick, Lilla, and a bunch of townspeople—drive up. Livingstone, in his flamboyant white suit and colorful southern accent, makes a big show of stomping up and wondering what is going on.

Hitch comes over, playing it cool and cocky, like it was all a grand joke on his old boss. His goal here is to defuse the situation.

The point of this scene is going to be learning more about Livingstone, the circus, and what Hitch has to do to earn the money he needs.

What will the disaster be?

The next scene is going to be Hitch visiting Griff, with the intent of keeping Campbell off his back.

**How do we lead into that?**

Could it be that Jael causes a row and Livingstone threatens to call in Campbell? Why would Livingstone do that? He’s not really that upstanding a type himself. He’s going to be looking out for number one. So whatever he does is going to be tied into that.

Maybe he conceives instead a dislike of Jael.

Aside from the fact that she’s a woman and a stranger, why wouldn’t he like her?

She can blunder into a gaffe that shines a little too much light on Livingstone.

She’s not a bold person (for all her fearlessness), so she’s not going to just butt in here.

**But Hitch might draw her in with a wink and a nod—which she would entirely miss.**

So why would it be in Livingstone’s best interest to go to the cops—and why would Hitch’sgoing to Griff mitigate it at all?

If Livingstone goes to Campbell, that’s it. Griff can’t (and won’t) do anything about that. Hitch would only go to Griff to head off someone else going to him—or because he had nowhere else to turn on an important matter (like Zlo?).

We need a really good reason for Hitch to go see Griff. He’s his brother and he’d want to see him despite the bad blood (much of which, come to think of it, Hitch doesn’t even know about).
If Hitch doesn’t know how upset Griff is, how does that change things? He wouldn’t have any reason, other than his own awkwardness over having failed to communicate for nine years and his suspicion that Griff would be a little taken aback, to avoid Griff.

There are a lot of general reasons Hitch could go out there. But we need a plot specific reason.

Or maybe it’s part of the sequel.

What if I played this whole next section as a sequel? Really, we need to slow down and let a lot of internalizing happen here before the big guns hit at the Quartermark.

He would still need a reason for going out to see Griff, but it wouldn’t have to be as heavy.

But that would seem to mean we’re going to need to end this scene with a definite disaster—to propel us through this link to the sequel.

So Livingstone is really going to have to lay down the law here. He’s got to spell out for Hitch exactly what has to happen (and how hard it will be) for Hitch to achieve his overall goal of winning the rally and paying off Campbell.

Is Livingstone antagonistic? Does he dislike and have it out for Hitch?

I think he’s just a selfish guy.

I don’t think he has a history of having it out for Hitch—but he’s petty enough to want to slyly twist Hitch for the whole plane stunt. So he might do something to make it extra hard for Hitch to compete and/or win.

Hitch’s plane is busted. What’s harder than that?

Maybe—since he knows Hitch’s strengths—he deliberately slants the competition to make it tougher on Hitch.

So let’s play this out:

Livingstone sees right through Hitch’s attempts to laugh it all off. But he plays along, both to make himself look like a good guy, and because Hitch just happens to be right about the publicity.

They jovially reminisce, with the undercurrent of tension. (Probably, we’ll want their previous relationship to have ended on a bad note.) Livingstone plays it up, makes a show of it, asks to be introduced around. And when Hitch gets to Jael, she kicks the conflict into high gear somehow…

Livingstone does something to frighten Jael or antagonize her, and she blows through all the smoke and the games Livingstone and Hitch have carefully and politely been playing. She does it mostly because she feels backed into a corner, but also because she doesn’t like Livingstone.

What bluff is there to call here?
She could tell the truth about Hitch stealing the plane. (But that would upset Hitch more than Livingstone.)

She could baffle everyone with some reference to Storming.

She could tell Livingstone she doesn’t like him.

But save for the first, I don’t know that any of those are really in character.

First, what exactly is Livingstone’s really all about?

Originally, I’d said he was returning and looking for a worthy successor, but that now seems out of character.

So maybe he’s just hosting a big air show, a part of which is a huge cash prize for the competitors—which is what Hitch was originally after. (It’s possible Livingstone could up the ante by revealing he is retiring and is looking for a suitable manager—hint, hint to Hitch.)

So that’s the bones. And I really won’t know more about the specifics until I start researching.

So what about Livingstone hinting at the possibility of Hitch taking over?

Hitch would jump at the chance (even though he would probably live to regret working for someone else—especially Livingstone), since it’s a huge step toward his dream. It would significantly up the ante for him. And it could end up being a great demonstration of his change in priorities if he gives it up in the end.

Livingstone is ticked off at Hitch right now. But at heart he’s a deeply practical businessman, and he knows that Hitch is both an excellent flyer and a great showman.

So maybe he phrases all this in the form of a bet. That way, he immediately puts the pressure on Hitch. If he loses the bet he gets a good manager in Hitch. If he wins he gets… what? Hitch’s busted plane?

His crew—who have minds of their own and half of whom are soon to be headed out the door anyway?

Money—which Hitch doesn’t have, but which he would impulsively bet anyway out of sheer cockiness.

That Hitch would come work at a low paying, possibly humiliating job?

The Hitch would back off the circuit (forever?) And out of competition with Livingstone?

It could be that Livingstone is interested in the modifications Earl has made to Hitch’s plane, even in its busted state.

Maybe Hitch brags he’ll win the competition on his super-modified plane—and that perks Livingstone’s ears. He’s interested both in the plane on its own merits and because he knows its loss would hit Hitch where hurts.

Okay, that all sounds pretty good.

So what about Jael?

How does she prompt this disaster? Preferably, in a way that emphasizes Storming—and maybe Zlo or some reason for Hitch to go see Griff?

What does she want out of this scene?
She’s going to start mostly in the background and try to go unnoticed like she always does. What she wants is Hitch to fly her back home. She doesn’t quite trust him, but she trusts him more than anyone else at this point.

She wants to evade Zlo—or maybe even have him arrested.
So she’s content to stay in the BG until…

Livingstone is introduced to her?
Someone says something she adamantly disagrees with?

They invite Zlo (in absentia) to the meet?
Livingstone *6 wants to see her key?
  3* wants to know where she’s from?
  wants her to be in the show?
  9* teases about pressing charges against her.
  8* says she needs to get off the airfield.
  2* insults (unwittingly) by saying she knows nothing about engines or some sort.
  5* calls her crazy after she references Storming.
  4* calls her a nasty foreigner or some such.
  1* tries to kiss her cheek/hand. (To which she tries to pull the *7 knife again?)
  kicks Taos?

I like the idea that she goes for the knife again—and Hitch stops her before she gets it out. Below causes that?

Okay, so Livingstone starts out trying to be the gallant and kisses her hand which she rejects ungraciously. He tries to laugh it off and says something cutesy about her being a mechanic wannabe (which she resents). He asks where she’s from to which she gives some vague, dissembling answer about Storming. He jokes about her mental stability and calls her some foreign epithet (jokingly of course).

He asks about her key and makes a move for it. A definite move—to which Jael, who’s already ticked off—reacts violently. She goes for her knife again. Hitch recognizes her intent and stops her with a little struggle. Livingstone gets just ruffled enough that he has to straighten or dust off his clothes.

He makes noise about having her thrown off the airfield. When Hitch objects to that (taking up her cause out of sheer reflex), Livingstone says something about drawing up charges. Hitch objects to that too—and then comes the challenge from Livingstone.

**Goal:** To evade Livingstone’s anger—both to be able to still compete in the show, and to keep charges from being brought before Campbell.

**Conflict:** Jael causes another row and Hitch takes her side against Livingstone.

**Disaster:** Livingstone maneuvers Hitch into a dangerous bet and threatens to raise charges against Jael.

9. I’d like a brief slowing of the pace here. Before Hitch heads out to see Griff, we have a nighttime scene at the airfield.

There are campfires and music once again—more now that Livingstone’s people have arrived.
Hitch comes into his own camp to see Jael. She could be fondling Taos or working on some bit of machinery. Maybe she’s found some better clothes by now. A jacket and some shoes. He objects at first. He doesn’t want Jael around. She already caused problems, and he doesn’t want to be responsible for her. But Earl tells him to stop being a jerk. He says Jael knows her stuff around engines and already showed him how to fix something up. He prompts Hitch to get himself over there and be nice to her.

So Hitch takes something to eat or drink and heads on over, awkwardly at first. Jael is pretty quiet. She’s alone and she’s scared and she’s worried.

He asks her about the engine piece she’s working on and that opens her up some. So anyway they have a little chat, and he warms to her. She’s lovely and she’s intriguing, enigmatic: quiet and meek and obviously uncomfortable, but also eagerly and thoughtlessly brave. More than brave: fearless. He identifies with the vein of recklessness running through her. She’s bewildered and maybe a little crazy, but she’s also obviously very intuitive and super smart.

For all that her stunt with Livingstone (and in the café) caused him a heap of trouble—which annoys him—it also impressed him. Truth be known, he already likes her—a lot. And not just in a sexually attracted way. They’re kindred spirits—free spirits—and he resonates with and admires that.

She’s going to be mostly thinking he’s a blowhard. She has good people instincts, and she sees right through his bluster. But she is very impressed with his flying, and she looks to him as a protector of sorts, mostly because she has nowhere else to turn at this point but also because she sees him as a strong and canny fighter.

She has so little experience with people that she really doesn’t know what else to think, so she warily admires him. Not quite likes him, not quite trusts him. But he’s the only person she has right now.

He kind of randomly wonders what he’s going to do with her, and she expresses concerns about Zlo. There’s a necessary explanation about Storming, which Hitch dismisses.

They talk about Livingstone’s threatened charges against her, and he decides to go see Griff about that, since he really needs to go see him any way. She mentions Zlo again, and he says he’ll ask Griff about that too.

**Reaction:** Discussing Livingstone and resolving opinions and emotions about Jael.

**Dilemma:** What to do about Livingstone’s threats.

**Decision:** Talk to Griff about it and get him to head off Campbell.

**Hitch gets up and mentions that she can’t stay here for long, now that Livingstone indicated he wants her off the field. (But it’s obvious that Hitch at least a softening toward her.)**

10. **Do we want Jael to come along and meet Griff? If not, when will she meet him?**

I’m envisioning this scene without Jael. She doesn’t need to be there every blessed minute—and it doesn’t seem in character for Hitch to bring her along at this stage. The only reason to do so would be to give Hitch and Jael more time together—and introduce Griff to Jael. I don’t want to make a big deal out of Griff liking her (no love triangle angst), but I’d like him to
like her just enough that it causes a little nameless niggle of irritation—and that he wants to protect her from Hitch for her own good.

So if Jael doesn’t meet him here, when will she meet him?

Probably sometime during or after the Quartermark. But will there be a place there for a significant meeting?

It doesn’t have to be a big deal, but it does have to be a moment—a cute meet of very small proportions.

Or maybe it doesn’t happen in the midst of the tragedy. Maybe Griff comes out to the airfield on an errand, or to see what’s going on with Jael, etc. Maybe they have a nice quiet meeting, in which he warns her of Hitch, and Jael impresses him (but he knows a relationship with her would be futile for a number of reasons).

I like that. But where would I put it? I don’t think it’ll fit prior to the Quartermark. For one thing, it’s too close to Hitch’s visit, and for another, there’s not yet a reason for Griff to have heard about Jael.

But is after the Quarter Mark too late? The relationship isn’t important to the plot but it is significant to the characters.

Maybe he sees her during the Quarter Mark kerfuffle, then goes out to see her afterward, after Hitch has given her a job and while he’s away talking to Campbell.

Okay, so no Jael in the scene.

Okay, Hitch hikes out to the family farm. He hasn’t been out there since his father died. He’s going with the purpose of a) seeing Griff, both because he wants to see him and because he wants to get it over with, and b) to try to get Griff to head off Campbell.

Griff was only 18 when Hitch’s left, so he wouldn’t have been a deputy at that point. Hitch has some legitimate concern for Griff being in Campbell’s grip. That might even be his primary reason for going out there—and Griff could misread it as Hitch’s trying to protect himself.

So he gets there. Griff is pretty upset and hostile. He mentions that Nan had already told him Hitch was back—and doesn’t mention that Nan told him to keep mum about Walter.

They talk about their pasts—about Celia’s and their father’s deaths, about both their experiences with Campbell, about the row at the café and at the airport.

And it doesn’t end well.

Griff is ambivalent about helping Hitch out with Campbell. But he does warn him to keep his nose clean and then get out of town as quickly as possible.

Hitch should probably mention Zlo briefly—but not coincidentally—to prep for the next scene.

Goal: Reunite w/ Griff, warn him about Campbell, and get him to keep Campbell away.
Conflict: Griff is angry w/ Hitch.
Disaster: Griff refuses to help w/ Campbell and warns Hitch to leave town.

11. So what is this scene with Zlo? Seems like it has to be a bit of a hybrid. It starts out as the sequel, with Hitch walking back to the airfield, mulling on his conversation—and his disastrous relationship with Griff, and basically everyone else. Do we need the dilemma and the decision prior to Zlo’s entry?

What is his dilemma?
What to do about his bad relationship with Griff?
What to do about Campbell?
Both, really. But perhaps they don’t have to be fully realized???
And the decision?
I like the idea of interrupting the sequel with Zlo—then closing out with the decision.
Does that work?
What is he going to decide to do with Griff? What can he do? Just let it ride? Try again later? He really has no clear course of action.

Reaction: Emotional turmoil and sadness over Griff’s anger. Realization that he kills all his important relationships, sooner or later, through his inability to commit. And then probably some rationalization, denial, and anger.

Dilemma: How to mend fences w/ Griff.

Decision: To let it ride and maybe see him later.

So then—whammo!—Zlo jumps him.
Or—what?

Why is Zlo out there?

Zlo’s plans have all been discombobulated by the fall. Not only does he not have Jael’s key, but he’s grounded too.

Maybe he knows though that Storming is losing supplies and will have to land. So he’s biding his time. What he needs is Jael’s key.

So why is he following Hitch?
Unless he doesn’t know where Jael is and stumbles on Hitch by accident, he’d be much better off stalking her in Hitch’s absence.

So does he jump Hitch with intent—or does he stumble on him by accident?
Or maybe Hitch stumbles on Zlo?

I still like the idea that Nestor falls from the sky. Could it be that Zlo is with the body?

Maybe the body is an Engine Master—a sign that Zlo’s contingent in Storming is at war. And that’s how he knows that the Stormers will be coming down for an emergency refueling.

If there’s a body, that’s going to cause lots more complications. Do I want that?
And if no body, then how do Hitch and Zlo meet?

What would Zlo want from Hitch?
Jael
Jael’s key
A ride home
His silence if he knows too much
To pay him off as a partner in the deal

Zlo is a hands-on guy but he also thinks he’s clever. He might try to bribe Hitch into getting the key from Jael and/or eliminating her.
What will they fight about at the Quartermark?

We’ll need it to be something that makes the fight personal between them.

It could be

- about Jael
- about Walter
- about Earl
- about Celia
- about Hitch’s pride
- about the plane
- about Taos.

Maybe Zlo kicks Taos.

That could be what pushes Hitch over the edge, but the enmity as a whole would have to be based on something personal—and story-centric.

Okay, how about this for the next fight.

Hitch identifies Zlo in town (probably) as the man with the body. Zlo gets in Hitch’s face and says lots of disparaging things about Jael in general, and some about Jael in particular. Gutter rat, grease monkey, and worse. Maybe he says something to cast doubt on her. Taos growls at him; Zlo hits him and Hitch loses it.

So for this scene, let’s just have Hitch stumble upon Zlo standing over an Engine Master’s body.

We really need to get Jael’s reaction to this, so maybe he’s almost to the airfield. Maybe Storming swoops over, and Maksim flies overhead—and knocks the master from the cloud.

So Hitch stops, only to find Zlo—eyes glittering evilly as he looks at Hitch over his shoulder—standing over the body. Maksim soars in and lands on Zlo’s hat (or something). Hitch instinctively puts two and two together enough to know that this is the guy Jael is afraid of—and he has something to do with the Engine Master’s fall.

Hitch and Zlo grapple, but Zlo escapes—with Maksim’s help.

So then he had a has to bring this body in (goal?)

**Goal:** Discover what just happened.
**Conflict:** Zlo disappears, taking the answers with him.
**Disaster:** Hitch is left to take care of a corpse.

So then we’ll finish off our trifecta with a final sequel.

12. Hitch has to either take the body in or bring the people to the body.

We’ll just cut the scene here, so we skip the boring details of hauling the body in and gathering everyone.

So—magically—Hitch has returned from driving the body in. He’s explaining it all to his little crowd.
Somebody—Earl probably—points out that Hitch will have to take the body in and report to the sheriff. (Let’s say they send somebody with a car to tell the sheriff—or maybe they telephone—so the burden of waiting all night to check it out weighs on Campbell and not Hitch.) That’s Hitch’s dilemma—what to do about this.

Then Jael comes up, and it’s pretty obvious she knows the guy. She clams up—or talks stuff they can’t understand. Hitch’s gets her off by herself and learns a few things about Storming and Engine masters in general, but not much more.

So finally he has to face the fact that he’ll probably have to meet with Campbell the next day.

**Reaction:** Explains what happens.

**Dilemma:** How to avoid Campbell.

**Decision:** Face Campbell.

13. I’m thinking we’ll tell this scene from Walter’s POV. He approaches Hitch the next morning. Taos falls in love with him and starts following him all over, but Hitch is gruff and impatient (caused partly by his stress over Campbell’s coming). So Walter wanders out, and finds Jael in the field staring up at the sky. And they share a bonding moment that consists of.

What’s the goal here?

**Goal:** Hang around the planes.

**Conflict:** Hitch is gruff and forbidding.

**Disaster:** Hitch shoos him off.

So now he wanders out to see Jael. On his way over, we can take care of the sequel.

**Reaction:** Complacent disappointment.

**Dilemma:** How to stick around the planes w/o getting into trouble.

**Decision:** Go talk to Jael.

His goal in seeing Jael is just to see who she is and what she’s up to. He recognizes her from when the stolen plane flew over. And then his goal is again to stay near the planes.

He and Jael get on beautifully, despite her bad English and his silence. He immediately forms a bond with her.
Maybe he signals that he’d like to ride in her plane—and she has to disillusion him once again. She can tell him a thing or two about Hitch.
And then Campbell arrives, and she has to leave.

**Goal:** Get Jael to allow him to see the planes.
**Conflict:** Jael has no authority over Hitch.
**Disaster:** Jael has to leave him before she can help.

14. So now we’ve got Campbell descending on Hitch. He might stop first to see Livingstone, and Hitch can see him coming to the hangar from across the field.
   Hitch’s goal here is going to be to get through the meeting and get Campbell and his debt off his back.
   Campbell asks him a few questions about the fallen bodies, scoffs at the notion of Storming, and makes a crack or two about the stolen plane.
   Then he gets down to the heart of the matter—which is the money Hitch owes him. He calmly and genially threatens, and Hitch promises to have the money for him after the air show.
   Campbell makes a lot of bullish noises and offers Hitch a new job that will cancel the debt and make him a bunch of new money besides.
   Hitch demurs, and Campbell gives him a deadline. As he’s leaving, he makes a crack about Walter—although nothing too explicit.
   The storm is starting to feel really blustery now. As he’s leaving, Campbell comments on it and also mentions the strange people come to town. He points out one—Seb. Then leaves.

**Goal:** Convince Campbell to give him more time.
**Conflict:** Campbell won’t forgive the debt pressures Hitch to take a new job.
**Disaster:** Campbell won’t forgive the debt.

15. Brief sequel in which Earl wanders over and wants to know what the deal is. He probably doesn’t know the debt Hitch owes Campbell, but he suspects the gist.
   So Hitch can vocalize a little of his frustration—and concern—mostly by sidestepping it.
   His dilemma is how to win the air show and get enough money to pay off Campbell. So he focuses on asking Earl if the repairs are finished on the plane.

**Reaction:** Fear and frustration, quickly stuffed away.
**Dilemma:** How to win the air show and pay off.
**Decision:** Get to work on testing the plane’s repairs.

   Earl makes noise about flying in the weather, but Hitch bulls ahead. He asks about Jael’s whereabouts, and Earl says he saw her talking to Walter and then head out. Hitch mutters something about good riddance, and Earl knowingly scoffs something about how all foreign speaking nuisances should be so cute.

**First Plot Point (25%)**

16. So off Hitch goes into the wild blue yonder (or stormy gray yonder in this case). He’s flying around, testing the plane, when he catches sight of something suspicious in the clouds—the
Stormers returning to base. But before he can investigate, he spies Jael’s running full out. Jael and Zlo should be someplace where there are people. In town even maybe. Griff needs to be there and see Jael. The storm is hugely destructive. Storming is making war. Townspeople are affected.

Maksim flies alongside the plane just long enough for him to recognize it, then dive bombs. Zlo comes into the open and tackles Jael. Hitch swoops low over them, doesn’t do any good, so he lands and gets out to help.

Zlo gets the key (or whatever) from Jael and starts to leave. Hitch stops him. They tussle a bit, but Zlo gets free and escapes into a loading vehicle, with Seb.

So everybody back

Hitch lands the plane in time to see Jael standing.

Hitch starts after Zlo, swooping low over Jael, who is up and running. She sees Zlo aim the dawsedometer at Hitch. She jumps onto the plane (both impressing and scaring Hitch). And she scrambles up just in time to impart some useful info, and sees that Zlo is aiming a lightning bolt at the plane. She starts hollering, but Hitch doesn’t know what the heck she’s talking about. She makes him understand that she wants him to fly low over a haymow. He dodges the lightning bolt without realizing it came from Zlo. Jael jumps off into the hay, and he sees her pull the next bolt to her. She glows and the hay all catches fire and that’s all he sees.

Goal: Save Jael and stop Zlo.
Conflict: Zlo takes the key and runs away.
Disaster: Zlo escapes and Jael gets hit by lightning

Reaction: Hitch is shocked and scared at what happened to Jael.
Dilemma: Keep after Zlo or help Jael.
Decision: Get Zlo.

17. Move #3 (from above) to here.

We’re going to have a general sense of shock and wonder as Hitch flies high enough to see Storming. He crashes into the Verge, mostly due to the storm.

Zlo and Seb will be talking mostly in unintelligible language but Hitch should get the gist that Zlo is under a bit of duress (but also triumphant) and Seb is confused and reluctant.

So then he wakes up and gets out of there.

Goal: Stop Zlo.
Conflict: The plane crashes due to the storm and Hitch blacks out.
Disaster: He escapes but the plane is damaged worse than before.

First Half of Second Act

18. Move #4 (from above) to here.

He is going to be insanely confused about everything that just happened—maybe even a little hysterical (in a manly way of course).

He runs through the wreckage of the storm to the hospital to find Jael (maybe Griff took her there). She is missing from her room, so that panics him for a moment, but then he finds her,
not all that much worse for the wear. And he should show a definite human and caring side in his relief that she’s okay. Maybe she’s with Nan and Walter (and Aurelia?), and Nan hustles Walter away—and Taos follows him.

So Hitch is going to be full of questions. But after his initial hysterics, he’ll probably slow down and back off, out of fear of looking crazy.

First question is going to be what happened to Jael and how she survived the lightning. He’s also going to want to know who exactly Zlo is, how she knows him, and what he took from her.

Then his questions are going to get more focused and calculating as he tries to probe her regarding Storming.

He landed in the Verge, where there wasn’t much to see, and he was kind of out of it from the conk on the head, so he has no real idea what he stumbled on. He just knows he somehow landed in the clouds, and he left Zlo and Seb up there.

Jael is going to be pretty reticent, both out of caution and the language barrier. But she’ll have to give him a bone or two.

First, maybe she should make some concerned woman noises about his conk on the head, probably while he’s still hysterical. She’s not very comfortable around people, but she might move confidently while he’s distracted. Then when he calms down and becomes aware of her proximity, she can grow embarrassed and back off and busy herself with other things.

She won’t tell him anything about Storming I don’t think. But she can explain her suddenly pressing worries about Zlo and his intentions. She makes it clear she’s going to stop him. She’s no longer asking for Hitch’s help. Soon she indicates she will look for a way home from the other pilots.

They need to have a bit of a casual bonding moment here. They reassure each other. Hitch tells her she was brave. She reassures him (perhaps wordlessly) that he’s okay and not crazy.

Then they head on out.

The town is pretty much in an uproar. They’re all a little breathless from the damage of the unexpected storm, but there’s also a rapidly spreading (and somewhat panicked) rumor that something weird is going on. People recognized the Stormers as strange, and some of them saw them ascending—and of course the rumors only grow from there.

Livingstone takes advantage of the situation, and uses it as a publicity stunt. He sort of takes charge of whipping the crowd into a frenzy and then announcing the grand prize to the pilot who can penetrate the secret of the storm.

Maybe the Berringers are there, and J.W. calls it for blarney. Griff tries to step in and bring some order, but Livingstone just whips the furor higher.

- Hitch goes back to Earl and discovers the plane is seriously busted.
- Private meeting w/ Campbell.
- Goes to Carpenters to hire Jael.
- Rick quits over Jael.
Hitch is privately both intrigued and skeptical. He tries to ask Jael what she thinks, but she’s already gone.

So he heads back to his plane, discovers it busted, and maybe has to get Rick or somebody (Berringers?) to haul it back out to the airport. He has Earl go over it, and they’re both disgusted (along with Rick) to discover it’s a mess beyond their capability of fixing without funds. So everybody’s pretty strung out and cranky.

Hitch raves about Jael’s bravery and how she would be a marvelous wing walker. Rick scoffs at that, and Earl just growls knowingly (even though he doesn’t know the half of it).

But the dilemma remains—they have no money for repairs—and thus no way to discover what’s going on up there and no way of paying off Campbell.

So Hitch makes the risky decision of accepting Campbell’s job for an advance.

He looks around for Jael, and Earl says she never came back.

So Hitch bums a ride or takes Rick’s car and heads townside.

**Reaction:** Hysteria and confusion.

**Dilemma:** What to do about the busted-up plane.

**Decision:** Take Campbell’s job.

19. It’s a late evening, and the sun is peeking through when Hitch drops himself in to see Campbell at his house (maybe he waited, in part, to avoid running into Griff).

I don’t see Campbell as being married, but he has a rough and harried housekeeper: Eliza Bates.

Okay, so they have their awkward chat, during which Campbell maintains deliberate authority (maybe he keeps right on eating, while Hitch stands around).

Hitch says he’ll do the job if Campbell will pay to have the plane repaired. Campbell agrees but then says, “yes, but…”

He wants Hitch to take Livingstone’s challenge, but he wants Hitch to report back to him. He knows something is up there, and he sees big money in it.

So Hitch’s going to be transporting stolen liquor. We’ll have to work that in.

**Goal:** Get money from Campbell.

**Conflict:** Campbell’s a jerk.

**Disaster:** Campbell complicates the job.

Hitch asks Campbell not to tell Griff.

20. Next stop he goes looking for Jael and Taos. Somebody mentions seeing the dog out Carpenters’ way, so he heads that direction.

He hears the dog bark and spies Jael out among apple trees. She explains the Carpenters’ our letting her stay. He realizes Nan’s burst of goodwill was the result of her thinking Jael was no longer with Hitch.

So the point of this scene is convincing Jael to come work for him. He doesn’t tell her the whole story, of course.

She jumps at it at first since she wants a flight back home. But Hitch scares her into caution when he makes it clear he wants her to stay on for a while.
It’s time for Jael to show some spirit and tell Hitch a thing or two. I don’t think we want the kiss here. But we need to start igniting some sparks between the two of them, some banter. Jael is confused by Hitch. On the one hand he’s friendly and attractive, and on the other she can see full well that he’s a scoundrelly type.

But they both have something the other wants.

The conflict is what’s important in this scene. I don’t want Jael looking up at him out of big doe eyes and blinking demurely. She needs to show some sass.

Maybe Hitch tries switching gears from the genuine if cranky person he’s shown her so far, and instead tries to be charming. She’s momentarily confused, then sees right through it.

She stands up to him (without necessarily pushing back). She wants to know exactly what he’s up to. He dissembles, but she’s not having any of it. She realizes that he needs her, but she doesn’t necessarily need him (or at least she lets him think that). So she drives him a hard bargain and makes him understand he has to respect her. Maybe she even says point-blank that she knows he thinks she doesn’t understand what’s going on.

He should say little something to get her ire up. She should get spitting mad there for a second.

Then he calms her down, says something nice or complimentary, partly to be charming but mostly out of sincerity. That rocks her a little off balance.

Maybe he coaxes her down—says she can’t really think he’s such a bad guy, which of course she doesn’t, since she’s deeply attracted to him in spite of herself. So she’s abashed and she backs down and says she’ll think about it.

He agrees as far as it goes.

Molly comes out to get Jael and immediately starts a transparent if highly inexperienced flirtation with Hitch. Nan comes out to see what’s taking so long and freezes up at the sight of Hitch.

He says he’s just come for his dog. Nan says for him to leave Jael alone, and he says he’s going to give her a job. Nan humps at that and tells Hitch to keep off.

Goal: Hire Jael.
Conflict: Jael resents his fakery.
Disaster: She will only promise to consider.

21. **And then I think I’d like to do a scene from Walter’s POV**

We’ll do a little scene from Walter’s POV. Walter is off romping with Taos, and when he comes in, he’s delighted to discover Jael at the dinner table. Maybe he passes Hitch on the way out, and although Hitch takes his dog, he’s nicer to Walter this time around. Walter is very impressed with him. Sees him as an adventurous hero. He’s probably heard rumors of what Hitch did it earlier that day.

So then he goes inside and discovers Jael, whom he immediately latches on to. This will be a good opportunity to see these characters outside of Hitch’s POV. The Carpenters are trying to figure Jael out, and Nan is doing her loving best—and failing—to disillusion her children regarding Hitch.

We could maybe use this as a sequel scene for the previous one and show Jael’s response to Hitch’s job offer.
She’s ticked off at Hitch, but she also likes him in spite of herself (although she’s not yet admitting that). And she knows he is her best chance of getting back to Storming. So she’ll listen to the Carpenters’ discussion, calm down, and ask a few questions about Hitch to help her make her decision.

I had intended her to know Walter was Hitch’s son before he did, but I probably want to keep the readers in the dark until Hitch finds out. But maybe she starts to figure it out here.

We might end after supper (depending how long the scene goes on), with Walter attentively showing her where she’ll sleep. Maybe she takes him outside and tells him about the stars.

Reaction: Annoyance fading into rationalization.
Dilemma: To take Hitch’s job or not.
Decision: To take it.

22. And now we really enter the bones of the 2nd act. I have basically no idea what’s going to happen here. This is where Hitch and Jael will deepen their relationship. And Hitch and Walter.

- Jael’s health
- Jael decides
- Seb visits
- Visits parents’ graves
- Kiss.
- Dance
- Fix plane
- Practice barnstorming
- Hitch and Walter
- Rick and Lilla’s quitting has ramifications
- Griff warns Jael,
- Hitch runs a mission for Campbell, and it goes south
- Griff and Hitch fight
- Jael decides to stay?
- Exemplify Hitch’s irresponsibility
- Ginny Lou
- Livingstone
- Berringers
- Hitch has heart-to-heart w/ Nan.

What is Hitch reacting to?
Primarily, he’s reacting Campbell’s hold over him.

He has to fix his plane and win the air show, but he also has to get Campbell off his back. And then there’s his strange experience in the clouds, which even though it’s crazy, he can’t quite get out of his head. And then there’s this intoxicatingly exotic and down-to-earth woman who is captivating him.

Jael and Walter (and Griff) are all legit subplots. The thrust of the plot has to come from his attempts to fulfill his deal with Campbell and discover the truth about Storming. Jael has to
be his primary obstacle in the latter, since she knows everything he needs to know. So why doesn’t she just tell him? What’s keeping her mum?

- She doesn’t know he wants to know?
- She doesn’t know herself?
- She doesn’t trust him?
- She’s mad at him?
- She’ll die if she tells him?
- She has amnesia? What effects is she suffering from the lightning?
  Her hair is highlighted? Maybe she stiffened her joints. She should suffer a few ramifications. She shouldn’t be all perfectly perky.
  Blackouts?
  Might force Hitch to act more like a protector.
  We could possibly use her health as an obstacle to achieving finding Storming.
  Maybe she decides it’s all too hard. She gets to where she doesn’t want to find Storming. She wants to stay groundside with Hitch.
  Maybe, at the dance, just before the Midpoint, he promises her she doesn’t have to. Or is that moving too quickly?
  We’ll still have half the book at that point, so we don’t want to solidify things too much between them. That sounds like a darkest moment, and then needs to wait until climax.
  So maybe her health deteriorates over the course of the story.

So why won’t she just tell Hitch about Storming?

#5 Move Down
Eventually, if she wants him to take her home, she has to tell him, so maybe she strikes a deal early on. She’ll tell him, but not until she’s good and ready—i.e., convinced everything’s a go on both ends.

Bottom line is she doesn’t trust him. She grew up in a veil of secrecy, both for herself in particular, and Storming in general. So she’s not wired to just spill the beans. Plus, she knows Hitch is irresponsible.

At some point, he should be deeply tempted to leave her and go back to his selfish irresponsibility. But he chooses not to. In the climax.

Walter needs to not be taken until the climax.

But I also like the idea that she doesn’t know everything.

- She doesn’t know about her father’s key.
- She doesn’t understand the dawsedometer’s true use (since the weather aspect was forgotten over time).
- She doesn’t know where Storming is and how Storming was damaged.
  Storming could go anywhere. Hitch and Jael need it to come back. Her key is the key. (!)
**THE PLAN**

1. Rick and Lilla quit.

2. Fix plane.

3. Teach Jael to fly/wing walk.
   She does brilliantly, but still requires a few lessons. Complications?

4. Griff warns Jael while Hitch is taking Walter flying. (Walter’s POV)

5. Use her key to alert Storming and/or Zlo (so they can use the little vehicle to gain info about Storming’s whereabouts)—Walter’s idea
   How? Bait and trap.

   (Maybe after the midpoint, Hitch stands up to Campbell, and gets beat up.)

6. Run mission for Campbell.
   Complications: botched? Jael very angry. Seb and Zlo take the bait, causing both plan and mission to fail.

7. Go scouting for Storming.
   Complications?

8. Fight Griff—Walter witnesses (Walter’s POV)

9. Prelim competitions in air show.
   Complications:

10. Dance

11. Taos gets kidnapped (Walter’s POV)

   We’re going to need some significant scenes with Walter and Hitch. How can he figure into the plot?
   He doesn’t talk and he’s only eight, so he presents pretty limited options.

   - Hitch takes him flying.
   - Walter sees the fight to w/ Griff.
   - Has the idea about how to use the key as bait.

   And something else. There has to be one significant scene that is all about Walter. But what?
Hitch won’t discover Walter is his son until the climax, but we need to build to that discovery.

How can we foreshadow that in the 2nd and 3rd Acts?

Second act will be about getting to know Walter. He decides he likes the kid.

So that could involve Hitch taking him flying—mostly as a lark, but then seeing Walter’s delight and genuinely responding to it. And something he says can lead to the bait idea.

In the 3rd Act, something should alienate Hitch and Walter. Maybe Walter is disturbed by the fight with Griff, which then leads him to do something that, at the Midpoint, causes Taos to get trapped on Zlo’s vehicle and taken up to Storming. And that of course makes Hitch mad at Walter—which makes Walter feel he has to make up for it, which causes him to stowaway aboard Storming himself at the climax.

That’s good.

First up in this scene Rick and Lilla are going to quit. Rick is steamed over Hitch screwing up their plans once again. He’s just kind of steamed in general. He’s never really liked Hitch, and now he sees opportunities for himself outside of Hitch’s act. All kinds of good acts are in town, and he’s seeing greener grass. Lilla is content where she’s at, but she just does what Rick tells her. Hitch’s goal here is going to be to get the plane fixed. He’s got the money from Campbell, so he and Earl start work. His goal is to get the show back on its feet, and Rick is causing complications of his own.

I’m going to want this scene to cause ramifications down the road, but not sure what yet.

At any rate, Rick is steamed about the busted plane, the money that Hitch won’t explain, and—at the last moment, when Jael arrives—Hitch’s hiring her. Rick quits in dramatic fashion and drags Lilla along.

Goal: Fix the plane.
Conflict: Rick is ticked off.
Disaster: Rick and Lilla quit.

Jael just kind of meanders up, surprising them all. She stands around quietly, hands in their pockets, while the kerfuffle with Rick finishes up. Then Hitch and Earl turn to her in some surprise, and Earl asks her what she wants. She announces she’s come to take the job. Earl casts a knowing look at Hitch and just snorts.

Then it’s between Hitch and Jael. He’s upset by Rick’s departure and still a little riled over the way she treated him the night before, so he responds a bit harshly. She raises an eyebrow to that but doesn’t react much. She wanders over to the plane, watches for a minute, then picks up some tools and starts helping. Earl grunts some more but doesn’t object.

Hitch is flustered: he’s upset, so he wants a reaction from her as well. He says that’s not what he hired her for. She and Earl keep working, ignoring him. She’s punishing him a bit more, and Earl is just enjoying the show.

Hitch makes noise about losing Rick and Lilla, and finally she asks him what he did hire her for.

He starts out by explaining that he needs her help to win the contest. He wants her to tell him more about Storming. But she resists. She doesn’t trust him. But she makes it clear she wants to go home. So they strike a deal.
Move #5 (from above) to here

Maybe Earl interjects with the revelation that there’s not a cloud in the sky so where’s Storming? Jael doesn’t tell Hitch yet that she doesn’t know where it is.
So he moves on to declaring her his act’s newest attraction, and tells her he’ll teach her to wing walk as soon as the plane’s fixed. So they all get back to work on the plane.

Reaction: Frustration over Rick’s departure.
Dilemma: Jael won’t tell him how to find Storming and get the act back up and running.
Decision: Teach Jael to wing walk.

24. The wing walking scenes are going to be important in bringing credibility and verisimilitude to the story—and also in developing Hitch and Jael’s relationship. So I’m probably going to want more than one. But what’s the deeper point? How do we keep it from growing repetitious or academic?
We could break the first one down into two parts—one on the ground and in the air. On the ground, they can talk. In the air, Hitch will once again be impressed—and maybe vice versa.
She’s going to catch on pretty quick. After this, there will only be refining necessary. So let’s just focus on this scene as if it’s the only one.

The goal is to teach Jael to wing walk.
She does brilliantly. He’ll explain it to her, and they’ll do a little practicing. Maybe she’s uncertain and less than stellar. She’s nervous, she wants to do a good job, but she’s unsure of herself. Bystanders (including Rick and Livingstone) scoff. Lilla cheers until Rick shushes her; then she forgets and cheers again. Earl just watches in strained silence.
Hitch is frustrated and angry. But he’s kind and patient with Jael. He coaches her through it. She flashes him a grateful glance. (Maybe her lightning-stiffened joints are part of the problem.)
Finally, he’s had enough and decides to take them up—not for Jael to practice, but just to get away and let her get a feel of the plane.

First though, he stops the lesson, wondering himself what he got himself into.

Goal: Teach Jael to wing walk.
Conflict: She’s nervous and stiff.
Disaster: Everyone mocks them.

25. He stops the plane and goes over to talk to Colonel Livingston about stepping down from the contest. Jael gets down and walks away to loosen up her joints (maybe by turning somersaults). Hitch and Earl discuss the problem. Rick and Livingstone scoff on. Then Jael comes over and asks to go up. Hitch’s agrees, just to get away and to give her a feel of being in the air.

Reaction: Frustration and disappointment.
Dilemma: How to turn Jael into a star wing walker.
Decision: Take her up in the air.
They go up, and she’s brilliant.

So they go up amid catcalls and laughter, and Hitch is disgruntled and feeling defensive of Jael. So the last thing he expects is for her to stand up and climb onto the wings. He’s shocked and frightened for her at first. But now that she’s in the air, she’s alight and alive.

When it becomes clear he can’t stop her, he gets into it himself. And then when she’s proven how good she is, he buzzes the airfield to everyone’s surprise—and most people’s delight.

They head back up, and Jael bobbles just a bit at the end, putting Hitch’s heart in his throat. She’s not physically 100%, but she’s good enough to get her act a shot at winning the air show if nothing else. But he decides to keep it under wraps henceforth, to make it all more mysterious and exciting come show time—and give Jael more time to heal up.

So he takes the plane back down.

Goal: Get Jael out of the airfield and into the air.
Conflict: Jael climbs onto the wings.
Disaster: She’s brilliant, but she bobbles dangerously at the end.

27. Should he land back at the airfield or someplace private?
   Is the Griff/Walter scene going to take place the same day?
   Same day means snappier timeline. Next day means more time for relational issues to brew.
   It feels right to make it the next day.
   So… I think we’ll land in the airport.

He takes the plane down, and they land amidst much shouting and cheering. Earl is knowingly smug—he thinks Hitch staged it all.

So Hitch plays it up—cuttingly to Rick and cockily to Livingstone, then he and Earl and Jael retreat to the hangar or wherever.

Earl is all congratulatory, slapping Hitch on the back and calling him a “sly son of a gun.” Hitch might roll with it for a minute, but then he would have to tell Earl the truth. So Earl quiets down some in shock, then turns the son-of-a-gun act on Jael, who is both a little embarrassed and very pleased with herself.

So after they’re all done congratulating themselves, they quiet down. (Maybe they crack out a few beers or whatever as a little celebration. Jael is going to save them from their troubles.)

As the conversation grows less jubilant and more sane, Hitch grins chummily at Jael and asks her about finding Storming.

She quiets down and admits she doesn’t know precisely where it is. She explains it travels. That upsets Hitch. He doesn’t get mad at her, just frustrated.

Jael herself is disturbed by the fact that Storming may never come back. She has even more at stake here than Hitch does.

Maybe Hitch starts out (mildly) venting at her, only to read from her expression how upset and worried she is in her own right. She goes off by herself. Earl and Hitch’s share an
uncomfortable silence, then Hitch gets up and goes over to awkwardly comfort Jael. He promises her they’ll figure something out—for both their sakes. And that gets Jael to look at him in a new light.

Reaction: Excitement and surprise over Jael’s feat.
Dilemma: Jael can’t find Storming.
Decision: To figure out a solution.

28. Next morning Let’s do Walter’s scene later that day. We can use it to deepen either the Berringers or Aurelia.
   Aurelia.
   With what intent?
   Jael comes home to the Carpenters, and Walter is all excited to see her. And they run upon Aurelia, who imparts some wisdom or info.
   - Aurelia throws a tantrum.
   - “calms slightly, says something encouraging Walter to spend time at w/ Hitch.
   - “ says something creepy about impending doom.
   - Maybe Jael calms her down by taking her running outside.
   - Walter’s already in trouble for something. Nan is harried.

   Walter is stuck inside the house, waiting at the table while Nan preps dinner. He’s in trouble for playing airplane too noisily and knocking a plate or something over. He sitting very abashedly when Jael comes home.
   Aurelia is strung out too. She’s having a bad day—which is part of the reason Nan is so strung out. She wants a lump of sugar or something silly and when she can’t have it, she throws a stormy tantrum.
   Or maybe she just gets upset but doesn’t blow quite yet. She’s sulking when Jael comes in, and she says something snarky regarding Hitch—and Walter—just to spite Nan. And that’s when Nan loses it and does something (slaps her hand, takes away the sugar bowl) to send Aurelia into a tantrum.
   What does Aurelia say about Hitch?
   Just play it by ear.

   So anyway, everything’s in an uproar and Nan is at her wit’s end. Jael takes it all in hand. She takes Aurelia by the hand and leads her outside. And Walter dares to follow. They race across the meadows. Jael laughs her glee and Aurelia soon mimics her. Finally Jael throws herself down and rolls in the grass. Walter loves it. He’s never met someone like Jael. She says something about how wonderful the grass and dirt is.
   Finally she sits up with Aurelia and Walter. She tells them about her job with Hitch and one of them asks her about her home. She doesn’t hold as much back from them. She says a bit about their problem, while fingering the key, and Walter gets the beginnings of an idea. She says he should come visit her and Taos tomorrow.
   Then Aurelia speaks her piece about doom. She’s not really a prophet—just a bit of a savant. She senses what’s coming down the pike.
And she says... A storm is coming. She says it looking directly at Walter. One has already been lightning struck. Walter’s next—or something like that. And both Walter and Jael are disturbed. Then Aurelia calmly picks herself up and heads for the house. Maybe she also has a moment of kind of semi-saneness, in which she plucks grass from Jael’s hair and smooths Walter’s and smiles lovingly at them.

Goal: Escape the house.
Conflict: Aurelia throws a fit, further stressing Nan.
Disaster: Aurelia pronounces doom.

Reaction: Fear.
Dilemma: How to escape doom.
Decision: Pushes worry to back of mind.

29. So the next morning Jael shows up at the airport with Walter—whom Taos is delighted to see. Hitch is only slightly annoyed.

What makes him decide to take Walter up?
Maybe Jael wanders over to watch/help Earl tinker on an engine, leaving Hitch alone with Walter. They size each other up, and Hitch says something about Walter and Taos liking each other.

What if he was trying to get people to pay to take rides, but they’re all scared to go first. So he latches on to Walter as a willing guinea pig. Ecstatic, actually.
So the sizing up can occur while Hitch is strapping on his flamboyant flying costume. He and Walter have enough of an exchange for Hitch to decide Walter is a pretty good kid.
So then off he goes to his waiting crowd of chickens. Nobody takes him up on his spiel, so he volunteers Walter, who can’t believe his luck.

Off they go—and Walter loves it almost as much as Jael loved it (maybe put in a note about Hitch deliberately choosing not to use Jael as his willing guinea pig because he wants to keep her under wraps). Taos should get in too.

How do we keep this from feeling repetitive in light of Jael’s flight in the last chapter?

As soon as Jael and Walter show up, Hitch puts them to work as crowd control for his passengers, to whom he’s giving paid rides. He has Jael practice her charming smile and pose to draw people in and direct them to the end of the line. Since neither she nor Walter talks well, he makes a sign for Walter to hold, indicating the price for a plane ride.

He gives rides all morning, and Jael eventually gets bored and wanders off to tinker with Earl (who scorns to be crowd control), but Walter’s stalwartly remains.
Finally, around noon, Hitch signals for a break and regards Walter.
“About lunchtime, isn’t it?”
Nods.
“Hungry?”
Nods.
Hitch gives him some money as payment for working hard all morning and holding up the sign, so Walter can buy some lunch. But Walter mutely holds the money back out to pay for his own plane ride.
Hitch relents and gives him, not just a ride, but lets him sit in his lap and teaches him a thing or two about flying. (With Taos in the backseat.) And at the end of it all, he’s impressed w/ Walter.

Goal: Make money giving rides, then quit for lunch.
Conflict: Walter wants a ride during lunch.
Disaster: Hitch gives up lunch to give Walter a ride.

30. The plane lands, and Hitch is pleased with Walter’s excitement. They have a little one-sided chat, and the subject of Jael and Storming comes up. And Hitch indicates his dilemma of not being able to find Storming, to which Walter pantomimes the lightning and Jael’s key, which is enough to give Hitch an idea.

Reaction: Happiness and bonding.
Dilemma: How to find Storming.
Decision: Use Jael’s key to lure it back.

31. So they wander into the hangar and find Griff talking to Jael. Hitch catches just the end of the conversation, but he hears enough to know Griff is warning her about Hitch—and Hitch of course deeply resents that and feels some telling spurts of jealousy.

Finally Griff sees him and comes over. The exchange a few heated words and Griff takes Walter away with him, which Hitch also resents. So as the parting shot of sorts, he says Walter can take Taos with him for the day.

So then he’s going to go over and confront Jael about it all.

The kiss is coming up, so I want to keep the tone light here. Maybe he’s more embarrassed and upset. I also need to get them outside, in the trees someplace.

What’s gonna happen here is that Hitch tells Jael Walter’s idea about using her key to draw Storming back.

But, first, we need to deal with the Griff situation. So Hitch is going to meander over to Jael, a little uncertainly, hands in his pockets. He needs to be relatively laid back. The conflict needs to come from her here. His kiss arises out of good humor more than anything. So although he’s annoyed by Griff’s presumption, he’s not angry or defensive over it.

So maybe Jael should be flustered. If she starts out flustered, it might amuse Hitch. He is just kind of poking at her here out of fun.

So he’s really in a very good mood after his flight with Walter. Griff irks him, but he approaches cautiously to see how Jael is reacting (Earl has gone for lunch). She’s pretty flustered. Griff said some things that indicate he thinks Hitch and she are in a romantic relationship—and Hitch was there for the end of those comments. She didn’t know quite what to do with that—and it hit a nerve, since she is attracted to Hitch.

Hitch catches on to her discomfort pretty quickly and thinks it’s funny, which probably only irritates her the more.
Then I’m going to want them to move outside. I see them in the woods, but I don’t think there are trees (or would have been) around the airport.

Since I really have no idea of the geography of the SB airport in 1920, I’ll have to play the location of this by ear as I get into my research. But, for now, let’s say they wander back into a big Quonset hut type warehouse. Jael is ostensibly looking for a piece of the machinery she’s working on, but it can also be an opportunity for Hitch to show her fun groundsworld stuff.

He keeps her a little off balance the whole time, teasing her. He brings up Walter’s idea. After a little difficulty in making her understand, she’s first skeptical, then once she realizes she’s essentially supposed to be lightning bait again, she’s upset. He lays into her with one more crack, and that’s what finally makes her lose her cool. She’s mad, but she’s not really angry—if you catch the difference.

She goes stomping off, and Hitch laughingly calls her back. She whacks him off, so he hooks a hand around her waist, picks her up, and carries her like a naughty child. That really makes her mad, so she kicks him in the shin and makes him drop her. He, laughing, grabs for her, she fights, and they wrestle a bit with him landing on top, her arms pinned. She resists momentarily, then is obviously and deeply embarrassed, if still defiant. They quiet a moment, and impulsively he gives her a quick kiss that surprises him almost as much as it surprises her.

She’s visibly shocked. He lets her up, and she embarrassedly dusts herself off, looks at him, blushes, then slaps him soundly and marches off.

If he’s going to haul her off like that, it needs to be because he wants her to go someplace, and she’s resisting.

And, also, maybe this warehouse isn’t the best place for this—a hard, dusty floor isn’t an inviting place for a tumble.

Maybe he wants her to show the key to Earl and get his opinion about using it as a homing beacon of sorts. Besides being mad at him, she’s very secretive about her key, so she stomps off in the opposite direction.

As for the setting…

Let’s put them in the trees and hopefully something will present itself during research.

**Goal:** Get Jael to use her key to bait in Storming.

**Conflict:** Jael is embarrassed by Hitch’s teasing.

**Disaster:** Jael slaps him after he kisses her.

32. So now we have Hitch reacting. To begin with, he thinks it’s funny. But he’s also a little stunned. He hadn’t admitted his attraction to her went that far—and he’s still not quite admitting it. But he is a little off balance, a little remorseful for manhandling her. Maybe he even admits he deserved the slap.

Then Earl comes to find him. Jael passed him on the way out, obviously upset, and slapped the key into his hand. The first thing Earl does is indicate Jael and ask, benignly curious, what happened. Hitch shrugs it off, but Earl gets the idea. He warns Hitch not to run her off, both for the show’s sake, and because she’s a nice girl—“the kind that will help you find the answers, George.”
Then he shows Hitch the key and wants to know what that’s all about. Hitch says that’s what Earl is supposed to tell him. He explains the plan and asks what Earl thanks. Earl examines it for a few minutes, says he’s never seen anything like it, but has a few hopeful things to say about getting it to work.

Then we get indication from Campbell that it’s time for Hitch to do his first job. Maybe Campbell himself arrives, pulling his truck in, after the cargo truck, and Hitch sees him from afar and realizes that the time has come.

He’ll have to tell Earl a little about the deal with Campbell. Earl won’t be too vocal, but he won’t like it.

So Hitch, his good mood now entirely gone, tells Earl to study the key and that they’ll try it out tonight while he’s flying Campbell shipment. Earl says that’s way too soon, but Hitch ignores him.

Reaction: Amusement, and settlement
Dilemma: How to use the key.
Decision: Use it that night during Campbell’s job.

33. I feel like we need another quiet, more relational scene before we go busting into the night flight.

Maybe Jael has disappeared, and Hitch has to go hunt her down. So he’s more than a little ticked off that she’s disappeared when time is short, but he also knows it’s his fault. So he borrows Rick’s auto from a very obliging Lilla and heads out. He looks all over (burning through Rick’s fuel) until finally he finds her fishing with the Berringers. Matthew is patiently teaching her, while J.W. works the other side of the bank, muttering (loudly) his disagreement with Matthew’s advice, most of which Jael ignores.

Hitch comes slogging up, maybe splashes in the stream, scaring off the fish to everyone’s disgust. He is properly remorseful. Jael is still mad at him and won’t make eye contact, not so much out of embarrassment now as pique. And the Berringers support her in it.

Hitch tries to play at first like nothing is wrong, but that doesn’t go over well. J.W. scolds him and Matthew calmly tries to guide him to make peace.

So finally he gets the gist, and now it’s his turn to be embarrassed. He goes up to Jael, turns her around to face him—kind of, since she still won’t look at him—and awkwardly (since he has to do it in front of Berringers) apologizes. But she won’t accept it until he spells it out. When J.W. and Matthew tsk-tsk him more, he defensively adds that she already slapped him. J.W. probably says something about her needing to slap him again.

So that gets Jael to look at him. She’s still a little uncomfortable, but she’s also amused that Hitch is now the one to be uncomfortable himself.

Then he asks her to come back with him, that he needs her help. She agrees with a smile, a nod, maybe a handshake, then hands him her fishing pole and walks off. Hitch is a little flustered by the speed of her forgiveness, but Matthew has a word of wisdom to speed him on his way. He hands over the fishing pole and trudges up the bank to join Jael, who has a pretty thank you for the brothers.

Goal: Find Jael and bring her back to the airfield.
Conflict: Jael is still mad at him.
Disaster: He has to apologize in front of the Berringers.
34. Together, they leave, with some awkward silence. Maybe Jael asks about the bait plan, and Hitch explains something about their job for Campbell. He asks her if she is sure she’s up for the bait plan, says they’ll find another way if she’s afraid. And she just looks him in the eye and says something to the effect that she has to do it to go home and stop Zlo. The key, it turns out (and maybe even Jael didn’t know this fully at first), is a homing beacon of sorts, a chain Storming can’t fly away from). And maybe Hitch feels the momentary twinge at the thought of her leaving.

Reaction: Embarrassment.
Dilemma: Will Jael do the job?
Decision: Give her the choice.

35. So then off we go on our night mission. I’m going to combine the job for Campbell with the search for Storming. But I’m not sure exactly what I want to happen.

Do they fulfill the job?
They’re going to botch a later job, so maybe it would be better to fulfill this one, which is still a disaster in a sense, since it once again makes Hitch (and Jael) criminal. (He should try to quit later only to have Campbell blackmail him.)

Does all of Storming respond or just Zlo?

Do they get the key (perhaps enabling the Midpoint)?

How is the plot advanced?

How are the characters inhibited in reaching their goals?

How will Jael and Hitch feel at the end?

I’m getting the feeling I’m needing to start executing the Midpoint. Maybe not. Maybe we can get all this stuff in. But I think we do need to keep the prelim encounter w/ Zlo down. It can’t overshadow the Midpoint.
And it also feels a little repetitive—or too much—to stick in prelim rounds of the air show. So we need to either combine that here or maybe with Jael’s earlier wing-walking scene. It seems a good fit there. But it also doesn’t make sense for Hitch to take a totally untested Jael in the competition.
How can we combine it here?

I think the best option is to add it above. It would increase the tension and make Rick’s sudden quitting even more meaningful.

#6 (Move Up.)
So Rick quits just a half hour or so before Hitch is due to compete. He’s desperate for help (and Earl probably flatly refuses to get on the wings). So Jael comes along, they practiced dismally, go up because they have no choice, and Jael surprises everyone—and impresses Livingstone. They don’t win, but they do pretty well.

So that leaves us free to run this scene as originally planned.
What I’m thinking will happen is the key’s luring in Storming will somehow endanger the job. Maybe Jael chucks whiskey bottles at Zlo.

The problem here is that I need Hitch and Jael to be at peace with one another at the dance. I imagine that happening before the Midpoint, as kind of the calm before the storm. But then what happens? Where does their relationship go from there?

He kissed her without really meaning it.
She didn’t know what to do with it.

They grow to respect each other.
They share a bonding moment—a tentative reaching out.

They endure trials together and see each other’s doubts.
They discuss those doubts to encourage each other.

Their faith in each other is tested.
Sacrifices are made; bond renewed in the climax.

In the finale, there will be commitment to each other.

Two points: From here to the Midpoint (maybe farther) Jael needs reasons to like and trust Hitch, not the other way around.

Is it possible to have the dance after Aurelia’s death at the Midpoint?
I really need to know what’s going to happen in that third section—in the climax for that matter.

What has yet to happen?

Zlo and Campbell need to hook up at the Midpoint. We need to get that moving.

The Midpoint will be Zlo landing as a pirate.
I really like the possibilities of that, but it seems a little too abrupt.

Maybe Jael and Hitch need to visit Storming first.

Is that going to be too weird a switch?
This funny little relational story in a small town—then, bam, fantasyland!
Whatever happens to w/ this current scene should be Jael’s fault, not Hitch’s. Time for her to start carrying more plot weight and start bringing him into her life more.

Maybe they’re not in the plane when they meet Zlo.

Fistfight?

What would happen if we dramatically downsized Storming? Made it more of a house than a city?

That would better balance it with SB. It would up the stakes more for Jael, since smaller is more personal. Her parents (maybe just her father), Nestor, and Zlo (as Nestor’s son?) could’ve been the significant bulk of the passengers. It could have been her father’s brainchild.

It’s also much easier to swallow.

I think that fits much better.

Whatever happens at the Midpoint needs to be something that gives Hitch and Jael a plan of action afterward.

- Hitch will demand the truth about Storming, and Jael gives it to him.
- Hitch should be particularly responsible for what happens @ the Midpoint. He should try to remedy it, but comes at it from completely the wrong direction by trying to fix things without fixing himself.

Hitch can indirectly caused the Midpoint by allowing Zlo to take the key—and thus full control of Storming. But he should also cause the heart of the Midpoint more directly by some stupid irresponsible action.

But the question still remains: What happens at the Midpoint?

- Zlo comes raiding.
- Zlo and Campbell join forces.

What catalyst does the raid bring about? I don’t want anyone to die or be kidnapped.

We already experienced destruction in the 25% storm.

Maybe lots of people are taken hostage (but Hitch doesn’t care too much until Walter gets taken).

Somebody’s wounded?
   Griff?

Maybe Zlo just takes the whole town hostage, via weather.
Maybe he literally barricades them in the valley via flooding or tornados. The planes can get out, but the people can’t. And Campbell comes out as his spokesman on the ground.

Maybe he shoots the planes down with lightning. Maybe he wants all the planes surrendered.

Or is that getting too dark too fast?

Should Hitch and Jael visit Storming before the climax?

Maybe they should try to take it down prior to the climax.

Maybe the fight in this current scene should take place up there?

Maybe they have a faux victory before the climax (and the realization that it isn’t real comes at the dance—and that’s when Aurelia and Walter are taken).

So Hitch has a (dumb) plan that leads to the faux victory.

Maybe Livingstone and Campbell’s renewed desire for finding Storming doesn’t happen until the Midpoint (and Campbell brings in on the side an offer to earn money for giving Campbell control of Storming). Hitch isn’t in on Jael’s using the key to bring in Storming.

The problem with downsizing Storming is that it also downsizes the stakes. But to create a whole world out there and not explore it in depth, that’s a copout. Bad framing.

Okay, so we downsize it.

What does that mean for introducing and exploring?

It means it’s a lot easier to encompass, to get your mind around. Hitch has already been up there once. Does he need to go up again?

How can we fully realize the setting’s potential?

It’s essentially a big plane, so we could maneuver it like a plane. Hitch has to fly it—with Jael in the Engines maybe. He has nothing to fight with it, but it might be crashing and he has to direct it away from people below.

But I don’t want it to crash.

What if Walter had to fly the plane at some point?

What type of movies personify the story I’m trying to tell?

- Star Wars
- Prince of Persia
- Iron Man
- John Carter
- Treasure Planet
• PoTC
• Indiana Jones
• 3 Musketeers

What I want to do is keep it fast, light, funny, action-packed. It can’t take itself too seriously. The stakes can be high, but the emphasis is on it being fun. So high stakes and dangerous, dark stuff is good to some extent, but I want to keep it bright—sunshiny even—and fast and furious.

So for this current scene… They run the mission for Campbell, successfully. Then on the way back, they clash with Zlo. He and Hitch tangle, and he takes the key (allowing him control of Storming). Do they tangle above or below? Jael is probably all excited, thinks she’s going home. Hitch doesn’t fully understand what’s going on.

Maybe part of what Zlo is holding Seb hostage for is the key, which Jael lost in this scene’s attempts to regain Storming?

What does he need the key for? It’s a homing beacon of sorts, a chain, Storming can fly away from it?

So how and where does she lose it?

They fly low under Storming, and the key snags on something? So the key is there all along but Zlo doesn’t know it. But something has to happen to really shake Jael. Maybe just that, since she now knows Storming can leave without her. So that’s why Hitch has to comfort her.

And no fistfight? No Zlo?

They unload the whiskey, the wind starts blowing in, and Jael gets excited thinking knowing it’s Storming, so they head up, try to find it, and it swooshes over them.

Or maybe it swooshes over while they’re still on the ground. That gets even Hitch’s attention, so up they go. They chase it, night blind, then get so close Jael can touch it. She’s holding up the key, trying to get Storming to come to her, and it catches on something and pulls from her grasp. So she freaks out, maybe starts to jump after it, and Hitch stops her, and they head down. Maybe Storming—intentionally or not—rams down on top of them, and gives Jael a minor injury.

Goal: Lure in Storming, so Jael can go home and Hitch can win Livingstone and Campbell’s bonus. Conflict: Storming proves dangerously elusive.
36. They fly back to the airport, and Hitch hustles Jael out of the plane. He starts to bawl her out but stops when he sees how upset she is.

I like the idea of her having a head wound, but that’s not practical, since she has to wing walk the next day. So let’s say it’s her hand that’s wounded.

This is going to be their first bonding moment. They look at each other as people, and Hitch is tender in his care of her. This is where she begins to trust him.

Taos is barking and creating a ruckus. Earl wakes up and grudgingly demands to know what’s going on. But by then Hitch’s has seen how shaken Jael is. So he calms everything down, sends Earl for first-aid kit, and helps Jael down, and tells Taos to shut up. (Walter brought him back earlier.)

So while Earl goes outside, Hitch helps Jael sit down. He gets her a drink or a blanket or something, and quietly and sympathetically goes over to her. She’s very upset, but I don’t think she’s crying. She’s not a crier. But maybe she’s shaking and staring. She tries to say a few unintelligible things.

He gets her to tell him a little of why she’s so upset. She doesn’t communicate what Storming is, but she indicates that she can’t go home without the key.

So he tries to comfort her. He sincerely promises her (maybe with a little lump of panic in his throat) that he’ll help her go home. She doesn’t believe he can do it, but she appreciates the gesture.

They end with a mention of tomorrow’s competition and the need to rest. Maybe she ends by saying something that makes him feel just a little guilty for taking on Campbell’s job. Maybe just something as simple as telling him he’s a good man.

**Reaction:** Sympathy.
**Dilemma:** Jael can’t go home w/o key.
**Decision:** Hitch will help her.

**Midpoint**

37. The Midpoint will start with a quiet opener between Jael and Hitch. Strong underlying tension on Hitch’s part, as he preps for the big competition.

**How can we tie in the competition later?**

**Competition.**

**What’s the conflict here?**

All the principles are present.

**Personal conflict here? Walter?**

Storming descends.

Hitch makes matters worse.
Zlo’s ultimatum.

Zlo and Campbell.

Action scene = fight/pursuit

What does Jael do?

Initial reaction.

I’m going to want to stick in a Walter scene here, but I’m not certain if I want it before or after the descent of Storming.

My first tasks here are figuring out what will happen in the competition, in the air, and on the ground.

On the ground, the conflict can either be between with Griff, via Campbell, or Nan—or both.

I don’t know that I want an outright confrontation with either—probably just the setup for both of which will happen in the next section.

So we could maybe start out with Walter’s coming by prior to the competition. Hitch is nice to him. He might tell Walter to go comfort Jael, and he lets him take Taos with him. Then a little later, Nan comes hunting him and tells him to stay away from Walter. Hitch doesn’t really have time to pursue it, but it could presage his heart-to-heart with Nan later on.

We could also have a little interaction with him and Griff. Or maybe Griff just sees him give Campbell confirmation of the previous night’s job having been completed. And Hitch sees Griff watching. They might pass each other and exchange just a few words.

As for the competition itself—we’ll have Storming interrupt the middle of it, but it should start out with some tension of its own.

#7 (Move Down)

Hitch, of course, is worried about Jael being all shook up—and injured. Earl might tell him not to take her up, and Jael disregards him, to Hitch’s relief.

I’ve really got to figure out the particulars of Storming’s arrival. How does it work? Zlo will want to start out with a bang—thunder and lightning. He might knock aside several planes—maybe even Hitch’s, although not with any great harm.

I’m now kind of thinking it’s a big battleship, hung from a dirigible, with lots of clouds and steam obscuring the bottom. So more Titanic meets Serenity than sailboat.

So it’s going to come storming in, making racket and causing havoc and panic. Zlo comes down to hover, and stands on the prow, shouting down. Maybe Campbell goes up to meet him to “bargain.” Hitch tries to be a hero and makes Zlo raise the stakes. And then there has to be some kind of an action scene.
What can we do that’s new?

Maybe he manages to damage Storming just a little. Zlo tries to shoot him down, and in the end maybe the weather forces him to land.

And Jael… might not even be aboard. What else could she do? Maybe she gets off to help out with something else.

Maybe she goes to warn other pilots to get their planes out of range. Maybe she does something to “tag” Storming, so they can see or track it in the sky.

Why doesn’t she tried to board? Probably because Zlo draws up the ladder—or whatever—after Campbell.

Or maybe she’s hiding because she’s the bargaining chip?

What does Zlo want?
He’s holding the town for ransom, so he wants money.
But ultimately he wants the key—and that means Jael.

She’s not exactly inconspicuous, so people (such as Campbell) would be willing to turn her over. So maybe Zlo doesn’t specify her, just the key. He might tell Campbell, but Campbell would maybe have his own reasons for holding back.

Actually, only a few people might connect to Jael with Zlo—Rick being one of them.
Campbell doesn’t know anything about her.

Maybe she wants to go back but Hitch won’t let her because he knows Zlo will have no use for her without the key. Maybe Nestor hollers at her to stay away.

So he makes her stay groundside and hide.

Maybe she gets J.W. to shoot a hole in the dirigible.

Maybe she also figures out how to mark it. Maybe she attaches something big and bright (a plane wing) to the undercarriage, so it won’t blend into the sky. Zlo won’t know it’s there—and Campbell can’t warn him, since once he gets down and sees it, he won’t be able to contact Zlo.

We could tell that from Walter’s POV

And then Hitch has to crash land in the field, and Jael and Earl drive out to find him.

All right, so we’ll open the next morning with some dialogue scenes.

Hitch wakes up and start prepping for the competition, all nervous.
Livingstone stops by to remind him of the stakes, with Hitch’s plane being up for grabs.
Maybe he comments about Jael, standing outside, staring forlornly at the sky like a mooncalf.
Hitch of course bluffs confidence.

Walter comes running in, all excited, and Hitch responds warmly to his enthusiasm, maybe plopping his helmet and goggles on his head.

He tells Walter to go comfort Jael and cheer her up, then heads out to see Campbell, who just drove up to join the crowd outside. Their transaction is quickly taken care of. Campbell either tells him he’ll have another job for him soon or signs him up right there (depending on the needs of the story later on).
Campbell drives on, and Hitch looks up to see Griff watching him. They could exchange words here, but I’m thinking it would be better to go for subtlety.

**Goal:** Square things w/ Campbell.
**Conflict:** Campbell wants him to do another job.
**Disaster:** Griff is onto him.

**Reaction:** Shame and regret.
**Dilemma:** How to make up to Griff.
**Decision:** Talk to him later.

38. Then up stomps Nan, angry because Walter is missing—and just generally angry at Hitch. She should be alone, but Molly might wave and make eyes at Hitch from the BG.

   Hitch tries to calm Nan down. He says he likes Walter and that he’s a nice kid. He’s not going to hurt him. He wants to know why Nan is so upset. He probably gets his ire up a little too.

   But she just ends by telling him to stay away from Walter. She calls Walter over, strips off the flying helmet, and herds him away, Taos in his wake. Might be a good idea to have Hitch call Taos back to him.

**Goal:** Discover why Nan is so set against Walter spending time with him.
**Conflict:** Nan is spitting mad and reticent.
**Disaster:** She forbids Hitch from seeing Walter.

39. The competition starts in earnest, and he heads back to his plane. He’s more upset than he wants to admit about Walter. He wants to put his past to rest with the people he’s left behind. But he doesn’t know how, so he decides to focus on the tasks at hand.

   He speaks to Jael, concernedly asking her if she’s okay. She just nods.

   Earl calls him aside.

   **#7 Here (from above)**

   **Reaction:** Sorrow and frustration.
   **Dilemma:** How to make right past mistakes.
   **Decision:** First things first: win the competition.

40. So they both suit up and go. Rick makes some nasty remarks in passing. There should be several events, and Hitch should start out poorly then start sailing.

   So they’re winning the leg when rain suddenly spatters the windshield, startling them (or maybe it’s hail). They look up and the next thing they know, lightning strikes a plane from the sky. Hitch’s fancy flying gets them out of the spot. He swoops around and lands just as Storming reveals itself—to everyone’s surprise (some old codgers—or hysterical ladies—maybe an unnamed but prominent Ginny Lou can think it’s attacking Germans) and awe.

   They all remain frozen while Zlo hollers down in broken English that he is holding the city ransom for lots of money and the woman who stole his key.

   So there’s a flurry of reaction as Hitch demands of Jael what the heck is going on, and Jael realizes Zlo thinks she still has the key. She tries to turn herself over but Hitch forbids it.
Campbell goes up to bargain, which Hitch views cynically. He decides to be a hero and end it all right then. So against everyone’s better judgment, he revs up and heads aloft. He gets Earl to give him a pistol, so he can shoot the dirigible.

Maybe he revs up and Campbell shouts down for everyone to stay put or Zlo will unleash the flooding and tornadoes or whatever. Hitch decides to push the plane behind the hangar and takes off from there. Meanwhile Jael is supposed to mark the undercarriage. So he takes off.

**Goal:** Win the competition.
**Conflict:** Storming arrives.
**Disaster:** Zlo takes the town captive.

**Reaction:** Shock, awe, and anger.
**Dilemma:** How to stymie Zlo.
**Decision:** Shoot him.

---

Walter and Earl and the Berringers go running up to help Jael. Walter doesn’t completely understand what’s going on. He’s scared, but he also sees it as some kind of storybook adventure, and he is deeply impressed by Hitch’s aerial derring-do.

Maybe the wing swings around (perhaps when Storming tries to maneuver away from Hitch) and breaks Earl’s arm. Walter could get bowled over. But he shouldn’t be seriously injured. Enough to scare Nan into running out to get him and scolding him.

Maybe Walter (inwardly) protests that he has to be brave and heroic like Hitch, which might presage the motivation that gets him in trouble in the climax. (He feels guilty for Earl’s injury.)

**Goal:** Help Jael mark Storming.
**Conflict:** It’s dangerous and difficult.

Why is it dangerous? Why can’t people just come right up to Storming and shoot from the ground if they want to?

Maybe high winds or something. Random lightning bolts?

**Disaster:** Earl’s arm is broken and Nan takes Walter away.

**Reaction:** Exultation and frustration @ being held back.
**Dilemma:** How to be as heroic as Hitch.
**Decision:** To disobey Nan.
42. So now we have Hitch’s disastrous derring-do. He’s flying about, trying to be a hero and take down Storming just like that. But he doesn’t have a chance. Why not? Why isn’t Storming vulnerable?

The weather is what is eventually going to force him down. But where’s the conflict in this scene? What’s going to make it interesting reading?

What if other pilots—such as Rick—went up and got in the way. That might work. They start out with some “chicken” teamwork, but it goes awry. Rick performs less than wonderfully—but ultimately Hitch makes it fall apart.

One goes in to draw off fire, while the other brings the ship down.

Or even Livingstone—it might be nice to let him fly in here too.

Maybe Storming has some good old cannons in addition to its high-tech weaponry. So it shoots down Livingstone and a few others, leaving Hitch with only Rick to work with. They communicate via some hand signals. Maybe Rick makes Hitch mad, so he zooms past Rick to do the job himself, and causes Zlo and Campbell to look up and figure it out. So Zlo turns on the dawsedometer, the gale comes in, and both Hitch and Rick are blown off course. Hitch gets a bullet in the dirigible, then is forced to crash land in a field. On the horizon, he can see the storms that are barricading the valley.

Goal: Stop Storming.
Conflict: Storming shoots down everyone but Rick, and Rick makes Hitch lose his temper.
Disaster: Storming escapes and barricades the valley.

Second Half of Second Act

After transcribing the 2nd quarter notes, I can say I’m extremely happy with what I have so far. But I’m now thinking this Midpoint I currently have is inappropriate. The giant steampunk ship is just too bizarre for the story as I’ve set it up. Zlo’s taking the valley hostages also makes for too high stakes.

Up to now, the story is been very character driven. It’s been about the people. The what-is-Storming plot has been a BG threat. The only supernatural elements have been subtle and sidelong.

So my two basic Q’s to answer at this point are:

1. What is Storming?
2. What can Zlo do to raise the stakes on a personal level for Hitch and Jael?

Second Q first.
The way I set this up, I need to keep conflict mostly on the ground in SB. Exploration of Storming would seem largely out of place now.

All right—maybe it’ll work as is.

So what do I know about the 3rd?

- Seb visits
- Hitch visits graves (parents’ and Celia’s)
- Rick and Lilla’s quitting has ramifications
- Campbell blackmails Hitch (stands up to him; get beat up; caves)
- Griff & Hitch fight (Walter’s POV)
- Hitch’s “dumb” plan
- Exemplify Hitch’s irresponsibility
- Heart-to-heart w/ Nan
- Jael’s health
- Air show
- Personal encounter w/ Zlo (x2?)
- Hitch and Jael fall in love
- Jael gives Hitch the truth about Storming
- Convo w/ Nan
- Executes plan
- Fight w/ Griff
- Walter’s disturbed
- Taos is lost
First thing, we have to react to the Midpoint. Hitch is going to want answers, and Jael is finally going to give them.
Since she was essentially part of the ransom, he’s going to have to protect her. And they’re going to have to come up with a plan. But probably they won’t take it totally seriously until Zlo demonstrates his power. Campbell is going to try to force Hitch into helping him help Zlo. Hitch will resist, get beat into a similitude of submission, then come up with a dumber plan that seems to meet all the needs.

What is the plan?

Why do Hitch and Griff fight?

How does the air show play in?
It doesn’t make sense for the air show to blithely continue in the face of the current emergency.

Maybe Livingstone bravely decides to go after Storming himself with a team of picked pilots. He thinks it’s the best advertising ever.

Maybe he makes shooting down Storming the requirement for winning the competition. But Hitch is going to do that so that doesn’t force him to choose to give up his plane.

Maybe he makes a new condition, that Hitch can take over the circus if he helps Livingstone play the whole thing up.

Maybe he says he will concede the bet (which Hitch was losing due Jael’s inexperience).

And Earl (and Jael) get mad at him for treating this whole mess like the game.

And Hitch finally tells Livingstone to get lost when Walter is endangered. That’s him taking responsibility and straightening out his practices.

And how does Rick throw a kink into the works?

Maybe Rick makes a run for it, and Zlo punishes the whole valley. He gets in good with Campbell and rats Hitch out.

What about Seb’s visit?

What about a personal encounter w/ Zlo?

What about Jael’s health?

I think it’s important to give Zlo a little more screen time. But how?

• Formal parlay.

• Hitch catches Zlo napping.

Zlo could come looking for Jael and run afoul of Hitch.

Hitch could sucker him in to a meeting.
(Use Jael as bait?)

Zlo sends/gives Jael Meesh—dead.

Formal parlay idea is best. Maybe Campbell forces Hitch into it.

What about Seb’s visit? What do we get out of that?
He’s a terrifically minor character. So he would have to bring important information. Maybe he’s just trying to convince Jael to give in, to spare bloodshed. Maybe he tries to woo her. Hitch could be momentarily jealous. He could act rashly on Seb’s info. Seb could come that night and give them their first inkling of a plan.

Convo with Nan that happened at the graves.

Okay, so what we need to figure out here is—

What’s the plan?

How does Hitch’s relationship to w/ Jael progress?

How does Hitch’s relationship to w/ Walter progress?

How can we bring in Zlo?

Campbell is in on Zlo’s plan. Zlo has offered him money if he helps him find Jael and the key. But Campbell wants to double-cross Zlo. He wants Storming for himself. He wants to find Jael and kill Zlo.

At first, Campbell should explain that he’s trying to save the valley. The fight should come when Hitch realizes Campbell wants Storming for himself. So maybe Hitch does that and that’s when everything falls apart. He thinks he’s ended Zlo, only to have Campbell prove worse. And Zlo gets loose and becomes a problem all his own—maybe proving stronger than Campbell after all.

The goal of the plan is to put Campbell in control of Storming.

The execution of the plan will be to...

I think it has to start out being something Hitch initiates—and only later falls under the control of Campbell.

9-26-12
Maybe he views it as a great opportunity to win the circus, via Livingstone’s demands for help.

And Jael doesn’t like that because it’s her home. She doesn’t want to shoot it down. So maybe he makes a deal with her. He’ll bring it down to Livingstone’s satisfaction, win the bet, and keep Storming in one piece so Jael can go home.

That’s all going to be tough enough, and then Campbell comes onto the scene and screws it all up by saying he wants Storming for himself. So… Hitch could still fulfill Livingstone’s terms but he would possibly betray Jael’s trust. That would be good, but she couldn’t find out until the dance when Walter is taken. It would probably be good for her to be mad at him during the pre-climax, when they’re in jail, etc.

Requirements:

- Hitch has personal brainstorm.
- Restore Jael to home.
- Take down Storming personally to win bet.
- Deliver Storming to Campbell.

To do this he’s going to have to:

- Find Storming (before anyone else, i.e. Rick).
- Bring it down intact.
- Capture Zlo.
- Deliver it/key to Campbell.
- Keep latter secret from Jael.

And delivery of it to Campbell has to be what enables Zlo’s escape and Aurelia’s death and Walter’s kidnapping.

How is he going to bring Storming down?

- Shoot it.
- Ram it.
- Trap it.
- Lure it.

If he snuck up on it to retrieve the key…

No, retrieving the key should be the last step—the thing he does for Campbell.

Maybe has to fight off Rick to keep him from crashing the ship.

The best choice I think is to track it. Via fancy flying, Hitch maneuvers Storming into a position that causes it to crash, without damaging it badly.
Zlo and his crew (maybe some are hiding—and that’s how Zlo escapes—and Jael realizes it) are dazed and easily rounded up and captured. And Hitch finds the key and turns it over to Campbell.

And how does Campbell become a threat here? If Zlo goes back up, he’s in control, not Campbell.

Would it work for Zlo to seize Campbell’s key—proving himself the Big Bad—but making Hitch’s collusion w/ Campbell culpable since that’s what allows Zlo to take the key? And then Zlo goes back up and holds the valley ransom for money and vengeance?

And then Jael finds out Hitch gave Campbell her key, and she feels betrayed. Hitch would need a good reason to give away her key to keep him from coming off as a total jerk.

To protect her life maybe?

So the plan will be to

- Find Storming.
- Attempt to trap it—stymied by Rick.
  - Try again.
- Blackmailed by Campbell.
- Try again and succeed.
  - Ground Storming.
  - Capture Zlo and some crew.
  - Give Campbell key.

But why the fight with Griff?

Maybe that should be earlier, to give Hitch more reason to be angry with Walter. Maybe Taos stows away much earlier and is hidden with the rest of the crew, so Hitch thinks he’s dead. But Walter holds out hope, and so he stows away. He isn’t kidnapped. He stows away on purpose.

But if Storming doesn’t land, how does Taos get aboard?

It could be hiding on the ground. And Walter may have gone looking for it and found it on purpose to be a hero like Hitch.

Maybe he isn’t disturbed by Hitch fighting Griff—but the other way around. He goes to prove something—prove Hitch isn’t so bad. Prove Hitch is right about Storming—maybe help him find it.

Why the fight?

It has to be over either—

- Campbell.
- The past.
- Jael.
- Walter.

    If it’s going to inspire Walter to try to help Hitch when the bet, it should be related to that.
    But if Griff is going to come gunning for Hitch it has to be something that sparked his tinder and made him mighty mad.
    What would set Griff off?
    If he thought Hitch had done something to endanger the valley.
    In the failed attempt with Rick’s interference, what did he do that would make Griff spitting mad?
    Maybe think Hitch is in on the plan w/ Livingstone to make a buck.

#14 Move Down
    It could be that they meet without any intent to fight—or maybe entirely by accident—but the conversation grows inflamed and Griff socks him purely over old grudges.
    And he says something about Hitch losing everything—to Livingstone and Campbell—although his own folly and irresponsibility. And so Walter gets the idea to help Hitch.

    Griff could be out there to see Jael.

    And that brings me to the romance.

    So far, our scene list for the 3rd looks like —
As things stand, the formal parley idea seems too much.
But I really feel like we need to get Zlo—and maybe Seb—into the mix.

Maybe he comes down to sabotage the planes. All but Hitch’s and Rick’s get damaged, which would nicely limit the next scene. But in that scene, Hitch could damage Storming enough for it to be grounded—hence Walter finding it.

I like that.

That could give us a scene with both Zlo and Seb. Maybe Hitch and Jael come out walking about (maybe her joints are stiffening up, and he’s helping her walk it off) when they stumble upon an abashed Seb. They chat, and Seb warns that Zlo is crazy dangerous.
Then through the fog or rain or whatever, Zlo cackles (or Maksim screams). Seb takes off and so does Hitch. He catches Zlo long enough for them to have a sinister chat, then Zlo bashes him just enough to keep Hitch from following.

Okay, so about this groundside heart-to-heart w/ Nan...
Why is he out there and what does he say?
Maybe he speaks to her in a Walter-related scene.

So now our remaining scenes can be about developing the Walter and Jael relationships.

I’m also going to need an Aurelia scene and a Berringer scene.

The Berringers might possibly make the appearance from Walter’s POV. Two Berringer scenes would be fun.

Maybe Walter is off someplace to meet the Berringers and they bring him back just in time for the fight w/ Griff.
That’s one.

Why was Walter out where they could find him?

And what about Aurelia?

#13 (Move Down)
It’s cold and rainy, and Aurelia is huddled in a barn or chicken coop, and Hitch finds her—maybe because Jael requests him to help.
He brings her home, Nan snaps, but is grateful to have her back. And that prompts some reflective words and thoughts about Celia and the past. Maybe he even apologizes to Nan and that throws her off guard some. Maybe she even says, “You’ve changed.”

Could be Walter was out looking for Aurelia too. He wandered off, so the Berringers brought him back.
That could also be why Griff is there. Everyone is gathered to find Aurelia.
And what is the significance of Aurelia’s being missing? Something about the failed attempt to take Storming scared her—maybe made her think her own prophecy of doom was coming true.

It would probably be better though to have Walter be with Hitch. Make the scene more meaningful. And more likely.

So what about the Berringers?
Maybe they bring Griff?
Or Jael?
Maybe she and Hitch just had a confusing romantic moment, and she went out there again for solace and guidance.
There could be a town meeting in which the town tries to figure out what to do, and the Berringers are vociferously there. Maybe defending Jael. And then Livingstone steps up to the plate—with a private word to Hitch afterward.

And we could do another Aurelia scene, something slight and foreboding.

So that leaves us to figure out how to advance Hitch and Jael’s relationship. This is the section in which they endure trials and plumb each other’s depths. No kissing or significant physical contact. Just an opening of souls and a mating of minds.

- She needs to find out about Celia.
- He needs to hear her dreams.
- She needs to be impressed by his bravery and loyalty.
- He needs to be inspired to be a better man.

Really, what we need here is just one or two significant conversations. Maybe she witnesses him being kind Walter. Maybe she gives him a tender, non-romantic kiss on the cheek—and steals his heart. And then there’s her worsening health.

I like the kiss on the cheek idea, but it might be too forward for Jael, considering how flustered she was by his first kiss. So maybe her gesture isn’t so forward. A little gift or something.

Most of the romantic impetus should come from him, since he’s the one who needs to bend, the one who needs to learn to be a gentleman and a worthy lover. But there should be some from her as well. So I like that she would reach out to him, maybe thank him bashfully for helping her (which could twinge him a little bit).

So this scene could be —

Hitch is nice to Walter.
Jael likes him for it and responds w/ an overture.
Convo results?

What is her role going to be in all this?
Hitch doesn’t need her to fly his mission against Storming. But she needs to play a key role.

—Maybe—

- Livingstone wants her in on the capture, for publicity.
- Her marking of Storming leads to its descending.
- She’s there when Hitch gets knocked out.
She can’t be too angry w/ Hitch over his anger toward Walter when Taos gets lost, since she has to be romantically inclined toward him at the dance. So either she doesn’t know about it or she takes it in stride.

What if being near Storming makes her joint pain worse?
So what does Hitch do for Walter that inspires Jael’s fondness for him?
It should be small but significant. Something that particularly resonates with her.

Nan has forbidden Hitch to go near Walter, and he wouldn’t deliberately go against that. But Walter is irresistibly drawn to Hitch.

So… he could…

1. Hug him.
2. Compliment him.
4. Spend time with him.
5. Do something for him.
7. Give him advice about being responsible.

He could send him away because being there puts them in danger, then call him back and give him a little plane he carved for him (or maybe something that becomes significant when Walter boards Storming). He could also say nice things.

Maybe Walter is upset about something he felt he did wrong during the Midpoint, and Jael is trying unsuccessfully to comfort him. Hitch comes along and takes it in hand.

#10 (Move Down)

Maybe Jael knows Walter is feeling he didn’t measure up (maybe he was afraid and feels abashed for it), and Hitch picks up on it and tells him he did a good job, then sends them home because he has work to do. Walter is a little disappointed, but Hitch cheers him up by calling him back in giving him maybe a carved pistol. We’ll play that one by ear. Maybe something will present itself later on.

So then Jael is very pleased with him, and does… what?

- Kisses his cheek.
- Hugs him.
- Brings him lunch.
- Pats him.
- Squeezes his hand.
- Gives him something.

#10 (Move Down)

Maybe he’s kneeling down, and she just comes up behind him and sets her hand on his shoulder. Maybe he hangs his head in exhaustion, and she kneels down catty-corner near him, in a semi-intimate position—and that’s how they talk. She compliments him for his bravery and other manly qualities. Maybe he apologizes for not doing a better job of protecting her in the first
place. And she can tell him just a little of her inner self. Probably should end with some sort of affirmation of her belief he’s gonna get it all done. Or something.

And that lead up to the town meeting, when he has to keep her safe.

And what about Aurelia?

Aurelia could cause trouble at the town meeting by proclaiming of doom some more.

And what about Jael’s health?

Maybe Storming is manipulating the humidity to make it worse. It could be near on crippling in the climax.

And the weather…

Zlo is barricading the valley with horrible storms that are not only dangerous, but will threaten to kill all the crops. So we got lots of rain and lightning. Probably some bad weather in the chase sequence. Maybe lightning lighting stuff on fire. Maybe save that for the climax.

Stay away from hail, since we did that in Dreamlander,

43. We’re going to want to slow down considerably for these reaction scenes. But we can’t slow down too far too fast.

Everybody’s gonna be panicking, the air show breaks up (despite, perhaps, Livingstone’s attempts to keep it all under control).

Hitch crash lands a ways off which is good, since it will give us some space from the other people and their panic.

So he’s patching up the plane—again—when Jael and Earl come careening up. They “borrowed” Rick’s car (or maybe the Berringers, if that ends up working out better). Earl can’t drive, because of his broken arm (which he didn’t stop to set in his excitement and his concern over a Hitch—and the plane), so Jael is learning as she goes and generally driving like a maniac.

They reach Hitch, and he (after asking after her health and hollering at Earl for his carelessness) demands to know what that just was. He’s excited and pumped up from the adrenaline, but he’s not mad at her. He’s really just kind of geeking out over the whole thing. He saw what she was doing down below and was impressed by that too.

So while he performs some rough setting and splinting of Earl’s arm, Jael spills the beans on the Storming, what it is, where it comes from, and how she fell from it, etc. Pretty much everything.

Reaction: Incredulity; demands answers from Jael.
Dilemma: What to do about the barricade.
Decision: First things first, Hitch is all excited, thinks it’s a great opportunity to impress Livingstone; promises to restore Jael to Storming; twinges at the thought of her leaving.

Then they hitch the plane to the car and haul it back to the airfield.

46. Back at the airport, Walter (in his own POV) is sitting a bit disconsolately, feeling it was his fault Earl broke his arm and that he was a coward and failed to live up to Hitch’s heroics.
After getting things straightened out, Hitch comes out and finds him. He looks around for Nan, then approaches to find out what’s wrong.

Hitch comforts him by telling him he’s afraid too. He’s afraid when he flies; that’s why he loves it—and then he extols the blessing of adrenaline and embracing your fears (which might come full circle later, when Hitch has to embrace his own fear of responsibility—Jael could overhear now and repeat it later).

Move #10 (from above) to here:

Goal: Cheer Walter up.
Conflict: Walter clings to his idea of his own failure.
Disaster: Hitch feels more keenly what he missed in not having a family.

47. Switch to Hitch’s POV. Jael overheard what he did with Walter and loved him for it.
Move #11 (from above) to here:

Reaction: Surprise and pleasure—and a little shame for not deserving encomiums.
Dilemma: How to do better for both Walter and Jael.
Decision: Keep her safe.

44. Changed my mind, I’m gonna want the town meeting to come directly after the Midpoint sequel scene.

So Hitch and Co. get back with the plane, and they discover all the prominent townsfolk and pilots gathered to discuss matters.

They’ve determined (maybe via flying, maybe with farmers who have driven in from the outskirts) that Zlo has hemmed them in. And now they have to figure out what to do about it.

Where do I want to stage this?
The airport would be handy, both because it’s an established setting and because that’s where everybody ends up. Since Campbell, Griff, and many citizens were already present, they could just convene in the hangar.

But Hitch and Jael could easily have reason to go to town, due to Earl’s arm.
I do kind want the next scene to be at the airfield, so would be nice to keep everything in the same spot.
Let’s keep it at the airport.

Okay, so they arrive and join the meeting. Campbell and Livingstone are at the front.
Really, as things stand, Campbell really isn’t in league with Zlo’s depredations, so much as taking advantage of them.
Everybody is trying to figure out how to defeat Storming, come up with the money, and find the girl with the key.
Everybody’s upset and shouting. Campbell tries to calm everybody down. He says they’ll pay a little from each farm and find the girl. Maybe that’s right when Hitch—and Jael—come in.
Hitch catches Rick’s gaze on Jael and immediately hustles her out with Earl. Sends her to take him to the doctor, which Earl objects to until he catches Hitch’s eye and realizes what’s up.
So the Berringers start in, out-shouting each other from across the room, saying they aren’t handing over any innocent girl (like a heathen sacrifice). Maybe they exchange a little nod with Hitch, since they likely have their own suspicions about Jael. J.W. is probably ranting that he wants to fight it out.

And that’s when Livingstone interjects with his grand plan to publicize the air show. He and his pilots are going to forgo the frivolous pursuits of competition and put their talents to better use in hunting down the sky beast. He looks right at Hitch as he says it.

And then Aurelia determinedly marches up to the front of the platform or whatever and makes her own speech, in which she says startlingly obvious and profound things, and ends with only a bare note of hysterical doom before Nan hustles her off.

**Goal:** Figure out how to stop Storming. Protect Jael.
**Conflict:** Everyone wants to do it differently to find her.
**Disaster:** Aurelia’s prophecy of doom regarding Hitch (and Jael).

We could start this scene so Hitch’s goal is protecting Jael, and Aurelia’s prophecy has something personal to do w/ Hitch.

45. Everybody’s leaving, and Hitch is on his way out when Livingstone catches up with him. He wants to know that he can count on Hitch to help him capture Storming. Hitch is deeply tempted for a number of reasons, including his own ego and a chance to prove himself to Livingstone and maybe win the air show away from him. Livingstone twists the bet to make it all more appealing to Hitch.

But it conflicts a bit with Hitch’s promise to Jael to get her safely home. He says he can’t because he has prior commitments, but Livingstone wants him to think about it and try to do both. So Hitch wavers and starts to convince himself he can do both. Livingstone really has to put the screws on here to make Hitch’s wobbling justified.

**Reaction:** Uneasiness and determination to protect Jael.
**Dilemma:** How to work in Livingstone’s new conditions.
**Decision:** To try to juggle both Jael and Livingstone.

48. So now we have Jael enacting her grand plan to find Storming

(4) Maybe Hitch tells her about Livingstone’s threat the day before. That could be a nice brick in their bond and wouldn’t make him seem so scummy. There really isn’t a huge conflict, so she wouldn’t have cause to be too upset about his doing it.

So the question is—how do they go about finding Storming?

(1) This should be a fairly snappy scene, summarizing the lengthy parts if necessary. Maybe Jael realizes her pain is worse around Storming, so they use that to find it, driving around. They spot the plane wing dangling, and Hitch runs back for his plane.

#12 (Move Down)

This scene will prominently feature Jael’s health. Hitch can compliment her on her cleverness, maybe squeeze her shoulder as she climbs out of the car. Maybe he even comes back,
a twinkle in his eye, to tell her he’d give her another kiss, but he doesn’t want to get smacked again.

(3) Rick isn’t likely to lend them his car now, so they’ll have to get one from the Berringers (or possibly Livingstone?).

(2) Maybe the scene starts out with Jael waking Hitch up and whispering her plan. They head out (sans Taos, who went home with Walter), maybe eating breakfast on the way. Maybe they leave Earl, grumbling, to fix the plane, with orders from Hitch that it better be ready by the time they get back.

Probably shouldn’t have Jael tell him her plan until they’re on the road, to fill that space.

(5) They can exchange a few (very few) personal words, then Jael get pale and strained as they get close. They’ll spot it, then ease away, and gun it back to the airport.

Goal: Find Storming.
Conflict: Can’t find it.
Disaster: They find it and have to take immediate advantage of it.

49. Brief sequel scene in which they return to the airport and snatch the plane out from under a surprised Earl.

Move #12 (from above) to here:

Livingstone catches wind of it and rallies the entire fleet. So we have hordes of planes launching.

That’s all against what Hitch wanted. He tells Livingstone as he is mounting up to stay out of it or they’ll alert Zlo too soon. But Livingstone, of course, wants in on the glory, so he rallies everyone anyway—maybe telling Earl or somebody to tell the media.

Reaction: Take off after Storming.
Dilemma: How to sneak up on it.
Decision: Take one plane and be quiet about it.

50. So off they fly into the wild blue yonder. Hitch tries to evade the others, and thanks to his superior plane (and skills) he manages to get a head start.

Is cranking up the weather enough of a disaster?

Maybe the bad weather was mostly confined to the boundaries, but now as a result of this attack, Zlo cranks it up, and most of the planes are forced down due to the rain and wind.

I think we’ll also break Livingstone’s leg(s). So he has to get around giving orders from a wheelchair. Could be pretty funny.

Zlo could tell them his reason for the weather through loudhailer.
Hitch should land a good hit on target.
Maybe he doesn’t know what the plan is. True to form, he’s just making it up as he goes.
So he could reflect on the fact that he doesn’t know what he’s going to do next.
Then Livingstone and Co. show up, and Hitch has to wing it.
What could Hitch do here that would give him the idea for the scene where he really does ground Storming?
And how can we keep this interesting and amusing?

- He could fly athwartships and send everybody scrambling.
- He could shoot the balloon.
- He could shot at Zlo.
- He could dive bomb them.

Maybe Storming takes a bit to get under way, so Hitch starts thinking maybe it’s not such a bad idea that everyone came. They all scream in, shouting triumphantly, and Storming lumbers awkwardly. Hitch flies close to the bow and smarts off to Zlo. Then Zlo lets loose with the cannons, nearly gets Hitch.

Then down comes the rain, and the planes scatter. Hitch gets in one last chance. He does a trick—maybe dives straight down and zooms across the deck. He gets tangled in some lines, tears Storming up some, and nearly crashes. By the time he recovers, Storming has disappeared. He also tears the marking wing off.

Goal: Bring down Storming.
Conflict: Too many planes.
Disaster: The storms intensify and planes crash

51. So they all limp back to the airport. People are rushing out via car to pick up those who crashed and some mention that Livingstone went down.

Before Hitch can take off to go help, Earl comes running out to tell him that Jael went to help Walter and a bunch of others find Aurelia, who’s gone missing. Hitch’s chooses to go after her instead of the downed pilots, mostly because he’s worried about someone spotting Jael and realizing she’s the ransom girl.

Reaction: Frustration and a little healthy “relief fear.”
Dilemma: To help the pilots or Jael and Walter.
Decision: Jael and Walter.

52. He heads out Carpenters way and meets a soaked Jael, who beckons him over and they follow Walter through the bush. He’s a little frantic, says he’s worried about Aurelia.

Taos’s bark leads them to her.
Griff’s fight will be part of the same scene.

Move #13 (from above) to here.

Goal: Find Aurelia.
Conflict: She doesn’t want to go back.
Disaster: Griff blows up.
The fight w/ Griff is important, both to the subplot of their relationship and because it inspires Walter’s subsequent folly.

Eventually, Hitch and Griff are going to make up, so we don’t want anything too irreversible here. Griff is really angry, but at the heart of it all is his wounded love for his big brother. So even though the insults he starts out slinging have to do with the other responsibilities Hitch has neglected, they need to end with Griff saying something particular about his own grievances. Make it clear, in one sentence, that he’s more hurt than angry.

Griff needs to say things, true or not, in the heat of anger that Walter then feels the need to disprove. Probably it comes down to something about Hitch’s having lost Storming earlier that day, and so Walter’s actions toward Storming the next day have to do with his trying to help Hitch.

And all of this is going to bite Hitch harder than not. He loves Griff—and deep down he knows he screwed up royally. So after a point, he shouldn’t fight back too hard. He may even apologize, though it’s probably too soon for that.

Then everybody parts ways, and Jael helps Hitch back to the airport.

The sequel will take place that evening, back at the airport. It’s raining cats and dogs, foggy. Hitch is pretty downtrodden after his fight with Griff. He knows he’s made a muck of pretty much all the important relationships in his life. He hates where he’s at and who he’s become—and he finally lets himself admit that.

Jael comes over to comfort him. She’s tentative at first, awkward, not knowing quite how to go about it. She brings him something—his coat or a mug of something hot. Maybe a rag to clean the dried blood from his face.

And they chat for a moment. She haltingly prompts him to tell her why Griff—and Nan—are so angry with him, and the full story of Celia comes out.

And this is where Jael tells him the core principle of our theme:

“Isn’t running away a kind of cage? Every morning you wake up, and you can never run far enough to run away from running away.”

He doesn’t quite get it yet, but he takes a step toward getting it. And he decides he has to learn how to find true freedom, the kind that you don’t have to keep running to find. The freedom of peace.

Reaction: Admission of his mistakes and the fact that his life has got him nowhere.
Dilemma: How to be responsible without feeling trapped.
Decision: To try to find a way.

About then, Hitch notices that Jael is in pain. She says she’s stiffening up again, so he suggests they go for a walk. Maybe the rain has slackened up a bit. He bundles her up in a coat and out they go.
Move #16 (from above) to here.
Move #15 (from above) to here. (And then they realize Jael’s joints are worse because Storming is near.)

Goal: Walk off Jael’s pain.
Conflict: Zlo and Seb show up.
Disaster: Zlo wrecks the planes and knocks Hitch out.

This scene needs to end with Hitch dazedly waking up under Jael’s administrations (and others are probably running around) and saying something to indicate his frustration.

56. Now we switch to Walter’s POV.

He leaves early the next morning to prove Griff wrong about Hitch. He might have heard (but not necessarily understood) Hiram say something in passing (maybe to Nan in the other room, while Walter and Taos sneak out early—maybe stocking provisions for their mission) about the row at the airport the night before.

So he heads out, using the gift Hitch gave him (binoculars?) and pretending to track. He stumbles on Storming almost entirely by accident. The ship is grounded for repairs so Zlo and Seb can board. Walter gets all excited. Taos runs off, barking. Walter starts after him, is seen by Zlo, who then decides to kidnap Taos—maybe yelling some things about killing him if Walter doesn’t show himself. Walter gets scared and runs off. Then, after a few minutes, he feels ashamed and goes back to watch from safety as Zlo takes Taos aboard and the ship takes off.

Walter is horrified, scared, and deeply ashamed of his cowardice, which he views as being at fault for Taos’s demise.

Goal: Find Storming and clear Hitch’s name.
Conflict: He finds Storming and is scared.
Disaster: Zlo takes Taos.

57. Move #17 (from above) to here, Move #18 (from above) to here.

Let’s tentatively set this in a café. Hitch is grabbing a bite to eat (with Earl?), and in walks Campbell and clears everyone else out.

What’s Campbell going to do to Hitch?

- Harm Jael
- Earl
- Fire Griff
- Call in the debt.

All of those things are going to get to Hitch; Jael should be the coup de grace. Campbell makes it clear that he basically know she’s the ransom and that he’ll turn her over to Zlo if Hitch doesn’t come through.
So play that
And he puts a time limit on (probably one day).

Reaction: Anger and frustration.
Dilemma: How to protect everyone and do the right thing.
Decision: Go after Storming to keep Jael safe from Campbell and apologize to Walter later.

58. Hitch leaves the café. He is very upset, not just because people are in danger from Campbell (himself included), but because he knows he’s compromising his promises to Jael—and caving to a crook. So much of his anger and fear (and he is really angry) is directed at himself. He needs to be worked into a fine fettle before Walter even shows up.
   And when he does show up, Hitch is instantly impatient with him. He tries to send him home, but Walter keeps tagging along, trying to tell him what happened. I think this should be the scene in which he first talks. He makes the giant effort out of his esteem for Hitch and the duress of the situation, and Hitch turns it against him.
   Someone needs to hear Walter’s effort and Hitch’s rebuff.

- Aurelia
- Berringers
- Lilla
- Molly

So Walter gives Hitch the info about where Storming is. Hitch is all excited and ready to head out right away—and impatient when Walter holds him back. When he hears that Taos is dead, he flips his top.
   Walter starts out by telling Hitch about Taos, and the info about Storming’s whereabouts comes out after that. So Hitch flips his top, is way harder on Walter than he deserves, and is immediately called out by Lilla who showed up to hear the end of it. She tries to hug and comfort Walter, but he breaks free and runs away.

   Hitch, of course, immediately feels terrible. But he has to take advantage of Storming’s proximity right away, so he puts off going after Walter.
   Lilla shouldn’t scold him so much as look at him in disbelief. She should say something to drive home the importance of Walter’s finally having spoken.

Reaction: Anger and grief.
Dilemma: To make things right w/ Walter or go after Storming.
Decision: Apologize later.

59. Move #19 (from above) to here.

So Hitch goes out alone and gets the job done. (Maybe ahead of time he alerted Campbell and Griff where to be to pick up the survivors as they were grounded.) He should be pretty tense and business-like.
   This is a big scene, but I feel like we can’t drag it out too much.
Since we just had the big flying scene in the previous hit-and-miss on Storming, we don’t want to do that again here. But the catching of Storming is important, so we do want to give that due precedence. That means we need to skip the catching part and get right down to the caught part.

I think we need to bring in a brief bit of Jael at the beginning. This is all very important to her after all.

She’s not going to get upset with Hitch until she realizes he gave her key to Campbell. (Maybe she searches for it and can’t find it.)

So maybe it would be better for her to come in at the end after Storming is down. Maybe both she and Hitch (and Earl) are searching for the key, and he finds it and silently hands it over to Campbell.

So how do we lead up to that? Do we want to start out at the airport? The only reason would be to touch base with Jael, which I don’t know is strictly necessary.

Could we do it without flying at all?

Maybe he asks Jael for help, and she tells him how to disable Storming to keep it on the ground.

Maybe it crashes at J.W.’s house.

Maybe Zlo let himself be caught, knowing he can’t get the ship up and running that fast. Many it’s part of his plan to let Campbell fix it up for him, then the stowaways break free and spring him.

Okay, so—

Hitch tells Campbell he knows where Storming is. They all pile into the car (several cars) and head out. On the way, they pick up Jael, since she knows how to shut off the dawsedometer (and because she wants to find the key).

They get there, sneak up to surround the eerily quiet Storming, and Hitch climbs aboard and takes out Zlo pretty easily (no Maksim, since Zlo didn’t want him to be taken and stowed him away with half the crew).

Jael jumps aboard to shut down the storm. She comments on the missing crew, but Zlo says he marooned them for mutiny or some such.

Hitch wants to call the deal good at that, but Campbell demands the key or he’ll lock Jael up too—and maybe threatens worse. So Hitch and Jael look for the key. Hitch finds it first, hesitates, then gives it to Campbell.

He convinces himself he did the right thing, but also decides he needs to tell her the truth, because he likes and respects her and owes her that much.

Goal: Capture Storming.
Conflict: Zlo has his own plan (so does Campbell).
Disaster: Campbell gets the key.

Reaction: Regret and justification.
Dilemma: How to approach Jael about it.
Decision: To be honest.

Third Plot Point

61. And now we’re into the final quarter! Seems like it’s coming really fast. This is been such a fun and easy outline put together.

I’m going to want about 20 scenes out of the section.
- The plan.
- Flying to Storming/infiltrating.
- Finding Walter
  Sequel: Reunion emotions.
- Jael in Engines (health).
- Battle to view/Zlo.
- Battle w/ Campbell.
- Crash landing (Walter flies the plane).
- Dénouement x 2?

1. 70. Land plane; find Walter.
2. 71. Reunion.
3. 72. Zlo captures them; wounds them; Jael’s health fails.
5. 74. Jael’s health fails; she goes to Engine (New plan).
6. 75. Zlo.
7. 76. Walter flies plane.
8. 77. Crash landing (bomb Campbell’s house).
9. 78. Campbell.
10. 79. Dénouement.
11. 80. Dénouement.

So we start out to w/ the dance. This is the calm before the storm (ha!). Everything goes to pot after this.

Mention Ginny Lou again in the scene. Show Berringers reacting to her—and vice versa.

So it’s Sunday night, the evil flying beast has been grounded, the threat averted. So the townspeople are holding a party to celebrate—and to honor Hitch and Campbell (probably to Griff’s—and Nan’s—mixed feelings).

But Hitch isn’t really feeling all that victorious. He hates that he betrayed his promise to Jael and gave the key to Campbell (not in small part because he knows Campbell is just as potentially dangerous as Zlo). And he feels bad about yelling at Walter.

Maybe he’s thinking about moving on, running away to be free of his burden of guilt and responsibility.
On the other hand, Jael is having second thoughts about going home to Storming. Now that it seems a real possibility, she finds she wants to stay with Hitch. So she’s going to tell him that and make this all so much more difficult.

#20 (Move Down)
As for Walter, he’s dying of shame and determined to prove himself. As far as he knows, Taos is dead, so he has no plans to rescue him, but he’s hanging around Storming, and when he sees Zlo escape and re-board, he’s right there and takes the opportunity to amend his wrongs.

My big Q here is Campbell. He’s actually become a bigger baddie than Zlo, so he’s gonna need to have a proper end.
My climax is going to take place aboard Storming, which means Campbell is probably going to have to be aboard.

I kind of like the idea of confronting Campbell on the ground—after having faced the strangers above.
I also really like the idea of blowing up his house. Maybe Campbell is excessively proud of his fancy house (à la Flem Snopes). Then Hitch turns him over for his crimes to Griff, thus admitting his own in the process. Maybe we could hint, earlier that Griff knew Campbell was corrupt and was just looking for enough excuse to prosecute.

So we’ll dive right in to the dance. Nan—or Aurelia—or maybe Lilla—has loaned Jael a black lace dress, and she looks stunning—her cropped hair crimped. Hitch is bowled over, naturally.

They meet somewhere at the party. Maybe she’s dancing with Griff. Maybe as Hitch comes over, Jael sees him, falters in the dance Griff is teaching her, and blushes. Griff sees Jael’s reaction to Hitch’s arrival, concedes his loss, and brings her over, maybe with some kind of stilted congratulations to Hitch for his work in bringing down Storming.

So Hitch and Jael dance away, it ends, they applaud. And Hitch wants to get her off alone somewhere where he can tell her the truth and tell her he’s leaving.

Maybe when he sees Jael dancing with Griff and sees Aurelia on the sidelines wanting to dance, he asks her. They can talk briefly. He could ask her about her prophecy of doom, and she can happily say is over.

Then they pass Griff and Jael. Jael fixates on Hitch, and they trade partners. Aurelia might have some penetrating observation about Jael’s feelings for Hitch. She might also be the one to mention Campbell is out at the ship. Or maybe Griff says it when Hitch asks, in a friendly way, why he’s not on duty.

So they dance away, he says nice things about her appearance, she glows. She and Hitch finish the dance in silence, staring into each other’s eyes. Then he takes her off to the side.

Romantic nooks —

Bridge
I like the idea that they go up high (since I always do that in my stories, and because it reflects well on both the characters. Might give them a better view of the tragedy as well). I can always change it later.

So he takes her up to the bell tower of the church where the dance is taking place (outside). The window is all lit up and beautiful.

Do I want him to kiss her?

I want this to be a very tender moment, but I don’t know if the kiss is appropriate. He might want to kiss her, but he’s grown up enough to realize it’s the wrong thing to do under the circumstances (since he’s about to leave). She might try to kiss him.

What has to be covered in this scene?

4—Hitch’s confession.
2—Jael’s decision to stay.
3—Almost kiss.
1—Jael’s reaction.
6—Plot point.
5—Jael’s suspicion?

Okay, so they get up there, they mumble some awkward banalities of valid sentimentality, and Jael mentions Walter’s being upset, and that cools Hitch’s ardor and reminds him what he has to do.

She launches into a panegyric all about all the good he’s done and before he can find the words to tell her the truth, she says she’s glad they didn’t find the key (?) and that she’s decided to stay.

And then we get to the almost kiss. She is gorgeous, ethereal in the shadows. She looks up at him from beneath her lashes, lips parted, irresistible, just begging to be kissed breathless. And she says something along the lines of, “I wouldn’t slap you this time.”

And he wants to of course. He almost does, but he does the right thing. He caresses her face, almost bends his head to hers, says softly, fingers still on her face, “I’m leaving.”

It takes a second for that to sink in. Then she pulls back and tries to find the right English words to respond. So he tells her the truth. Everything. Probably only

She considers that and is hurt. But the fact that she’s already decided to stay herself lessens some of the sting of the stolen key. What hurts is that he didn’t keep his word—but way more that he’s just running away.
So that’s what she reacts to. He’s running away from her, from Griff, from Walter—maybe even Earl. And he just shakes his head and says it’s the only thing he knows how to do. And then she should probably have a cutting response.

And we’ll probably stick Walter’s scene in first.

Goal: To tell Jael the truth and that he’s leaving.
Conflict: Jael wants him to stay.
Disaster: Zlo retakes Storming.

Reaction: Horror.
Dilemma: What to do?
Decision: Go after Zlo.

60. Okay, so Walter’s scene first to lend the dance a bit of tension.

He’s feeling very bad about losing Taos and disappointing Hitch. So after he gets all dressed up for the party and drives out with Nan, Jael, and the family (to be mentioned in passing), he just wanders off by himself. He meanders out to where Storming is grounded and starts poking around, when he hears the hubbub.

Zlo appears, knocks out Campbell (who without seeing Walter is doing some investigating of his own), takes the key from him, and regains the ship. This is where we see and realize he had stowed away half his crew (including Seb). So Walter sees the chance to redeem himself. Maybe he hears a dog bark and thinks Taos survived—and that’s his real reason for taking action.

I need to figure out how and why Aurelia is taken.

Maybe she comes after Walter, tries to hold him back, and starts screaming for help. To keep her quiet, Zlo nabs both her and Walter. His crew hastily takes off, and when Hitch pursues he drops both Aurelia and Walter. Jael tries and fails to catch Aurelia, and Walter catches onto the undercarriage. Then he’ll climb aboard and look for Taos.

That means Storming should currently be grounded very near to the dance. Within seeing and shouting distance.

Goal: To stop Zlo.
Conflict: Aurelia gets tries to stop him.
Disaster: Zlo kidnapsthem.

62. So now Hitch and Jael have to react—with horror, of course. The dilemma—what to do?—is quickly resolved with the decision to go after them.
As soon as Hitch sees Walter’s peril, his heart leaps to his throat, and he knows he has to do something. Zlo is going to yell down something sinister, and the party turns into mass hysteria.

Hitch jumps into his plane, and as he’s revving it up, Jael scrambles aboard, in her party dress.

Maybe they both cling to the railing for a moment. Walter might try to help Aurelia back up, but they both lose their balance as a result. Walter—after putting Hitch’s heart in his throat—catches hold of the undercarriage (maybe even the rope Jael used to secure the wing) and saves himself from falling. But Aurelia is not so lucky.

Hitch, perhaps at Jael’s urging, tells Hitch to dive, then jumps. She dives after Aurelia and catches her just as Hitch comes screeching around to pick them up. Jael grabs hold of the plane, but Aurelia is out of her mind with fear, and Jael can’t hang onto her.

So Aurelia falls and breaks her neck.

By the time Hitch gets the plane back under control, Storming has disappeared. He goes after it, but the search is futile.

I think we’ll have Jael’s climb onto the undercarriage herself to try to help Aurelia and Walter onto the plane. Aurelia falls and Jael dives after her.

Goal: Save Walter and Aurelia.
Conflict: Zlo throws them overboard.
Disaster: Aurelia falls to her death; Zlo escapes w/ Walter.

Third Act

63. Hitch and Jael finally land to a great hubbub. Aurelia is dead, and a sweet young boy has gone missing. And everyone (except the Berringers and Earl) blames Hitch and Jael. So they land to a tumult of blame. Earl might run over to try to warn them, but then he too is swept away by a tumult of people.

Griff, with the help of some others, and at the order of Campbell, grabs them. Rick repeats his accusation that Hitch and Jael are in on Zlo’s escape and, as a result, Aurelia’s death.

Griff is unsure. He really doesn’t believe Hitch would do that, but he’s rocked when Campbell announces Hitch’s criminal past.

Hitch of course protests, and Jael defends him.

But then it comes out:

Maybe Nan says something suddenly, something with eyes of wide-eyed hurt. “How could you do it—or let this happen—and to Walter of all people?”

Griff’s grip tightens defensively as he realizes what’s coming, and then Campbell sees his opportunity to twist the knife. He announces (without explaining the wherefores) that Walter is Hitch’s son.

Hitch of course is gobsmacked. And he stops fighting long enough to let them haul him off to jail.

Reaction: Fear and sadness.
Dilemma: How to convince people he had no part in the tragedy.
Let’s do a Walter scene here, to show how he survives.

He climbs back inside, overhears some bit of news from Zlo and the crew (or, since they speak Russian, gleans it visually) about their dastardly plans for retaliation (probably to flood the living daylight out of Scottsbluff, simply because Zlo is mad and wants payback).

Zlo has returned to bring bad weather to Scottsbluff, with the ultimate goal of “bombing” the heck out of the valley. So he’s basically intent on destroying the lives of everyone in the valley (one way or another), which significantly raises the stakes all across the board.

Anyway, he then crawls on and finds solace with Taos (?—maybe).

**Reaction:** Get back to safety.
**Dilemma:** What to do to save himself and warn Scottsbluff?
**Decision:** To try to warn them somehow (or maybe to try to steal the key—when Zlo is sleeping?)

That night in jail, Hitch sits in flabbergasted and dejected silence. He and Jael should be together, so they can talk, but I doubt they’d have cells near each other.

So maybe they talk on a bench, as they’re being processed.

He feels all the more awful about everything that’s happened, and Walter’s being his son only drives home further the price of his irresponsibility. Maybe he reflects on how he wished he had a son like Walter. And now that he’s learned Walter is his son, it’s too late.

Jael starts out curious and sympathetic, but her main focus is on doing something about what happened.

Then they’re hustled apart, and Griff takes Hitch to his cell.

Griff is still a bit unsure, but he does take a bit of his anger out in condemning Hitch.

Hitch probably wants to know why no one told him, and Griff gives a catty example. As he is leaving, he asks Hitch about the truth of Campbell’s accusation, and Hitch appeals to him: “What do you think?”

**Reaction:** Shock and shame.

Toward dawn, the Berringers pull together long enough to stage a jailbreak—with a little

The next morning, Campbell appears and mocks Hitch, really twisting the knife. He says he’ll let it out if he’ll do one more job for him. He says Hitch belongs to him (just as Griff belongs to him?), and that he’ll never get free. Either he can belong to him locked up in jail, or he can belong to him doing a few jobs for him on the outside.

And Hitch basically spits in his face. His mind is made up. Come what may, he’s no longer Campbell’s tool.

Campbell doesn’t take that kindly, of course.

He orders Hitch let out, which, of course, surprises Hitch. Campbell wants him to attend Aurelia’s funeral, both to show the townsfolk that he’s in chains and to stick the knife deeper in Hitch.

**Decision:** To defy
**Dilemma:** To accept Campbell’s deal or not.
**Decision:** To defy Campbell.
So Hitch (and Jael, still in her party dress and limping) is hauled out to Aurelia’s funeral, where they watch from a distance (probably a distance from each other too). Hitch sees his parents’ and Celia’s grave, and that gives him a little pause for reflection.

Then, after the ceremony, Nan comes over. She tells him the rest of the (brief) story about Celia’s being pregnant with Walter and dying before Hitch found out. He has a flash of anger with her for keeping Walter from him, then realizes it was probably for the best. He tells her as much—surprising her—and asks for her forgiveness.

She gives it conditionally on his bringing Walter’s coming back. Hitch tells her to get him out of jail, and he’ll do it.

Goal: To escape; find a way to escape.

Reaction: Grief and self-realization.
Dilemma: How to escape and go after Walter.
Decision: To take responsibility and to get Nan to help him.

And now the jail break!

It’s night again, and Hitch is pacing his cell or tensely staring outside, scanning the sky for some sight of Storming.

And then there’s some kind of commotion. And in march the Berringers, badly disguised in bandanna masks and wielding shotguns. They’re herding a not-too-uncooperative Griff in front of them, making a ton of racket in their attempts to be quiet and arguing volubly (probably saying how their “truce” was a stupid idea, with each brother believing he would have done better to have come alone).

So they barge in, free Hitch, tell him Earl has the plane’s motor running, something like that.

Then they all troop over to Jael’s cell—at Hitch’s insistence. But when they get there, she’s hiding (maybe shimmed up in a corner). Griff goes in, and she whacks him on the head with something (maybe the toilet seat) and knocks him woozy.

(She is hurting pretty bad, but she mostly conceals it. Hitch is worried.)

She realizes it’s a rescue, comes down (perhaps murmuring apologies to Griff and trying to help him sit up), and Hitch tells her the plan. He wants her to come with him, both because of her fearless skill in the air, and because she knows Storming.

She, of course, instantly agrees.

As they are leaving, Hitch helps Griff up, and Griff tells him that Nan talked to him about what Hitch said about rescuing Walter. We don’t want an outright reconciliation here, but Hitch needs to apologize for everything and specifically for abandoning Griff himself. And Griff will give indication he has forgiven Hitch—or is starting to.

They sneak out, but before all’s said and done, the other cops spot them. So they run for it. As they near the exit, Campbell himself shows up. Griff throws himself in Campbell’s way, slows him down, and is beaten back and taken prisoner.

The others escape into the Berringers’ car. Campbell takes a couple potshots at home, but they escape.

Goal: Escape.
Conflict: Campbell’s after them.
Disaster: Campbell captures Griff.

69. So as they drive, Jael wriggles into a jacket and some pants and borrows a knife to slit her skirt and cut it off at the waist. They might also have some boots for her.

As they go, Hitch quickly outlines the plan, pretty much making it up as he goes. With some input from Jael, he decides he is going to land the plane in Storming’s docking bay. They’ll get out and search for Walter. Then disable the dawsedometer—and the whole ship if they can—then take the plane and leave. It’s crazy, but they really don’t have any better option. J.W. sees to it they are both armed (Jael might need something other than a pistol, since she’s never used one).

Hitch’s focus is on finding and rescuing Walter. Matthew reminds him that disabling the dawsedometer and taking Zlo out of commission is important to the whole valley. Hitch should hear him but balk just a little bit—when his old instinct to run away kicks in (but be careful with that, since Hitch isn’t a coward and has never been in the habit of physically running away). (I think Hitch intends to take Zlo out—to satisfy his own anger, if nothing else. It’s only when the odds look impossible that he wavers.)

Reaction: Regret over Griff’s fate; determination.
Dilemma: How to infiltrate Storming.
Decision: The Plan.

70. What is Zlo’s plan in all of this?

He has returned to bring bad weather to SB, with the ultimate goal of “bombing” the valley. So he’s basically intent on destroying the lives of everyone in the valley (one way or another), which significantly raises the stakes all across the board.

**Things That Have to Happen**

- Land the plane.
- Find Walter.
- Run afoul of Zlo—almost beaten—Jael’s health.
- Semi-escape—choose not to run away.
- Implement final plan (Jael in Engines; Walter in plane).
- Final battle the w/ Zlo; Storming damaged.
- Crash land (maybe this is the moment of choice; Walter was waiting for him, but Hitch tells him to take off).
- Campbell.
- Dénouement.
Where/how do they land the plane?
Conflict?
Where do they find Walter?
How does Zlo find them?
What does he do/plan to do to them?
How do they escape?
Have do they find Storming?

Hitch and Jael could maybe find Storming based solely on Jael’s aches. Then suddenly they see a flash of light (Walter’s light) through the darkness.

Emphasize the danger of the storm. Hitch needs to think it’s probably suicidal there for a few minutes. Then Jael taps his shoulder and shows him the light. Their approach is going to be muffled by the storm, preventing all hands on deck from hearing them.

There’s going to be some kind of docking bay that they skillfully and luckily skid into. They should be met almost immediately by opposition, who raised the alarm.

So the next Q is: How do they escape or take out the opposition?

10-12-12

I don’t see there being more than maybe 20 to 30 crew members aboard. So whatever opposition they run into isn’t going to be huge. Hitch has a gun, but I don’t think he should just start randomly shooting.

I want there to be instant danger, which they obviously escape only temporarily. It also needs to be pretty quick, since I want to move right on to find Walter.

Maybe Walter helps them.

They’re immediately in over their heads, and then Walter does something to either distract the guards or provide an avenue of escape.

Taos maybe?

Okay, so they crash land in the dock. Jail is very pained. Hitch helps her out of the plane, and they stagger out the door and straight into armed (but surprised) resistance. Things look pretty bad. The baddies are armed. Hitch probably does take a few ineffective shots at them.

They’re pinned down, in bad shape, when… Walter and Taos come to the rescue.

I see them in some sort of corridor, but what if they unluckily backed into an outside observation deck or something—trapping them between the enemy and a fall. Maybe starlight blinking dizzily from beyond the storm clouds.

And then Walter opens a port hole above them. Maybe he’s been living in the drainpipe or something—a storage tube.

So in their desperate moment, Hitch hears a dog’s bark through the wind, and his brain half thinks it’s Taos. Maybe Jael recognizes it and is sure it’s Taos. He argues with her, but she struggles upright and identifies the porthole. Then a rope or something drops, and Walter sticks his head out.

So they climb up and have a touching reunion.
Goal: Board Storming and find Walter.
Conflict: Baddies see them and force them to a treacherous observation deck.
Discover: They find Walter, but they’re stuck in a drainpipe.

71. This needs to be an emotional scene for Hitch. Largely, this is his emotional climax. Seems like a dumb time to just blurt out that Walter’s his son. It’s really Hitch’s recognition of the fact that’s more important that Walter’s. Walter will be largely delighted, so his learning the truth in the dénouement shouldn’t cause any complications. What’s important to Walter is that Hitch forgive him and love him.

Hitch is very emotional about the whole thing, but he’s also going to be a bit awkward about the whole thing.
I think he would embrace Walter, but it should be awkward.
Maybe Jael takes the lead and hugs Walter and loves up on him, and expresses her delight that he’s all right. And he can probably express some concern over her pain.
He should hold back, sneaking looks at Hitch, but not quite meeting his eye. Hitch stays by the entrance as Taos jumps all over him. He needs to feel awful about failing Walter, both in leading him into the current predicament and in failing him utterly as a father.
So finally Jael’s chatter dies down, and she sees the tension between them and backs off. Hitch should start off saying something stupid and inane. Clears his throat and says, “Ahem. Glad you’re all right.”
Or “Thanks for the help.”
Walter scuffs his toe and nods. Maybe says, “I found Taos.”
Or maybe says nothing at all. Silence and subtlety might be better.
And then maybe Hitch says, “He’s just a dog. You’re more important than a dog.” And then he hugs him—and there’s probably some tears. Maybe some hasty promises about doing things better in the future.
And he meets eyes with Jael over the top of Walter’s head and she smiles and nods her approval.
So then their only remaining objective is to get off the ship, save their lives, and do something to stop it from harming the valley.

So Hitch has this plan to open a nearby fuel source (or some important juice).

Reaction: Joy at finding Walter safe.
Dilemma: How to disable Storming and get away.
Decision: To open a fuel line.

72. So they all creep out to do the dirty deed to the fuel line. And Zlo descends on them.
He would know from the firefight in the bay that he had guests. So he comes down to inspect them personally.
The first Q is: What does he plan to do to them.
Nothing good.
He has no use for them except revenge, so he’s probably going to kill them. It should all be scary and evil.
So maybe he and his henchmen capture them all just as Hitch (unbeknownst to them) opens the fuel line. His men grab and hold Hitch, and Zlo beats him up some. Maybe he pulls a knife and cuts a little on Hitch out of sheer meanness.

When Hitch’s only reaction is to spit in his face, act tough, and smart off, Zlo then turns his attention to Jael and Walter. Kicks Taos. Maybe he senses what’s wrong with Jael and twists her joints or turns up the barometric pressure.

Walter might kick free and attack his legs. So Zlo turns his attention to him, and Hitch really goes berserk. Maybe he nearly thrashes free, gets a couple more blows in.

Zlo is about ready to finish them off when the ship shudders as a result of whatever it’s leaking. So he orders the prisoners secured while he goes to check it out.

**Goal:** Disable the ship and get away.

**Conflict:** Zlo captures them.

**Disaster:** Zlo tortures them, and the ship starts to crash.

**Climax**

73. So now we find them pretty much at their lowest moment. They’re beaten and bruised and without hope. If Zlo doesn’t kill them, they’re all going to crash.

Maybe they wriggle together, hold hands, share sorrowful looks. And Hitch would probably do well to apologize for getting everybody mixed up in this—one way or another.

But he isn’t quite ready to give up. He knows Seb, who’s guarding them, has never been fully on board with Zlo. So he rolls over, somehow gets him under his power (assuming he’s tied up, maybe he sits on him). And he threatens and cajoles him into helping them escape. He probably explains that he did something to disable the ship, and that unless Seb helps, they’re all going to die.

So Seb gives in and helps them get free. (Hitch might then tie Seb up because he doesn’t trust him.)

**Reaction:** Despair and regret.

**Dilemma:** How to survive.

**Decision:** Convince Seb to help.

**Goal:** Coerce Seb into helping.

**Conflict:** Seb puts up a fight (guards hear?)

**Disaster:** Seb agrees, but the place shows further indication of crashing.

74. So now they have to come up with a master plan. And that, in a nutshell, is that Hitch will sneak out to the pilot house and take out Zlo. Jael will sneak into the engines and destroy the dawsedometer, and Walter and Taos will wait in the plane until Hitch and Jael can join them, so they can all escape.

Hitch gives Walter clear instructions on prepping the plane.

Then he helps a severely pained Jael sneak down to the engines’ entrance. They should share a fond parting. He tells her to stay alive, etc.

And then he has to make his way back up to where Zlo is.
**Reaction:** Relief and determination.
**Dilemma:** How to stop Zlo and get out.
**Decision:** Kill Zlo and destroy the dawsedometer.

75. So now we need to a jolly good fight w/ Zlo.

I think we’ll have Hitch sneak into the pilot house. He sees no one, sneaks in a little farther, and then Zlo jumps him. He puts a knife to his throat and manhandles him around, leering threats. Hitch tries to scramble away, and Zlo sticks him one (nothing bad, just a flesh wound). And that makes Hitch mad.

So Hitch wrenches free and gets enough of an upper hand to bash on Zlo for a while. Then Makosm swoops in, distracts Hitch, and Zlo gets free. They warily confront each other—as the ship plummets and alarms sound.

This is where Zlo pokes at Hitch’s weakness. He tries to tempt him into running away from responsibility—from Jael and Walter (which loyal Hitch doesn’t even consider), from Scottsbluff. And that does tempt Hitch. He wants to take Jael and Walter and run while they still can.

Hitch is tempted but doesn’t cave.

Then Zlo jumps in for a final attack. Hitch sideswipes Makosm out of the air and grabs Zlo in a bear hug (trapping his knife somehow) and runs him to the railing and pitches him over (with a witty one-liner, of course).

**Goal:** Kill Zlo and escape.
**Conflict:** Zlo gets the drop on him.
**Disaster:** Zlo dies, but Hitch can’t escape w/o endangering SB.

76. Hitch runs to the helm and realizes the only way to protect innocent people below (Scottsbluff looms below) is to pilot it to a crash landing.

So as much as he’d like to, he can’t run away. He has to see this one through to the end.

He sees some kind of intercom and uses it to tell Walter to get Jael and take off. Or maybe he tells Jael, and when she protests that neither she nor Walter can fly, he tells her he taught Walter. He orders her to go, and she regretfully complies.

**Reaction:** Horror at the truth of the crash site.
**Dilemma:** Save himself or be responsible.
**Decision:** Stay and guide Storming to a crash landing.

77. Walter hears what Hitch said to Jael on the intercom and comes running to find her. She meets him halfway and stills his protests about leaving Hitch. He helps her aboard the plane and they take off for a wild ride—which is helped some since, without the dawsedometer, the storm is slackening some.

They make it down barely. Jael’s health is recovering a bit, so she’s able to help him some. He, of course, is jubilant at his success. Taos is barking. It’s all a big uproar, tempered by their concern for Hitch.

And then Campbell (amongst a general mob that includes Earl and Nan) swarms them. Campbell is spitting mad. He arrests Jael, and when Walter intercedes, he rattles his teeth. He
scoffs at Hitch’s running away and leaving Walter and Jael to get back on their own. But Jael makes it clear that’s not what happened. Hitch stayed in Storming to save Scottsbluff.

Storming swoops over low, smoking, maybe on fire. People run to get a fire brigade going. Campbell makes it clear that if Hitch survives, he’s gonna be in deep trouble.

Walter runs away to watch Storming land.

**Goal:** Land safely.
**Conflict:** Walter doesn’t really know how to fly.
**Disaster:** Campbell arrests Jael and threatens to arrest Hitch.

---

78. This scene shouldn’t be too long. But there’s much peril involved. Maybe Seb and the other crew members break down the door. But Hitch tells them they’re all going to die if they don’t help him and do as he says—and Seb backs him up.

He looks for a safe landing place and doesn’t see one. So he decides to land it on Campbell’s house.

He blares the horn or something to warn Mrs. Bates to get out (in her curlers, floral wrapper, and wellies). Then, bam!

He finds himself alive and crawls out of the wreckage.

As he and the others walk away, the ship blows up.

**Goal:** Pilot the ship to a safe landing.
**Conflict:** There is no safe landing.
**Disaster:** Crashes into Campbell’s house.

---

79. So now I have to figure out what happens to Campbell. Hitch can’t just hand him over to Griff, since Griff is in jail. He’s definitely got to get his comeuppance, but I don’t think I can kill him with the whole town looking on.

So...

Campbell comes running up, all distraught about his house, and tries to arrest Hitch by physically manhandling him. Hitch tells him to back off or he’ll bring the whole town down on Campbell’s scurrvy head. But Campbell, of course, won’t swallow that. He dares Hitch to go against him, saying he’ll bring Hitch down with him if Hitch tries anything.

Maybe Hitch says something about how that might have worked earlier, but not now. He turns away, Campbell grabs for him, and Hitch (expecting just that) turns back and belts him off his feet.

The town is all a little shocked, but then Hitch, kneeling on top of him, raises his voice and tells the town the truth about Campbell’s corruption—and his own part in it, both now and 11 years ago.

That’s when Griff, in uniform (tousled, but none the worse for wear), steps up, having been sprung from jail by the Berringers, who stand behind him, probably with their shotguns. He takes charge of the prisoner and nods approvingly to Hitch, indicating that, as far as he’s concerned, Hitch will get off easy.

---

Move #22 (from below) to here.
And, then, as for how to close out the scene, I kind of need to know what’s going to happen in the dénouement.

- Indicate Hitch’s punishment.
- “Hitch’s future course.
- “relationship w/ Walter.
- “Jael.
- “Griff.
- Ginny Lou?
- Bet w/ Livingstone.
- Earl.
- Fate of Seb and other Stormers.

I’m thinking two scenes: one for practical stuff (yellow) and one for relational stuff (pink).

Resolution

Best Emotional Closing Scenes:

- Star Wars: A New Hope (Ensemble).
- The Kid (Happiness).
- Prince of Persia.
- It’s a Wonderful Life.
- Master and Commander (Adventure; continuation)
- Iron Man (cliché buster).

So I want to end with a grin—probably a joke or a one-liner.
And I want to end with a sense of continuing adventure. Hitch takes Walter and Jael and they fly into the sunset? Or is that at odds with his new resolution to be responsible and grounded?

#21 (Move Down)
What if the new adventure was an opportunity offered by Livingstone. Maybe he impounded Hitch’s plane in the bet, but then gives it back. He’s temporarily grounded himself, thanks to his broken legs and destroyed plane. But he thinks Hitch’s incumbent fame will be a good draw to a new flying school here in SB—where Livingstone wants Hitch (and Jael) to teach; maybe put on a mini circus every week.

So we start out by having Griff release Hitch from jail and take him out to the airport (probably after some kind of hearing). This is where we see things (subtextually) patched up between the brothers. Maybe they look out and see the Berringers both trying to get Walter’s attention, and a comment or the narrative indicates that it’s a lucky thing they didn’t end up like
them. Then Ginny Lou comes flirting up to the Berringers, and they both get flustered and skedaddle.

And we can either mention the fate of the Stormers here, or when Hitch talks to Jael.

**Reaction:** Summation of emotions post-climax.

**Dilemma:** How to start making things right.

**Decision:** To ask Livingstone for a job and ask Jael to stay.

81. So let’s say there’s some kind of todo out at the airport. A picnic with the Carpenters, the Berringers, and other prominent characters (Lilla, Earl, Livingstone, Griff).

Hitch is subdued but hopeful. He wants the second chance, but knows he doesn’t deserve it. He’s heading toward Walter (and pulled in by a teasing smile from Jael), when Livingstone (in his wheelchair) calls him over. Hitch is humble (even though he’s groaning inside and maybe calling Livingstone names).

**Move #21 (from above) to here.**

So then Hitch nervously approaches Walter, who is playing at fixing the plane’s engine with Jael, until Earl chases them off. Nan sees Hitch’s intent and nods her encouragement and acquiescence.

So he takes Walter by the shoulders and kneels down, says all the right things, says, “How would you like it if I were to be your father from now on? How would you like it if I were your father?” (I don’t think we have to get into it too deep.) And, of course, Walter is delighted. Hugs Hitch and near breaks his heart with his love and forgiveness. I think he’s back to not talking.

So there’s something interesting happening, and he runs off to play.

And Jael, who’s been watching, maybe leaning over the plane wing, catches his eye. And he approaches her (maybe leans over the other side of the wing). Her health is all recovered. He tells her that he’s not asking her to stay—just promising her that he’s going to stay.

And she plays the coquette for a minute. Maybe she says she doesn’t know the right words in English, and then ducks under the wing and gives him a deliberate kiss.

And then maybe Livingstone calls for an air show. Hitch asks who wants to ride, and a lot of people do. So they pile in, Taos barking, everybody laughing, and taxi around the runway (which might be metaphorical for him being grounded and not running away).

Happily Ever After

**Goal:** Find a way to stay in SB and be a father to Walter and continue his relationship w/ Jael.

**Conflict:** No job.

**Outcome:** Livingstone gives him a job and Walter and Jael forgive him.

So, in light of that, how are we going to end the climactic scene?

#22 (Move Up)
Let’s say Campbell puts up more of a fight, but is distracted by a secondary explosion in his house. And in the confusion, the Berringers (or Earl) Jael comes up behind Campbell and smacks him on the head with a board or something.

So then Hitch has to stagger off to jail with Griff and Campbell, with only a backward glance at Jael and Walter standing together, worriedly seeing him off—while the rest of the townsfolk hurry to put out the fire.

Goal: Expose Campbell.
Conflict: Campbell threatens to arrest him.
Disaster: Campbell is arrested, but so is Hitch.

THE END
Sometimes Even Pilots Have to Wing It

It’s not every day a woman in a ball gown parachutes out of the sky right in front of your biplane. Brash barnstormer Hitch Hitchcock is used to being ready for anything. But his world does a barrel roll when the fearless Jael demands he fly her back home . . . to the clouds. Caught between a corrupt country sheriff and dangerous new enemies from above, Hitch must save his Nebraska hometown from storm-wielding sky pirates before Jael flies off with his freewheeling heart.

Claim Your Copy

What If Your Dreams Came True?

Read the BRAG Medallion winner and NIEA finalist!

Every night, journalist Chris Redston dreams of a woman riding a black warhorse through the mist. The only thing she ever says is, “Don’t come.” And then she shoots him—every single time. And every single time, he wakes up in a cold sweat and wonders . . . what if dreams aren’t what we’ve always been told they are?

Claim Your Copy!
CLAIM YOUR FREE BOOK!

From internationally published and award-winning author K.M. Weiland:

The vengeance of a monk.

The love of a countess.

The secrets of a knight.

For sixteen years, rogue knight Marcus Annan has remained unbeaten on the field of battle, but waiting for him in the midst of the Third Crusade is the greatest enemy he has ever faced... His past.

Get a free copy of acclaimed author K.M. Weiland’s BRAG Medallion-winning medieval novel BEHOLD THE DAWN, when you sign up for her Reader’s Group.

Click here to get started:
About the Author: K.M. Weiland lives in make-believe worlds, talks to imaginary friends, and survives primarily on chocolate truffles and espresso. She is the IPPY and NIEA Award-winning and internationally published author of the medieval epic Behold the Dawn and the portal fantasy Dreamlander, as well as the bestselling Outlining Your Novel and Structuring Your Novel. When she’s not making things up, she’s busy mentoring other authors through the award-winning website Helping Writers Become Authors. She makes her home in western Nebraska. Visit her on her website kmweiland.com/news for bi-weekly updates about her books and her adventures as a writer. You can email her at km.weiland@ymail.com. Join her mailing list for news of upcoming books.

Want more?

Use the following link to visit a hidden webpage, designed especially for fans of Storming!

kmweiland.com/storming-extras

Access exclusives such as:

- Desktop Wallpaper
- Story Soundtrack
- Deleted Scenes
- Character Interviews
- Research Notes
- And more!