Conflict!!

Conflict is the number one thing that drives a story. Without it, you have NO STORY TO TELL. *Once upon a time, there was a girl.* That is not a story. We need conflict in writing, just like you need air to breathe. Conflict is introduced as the plot builds (see the narrative arc or plot guide for more detail) and climaxes in the story, then it resolves in the end. It must go through these stages.

**Types of Conflict**

The types of conflict can be classified as EXTERNAL conflict and INTERNAL conflict, but even that can be broken down to several different conflict types. An external conflict is something outside the character that causes the conflict. The dog ate my homework. Conflict in this situation is caused by that darn dog. Internal conflict is something inside of the character that causes the conflict. I am torn between my feelings for chocolate and my need to stay healthy. Eek, what to do...

The types of **External Conflict** are:

**Man vs. Man:** This is when one person fights or struggles with another person. I like to call it “fisticuffs.” That may be one of the best words ever. Ever. People fight, they argue, they bicker, they berate, they debate, they cause CONFLICT.

**Man vs. Nature:** In this type of conflict, the character struggles with a force of nature, something big, like an earthquake. This is a type of conflict where the character struggles against some huge element of nature. Often these types are struggling just to survive that arctic wind, tsunami, whatever.

**Man vs. Society:** This type of conflict showcases a character fighting against the society in which they live, fighting “the man.” They usually try to change their world/society so that life can be better for them and the other people in that world. Most dystopian novels are written with this type of conflict (and maybe others too).

**Internal conflict** is...

**Man vs. Self:** In this type of conflict, a character struggles against their own mind. Should I call him? Should I not? That kind of thing. It is usually a choice between right or wrong, or a decision they have a hard time making. They fight with themselves until they finally decide.

Every story needs conflict. It is absolutely necessary. You can’t live without it. 😊