

Short Story

Mood-setting description

Third-person point of view established

Main character introduced

Main character and setting developed through description

Internal conflict established

T-formity

Sy stood in front of the mirror for about the twentieth time. He meant to look good. He'd been waiting seventeen years for this night, and even now he couldn't believe he'd made it. He pulled his certification card out of his backpack (also for about the twentieth time): "Syzer.dos, Transformer Level I, valid June 16, 2395." He didn't like his laser image on the card, though. His ears looked like cabbage leaves.

Well, he could fix that now! He was a T-former at last! Sy could understand why the Earth Council didn't give people transforming power from the time they were born. Imagine if little kids could change their shape, size, and color whenever they wanted to. Disaster City. T-form Training started when you were thirteen. You got one brain chip installed at a time and had to pass some *mean* tests for the first card. So what if he was only a Level I—a greenie? He was allowed two transformations per day, and his only skin color choice was green, but it was a start.

Sy, though, had a secret. He gazed at his perfect ears in the mirror (his first change for the day). Maybe he should be 7 feet tall tonight (that would be change number two). Red dreadlocks might be cool (that would be three). His secret? He *could* do all three if he wanted to! Every trainer said Sy was the best T-form student they'd ever seen. They didn't know how good. Even without a Level II chip, Sy had created his own brain program to do *five* changes per day—including

Short Story *continued*

Main character developed through action, description

Setting developed through description

Setting developed through description

Initiating event (external conflict established)

orange. But Level II was illegal for him, and he was going to play it straight.

That meant he would do just one more T-form change for tonight. He decided to leave his head alone. With the ear change, his head was OK: deep brown skin, gray eyes, wide mouth, skyscraper-high white hair. He decided to go for super-broad shoulders. He'd noticed that Tara.mac, a really excellent Level II girl, was always hanging with wide guys. Popp! Sy's shoulders moved out 3 inches on each side, stretching his crimson jumpsuit tight. *All right!*

When Sy got to the T-Time Club, Tara was already there. She was standing by the food belt with a whole lot of older T-formers who were acting like kings. Sy saw a few other greenies he knew, looking as scared and excited as he was. None of them had ever been inside the club before because this was the first party since they'd graduated. It was packed and unbelievably noisy. All the high-power T-formers looked great. They were tall or tiny, neon purple or midnight blue, slim or solid. The greenies just stared at them on the dance floor.

Sy took a deep breath and headed for Tara, who was wearing her black hair down to the floor. She'd always been friendly in the neighborhood, and he was relieved to see her smile.

"Hey, Sy," she said, "how do you like it? You really should try some of this great food." She pointed at the plate a guy was holding for her. The guy gave Sy a dirty look.

Short Story *continued*

Internal conflict
developed through
action

External conflict
developed through
action, dialogue

External conflict
developed through
action, vivid
description

"You a greenie?" he asked. "You can always tell a greenie 'cause they only have two T-forms and need a hundred to look decent." He thought this was hilarious and laughed with his mouth full.

Sy tried to ignore Tara's friend, Gopher, but Gopher kept cutting him down. And Sy didn't think Gopher was so great. He was big, yes, but he looked mushy. Suddenly Sy couldn't stand it. He'd show this clown how to T-form, even if it was number three for the day. Muscles, that's what Sy wanted. Popp! Out came gorgeous weight-lifter biceps. But also out shot his arm—right toward the plate Gopher held. Gopher got it in the chest: oozy globs of seaweed dip.

"Yikes," said Tara, trying not to laugh.

"I'll get a towel," said Sy, scrambling fast. He headed for the crowded dance floor, trying to disappear, but Gopher was following. "Man," he thought, "I am about to get colored black and blue." He could think of only one way to escape: T-form number four. Sy didn't have time to plan. He just had to look really different really fast. And preferably really big. Sploosh! He was 5 feet tall and about 500 pounds.

"Crazy," admired a Level-IIIer he bounced into. "You think that's something? I can do better." Ripppp! He shot up to 9 flaming-red feet. And the T-form contest was on. Splat! Plop! Whiz! Bodies were changing at warp speed. Arms and legs stretched out and tangled. Heads knocked. The macho guys got bigger and bigger. The greenies hugged the wall in terror. Sy managed to waddle to the edge of the dance floor,

Short Story *continued*

Conflict reaches climax

Conflict moves toward resolution

External conflict resolved

Internal conflict resolved

but he had to do something or he'd be crushed.

He had one T-form left—and he'd have to stay that way. He saw Gopher and three of his monster buddies looking like they'd pop. "Here goes," said Sy. He T-formed and dived for cover.

The next thing Sy knew, blinding white lights were flashing, and somebody was gripping his arm like iron. Then he opened his eyes. He was under a table. The lights were real, not in his head, and the hand gripping him was Tara's. But Tara had hair about an inch long. She saw his surprise.

"It's me," she said. "Would you want to be in a riot with 5 feet of hair for people to grab? I notice you're not the new, improved Sy anymore, either."

Whew, he'd done it. He touched his ears: cabbage. Too bad, he'd gone back 100 percent. Oh, well. At least Tara hadn't seen him at 500 pounds.

"Look," said Tara, "let's go. The lights mean all T-form chips are deactivated. Boy, that doesn't happen often! You probably feel lost, being a greenie. But don't worry. You'll get more experience."

That was exactly what Sy meant to do—at Level I.

Short Story

Definition

A **short story** is a fictional narrative that employs literary elements such as setting, character, and plot to explore human experiences. Because short stories are a form of creative writing, they do not have a rigid structure or a set writing process.

Many short stories use the structure illustrated in the framework below. Print this framework and use it as a guide when you write your own short story.

Framework

Directions and Explanations

