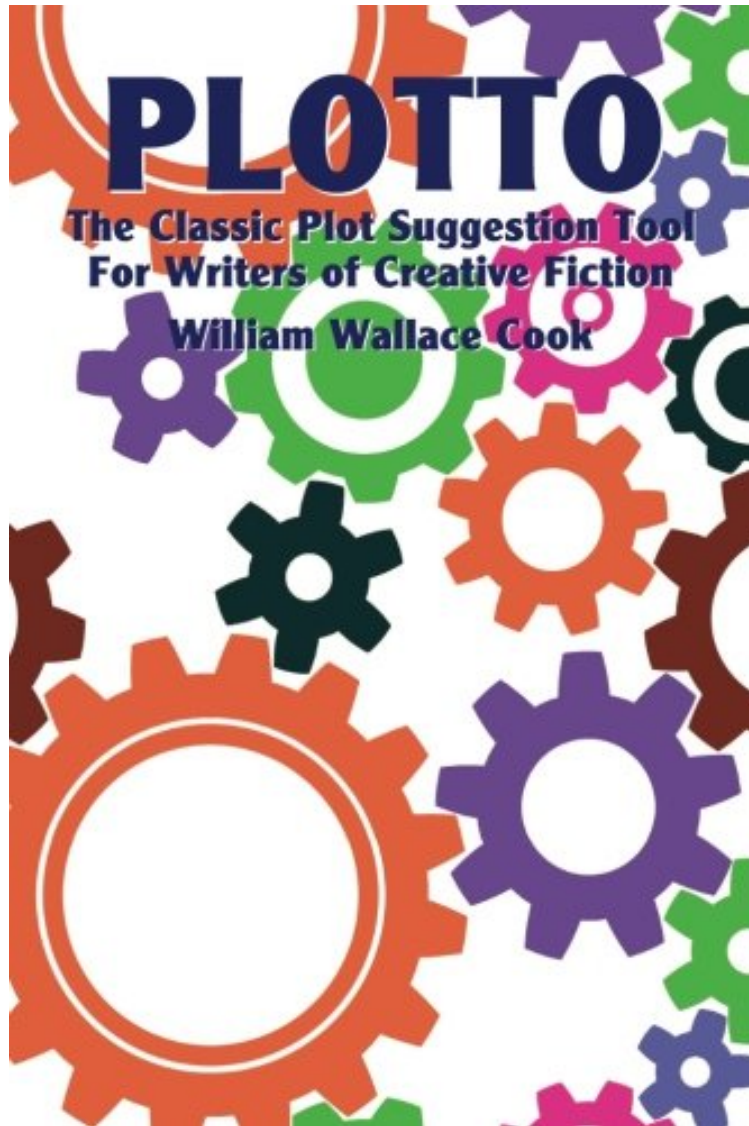


[Free pdf] *Plotto: The Classic Plot Suggestion Tool for Writers of Creative Fiction*

Plotto: The Classic Plot Suggestion Tool for Writers of Creative Fiction

William Wallace Cook
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#961142 in Books Norton Creek Press 2011-08-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .77 x 6.00l, 1.00 #File Name: 0981928471308 pages | File size: 65.Mb

William Wallace Cook : *Plotto: The Classic Plot Suggestion Tool for Writers of Creative Fiction* before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Plotto: The Classic Plot Suggestion Tool for Writers of Creative Fiction*:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fun!By ChristyIf you love to tell a story this book will interest you. It is like a lego set of ideas: pieces (characters, settings and plots) that can be assembled any way you like - mix and

match, build a story. It's fun! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer Brilliant and unmissable. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. AMAZING! By andrea Absolutely the bible to every writer. It is like a bag with a million seeds, all to become a great story. I totally recommend it! It has millions of story starts and scenes (that you can combine infinitely) that inspire you to create your story.

Have you struggled to expand your initial idea into a complete story? Plotting can be frustrating work! What if there were a tool for this very problem, so you could navigate these uncharted waters as quickly as possible? A tool that starts with what you have (a situation, perhaps, or a group of characters) and sets you on the road to new possibilities? Plotto does all this. Created by a master of organized creativity, William Wallace Cook (one of the most prolific writers in history), Plotto has been prized by professional authors and screenwriters since its publication in 1928, and is still in demand today, with copies of the original edition selling for up to \$400. Its companion piece, the Plotto Instruction Booklet, is almost unobtainable. Plotto's value lies as much in what it isn't as in what it is. Plotto isn't a random plot generator, and never gives you something you can cut out and paste down (sometimes it looks like you could, but ... don't). Instead, it deliberately serves up situations or conflicts that seem rather lifeless at first glance, because they are. They still need to be animated by the spark of your own creativity, while putting the process into a more manageable framework. This Norton Creek Edition is an exact reproduction of Cook's work. To keep the book down to a manageable size (300 pages of small type) while retaining its powerful features, Cook uses a telegraphic format that takes some getting used to, so working through the Plotto Instruction Booklet (also available from Norton Creek Press) is essential. Because Plotto was written in the Twenties, its situations can seem old-fashioned and its terminology politically incorrect, but these problems are more apparent than real. Cook himself wrote both westerns and early classics of science fiction, so you see how replacing stagecoach with star ship or dance hall girl with male stripper are within the reach of anyone using the Plotto system. In fact, this kind of substitution is how the book is intended to be used, and is the key to its flexibility and enduring popularity.

I first heard of Plotto: The Master Book of All Plots in the late Eighties, when a technical writer friend of mine told me about it. In spite of having been out of print for 45 years, Plotto was so legendary that everyone but me seemed to know of its existence! Few had ever seen a copy, though. Finding rare books was difficult in the pre-Internet age, but the owner of the Antiquarian Archive in Sunnyvale had (of course) heard of Plotto and managed to find a copy for me at another store for a mere \$130 which was (and is) a bargain price for a nice copy of the original edition. This was the most expensive book I'd ever bought, but I was not disappointed. I didn't know what to expect from Plotto. By working methodically through the examples in the introduction, I soon figured out how the book is meant to be used. For those who have never seen Plotto, the closest I can come is Roget's Thesaurus in its original, non-dictionary format, which is arranged to put similar concepts next to each other. If you don't find what you're looking for on the first go, you can scan the adjacent entries and often realize that what you were looking for wasn't really what you wanted anyway. Close, but no cigar, and what you really needed was within a page or two. Plotto is like that. Sometimes you strike pay dirt right away, sometimes you have some false starts, and sometimes a "false start" suddenly clicks a while later, after you've dismissed it as unworkable. It works not by giving you ideas on a silver platter, but by bouncing ideas off you in a structured way, until one clicks. One thing about Plotto is that it can seem simultaneously too vague and too specific. The "masterplots," which are very high-level plot descriptions, are too high-level to have much "zing" and need to be fleshed out. The main section of the book provides this fleshing-out process, and sometimes it can seem too specific. For example it might suggest a plot having to do with hidden gold dust buried by a Forty-Niner, when you were intending to write a science fiction story! All is not lost, since the whole point of Plotto is not to rehash old stories but to come up with new ones, and your SF story can easily accommodate a quite similar plot element, with someone who fits your future society hiding something of value. You're expected to make this kind of change, so don't let the details put you off! I actually find the specific suggestions easier to work with than the general ones, because they seem more human somehow, and changing details is easier than making them up out of whole cloth. Alas, my fiction-writing career has not yet propelled me on to fame and fortune (though I'm proud of my SF novel, *One Survivor*), so I can't make any extravagant claims about Plotto's role in my success. But when it happens to you, be sure to let me know! Keep in mind that Plotto is doubly indexed: first with the "Chinese Menu" of three columns, starting on page 12, and again by the main characters, starting on page 191. So if you're looking for an idea involving a man and his daughter, you'd look it up in the index on page 191 and be referred to the situations on page 292. Whether you start with situations or characters, Plotto is the tool for you. --Robert Plamondon

About the Author William Wallace Cook (1867-1933) was a prolific author and an early enthusiast of systematic writing. His most famous work is Plotto: The Classic Plot Suggestion Tool for Writers of Creative Fiction, and its essential companion volume, the Plotto Instruction Booklet and his autobiographical work, *The Fiction Factory*, describing his ups and downs as a prolific freelance writer for pulp magazines more than a century ago, is not to be missed. (All three are available from Norton Creek Press.) Cook had an orderly mind and an unruly imagination, and worked hard to organize what could be organized, so his rampant creativity could run at full speed, producing fiction in every genre,

including screenplays and early works of science fiction. He was an early adopter of the typewriter and wore many of them out. He maintained an ever-growing library of newspaper and magazine clippings and adopted the then-new practice of indexing them through a file card system. For more information about Cook's writing life, see his autobiographical *The Fiction Factory* (1912), written under the alias John Milton Edwards. He published *Plotto* and its instruction booklet in 1928, and died in 1933.