Context/Setting

“the Crucible” -- Ramsley

Crucible

cup-shaped piece of equipment used to contain materials for heating to extremely high temperatures to melt metal, the heat must be concentrated and contained

Provides boundaries
time period (WWII)
French countryside

political situation (German occupation)
answers why things are happening
answers to whom things are happening
Plot:
what happens

the primary sequence of events.

Aristotle wrote in Poetics that mythos (plot) is the most important element of storytelling.

**plausible** chain of events
evoke the desired **emotional or artistic response**
from an audience.
Rising Tension

The movement of the plot that builds tension

The Rising action
follows the exposition
and leads up to the climax (shooting of family)
purpose to build suspense to the climactic finish.
not the middle of the story, but the action right before the climax.
The material beyond the climax is known as the falling action
similar to music--leads to resolution
Conflict

Stories thrive on:

- conflict,
- clashes of differing wills,
- difficulties,
- inconsistencies,
- the very fault lines of society.

with a nemesis-the Gestapo Colonel

with Self--classic dilemma

Pedite’s family vs Jewish family

society--the war and occupation
Theme
what is the story about

- Francis Ford Coppola

“When you make a movie, always try to discover what the theme of the movie is in one or two words. Every time I made a film, I always knew what I thought the theme was, the core, in one word. In The Godfather, it was succession. In Apocalypse, it was morality. The reason it’s important to have this is because most of the time what a director really does is make decisions. All day long: Do you want it to be long hair or short hair? Do you want a dress or pants? Do you want a beard or no beard? There are many times when you don’t know the answer. Knowing what the theme is always helps you.
Theme
Central premise--Ramsley

A Clean Premise

what is the point?

communication objective

can express in one or two sentences

if not probably don’t have one

“In the crucible of wartime France, a courageous farmer is forced to betray himself.”
“In the crucible of wartime France, a courageous farmer is forced to betray himself.”

What the story is about
abstract—not enough by itself for a strong story
but all good stories have a theme
be about something
use oblique approach

Great themes
“In the crucible of wartime France, a courageous farmer is forced to betray himself.”

Great Themes

Love (family)
Death
Self awareness
Limitations
Envy
War
Power
Abuse
“In the crucible of wartime France, a courageous farmer is forced to betray himself.”

At the highest level—great stories
socially redeeming
provides insight into the human condition
deals with difficult subjects
has seriousness of purpose
has a reason for the telling
addresses universal issues
illuminates the human spirit
is significant to the culture
How to tell it

Begin strong/powerfully/interestingly

Showing is preferable to telling

unfold events

reflect the plot and the theme

Characters unique
How to tell it

through behavior reveal the character and conflict

Keep it simple

Characters unique

Make viewers care
How to tell it
How to tell it

Modulate tempo, mood
Emphasize relationships
Unpredictable
end well
The Porcelain Unicorn

The Philips Parallel Lines: Tell It Your Way film contest invited people to make a short film, no longer than three minutes, that contained these lines as its dialogue:

What’s That?
It’s a Unicorn
Never seen one up close before
Beautiful
Get away, get away
I’m sorry.

The winner, as judged by acclaimed director Ridley Scott, was *Porcelain Unicorn*. 
The Porcelain Unicorn