

## **"The Old Lady Girl," A novella-in-progress**

I'm starting from a story I partially drafted a couple of years ago as a young adult novel. A lot of material, **typical for a novelist** I kept adding characters and places and events until I got bogged down. Another thing in my way was trying to please some imaginary fourteen year old.

What I did have was plot points, something like:

Jenna's "grandmother: dies....Jenna runs away ...Jenna moves to father and his new family ...tension with stepmother ...nursing home visit ...Jenna gets a new "grandmother"...decides to kidnap her, etc. etc.

I liked this pretty well, but got bogged down in all the people, and adding more people, and did this make senses,.

So I laid it aside.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT REVISION TECHNIQUE OF ALL**– Walking away and coming back later when you have some perspective on it. The point of perspective is **Structure—how to see it whole.**

I came back and started writing in third person, avoiding the whole YA thing. Then, realized I liked the girl's voice, but wanted to make it an "adult" story.

Now I am in the process:

(A) following the plot I already established

(B) Cutting out everything that distracts– cutting out a ton of characters and incidents, making it shorter and more compact –looking for what moves it forward, which is what I prefer to call **story.**

( C ) Working my way through the piles of scenes, sometimes adding, moving the piles around.

So this ultimately about (1) structure and (2) getting the richest story you can.