



Part 04: Point of View

HOW TO WRITE A SENTENCE



About This Series

Let's get something straight: writing is hard. Really freaking hard. No one is born with the talent to write. You have to earn that talent through blood, sweat, and tears. So. Many. Tears.

But I don't want you to give up on your dream of becoming a great writer. It's possible at any age, at any skill level, and even if English is your second language.

So welcome to my series, "How to Write a Sentence." This series helps beginning writers, young writers, and ESL writers with their dreams of creative writing. I will be teaching you the basics of creative writing in bite-sized lessons that won't overwhelm you and make you want to quit writing.

So in this lesson, we'll talk about who is telling the story. In other words, the point of view.

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Points of View

POV (point of view) refers to who is telling your story. Is it you, the writer? Is it a character?

There are three types of view in storytelling:



1st Person

Telling the story from the viewpoint of the character, using “I”, “me”, “my”



2nd Person

Includes the reader in the story by using “you” and “your”



3rd Person

Tells the story from the view of an outsider with “he”, “she”, and “they”

First Person



First-person POV is telling the story through the eyes of a character.

IT SHOWS A CHARACTER'S INTERNAL THOUGHTS.

Positive: You can see the depth of what a character feels and thinks in a situation

Negative: You must create a unique voice for the character, one that doesn't match your own voice

IT ADDS AN ELEMENT OF MYSTERY

Positive + Negative: the reader can only know what the character knows

OFTEN SEEN IN:

- Romance (one chapter male lead POV, next chapter female lead POV)
- Mystery/suspense
- Bystander stories (*The Great Gatsby*, for example)

Second Person



Second-person POV is telling the story directly to the reader.

ENGAGES THE READER IN THE STORY

Positive: The reader immerse themselves more in the story

Negative: Difficult mechanics, such as names, appearance details, gender, etc.

VOICE FLEXIBILITY

Positive: You can choose any voice, your own or a character

Negative: Not often used for commercial use

OFTEN SEEN IN:

- Books with story choices (*Choose Your Own Adventure* series)
- Fanfiction
- Video games (text-based games)

Third Person



Third-person POV is when you tell the story as an outside narrator

ALLOWS THE WRITER'S TRUE VOICE

Positive: The writer can write in their true style, not worrying about creating a voice for each character

Negative: The writer can get too obsessed with being impressive than telling a story

ALLOWS MULTIPLE CHARACTER VIEWPOINTS

Positive: You don't have to focus on one character for the entire story

Negative: The reader feels more distant from the characters, unable to immerse themselves in the story

OFTEN SEEN IN:

- Stories with many main characters
- General fiction
- Action stories

CHOOSING

point of view

*When deciding which POV will be best to tell your story,
think about these four things:*

01. How much information to show

How much info do you want to share with your reader?

How much do you want to keep a secret?

02. Whose voice you want to use

Do you want to tell the story with the voice of your character or your own voice?

03. The number of characters

How many main characters do you have in your story?

Is this a stand-alone title or series?

04. Reader immersion

How connected do you want the reader to be? Do you want them to feel like they're the character, or do you want them to watch it like a movie?

Choosing Point of View

01. Amount of information

You'll need to decide how much information you want to give the reader.

1st person: The reader knows only what the main character knows

2nd person: You must reveal everything to the reader in real time

3rd person: The writer gives a bird's eye view of all events

03. Number of Characters

Decide how many characters and how many books you plan to write.

1st person: Great for one to two main characters, stand alone novels

2nd person: Can only be one character: the reader. Stand alone stories.

3rd person: Great for multiple main characters and books that go in a series

02. Which voice to use

You must decide whose voice you want to use in your story.

1st person: Only the voice of the character

2nd person: A narrator that can create a first-person voice or third-person voice

3rd person: voice of the narrator/writer



04. Reader Connection

Decide how engaged you want the reader to be with the story.

1st person: Great immersion. The reader can think of themselves as the main character(s) of the story or current chapter.

2nd person: Full, 1000% immersion. The reader IS the character.

3rd person: Less immersive. The reader can adopt themselves to a character, but they usually feel distanced.

Common Mistakes



Here are some common mistakes writers make when they are writing POV:

#1- More than one POV per scene

Even if you're using 3rd person, you should only be focused on one character's emotions at a time. Otherwise, your reader gets dizzy and doesn't get to know your characters.

#2 - Switching POV inconsistently

Create a good story rhythm for your reader by switching POVs consistently. Don't make it too random.

#3 - Not creating a unique voice

If you are using 1st person, you MUST tell the story as the character, not yourself

Remember that no matter what POV you pick, your goal as the storyteller is to be invisible. Make sure your readers are so wrapped up in the characters and story that they forget about you completely.

You can only break POV rules for good reasons. If you break a POV rule, be prepared to answer why

Recap

01. DECIDE YOUR POV

- First person: Tells the story using “I” , “me” , “my”
- Second person: Tells the story using “you” , “your”
- Third person: Tells the story using “s/he” , “they” , “his/hers”



02. WHEN CHOOSING POV, THINK ABOUT:

- How much information to show
- Whose voice you want to use
- Number of characters / books
- How connected you want the reader to be



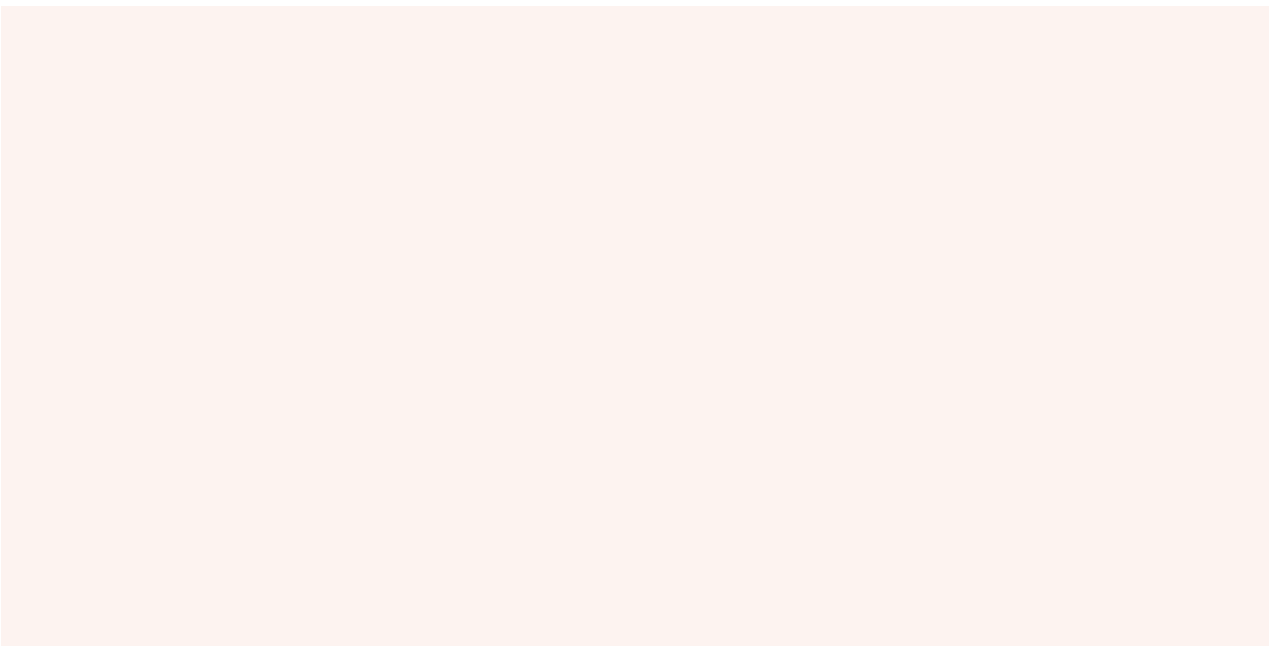
03. MISTAKES IN POV

- Flipping between multiple characters in a scene
- Switching POVs inconsistently
- Creating the same voice for every character



1st Person Prompts

Let's practice different POV writing. We'll start with first person. Write from the perspective of one of the people in the picture.



1st Person Prompts

Write from the perspective of one of the people in the picture.



A large, empty rectangular area with a light pinkish-beige background, intended for writing a first-person prompt.

1st Person Prompts

Write from the perspective of one of the people in the picture.



A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, intended for writing a first-person prompt based on the image above.

1st Person Prompts

Write from the perspective of one of the animals in the picture.



A large, empty rectangular area with a light beige background, intended for writing a first-person prompt from the perspective of one of the animals in the image above.

1st Person Prompts

People see things differently. Here is a picture. Write a sentence based on the POV of someone who:



IS IN EUROPE FOR THE FIRST TIME

JUST GOT DUMPED

IS BROKE AND BORED

1st Person Prompts

People see things differently. Here is a picture. Write a sentence based on the POV of someone who:



HATES THEME PARKS

JUST SENT THEIR KID TO COLLEGE

IS FROM THE YEAR 1775

1st Person Prompts

People see things differently. Here is a picture. Write a sentence based on the POV of someone who:



LOVES THE COLD

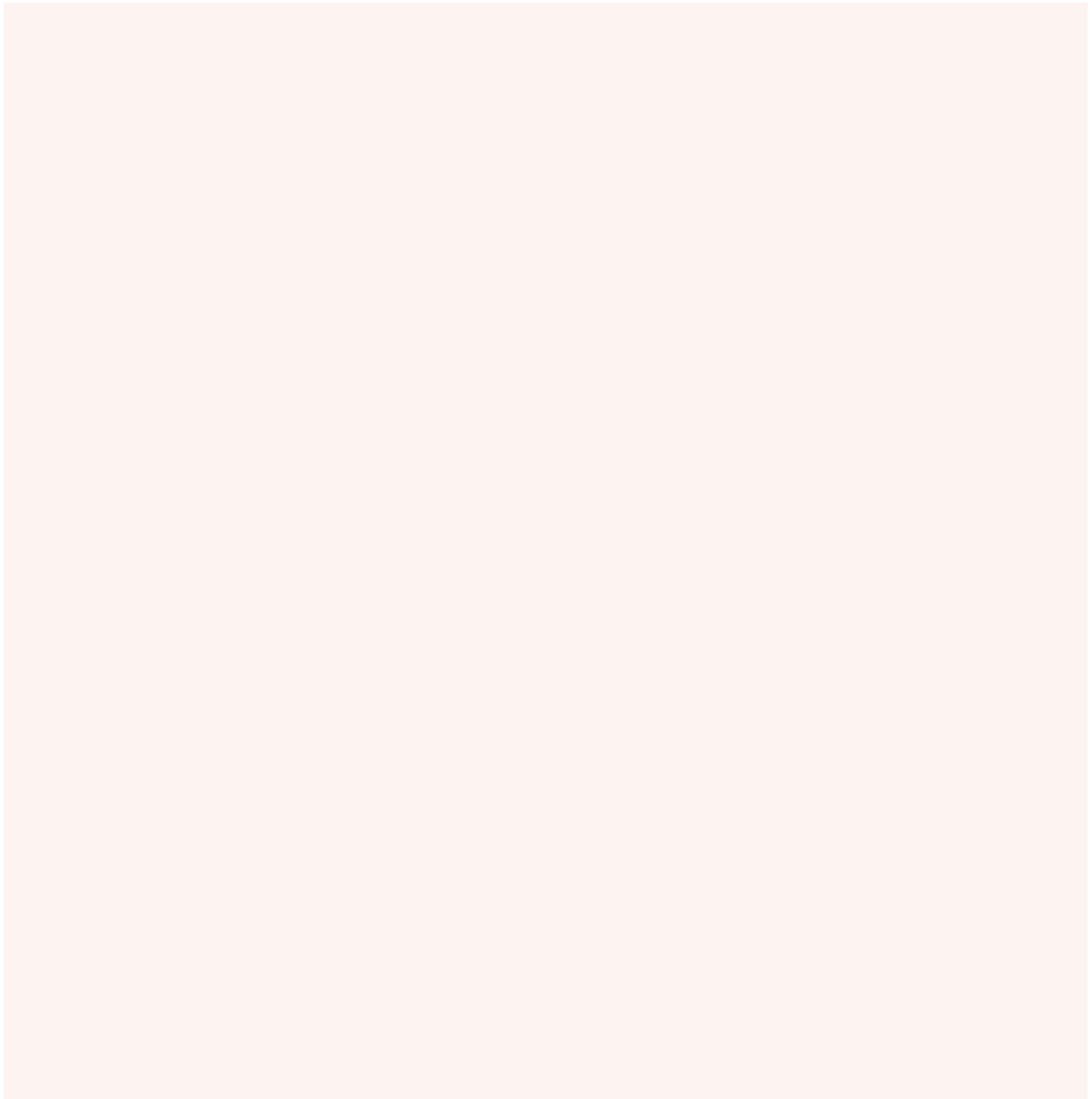
HATES THE COLD

IS NUMB TO ALL FEELINGS

2nd Person Prompts

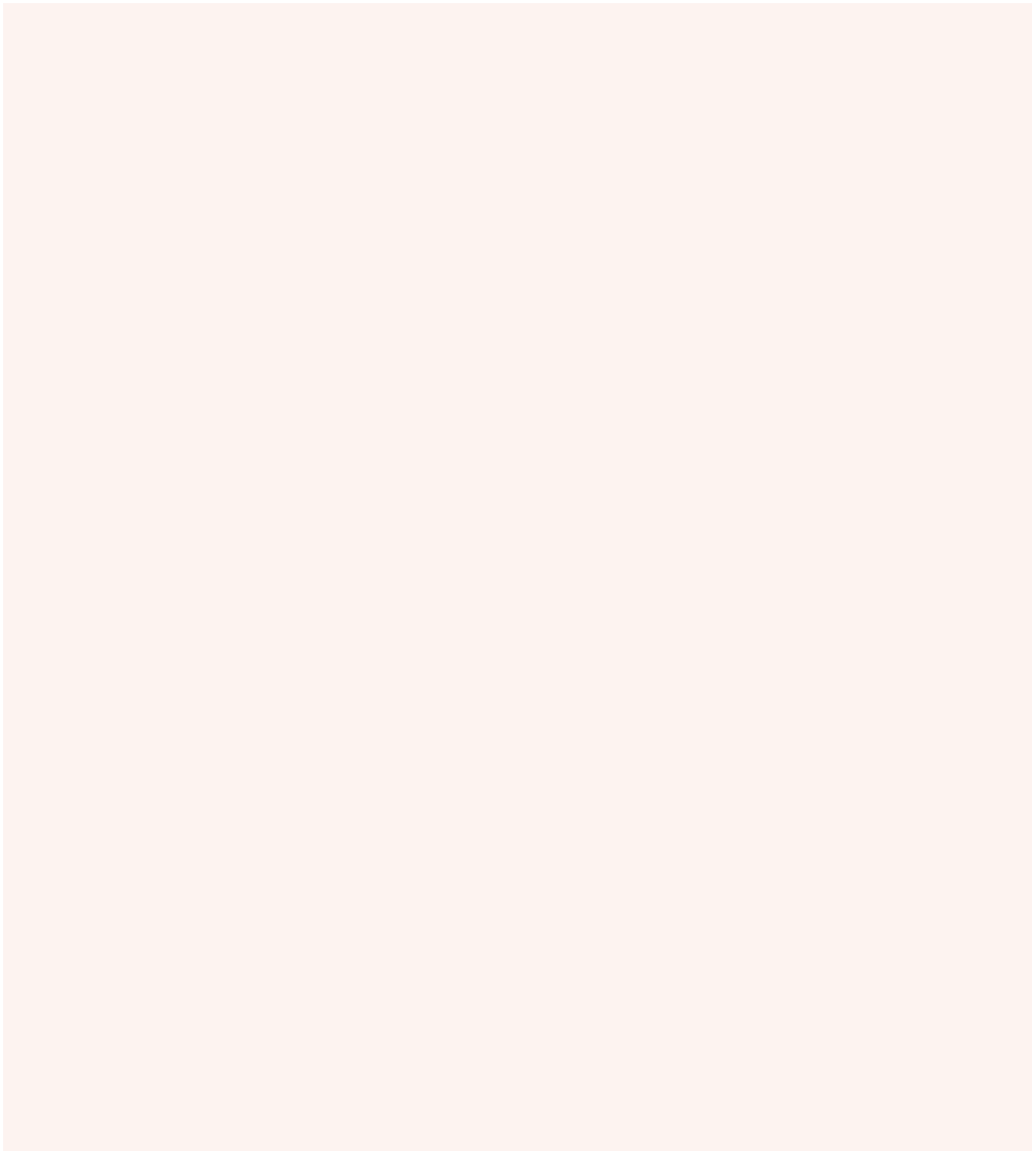
Now let's work on second person POV. With this POV, you want to make the reader the main character.

PROMPT: Your reader is a secret agent in trouble



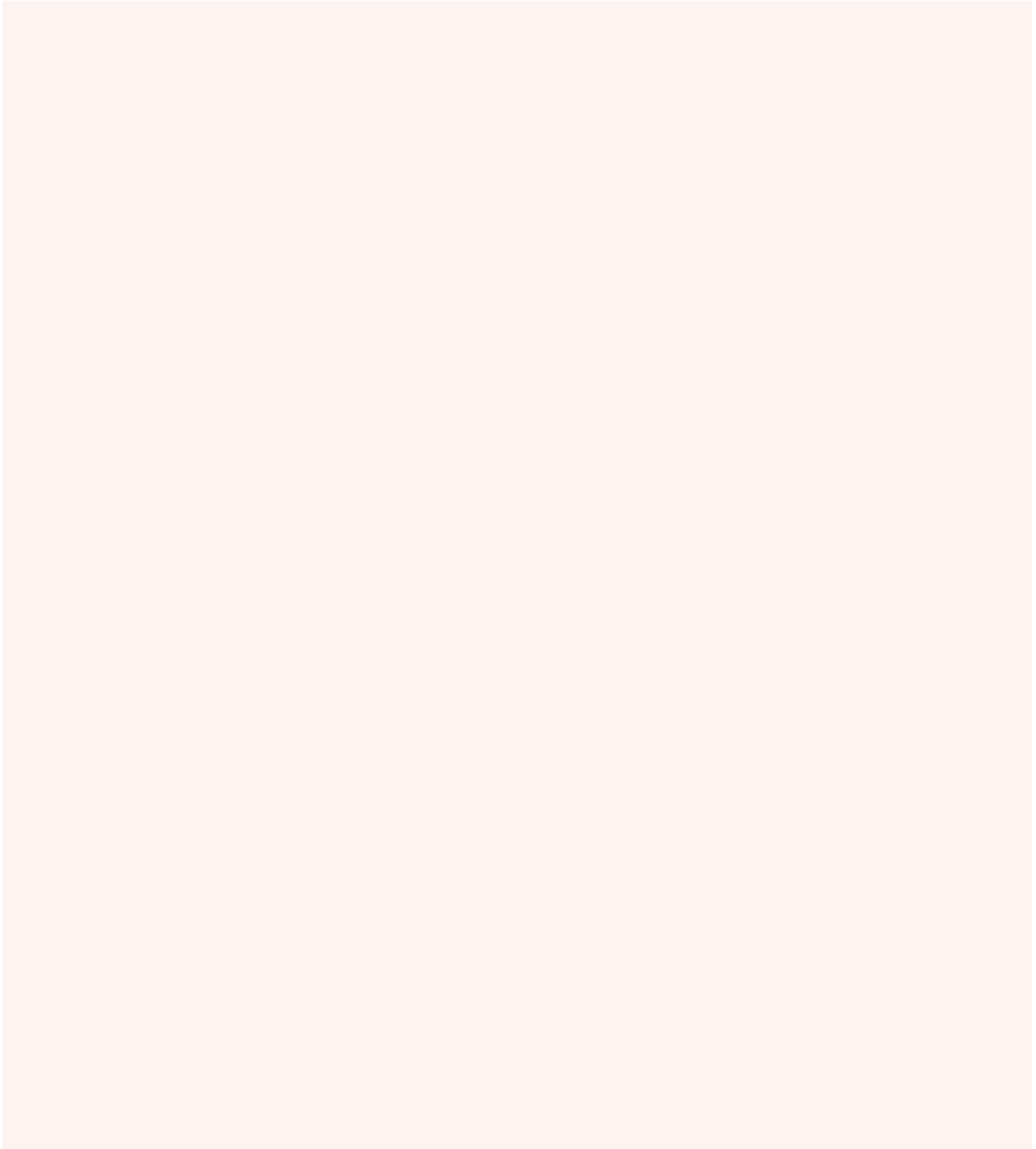
2nd Person Prompts

PROMPT: Your reader is a dear old friend, and you are telling them a wild story of the person you married after one day



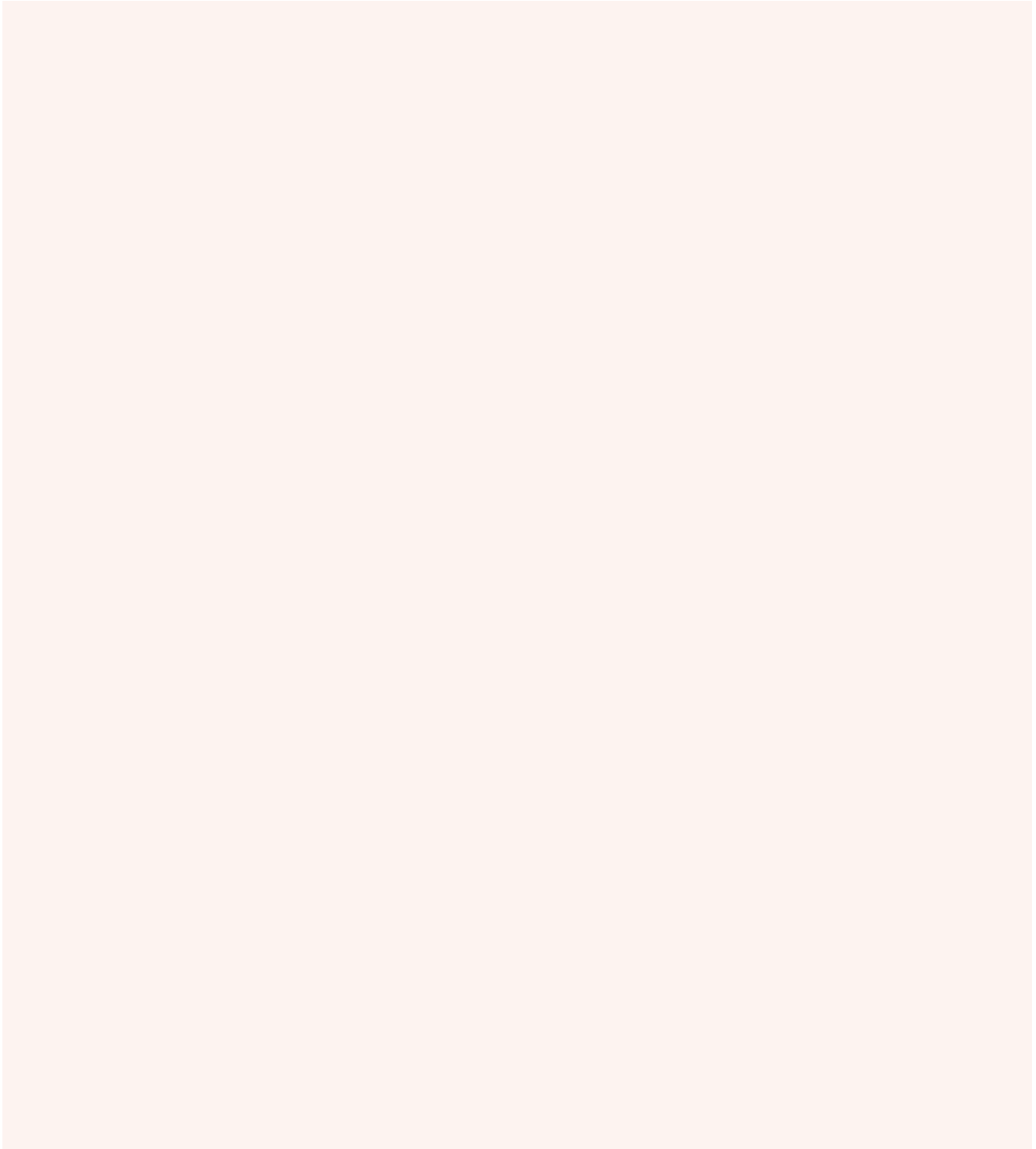
2nd Person Prompts

PROMPT: Your reader is meeting their favorite singer backstage... when something unexpected happens



2nd Person Prompts

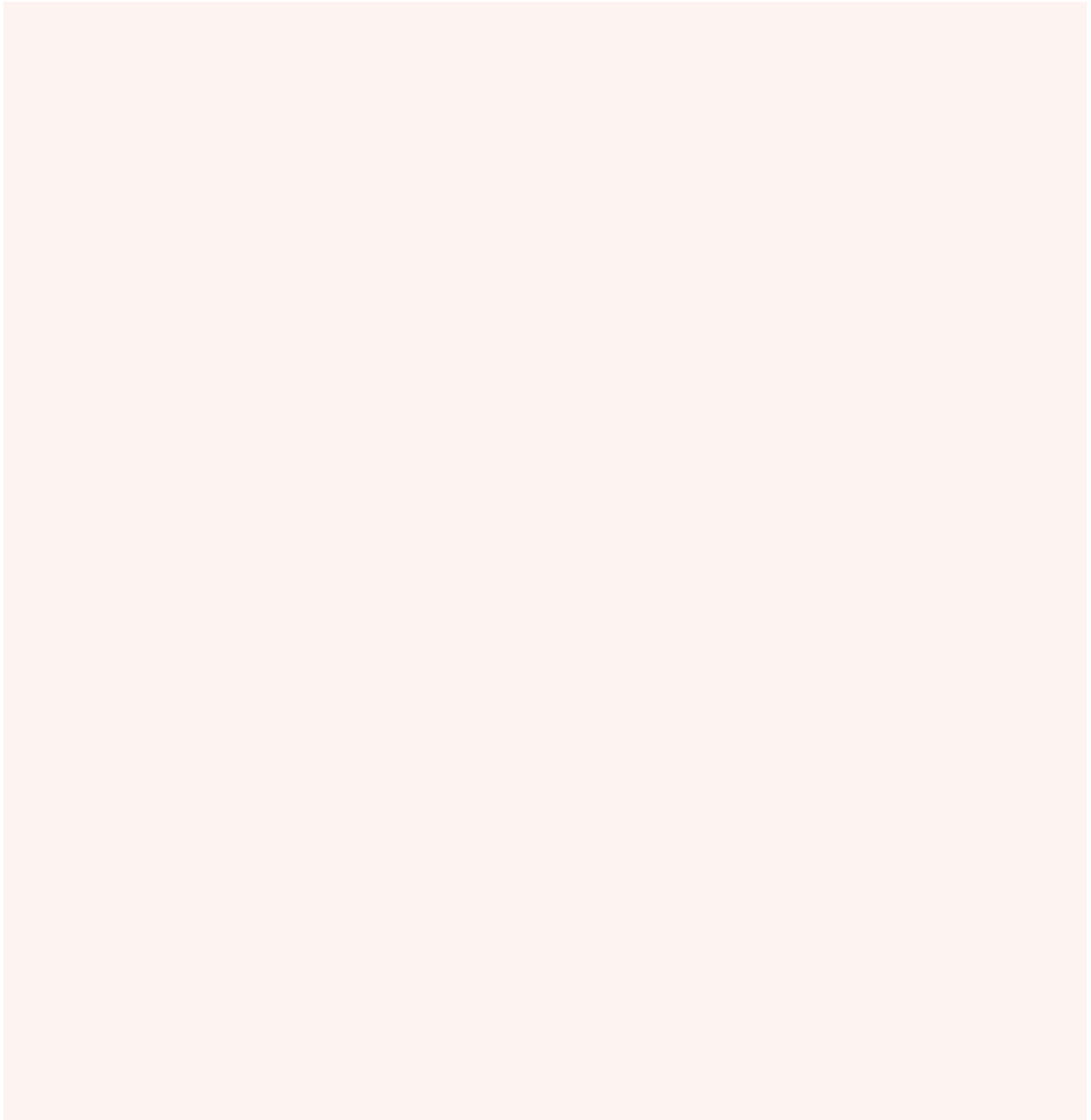
PROMPT: Your reader just arrived to another dimension, where everyone speaks an alien language



3rd Person Prompts

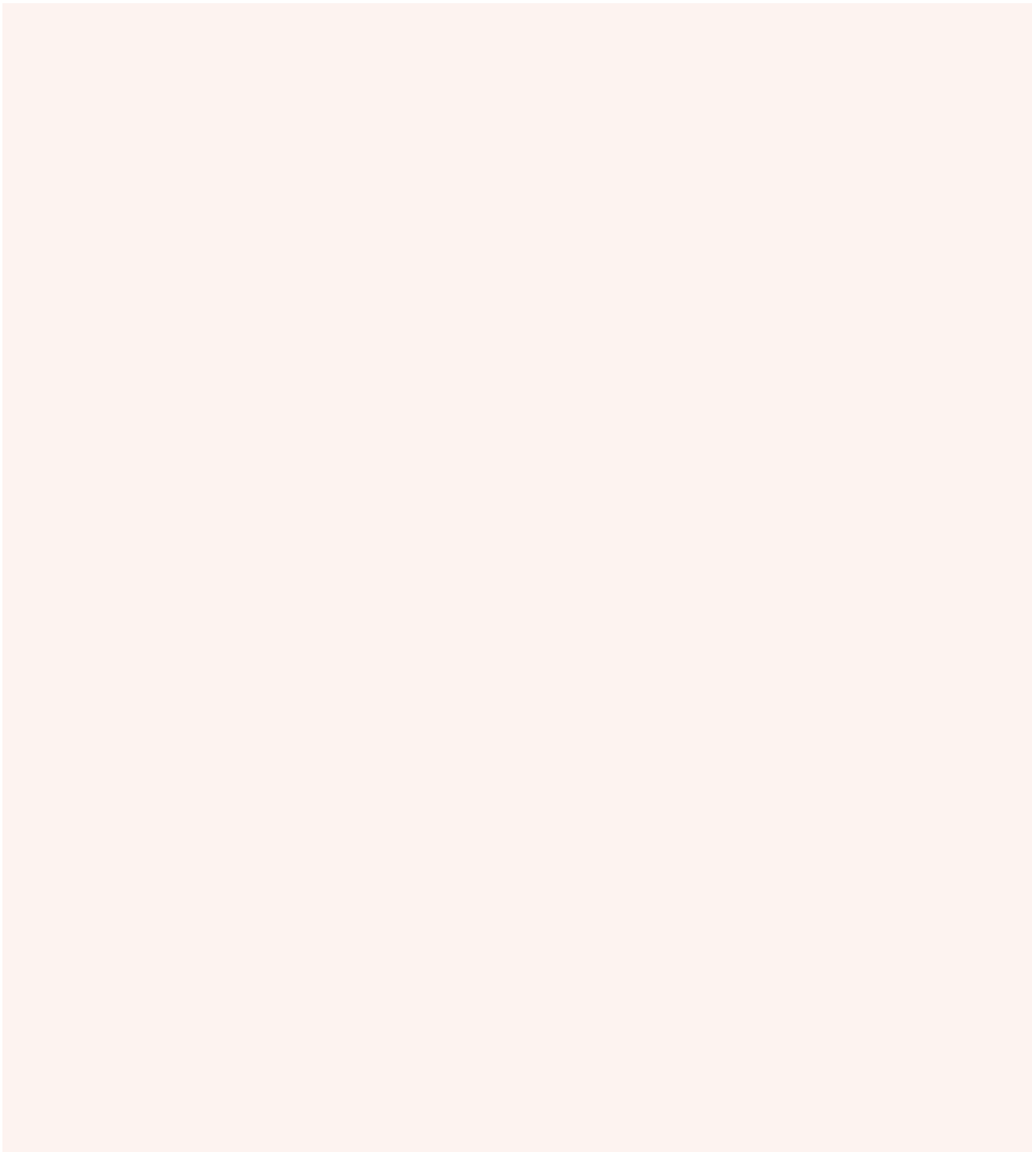
Now let's work on 3rd person. Write as an observer of these events in your own voice.

SCENE: Two people having an argument at a cafe.



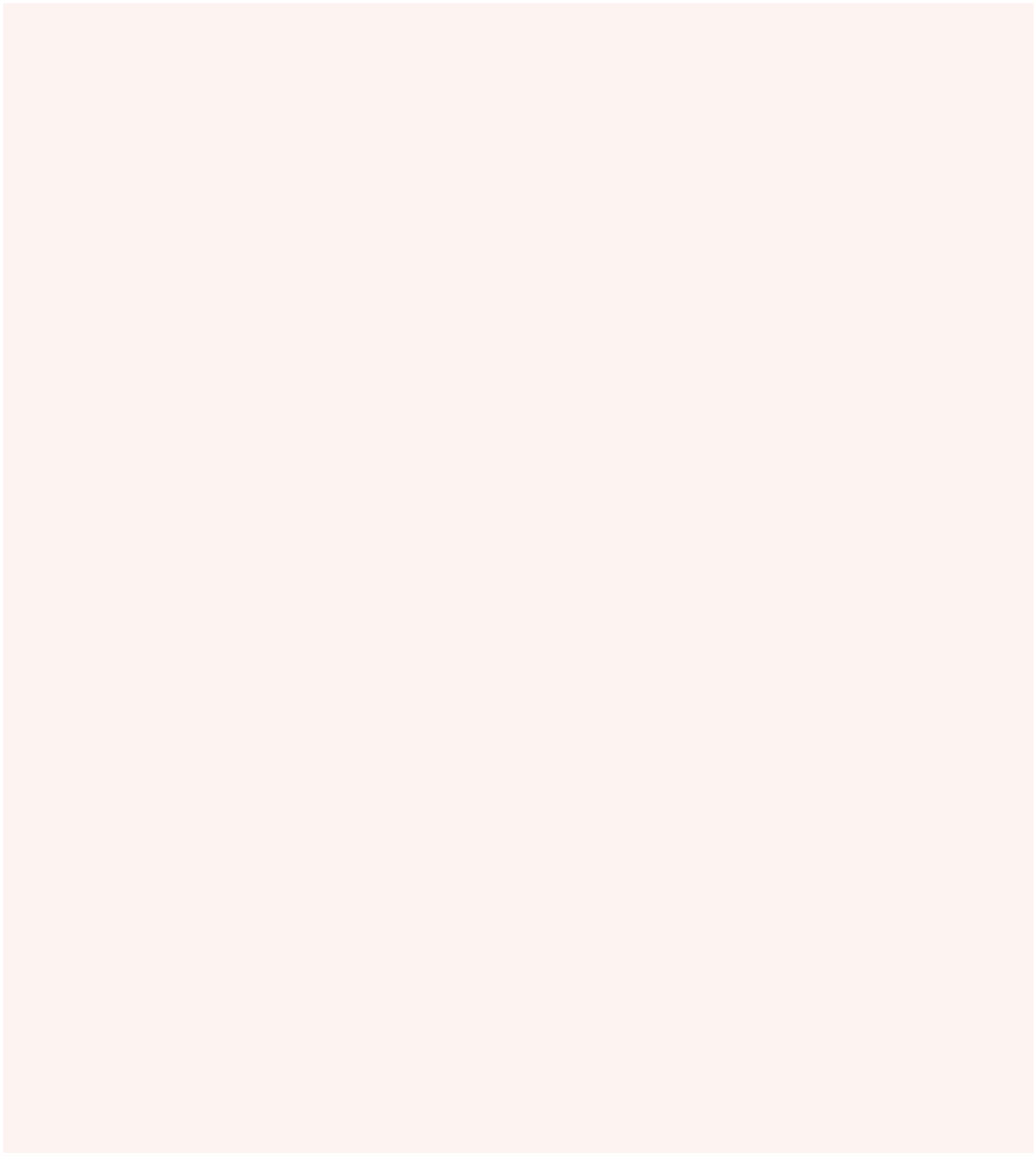
3rd Person Prompts

SCENE: Someone sneaks into a family reunion for free food



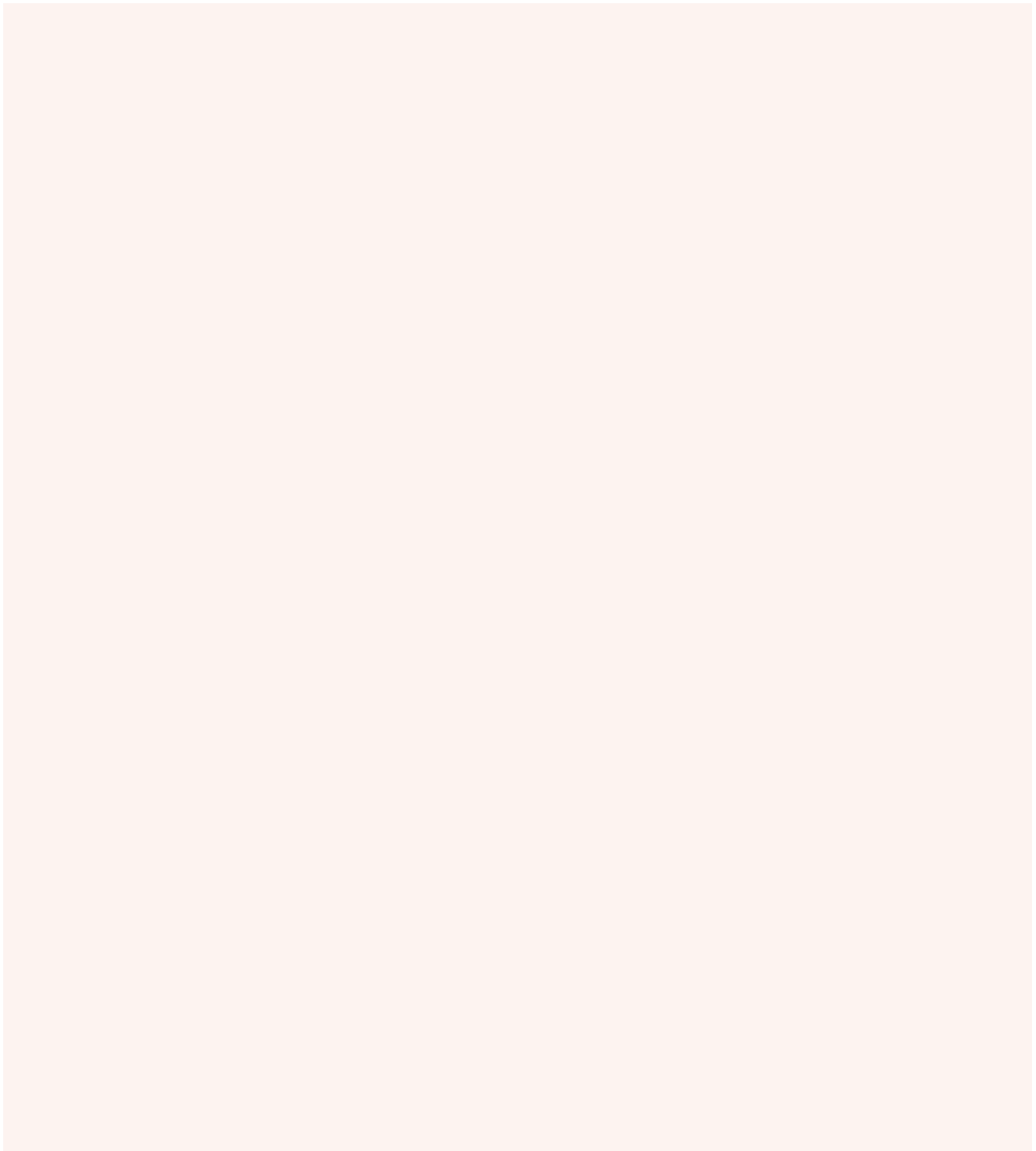
3rd Person Prompts

SCENE: Romance blossoms at a library



3rd Person Prompts

SCENE: A painter questions his monotonous life as a broke artist



14 day challenge

Use the keyword and POV to write a short 250-word scene.

1

RUG
1st person

2

BOAT
2nd person

3

LEARN
3rd person

4

CARPOOL
1st person

5

FIRE
2nd person

6

SKI
3rd person

7

FESTIVAL
1st person

8

UNDERCOVER
2nd person

9

EXPERIMENT
3rd person

10

KNIFE
1st person

11

PAINT
2nd person

12

HACKER
3rd person

13

ROSES
1st person

14

TEACHER
2nd person

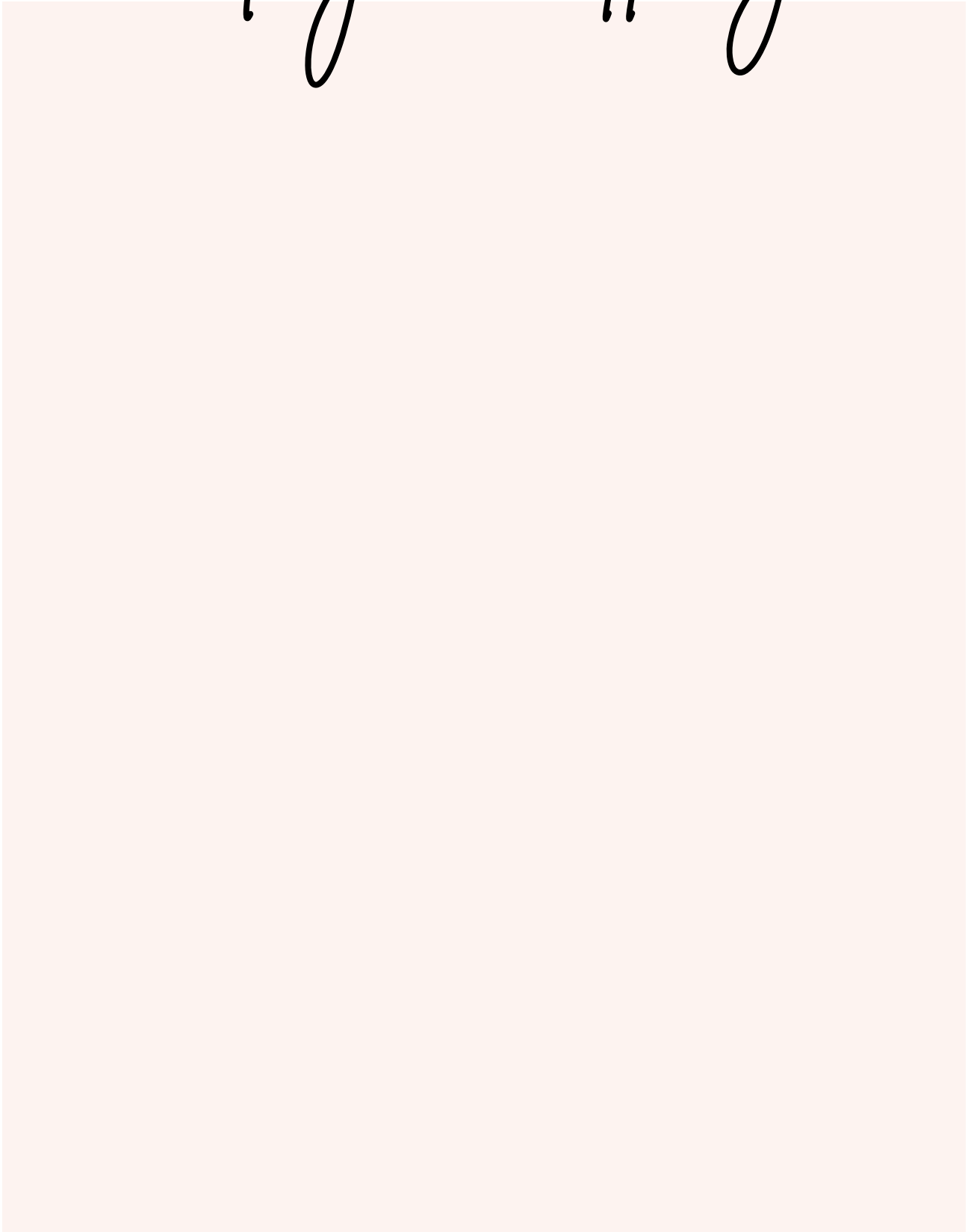


Write a little each day

14 day challenge

14 day challenge

14 day challenge



Thank You so Much

I hope you enjoyed this lesson! If you have any questions or comments, send me an email or connect with me on social media.

In the next lesson, we will talk about sentence lengths and how to use them to set the pace of your scene.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deidrea DeWitt is a California native who currently works as an ESL teacher in South Korea.

She has more than ten years of martial arts experience, resulting in her characters constantly getting punched in the face.

She is the author of the CHOOSE THE ENDING SERIES, the romantic suspense series where YOU get to choose how the story ends! Now available for purchase on Amazon.



When she's not writing, fighting, or traveling, you can find her reading classical literature or making pancakes.



/deidreadewitt