

Prose

LECTURE 3

STORY AND PLOT:
THE ELEMENTS OF PLOT IN A NOVEL: SITUATIONS,
DISJUNCTION, TRAJECTORY, PROLEPTIC EVENTS,
REVERSAL AND DISCOVERY - PIVOTAL MOMENTS, AND
WIND-UP, RESOLUTION AND DENOUEMENT.

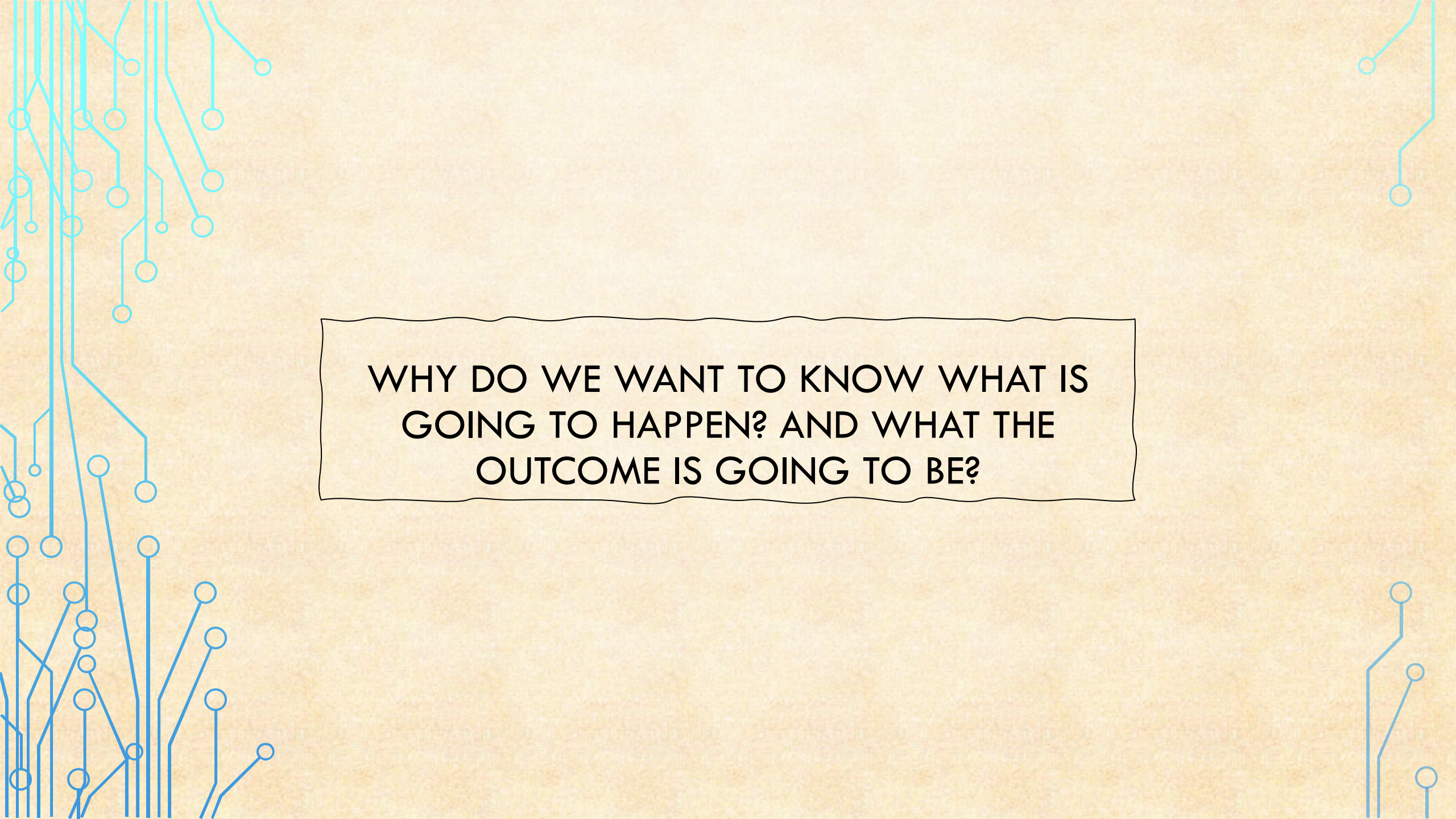
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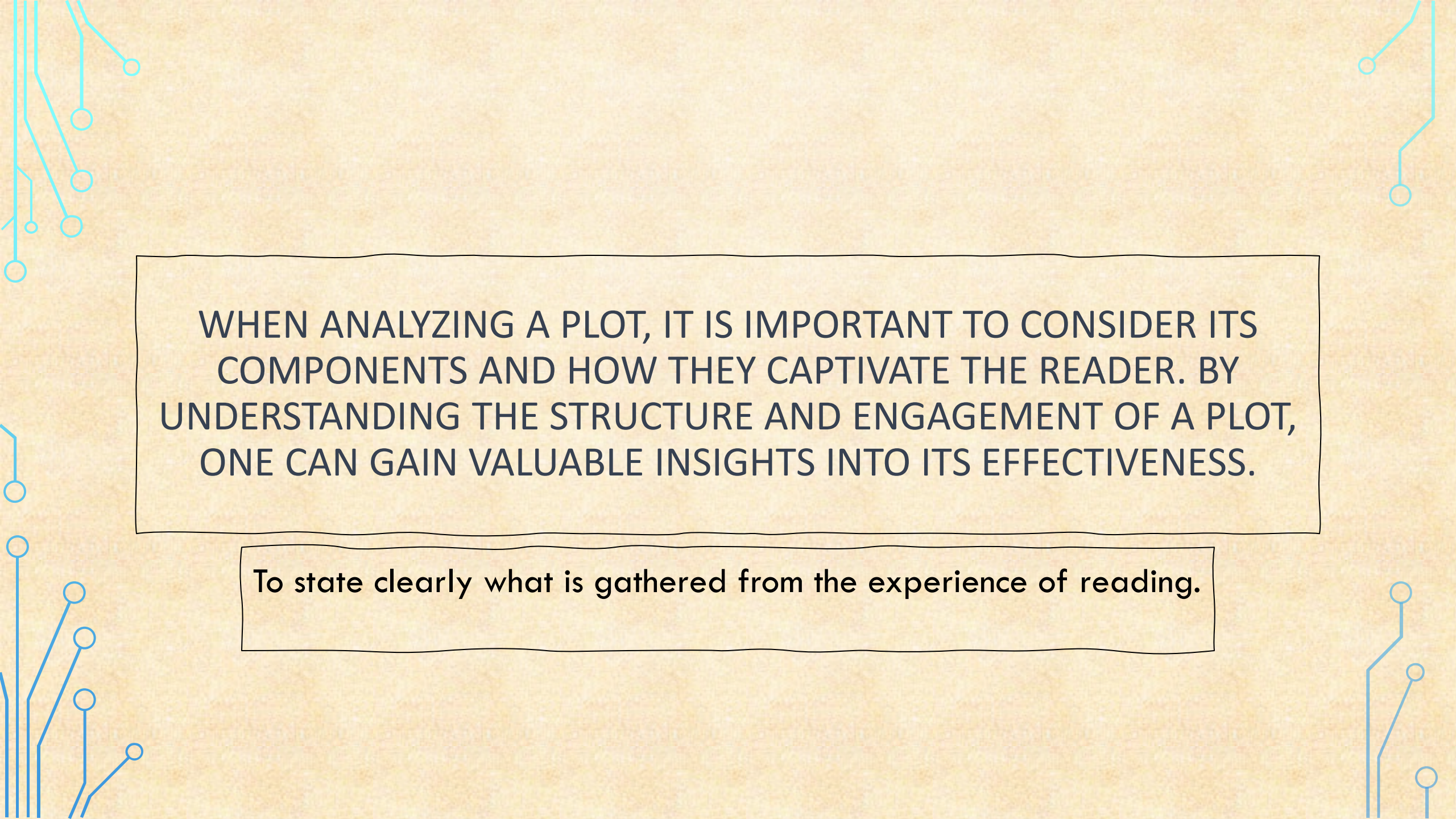
1. The elements of plot in a novel

- Situations,
- Disjunction,
- Trajectory,
- Proleptic Events,
- Reversal and Discovery - Pivotal Moments, and
- Wind-up, Resolution and Denouement.

2. Concepts of plot

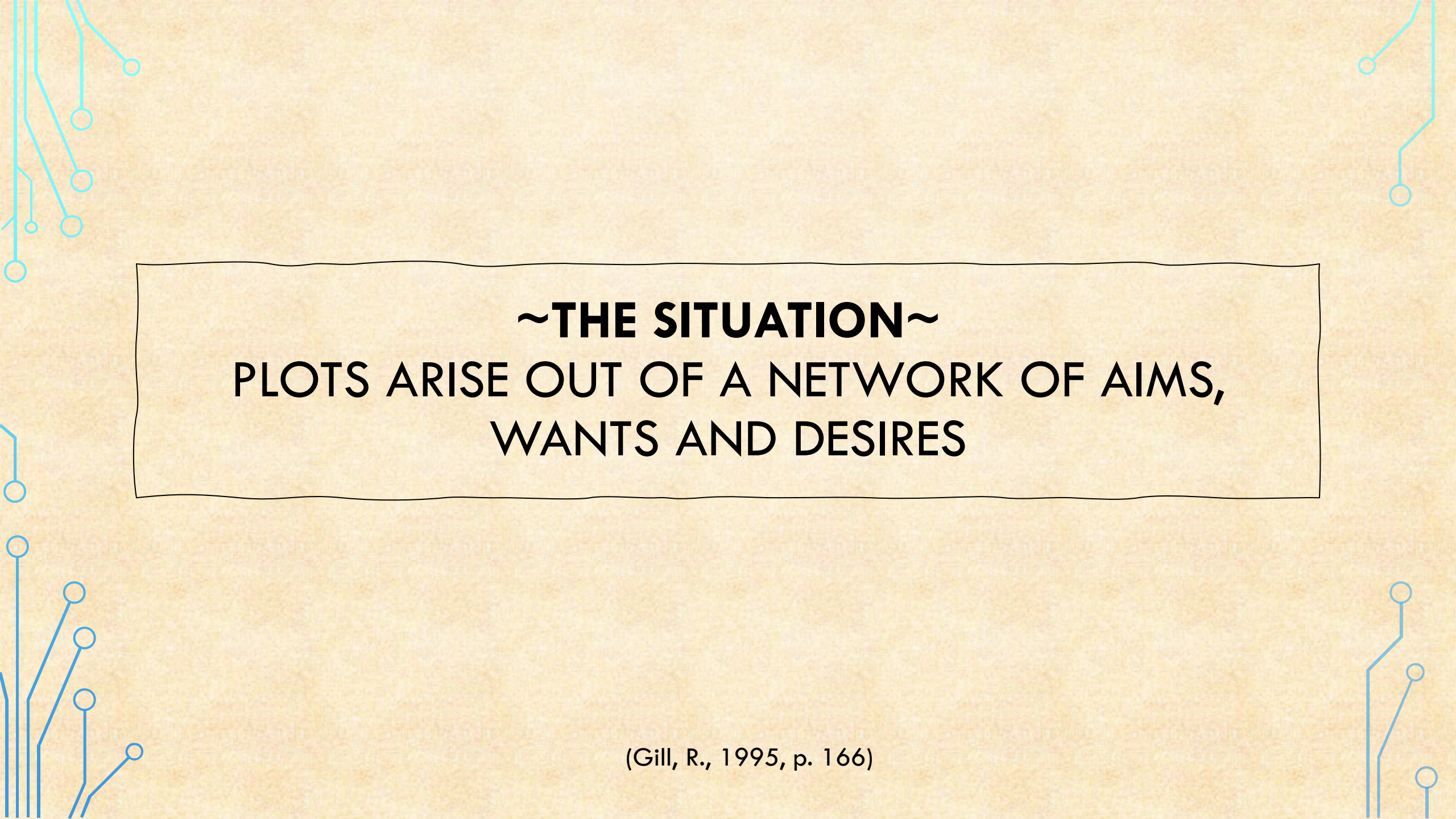


WHY DO WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS
GOING TO HAPPEN? AND WHAT THE
OUTCOME IS GOING TO BE?



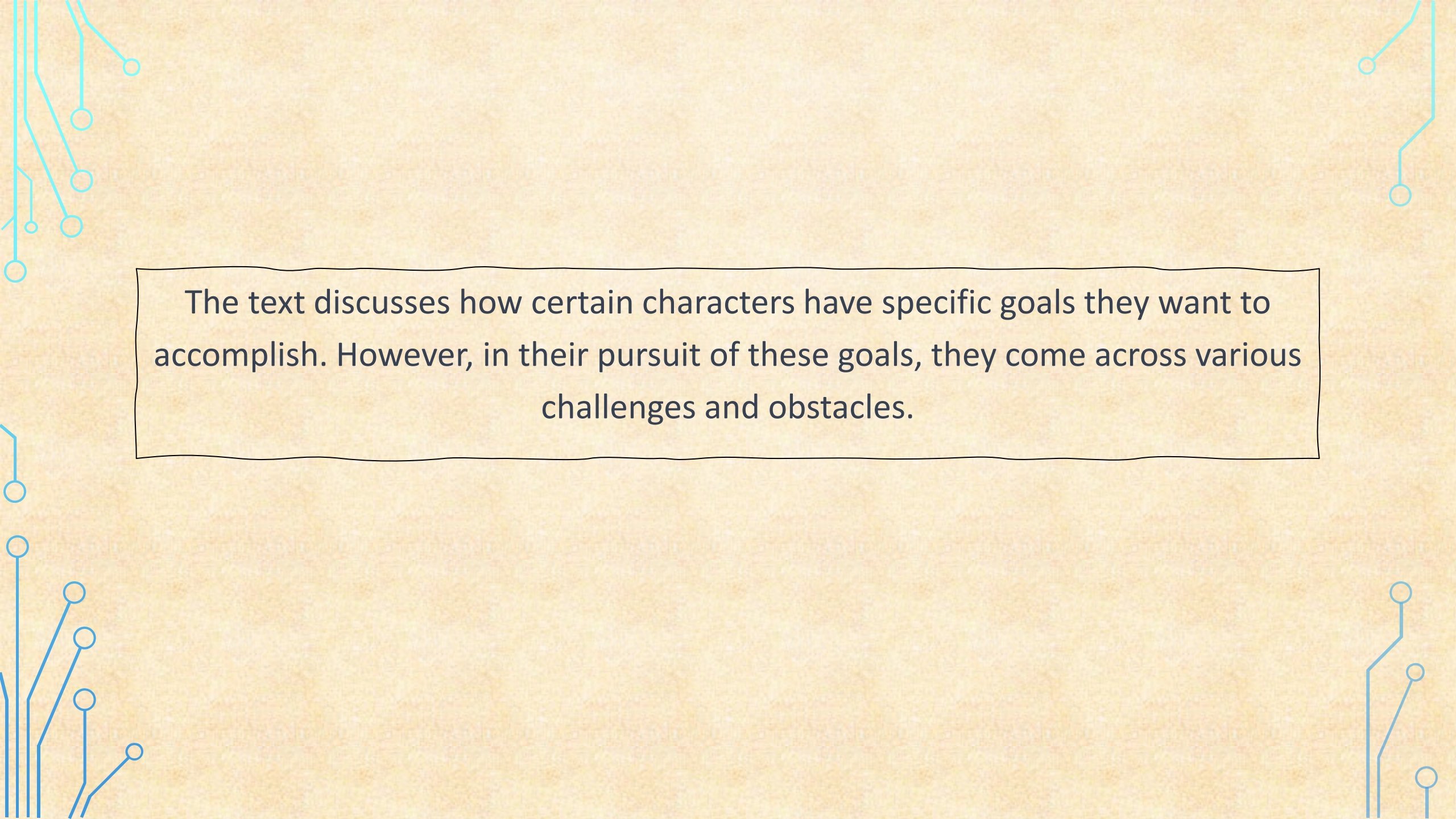
WHEN ANALYZING A PLOT, IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER ITS COMPONENTS AND HOW THEY CAPTIVATE THE READER. BY UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE AND ENGAGEMENT OF A PLOT, ONE CAN GAIN VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO ITS EFFECTIVENESS.

To state clearly what is gathered from the experience of reading.

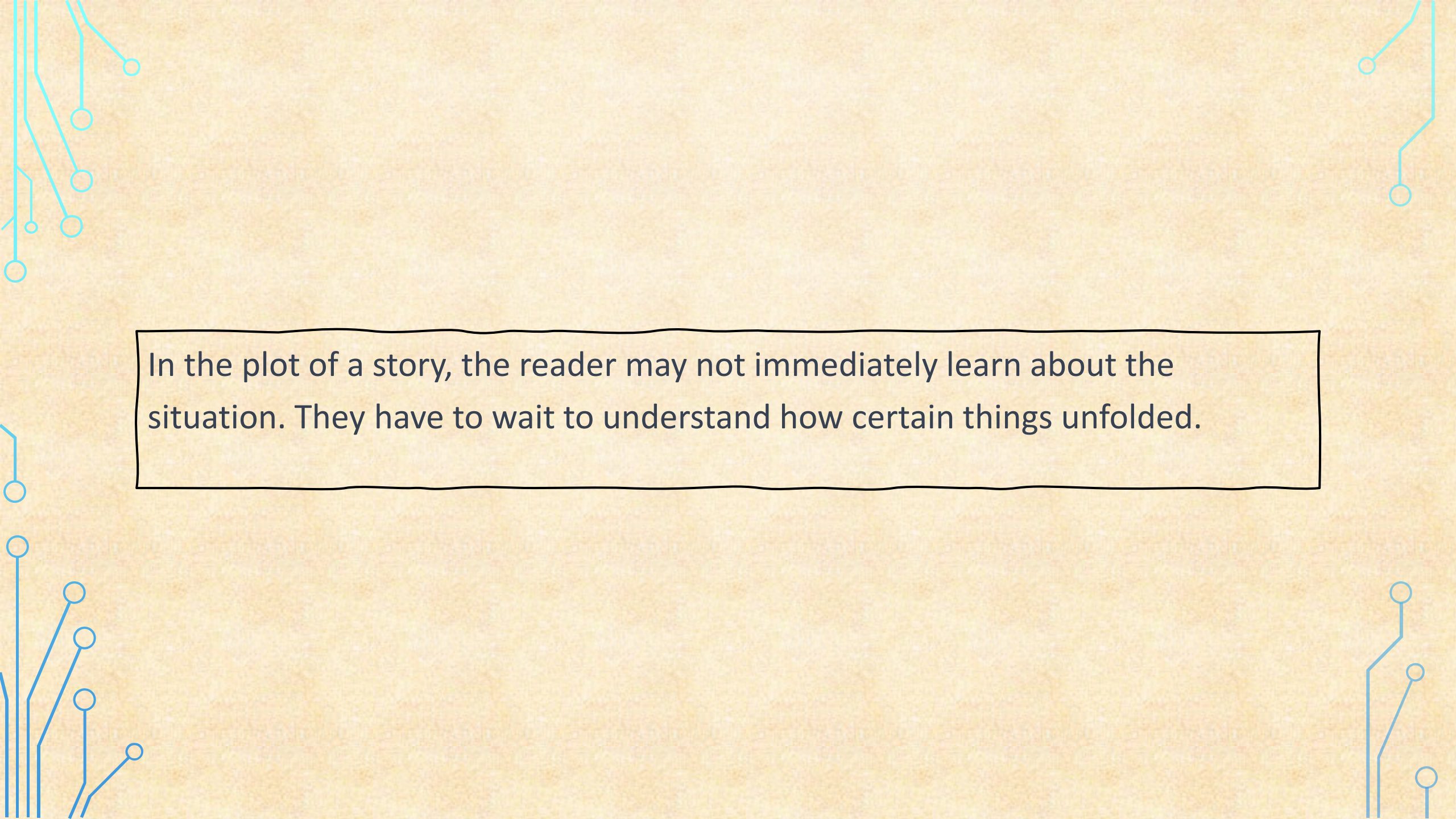


~THE SITUATION~
**PLOTS ARISE OUT OF A NETWORK OF AIMS,
WANTS AND DESIRES**

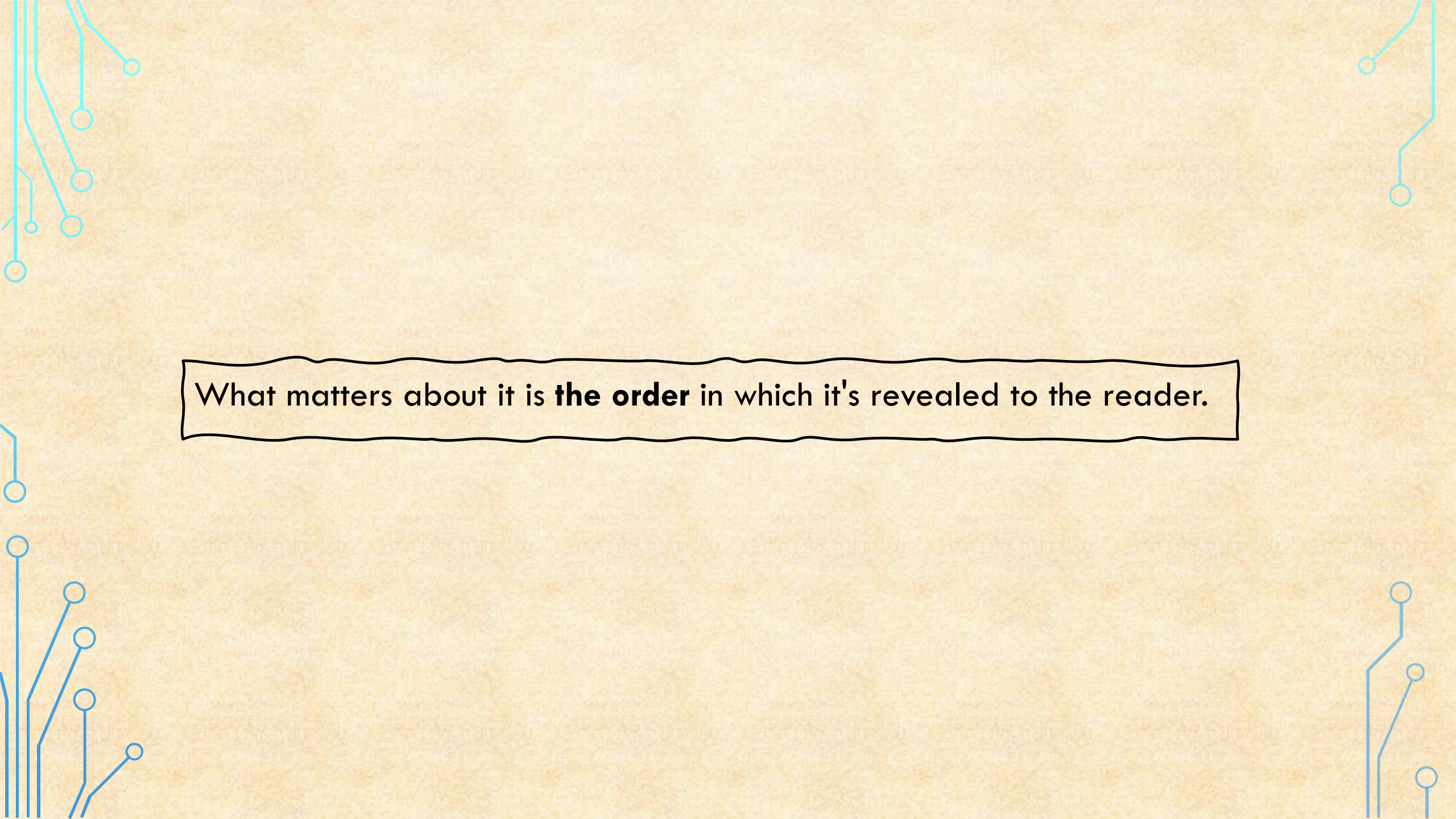
(Gill, R., 1995, p. 166)



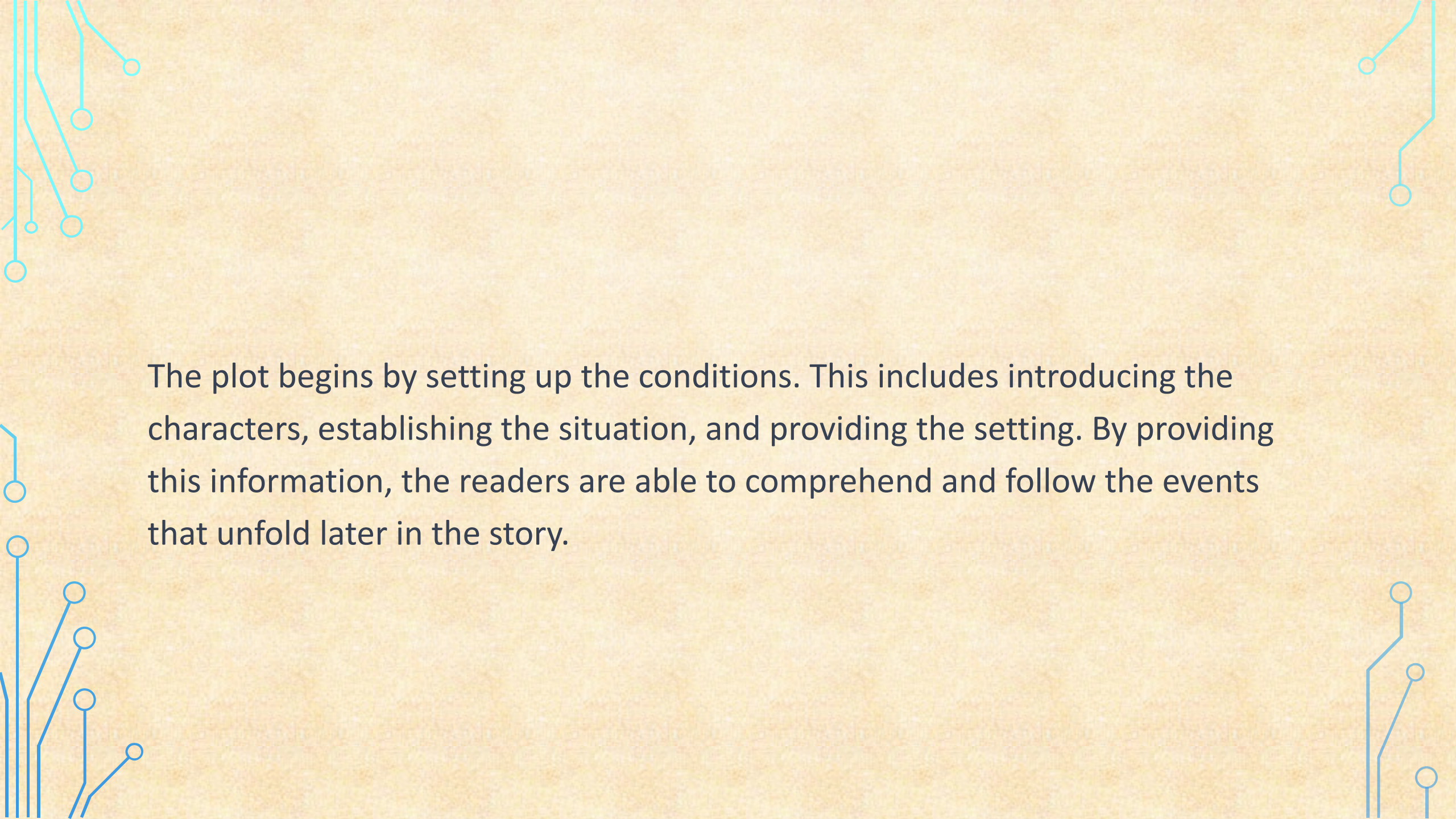
The text discusses how certain characters have specific goals they want to accomplish. However, in their pursuit of these goals, they come across various challenges and obstacles.



In the plot of a story, the reader may not immediately learn about the situation. They have to wait to understand how certain things unfolded.



What matters about it is **the order** in which it's revealed to the reader.



The plot begins by setting up the conditions. This includes introducing the characters, establishing the situation, and providing the setting. By providing this information, the readers are able to comprehend and follow the events that unfold later in the story.

DISJUNCTION

Novelists frequently begin their stories by establishing a situation and then introducing a disruption or conflict. This helps to drive the plot forward and engage the reader.

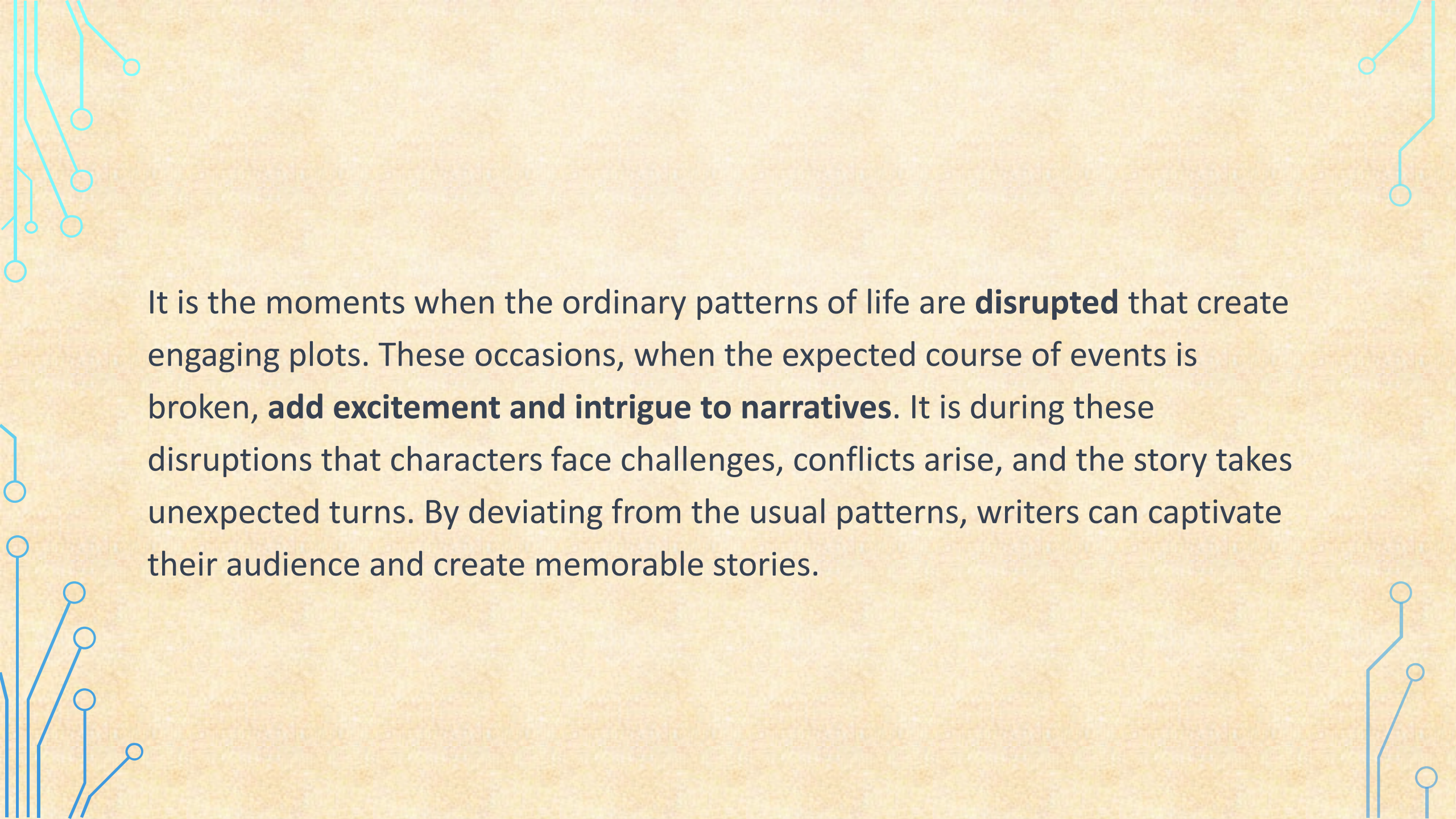
A break, also known as a disjunction, refers to a disruption in a regular life pattern.

(Gill, R., 1995, P. 167-168)

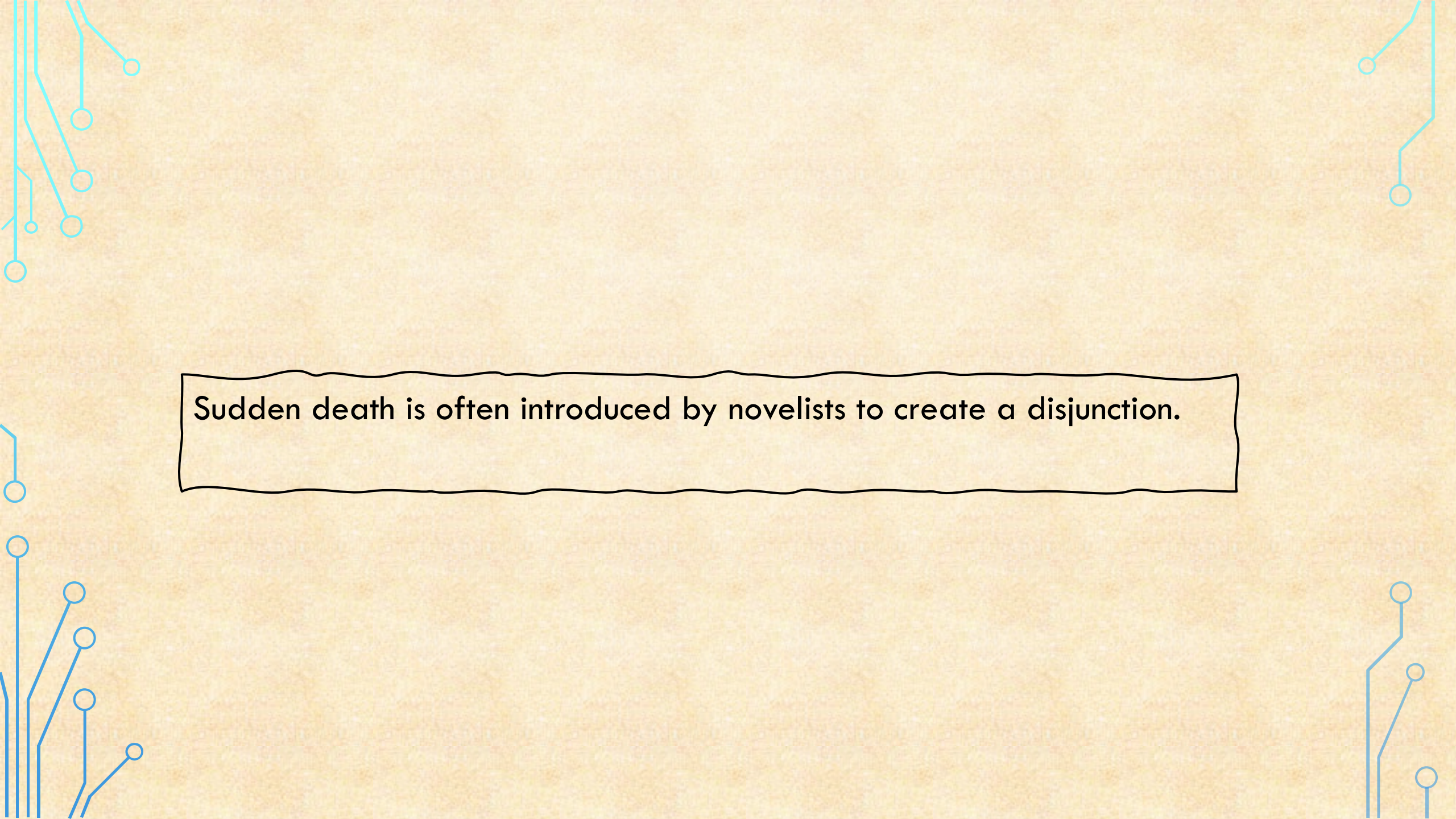
EXAMPLE

- For instance, a careful reading of the opening of *Jane Eyre* reveals that although Jane has been badly treated at Gateshead, she does not retaliate until that moment in the first chapter when she turns on John Reed. The retrospective account she gives of the way she has been treated establishes the pattern of life at Gateshead, and her retaliation functions as the disjunction that launches the main events of the plot

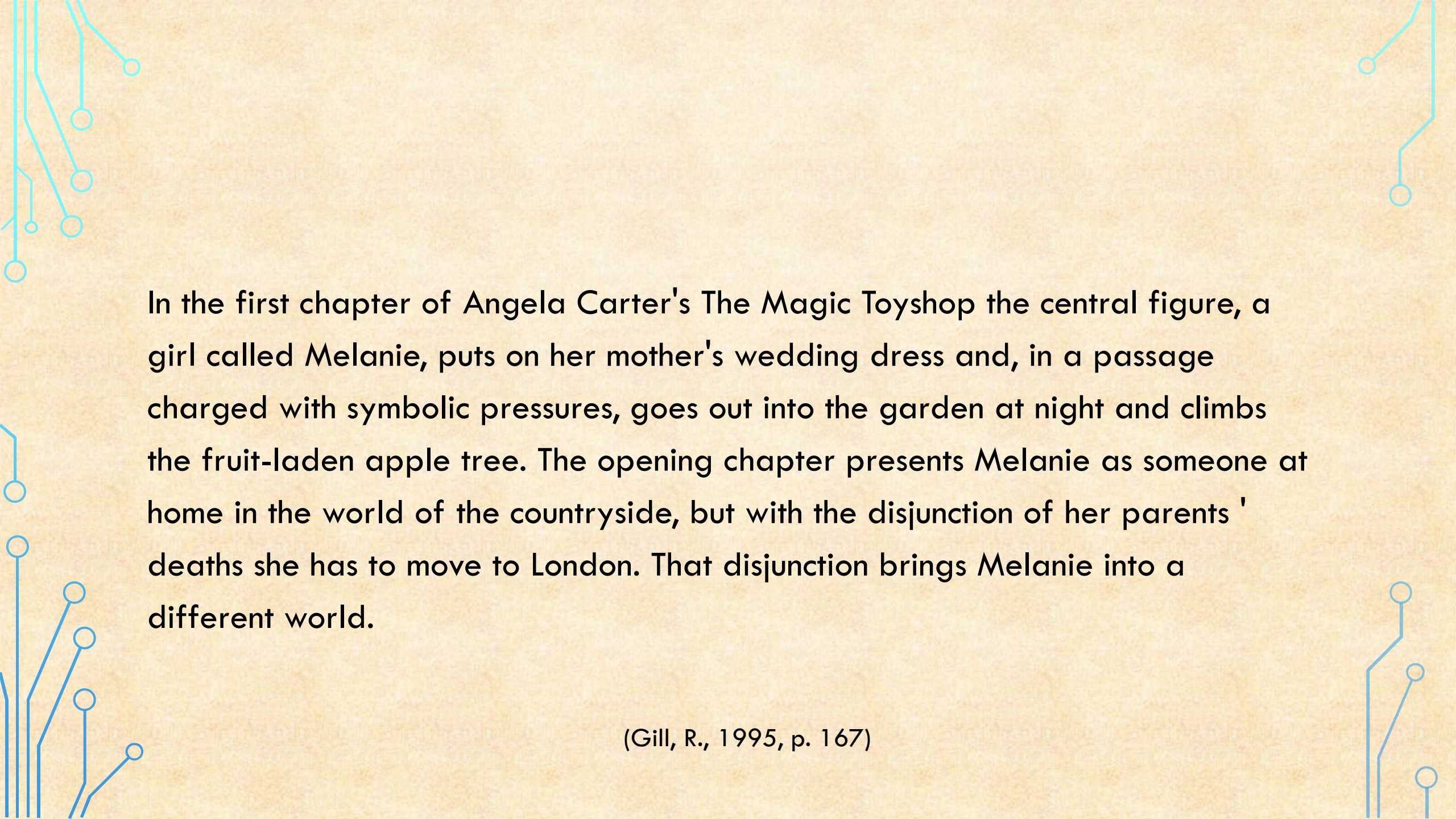
(Gill, R., 1995, p. 167)



It is the moments when the ordinary patterns of life are **disrupted** that create engaging plots. These occasions, when the expected course of events is broken, **add excitement and intrigue to narratives**. It is during these disruptions that characters face challenges, conflicts arise, and the story takes unexpected turns. By deviating from the usual patterns, writers can captivate their audience and create memorable stories.

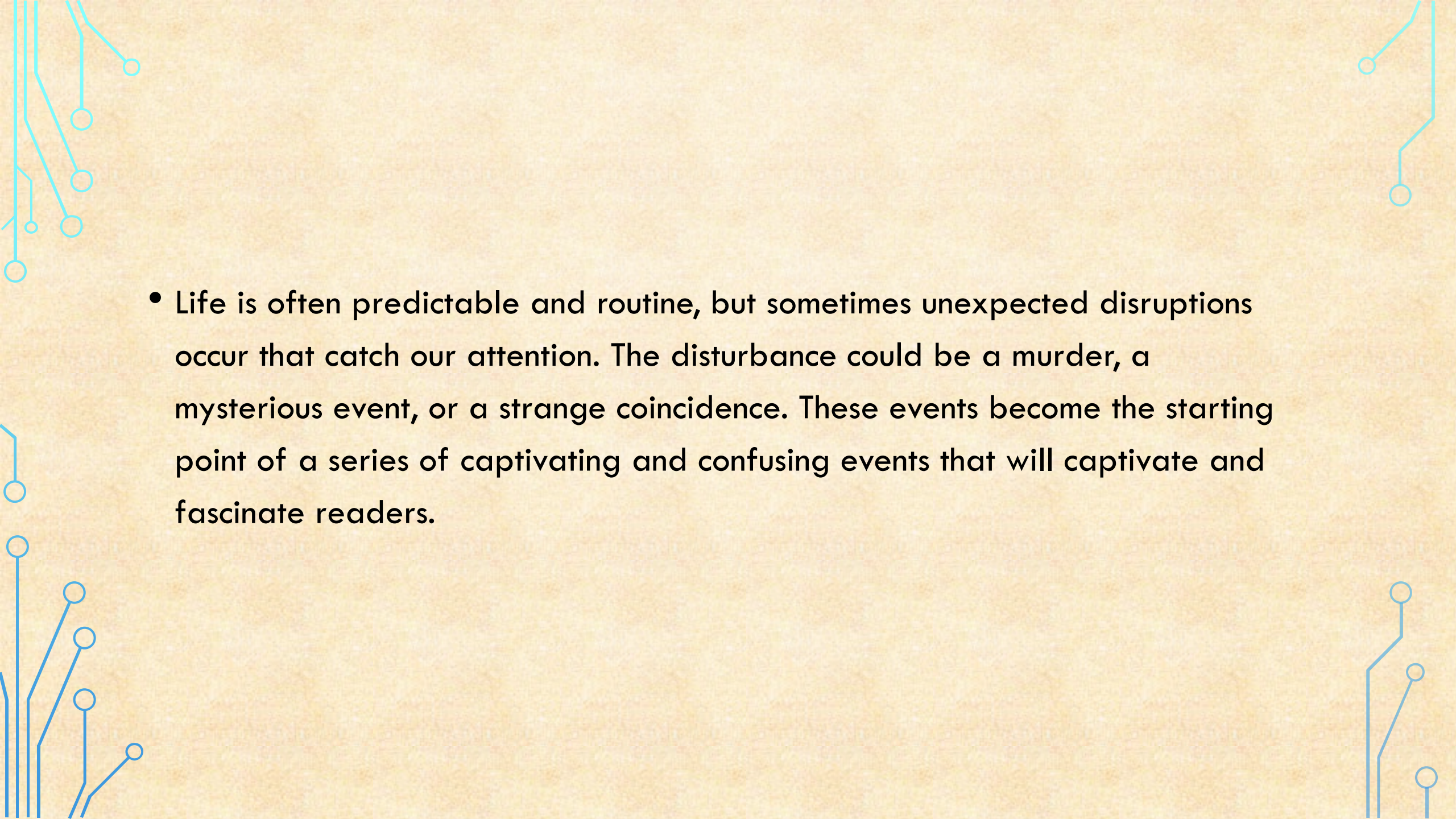


Sudden death is often introduced by novelists to create a disjunction.



In the first chapter of Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* the central figure, a girl called Melanie, puts on her mother's wedding dress and, in a passage charged with symbolic pressures, goes out into the garden at night and climbs the fruit-laden apple tree. The opening chapter presents Melanie as someone at home in the world of the countryside, but with the disjunction of her parents' deaths she has to move to London. That disjunction brings Melanie into a different world.

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 167)

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- The background is a light beige, textured surface. In the four corners, there are decorative elements consisting of thin, light blue lines that resemble circuit traces or neural pathways. These lines connect to small, hollow light blue circles. The lines are more dense and complex in the bottom-left and top-left corners, and more sparse in the top-right and bottom-right corners.
- Life is often predictable and routine, but sometimes unexpected disruptions occur that catch our attention. The disturbance could be a murder, a mysterious event, or a strange coincidence. These events become the starting point of a series of captivating and confusing events that will captivate and fascinate readers.

WHO IS THE MAN WITH A BLACK SHIRT?

Disjunction can be prompted by a question.

Disjunction can be prompted by an unexpected meeting.

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 44-45)

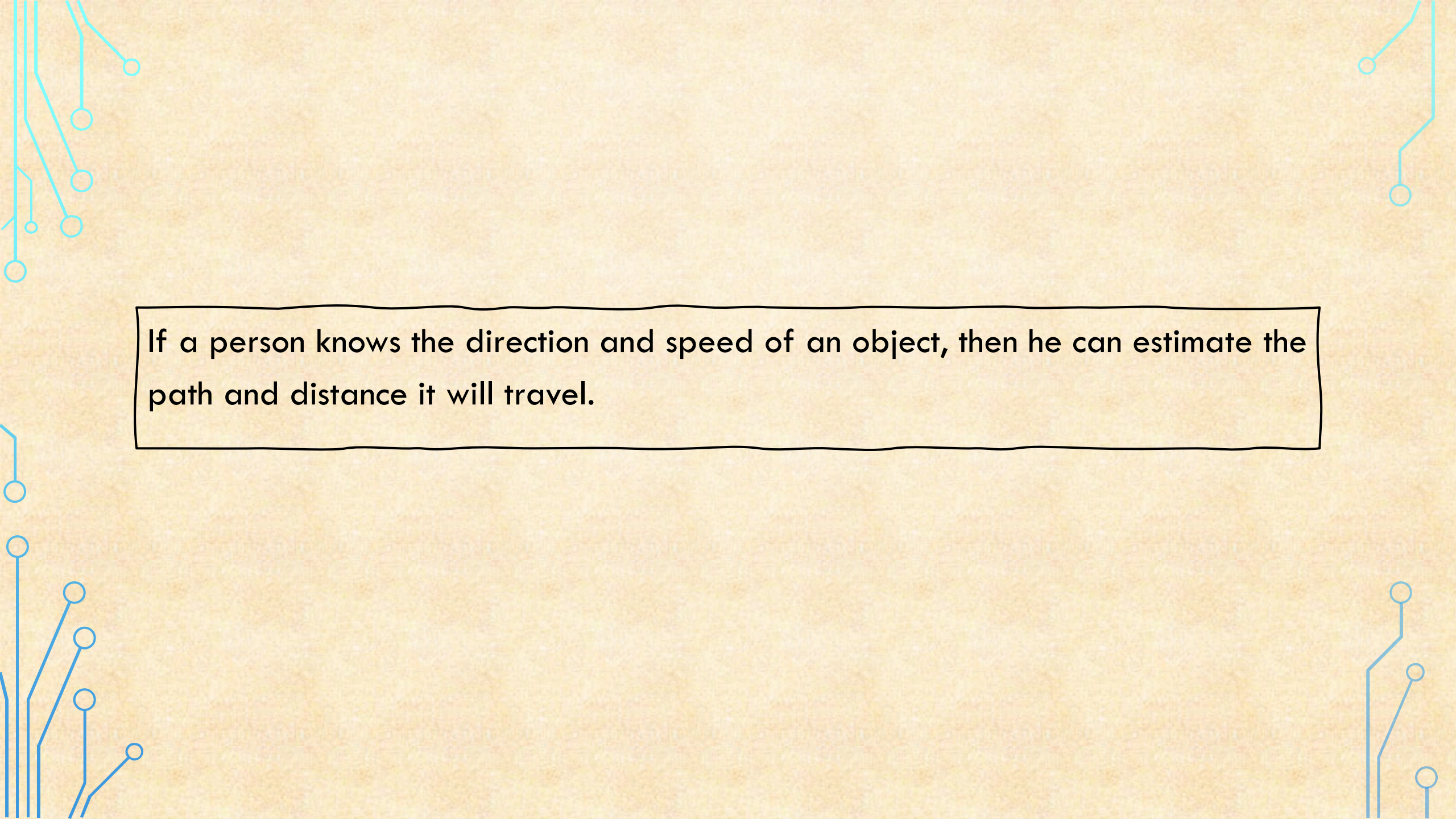
The background is a light beige, textured surface. In the four corners, there are decorative elements consisting of light blue lines that resemble circuit traces or neural connections, ending in small circles. A central rectangular box with a thin green border contains the text.

DISJUNCTION CAN APPEAR ANYWHERE, NOT ONLY AT THE BEGINNING.

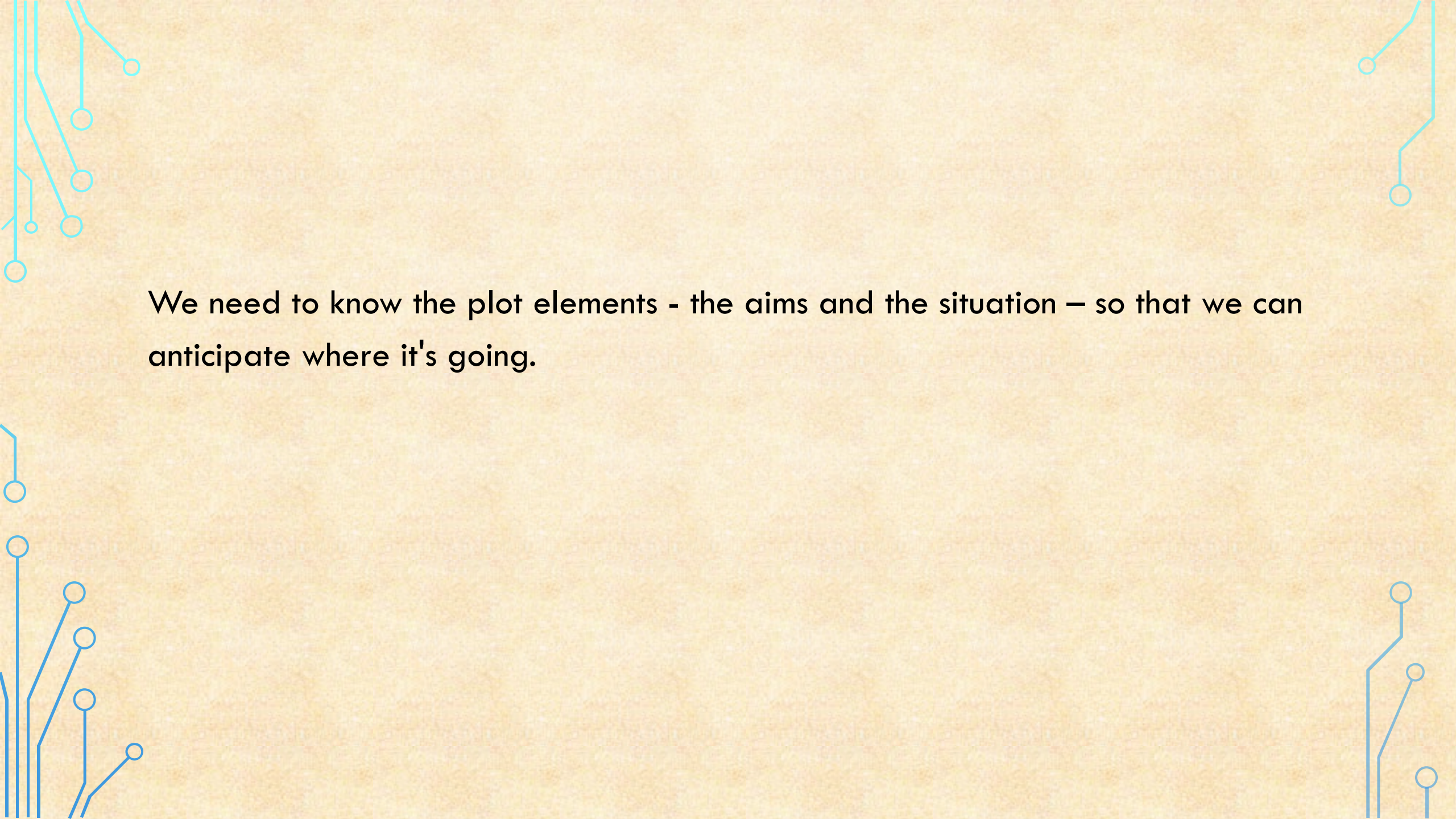
TRAJECTORY

- Once events **start to occur**, the plot takes **on a shape**. Because of **the situation** and **the way events have happened**, the plot can be seen to have a particular shape

(Gill, R., 1995, p. 168-170)



If a person knows the direction and speed of an object, then he can estimate the path and distance it will travel.

The background is a light beige, textured surface. In the four corners, there are decorative elements consisting of thin, light blue lines that resemble circuit traces or a network diagram. These lines connect to small, hollow light blue circles. The lines are more dense in the bottom-left and top-left corners and more sparse in the top-right and bottom-right corners.

We need to know the plot elements - the aims and the situation – so that we can anticipate where it's going.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF TRAJECTORIES

- Parallels
- Plot as journeys

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 45-47)

PARALLELS

- Some plots work parallels – plot elements are related.
- Juxtaposition & Contrast

PLOT AS JOURNEYS

- Plot trajectory is a journey searching for something.
- Plots consist of adventures.
- Simple plot with the purpose of journeys is vague
- What happened on the ways is more important.
- Previous characters turn up to help

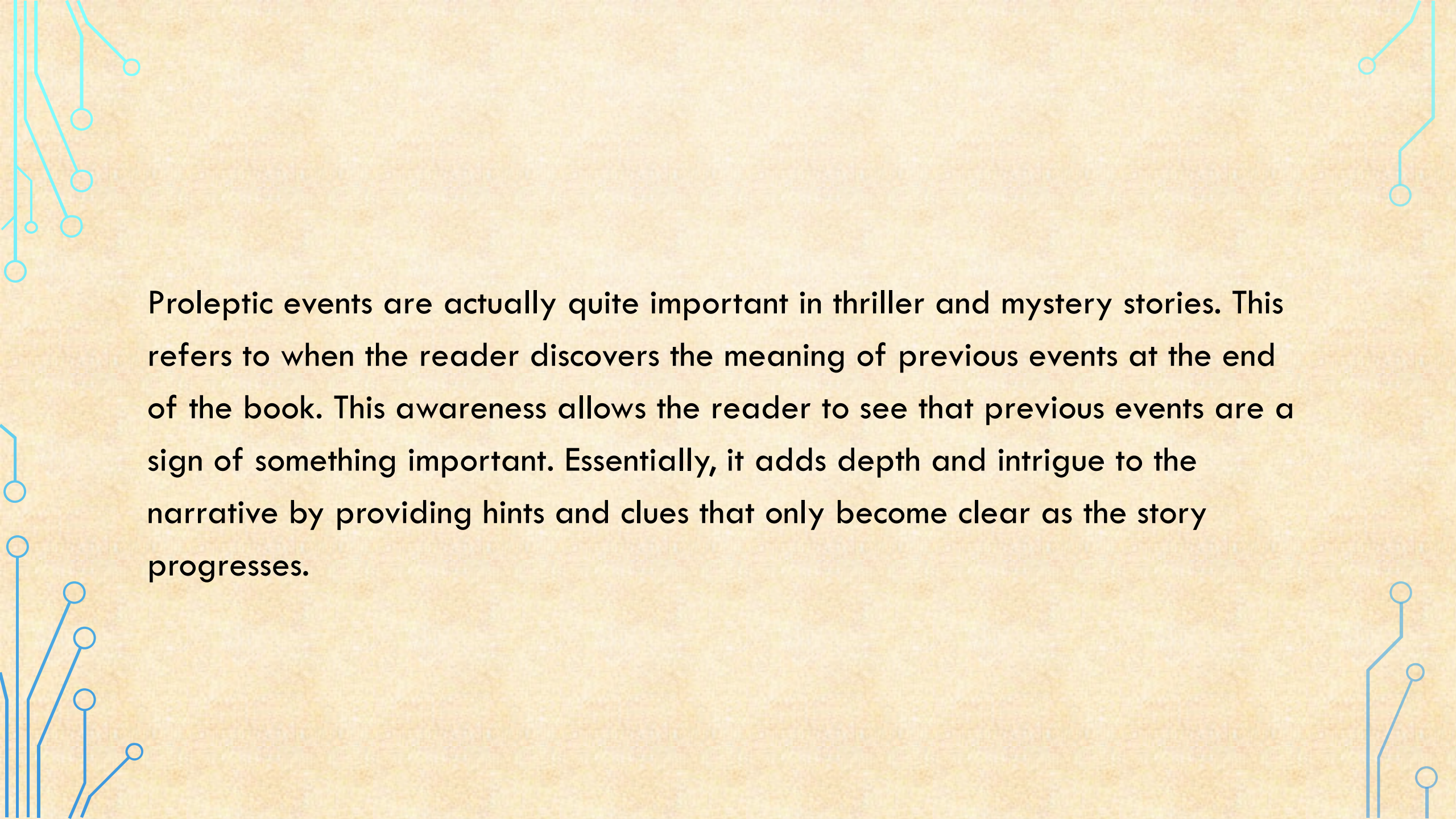
PROLEPTIC EVENTS

- Looking forward and backward is something that we do.
- Recall the past event in order to see the possibility in the future.

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 47)



The relation between WHAT HAPPENED in the past and WHAT WILL HAPPEN future event is what gives those events meaning.



Proleptic events are actually quite important in thriller and mystery stories. This refers to when the reader discovers the meaning of previous events at the end of the book. This awareness allows the reader to see that previous events are a sign of something important. Essentially, it adds depth and intrigue to the narrative by providing hints and clues that only become clear as the story progresses.

DISCOVERIES

- The characters are aware of what has been happening
- Moment in the plots movement –Anagnorisis-, it arouses new knowledge

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 47-48)

REVERSAL

- Discoveries → plots turn around
- Plots are so devised that readers **look backwards** and **forwards** to other events. The movement of plots involves a moment of discovery and this results in the reversal of the plots.

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 48)

REVERSAL AND DISCOVERY - PIVOTAL MOMENTS

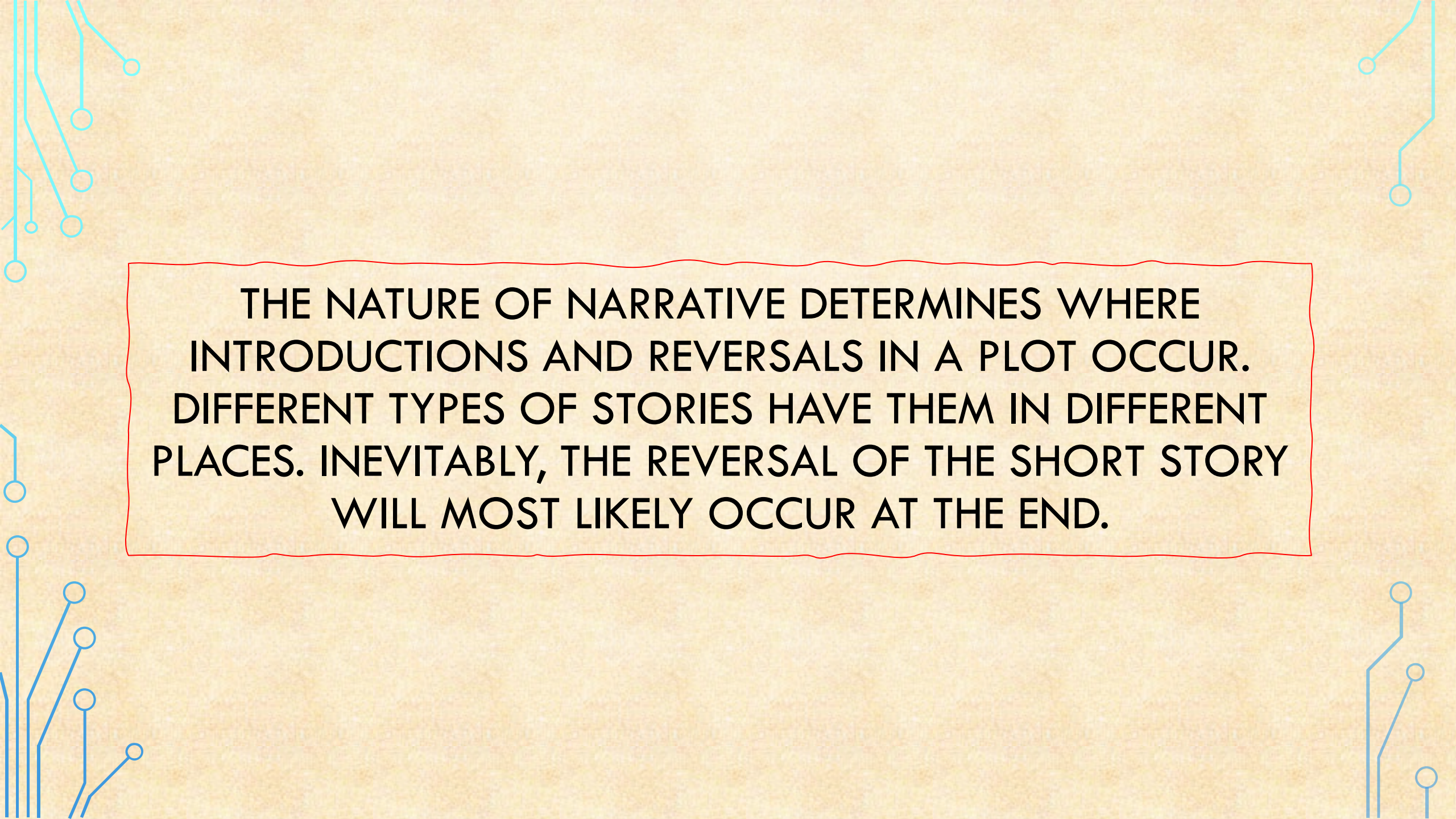
The pivotal discovery can happen much earlier.

The reason for this is that usually at the close of a novel another element is the most important.

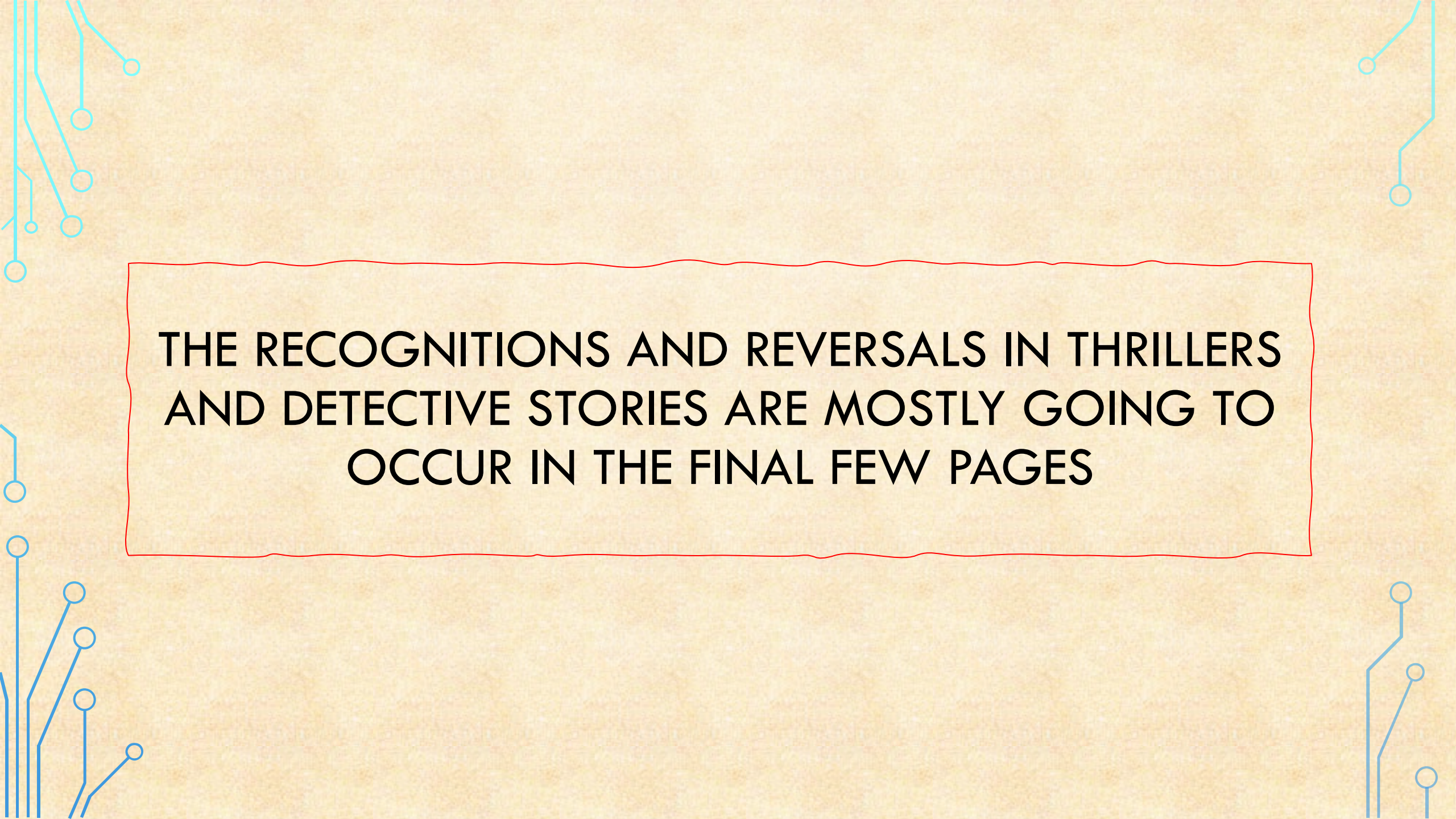
(Gill, R., 1995, p. 171-172)

The background is a textured, light beige surface. In the four corners, there are decorative blue circuit-like lines with small circles at the ends, resembling a stylized PCB or network diagram. A central red-bordered box contains the text.

DISCOVERIES BRING ABOUT REVERSALS

The image features a light beige, textured background. In the four corners, there are decorative elements consisting of thin, light blue lines that resemble circuit traces or neural connections, ending in small circles. A central rectangular area is outlined with a thin, hand-drawn red border. Inside this border, the following text is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font:

THE NATURE OF NARRATIVE DETERMINES WHERE INTRODUCTIONS AND REVERSALS IN A PLOT OCCUR. DIFFERENT TYPES OF STORIES HAVE THEM IN DIFFERENT PLACES. INEVITABLY, THE REVERSAL OF THE SHORT STORY WILL MOST LIKELY OCCUR AT THE END.

The background is a light beige, textured surface. In the four corners, there are decorative elements consisting of light blue lines that resemble circuit traces or fiber optic paths, ending in small circles.

**THE RECOGNITIONS AND REVERSALS IN THRILLERS
AND DETECTIVE STORIES ARE MOSTLY GOING TO
OCCUR IN THE FINAL FEW PAGES**

ENDINGS

Neat conclusions

- Satisfaction of closure
- Knowing what has happened and will happen

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 49-51)

ENDINGS

The climax

- Climax can be many kinds and can occur in different places
- All must lead to the close.
- Climax can be dramatic changes or changes of heart and mind.

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 49-51)

FORMS OF CLIMAX AND CLOSURE

- Death
- Illness
- Judgment on the characters and their actions
- Trial

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 49-51)

RESOLUTION

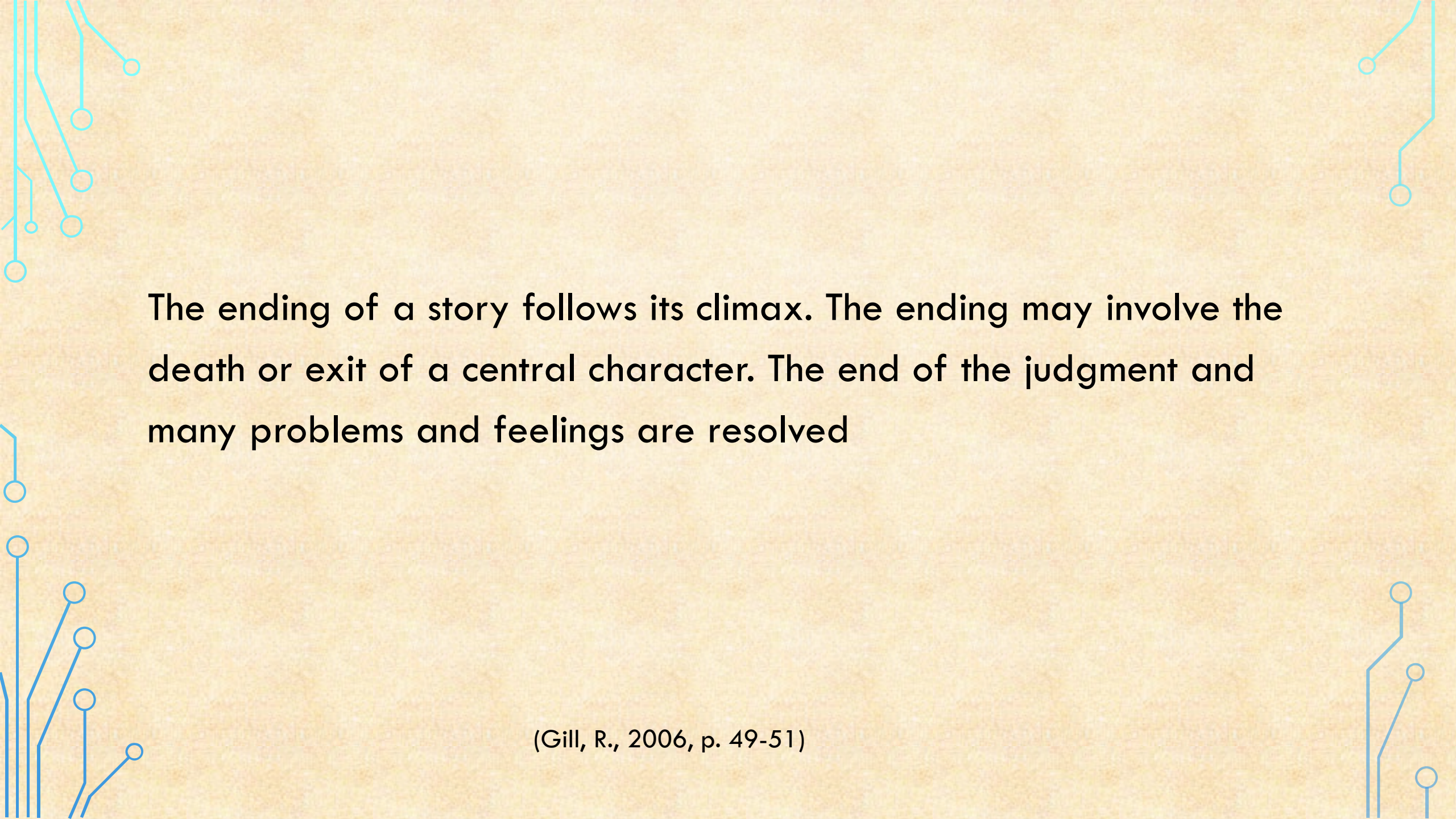
- **Resolution** is the experience we get when all the issues of a novel have been brought to a satisfactory state.
- The feelings that things are settled

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 49-51)

DENOUEMENT

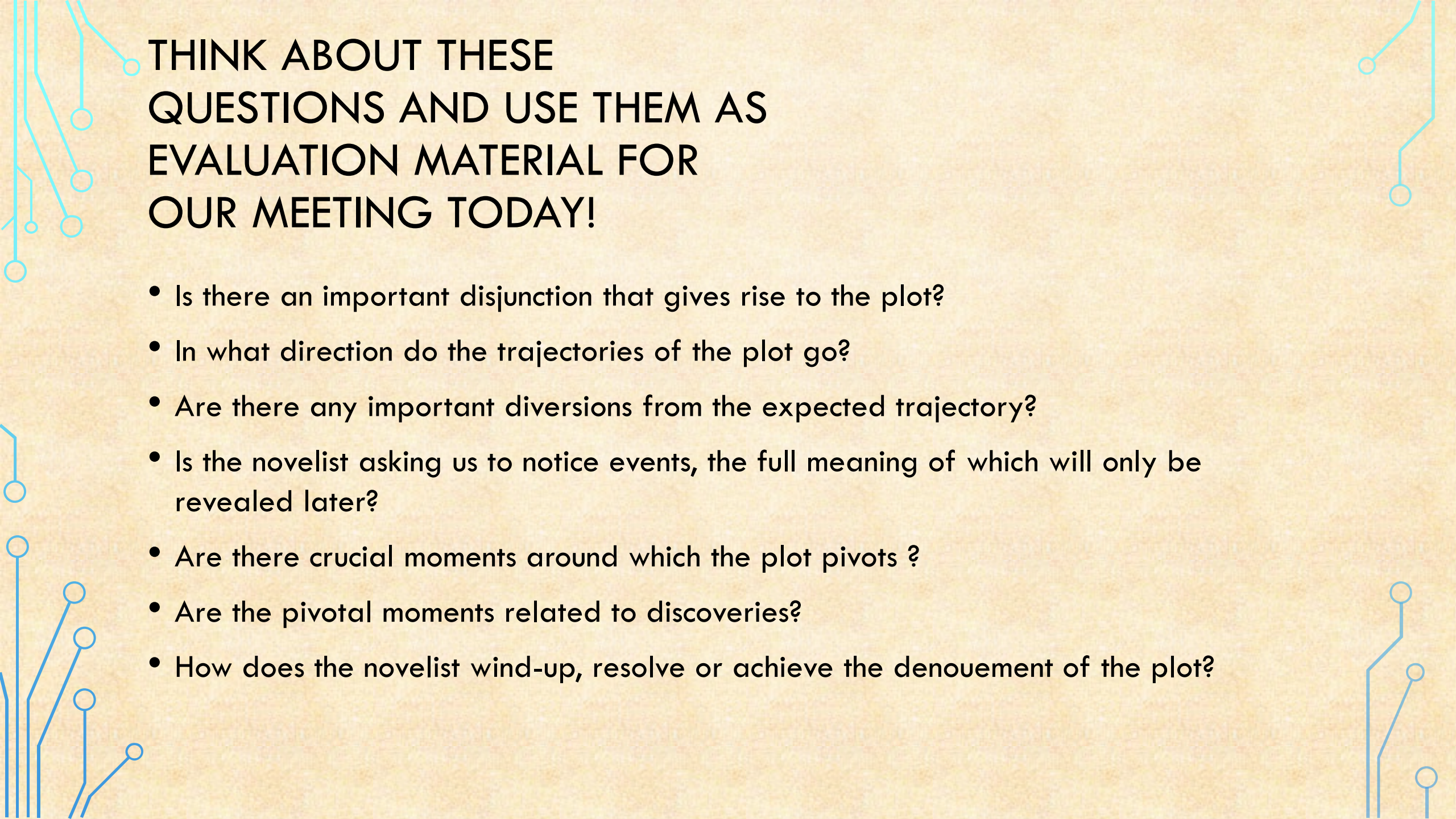
- Denouement is a word we have taken from the French. It means 'the untying of a knot' .
- We know who, how, and why.
- Tensions in plot are reconciled.

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 49-51)



The ending of a story follows its climax. The ending may involve the death or exit of a central character. The end of the judgment and many problems and feelings are resolved

(Gill, R., 2006, p. 49-51)



THINK ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS AND USE THEM AS EVALUATION MATERIAL FOR OUR MEETING TODAY!

- Is there an important disjunction that gives rise to the plot?
- In what direction do the trajectories of the plot go?
- Are there any important diversions from the expected trajectory?
- Is the novelist asking us to notice events, the full meaning of which will only be revealed later?
- Are there crucial moments around which the plot pivots ?
- Are the pivotal moments related to discoveries?
- How does the novelist wind-up, resolve or achieve the denouement of the plot?

REFERENCES

- Gill, R. (1995). *Mastering english literature* (2nd edition). Palgrave.
- Gill, R. (2006). *Mastering english literature* (3rd edition). Bloomsbury Publishing.

A WARM
THANK YOU
TO ALL OF YOU!

