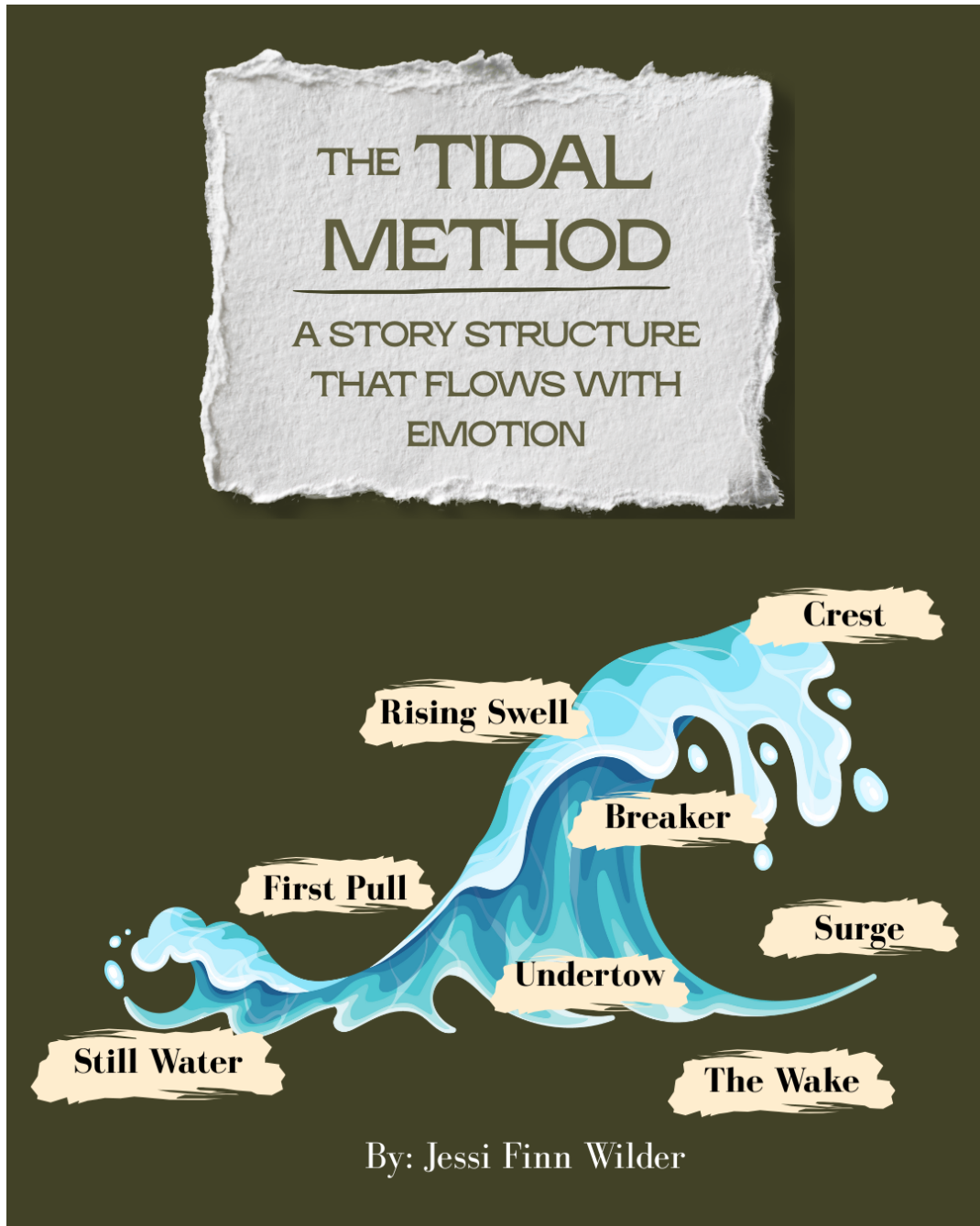


THE TIDAL METHOD: A STORY STRUCTURE THAT FLOWS

A flexible structure that mirrors the natural rhythm of tides. It focuses on emotional movement, character transformation, and theme. Use this worksheet to map the emotional current of your story.



KNOW YOUR CHARACTER

Before diving into the tide, let's meet your protagonist. The Tidal Method starts with character because the story is not just about the plot, it's about the person moving through it.

- ❖ Who are they at the beginning of the story
- ❖ What are they most afraid to face about themselves?
- ❖ What belief do they hold that isn't true?
- ❖ What do they *want* versus what do they *need*?
- ❖ What emotional transformation would be meaningful by the end?
- ❖ What kinds of choices define them early in the story, and how will those evolve?

1. STILL WATER

The stillness before the change.

- ❖ What feels emotionally barren or "off" in the protagonist's world?
- ❖ What belief or wound is keeping them stuck?
- ❖ How do they see themselves at this point?
- ❖ What version of themselves are they clinging to?
- ❖ What choice have they made to remain in this state?
- ❖ Theme hint: What truth is absent here?

2. THE FIRST PULL

The current shifts. A call or disruption arises.

- ❖ What event nudges them toward change?
- ❖ How does this create internal or external tension?
- ❖ What do they want to do versus what they *should* do?
- ❖ How does this moment begin to crack their self-image?
- ❖ What is the first significant choice they make in response to this disruption?

3. RISING SWELL

Things begin to move, but not in the right direction.

- ❖ What are they pursuing? (Often the wrong goal.)
- ❖ Who challenges their view of the world or themselves?
- ❖ What tension is building beneath the surface?
- ❖ What internal flaw is being exposed through their choices?
- ❖ How are they resisting growth?
- ❖ What choices are pushing the story forward, even if unknowingly?

4. THE CREST

The high point of false victory or major turn.

- ❖ What moment feels like a win or emotional breakthrough?
- ❖ What realization is close, but not fully embraced?
- ❖ How does their false self believe they've succeeded?
- ❖ How are they still protecting themselves from vulnerability?
- ❖ What decision reinforces their current identity, even if it's flawed?

5. THE BREAKER

The wave crashes, the truth hits hard.

- ❖ What breaks them?
- ❖ What belief or lie is destroyed?
- ❖ How does this moment strip them emotionally?
- ❖ What are they forced to confront about themselves?
- ❖ How does this moment mark the death of their old self?
- ❖ What critical decision must they face, and how does it change them?

6. THE UNDERTOW

The inward pull, quiet but powerful.

- ❖ How do they reflect and begin to shift?
- ❖ What internal decision realigns them with truth?
- ❖ How does their understanding of self, begin to change?
- ❖ What does it cost them to choose growth?
- ❖ What new choices reveal their transformation in progress?

7. THE SURGE

Return with clarity. A transformed action.

- ❖ What new truth do they live by?
- ❖ How is the theme fulfilled through their choices?
- ❖ How do they now see themselves and others?
- ❖ How is this action different from how they would have acted before?
- ❖ What conscious, transformational choice defines this moment?

8. THE WAKE

The release, the tide flows out, leaving space for something new.

- ❖ How does the world settle after transformation?
- ❖ What quiet truths remain?
- ❖ What is let go of, and what lingers?
- ❖ How has the character's emotional foundation changed?
- ❖ What glimpse do we get of their new self?
- ❖ What final choice or action quietly closes their arc?