

NICHE RAIDERS
AI FICTION PROMPT GUIDE

Scene & Pacing

Scenes that move, chapters that pull.

50 prompts for pacing and scene tension

How to use this guide

This is a working toolkit for the two things that keep readers turning pages: scenes that move and chapters that pull. Fifty Claude prompts, grouped into six parts that scale from a single scene up to the rhythm of the whole book.

Each prompt is written to be copied straight into Claude. Anything in [BRACKETS] is a placeholder. Swap in your scene, your chapter, your outline, or your genre before you send it. The more specific your inputs, the sharper the pacing you get back.

A simple order that works for most drafts:

1. Sharpen where each scene starts and ends (Part One), then install its engine (Part Two).
2. Build and release tension across the scene (Part Three).
3. Control the pace sentence by sentence (Part Four).
4. Zoom out to chapter and story rhythm (Part Five), then diagnose and polish (Part Six).

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Start Late, End Early

Most scenes start too soon and stay too long. These prompts find the latest possible entry and the sharpest exit so every scene moves.

1. Enter the Scene Late

P R O M P T

Act as a structural editor. Read the scene below and tell me the latest point I could start it without losing anything the reader needs. Cut the warm-up and show me where the scene should actually open.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Start as late as you possibly can. The reader fills in the run-up for free.*

2. Find the Right Entry Point

P R O M P T

Give me three different places this scene could begin, each later than the last, and tell me what each opening gains and loses in momentum. Recommend the strongest entry for pace.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *The best entry point is usually two beats later than your instinct says.*

3. Cut the Warm-Up

P R O M P T

This scene opens with throat-clearing: a character waking, traveling, or settling in before anything happens. Trim the run-up so the scene starts at the first moment of friction or change.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *If a scene opens with arriving, waking, or settling in, the real scene starts after that.*

4. Exit Early, End on a Turn

PROMPT

Tell me where this scene should end for maximum impact, ideally on a turn, a decision, or an unanswered question. Cut any wind-down after the real ending and show me the new final line.

Scene:
[PASTE]

Tip Leave the scene on the turn. Everything after the change is the reader's to imagine.

5. Scene Hook Generator

PROMPT

Write eight strong opening lines for this scene that drop the reader into motion, tension, or a question. Avoid setup and weather. Vary the approach so I can pick the one with the most pull.

Scene context:
[PASTE]

Tip Generate eight openings and steal the best. The first line you write is rarely the strongest.

6. Open a Scene Question

PROMPT

Rewrite the opening of this scene so it plants a question the reader needs answered within the first few lines, a gap, a threat, or a mystery that pulls them forward.

Scene:
[PASTE]

Tip A question on page one is a promise the reader follows to find the answer.

7. Sharpen the Transition

PROMPT

Here is the end of one scene and the start of the next. Tighten the transition: decide whether to hard cut, summarize, or skip time, and rewrite so no momentum leaks between them.

[PASTE BOTH]

Tip Transitions are where momentum leaks. Hard cut whenever you can.

8. Cold-Open the Chapter

P R O M P T

Rewrite the start of this chapter as a cold open: drop the reader straight into a charged moment with no preamble, and let context catch up after the hook lands.

Chapter opening:

[PASTE]

Tip *A cold open trusts the reader. Drop them in and let context catch up.*

Build the Scene's Engine

A scene that moves has an engine: a goal, mounting conflict, and a turn. These prompts install that structure so nothing feels like filler.

9. Goal, Conflict, Disaster

P R O M P T

Analyze this scene for its three structural beats: the point-of-view character's goal, the conflict that blocks it, and the disaster or complication that ends the scene worse than it began. If any beat is missing, tell me and suggest how to add it.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Goal, conflict, disaster. If a scene is missing one, that is usually why it feels flat.*

10. Give the POV Character a Goal

P R O M P T

This scene feels aimless because the point-of-view character wants nothing in it. Give them a concrete scene goal that fits the story, and rewrite the opening so the reader knows what they are after.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *A scene with no want is a scene with no engine. Give the POV character something to chase.*

11. Escalate Through Obstacles

P R O M P T

Rewrite this scene so the character meets rising obstacles on the way to their goal, each harder than the last. Make the scene get worse before it turns, instead of resolving too easily.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Easy roads are boring. Make the character fight up a rising slope of obstacles.*

12. Land the Scene Turn

PROMPT

Every strong scene changes a value from start to finish: safe to threatened, hopeful to crushed, strangers to allies. Tell me what value this scene turns, and if it does not turn, rewrite the ending so it does.

Scene:
[PASTE]

Tip *If nothing changes, it was not a scene. Find the value that turns from start to finish.*

13. Build the Reaction Beat

PROMPT

After this high-impact scene, write the sequel beat that lets the character react: the emotional fallout, the dilemma they now face, and the decision that launches the next scene. Keep it tight, no wallowing.

What just happened:
[PASTE]

Tip *Big scenes need a reaction beat after. Let the character process, decide, and launch the next move.*

14. Balance Scene and Sequel

PROMPT

Look at this stretch of chapters and tell me whether I have enough reaction and processing beats between the action scenes, or whether it is all action with no breath. Recommend where to add or cut.

[PASTE OUTLINE OR SCENES]

Tip *All action and no breath exhausts the reader. Balance the punches with reactions.*

15. Make a Quiet Scene Earn It

PROMPT

This is a slower, quiet scene. Tell me whether it earns its place, and if it sags, give it a quiet engine: a subtle want, an undercurrent of tension, or a small turn so it still moves.

Scene:
[PASTE]

Tip *A quiet scene still needs an engine. Give it a subtle want or an undercurrent.*

16. Make the Scene Multitask

P R O M P T

Strong scenes do more than one job. Tell me what this scene currently accomplishes, then show me how to make it carry a second purpose, advancing plot while also deepening character or raising tension.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Make every scene do two jobs. Single-purpose scenes are the first to feel like filler.*

17. Choose the Scene Outcome

P R O M P T

Give me four ways this scene could end using the outcome ladder: yes, no, yes-but, and no-and. Tell me which keeps the story moving with the most tension for [GENRE].

Scene goal and situation:

[PASTE]

Tip *Yes-but and no-and keep stories moving. A clean yes or no often ends the tension too early.*

Build and Release Tension

Tension is what keeps a reader turning pages. These prompts escalate stakes, withhold answers, and place the release valves that keep it bearable.

18. Escalate the Tension

P R O M P T

Rewrite this scene so the tension rises steadily from the first line to the last, each beat tightening the screw. Tell me where it currently plateaus and how each new beat raises the pressure.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Tension should climb, not plateau. Every beat tightens the screw.*

19. Raise the Stakes Mid-Scene

P R O M P T

Partway through this scene, introduce a complication that raises what the character stands to lose, so the second half matters more than the first. Suggest the complication and weave it in.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Raise the stakes mid-scene and the second half outweighs the first.*

20. Add a Ticking Clock

P R O M P T

Give this scene or sequence a time pressure that makes every delay costly: a deadline, a closing window, a countdown. Show me how to thread the clock through so urgency builds.

Scene or sequence:

[PASTE]

Tip *A clock turns waiting into pressure. Every delay should now cost something.*

21. Build Slow-Burn Dread

PROMPT

Rewrite this scene so unease builds quietly under an ordinary surface, the wrongness leaking in detail by detail, rather than spiking too early. Restraint over shock.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Dread is built, not dropped. Leak the wrongness in slowly and let it grow.*

22. Add Microtension to Every Page

PROMPT

Read this passage and show me how to add microtension at the line level, the small friction, doubt, or discomfort that keeps a reader leaning in even in calm moments. Mark the flat lines and lift them.

[PASTE]

Tip *Microtension is the secret to unputdownable. Keep small friction alive on every page.*

23. Withhold Information

PROMPT

Tell me what this scene reveals too soon. Show me how to withhold or delay the key information so curiosity pulls the reader forward, without cheating or confusing them.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Curiosity is a pull. Withhold the answer and the reader chases it.*

24. Add Complications and Interruptions

PROMPT

This scene resolves too smoothly. Add the interruptions and complications that keep the character from getting what they want easily, so the reader cannot predict how it lands.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *If the character gets what they want easily, the reader gets bored. Complicate it.*

25. Place the Release Valve

P R O M P T

After this high-tension peak, write a brief release beat that lets the reader breathe without killing momentum, a moment of relief, humor, or quiet before the next rise. Keep it short.

What just peaked:

[PASTE]

Tip *After a peak, give one breath of relief. Unbroken tension goes numb.*

26. Tension in a Calm Scene

P R O M P T

This is a peaceful scene with no overt conflict. Give it quiet tension through subtext, unspoken history, or a small unsettling detail, so it still hums under the calm.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Calm is not slack. Run subtext underneath and the quiet scene still hums.*

Control the Pace

Pace is a craft you control sentence by sentence. These prompts speed up the fast parts, slow down the deep ones, and cut what drags.

27. Speed Up an Action Scene

P R O M P T

Rewrite this action scene to move faster: shorter sentences and paragraphs, strong verbs, less interior reflection, cleaner choreography. Show me the quickened version.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Speed lives in short sentences and clean verbs. Strip reflection from the action.*

28. Slow Down for an Emotional Beat

P R O M P T

This emotional moment goes by too fast to land. Slow the pace: expand the beat with interiority, sensory detail, and shorter scene time, so the reader feels its weight.

Moment:

[PASTE]

Tip *Slow down to make a moment matter. Expand the beat you want the reader to feel.*

29. Tune the Sentence Rhythm

P R O M P T

Rewrite this passage so sentence length matches the intended pace: short and clipped for speed and impact, longer and flowing for calm. Use a one-line sentence at the moment of greatest force.

Passage:

[PASTE]

Tip *Sentence length is tempo. End on a one-liner when you want the hit to land.*

30. Control Paragraph and White Space

PROMPT

Tell me how paragraph length and white space are affecting the pace of this passage. Break up the dense blocks where I want speed, and show me how the page rhythm changes the read.

[PASTE]

Tip *White space sets the speed. Break the dense blocks where you want momentum.*

31. Cut the Pace-Killers

PROMPT

Find what is slowing this passage when it should move: filtering, over-description, repeated information, throat-clearing, and excessive interiority. Flag each and show the tightened version.

[PASTE]

Tip *Find the pace-killers, filtering, over-description, repetition, and cut them without mercy.*

32. Summary vs Real-Time

PROMPT

Tell me which parts of this stretch should be summarized to move faster and which deserve full real-time scene. Rewrite one section the better way to show the difference.

[PASTE]

Tip *Summarize the connective tissue, dramatize the turning points. Mismatched pacing tires readers.*

33. Vary the Scene Tempo

PROMPT

Look at these consecutive scenes and tell me whether they run at the same tempo for too long. Recommend where to quicken or slow the pace so the rhythm varies and never lulls.

[PASTE SCENE LIST OR SUMMARIES]

Tip *Same tempo too long becomes a lull. Vary the speed scene to scene.*

34. Pace a Fight or Chase

PROMPT

Rewrite this fight or chase for momentum: tight cause-and-effect beats, minimal reflection, sensory immediacy, and a clear sense of stakes and geography. Keep the reader oriented while moving fast.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *In a fight or chase, keep cause-and-effect tight and the geography clear while you move fast.*

35. Pace an Intimate Scene

PROMPT

Pace this romantic or intimate scene with a deliberate slow build: stretch the anticipation, control the rhythm of advance and pause, and match the tempo to a [SWEET / STEAMY] heat level.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Intimacy is paced in anticipation. Control the rhythm of advance and pause.*

Chapter and Story Rhythm

Zoom out from the scene to the shape of the whole book. These prompts sharpen chapter hooks, fix the sagging middle, and pace the arc to the climax.

36. Audit the Chapter Opening

P R O M P T

Read the first lines of this chapter and tell me whether they hook fast enough. If the chapter starts slow, show me where it should begin and rewrite the opening to pull the reader in.

Chapter opening:

[PASTE]

Tip *Open every chapter on a pull. A slow chapter start is where readers set the book down.*

37. Write a Chapter-Ending Hook

P R O M P T

Write five options for the last line or beat of this chapter that make the reader turn the page: a cliffhanger, a revelation, a question, a reversal. Keep each true to the scene and spoiler-free.

Chapter ending:

[PASTE]

Tip *End chapters on a hook and the page turns itself.*

38. Find the Chapter Break

P R O M P T

Tell me whether this chapter is the right length and breaks in the right place for pace. Recommend where to cut it, combine it, or split it so each chapter ends on a pull.

[PASTE CHAPTER OR SUMMARY]

Tip *Break the chapter where the tension is highest, not where the action happens to pause.*

39. Fix the Sagging Middle

PROMPT

My middle is dragging. Based on the summary below, tell me why the energy dips and give me five ways to re-inject momentum: a midpoint reversal, a new complication, raised stakes, a subplot turn, or a deadline.

Middle summary:
[PASTE]

Tip *A sagging middle wants a reversal. A strong midpoint turn re-lights the whole book.*

40. Map the Story's Tension Curve

PROMPT

From this outline, sketch the rise and fall of tension across the book and flag the flat stretches where it sags or the spots where it peaks too early. Recommend adjustments for a satisfying curve.

Outline:
[PASTE]

Tip *Sketch the tension curve and the flat stretches reveal themselves at a glance.*

41. Pace the Opening Chapters

PROMPT

Tell me whether my first few chapters hook fast enough for [GENRE] or spend too long on setup and backstory. Show me what to cut or move so the story gets moving sooner.

[PASTE OPENING SUMMARY OR PAGES]

Tip *Hook fast. Modern readers give the opening chapters very little patience.*

42. Build to the Climax

PROMPT

Look at the chapters leading into my climax and tell me whether the tension and pace escalate enough heading in. Recommend how to tighten the run-up so the climax hits at full force.

[PASTE SUMMARY]

Tip *Tension should ramp into the climax. Tighten the run-up so the peak hits hard.*

43. Pace the Ending

P R O M P T

My falling action and ending feel rushed or saggy. Tell me which it is and how to pace the resolution: what to linger on, what to cut, and how to land the final beats with the right rhythm.

Ending summary:
[PASTE]

Tip *Land the ending with intention. Linger on what matters, cut what is already resolved.*

44. Alternate Tension and Relief

P R O M P T

Look at this sequence of set-pieces and tell me whether I alternate high-tension scenes with relief well enough, or whether the reader will fatigue. Recommend a rhythm of pressure and release.

[PASTE SCENE LIST]

Tip *Alternate pressure and relief. Wall-to-wall intensity fatigues as surely as wall-to-wall calm.*

Diagnose and Polish

Last, find where readers will skim and fix it. These prompts hunt down dead weight and run the final pacing pass.

45. Pacing Diagnostic Pass

P R O M P T

Act as a tough developmental editor. Read this passage and map its pace beat by beat, flagging every stretch that drags and every spot that feels rushed. Do not rewrite yet, just diagnose with specifics.

[PASTE]

Tip *Map the pace before you fix it. Specifics beat a vague sense that something drags.*

46. Find the Boring Parts

P R O M P T

Read this chapter as an impatient reader and tell me honestly where you would start skimming. Quote the exact lines where attention drops and tell me why.

[PASTE]

Tip *Read as an impatient reader. The line where you skim is the line to cut.*

47. The Page-Turner Test

P R O M P T

Go through this chapter and tell me, at each scene break, whether there is enough pull to keep a reader going. Mark any break where they could comfortably put the book down, and suggest how to keep them turning.

[PASTE]

Tip *Test every scene break for pull. If the reader could stop there comfortably, add a hook.*

48. Audit Each Scene's Purpose

P R O M P T

List every scene in this section and, for each, name what it accomplishes for plot, character, and tension. Flag any scene that earns its keep on only one front or could be cut or merged.

[PASTE SCENE LIST OR SUMMARIES]

Tip *A scene that does only one job is a candidate to cut or merge. Make each one multitask.*

49. Tighten a Baggy Scene

P R O M P T

This scene is overwritten and slow. Cut it down hard: remove the redundancy, trim the over-description, and keep only the beats that move it. Show me the leaner version and what you cut.

Scene:

[PASTE]

Tip *Bagginess hides in redundancy and over-description. Trim to the beats that move.*

50. Final Pacing Polish Pass

P R O M P T

This is my final pacing pass on this chapter. Identify the three places that most hurt the pace, whether dragging or rushed, and for each give a specific fix. Then tell me the single change that would most improve the read for [GENRE].

Chapter:

[PASTE]

Tip *End every chapter here. Fix the three worst pace problems and the whole read tightens.*

Now go make it move.

Niche Raiders · Scene & Pacing Builder