A fast plotting exercise for when all you have is a nebulous cloud of idea-stuff floating around in your brain.

1. BRAINSTORM (OPTIONAL)

Start here if you have no ideas whatsoever, or want to develop your idea more before using the chart. Use a separate sheet of paper to write down a list or mind map of anything you might like to write about: genres, types of characters, themes, even images or lines of dialogue you have in your head. Try for specifics. If you write down a genre, try to also write down specific genre elements that interest you. Don't worry about writing down conflicting ideas; everything will be sorted out later.

2. CHART

Take any material you have developed at this point, and add it to the chart wherever it seems to fit best. It doesn't matter if it fits the category exactly. If, at this point, you have no ideas whatsoever, make things up, ask others for suggestions, roll dice, or use online generators.

- Add characters in any way that makes sense: names, job titles, interests, roles in the community, etc.
- Events are not necessarily events in the sense of parties or festivals. An event is anything that could happen in the story, such as winning the lottery or having something stolen.
- You may have setting, a like a city or time period, which encompasses the whole story, but where do individual scenes occur?
- For plots and conflict, write down any ideas you have about what the main plot is, any ideas for subplots, and any ideas for conflicts between characters. Consider human vs. human, human vs. self, human vs. nature, and human vs. event.
- Miscellany is everything else: items, themes, quotes, clues, etc.
- Try for at least six entries in every column. Ask questions to find more items, and add items that seems logical (like adding a pet store to setting, if a pet groomer is one of your characters).

3. CONNECT

Draw lines connecting characters with events, settings, plots and conflicts, and miscellany.

- Start by marking one or more characters.
- Draw a line that connects them to an event. Avoid using more than one event at a time, unless they absolutely have to happen at the same time, same place, and with the same characters.
- Connect the character/event line to a single setting. A scene occurs in a single place and time. If either changes, it is a new scene.
- Add one or more plots and conflicts.
- And as much miscellany as you want.
- Repeat. Using different colored lines will make the next step easier. Continue until you've used all or most of the events. Don't over-think, and use combinations that interest you and seem fun.

- Add more items to the chart as they occur to you and place them in lines.
- Not all items have to be used.

4. WRITE DOWN SCENES

Every line represents an idea for a scene. Grab an index card, pick the most interesting line, and write down a sentence or two to describe the scene.

5. FIGURE OUT NEW SCENES

For every scene you write down, think about what consequences might come from it. Write down more scene cards for the consequences.

6. STUDY (OPTIONAL)

If you don't already know who your main character is, or what your main plot is, study the chart. Which characters ended up in the most lines? What plots were used the most?

CHARACTER	EVENTS	SETTING	PLOTS & CONFLICT	MISCELLANY