

Sixth Workshop in Playwriting

Follow-up on the Monologue leading to Scenarios



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Tips for Writing Monologues

Main Rule: The audience has to care about what the actor is talking about. If the performer spends a lot of time in the 'woe is me' frame of mind an audience will turn off pretty quickly.

The Trick: Combine the real with the theatrical. The monologue form must always come first. All true stories are crafted for performing, and not to tell the truth in tons of trivial detail.

Remember: All stories or monologues or plays are about an ordinary person dealing with extraordinary circumstances, or an extraordinary person dealing with ordinary circumstances.

Continually ask yourself if you are being theatrical and dramatic throughout the monologue. Remember, you're writing it to be performed.

The Theme: Sometimes it is not a character that takes center stage in a monologue but a theme or issue.

The Positive: A character's experience with an issue is a great way to explore it.

The Negative: Sometimes the theme takes precedence over character and story.

The Trick: Make sure your character has a passionate reaction to the issue, whether positive or negative.

QUESTIONS?

In Class Exercise:

Let's bridge from monologues to scenarios.

(Review what a scenario is, based upon the five parts of the story play.)

1. Spread out in the theatre with some paper AND a pencil.
2. **Choose ONE OF the following scenarios:**
 - A. **For women:** You just found out that you're pregnant. You have to tell the father. What do you say?
For men: You just have been told by your girlfriend that she is pregnant. What do you say to her?
 - B. You just found out that you have an opportunity to go to Missoula to attend a concert you've always wanted to see. You have to get permission from your parent(s). What do you say to him/her/them to persuade them to let you go?
 - C. You just dented your best friend's car that you "borrowed" under false pretenses. You have to return the car and face your friend. What do you say?

More directions for the exercise.

1. Write a monologue for a few minutes. Don't edit or censor yourself. I'll time you.
2. Now, let's pair up.
 - A. Read your monologues to each other, one line at a time.
 - B. Now, devise a scenario based upon the five parts of the story play that combines your two monologues. You can go beyond the basic original situation that inspired your monologue. Make it work!
 - C. Both write it down. You'll be turning this in, along with your monologue later.

STAY ON TASK!
USE YOUR TIME WISELY.