

Playwriting 101

- Reflect on what you think this analogy is trying to teach about dialogue:
 - “Dialogue is action. It is not treating water, it is not swimming backward, it is not thinking about swimming forward, and it is not standing on the side of the pool deciding how it might feel to dive in. No. It is in the water and swimming around” (Jensen).

Read “Dialogue” as class.

- As we read, what pieces of advice does Julie Jensen give about writing dialogue?
 - Write this advice in your writer’s journal.

Read “Character” with your group

- As you read, discuss what pieces of advice Julie Jensen gives about writing characters.
 - Write these in your writer’s journal.

Read “Plot” by yourself

1. As you read, write down in your writer’s journal the pieces of advice Julie Jensen gives about writing plot.
2. Create a visual image or map that represents what a plot looks like according to Jensen. Label and define the different stages.

“Dances with Dialogue”

- Read page 1 as a class. As we read, write down the advice and ideas that stand out to you that you think would help you create good dialogue.

Discussion

- “To master dramatic dialogue, one must master both the spoken and unspoken. Playwrights must work both sides of dialogue’s ‘street.’ Perhaps 95% of the tie will be spent on the avoidance side—the side where any words are the words of not-speaking” (Karnes).
- What are some “diversion tactics” people use to avoid REALLY speaking (saying 100% what’s going on in mind and heart).

Tactics Brainstorm

Some tactics Karnes talks about

- Speaking more: dominate the conversation by saying the most—allows for control and power.
- Speaking less: silence and mystery. Every word is a risk of really “speaking” so the less you say, the less you reveal.
- Cutting others off: control the topics and keep the power of the conversation
- “Taking” knowledge: fill conversation with facts and trivia rather what’s really going on with you.

- The interrogator: Asking questions of others so that you can distract from people asking you questions.
- Change the subject: diversionary tactic if the conversation borders too close on what you don't want to reveal.
- Ridicule: Bring other people down with insults to gain power in the conversation and to distract from your truths.
- Playing with received line: twisting what was said or asked so that you don't have to talk about what was originally intended.

Practice Scenario-with a partner

- One friend wants to share with another friend his/her excitement about a letter he/she received from his/her top college choice.
 - Letter Holder's Objective: You open the letter and discover that it's a rejection. You are very upset about this, but you try to hide your feelings.
 - Friend's Objective: You never thought that your friend would be accepted to this college, but you didn't have the guts to tell him/her. Console him/her when you find out that the letter is a rejection.
- Write a 2-page scene for this scenario. Must use at least six of the dialogue tactics we've discussed. No narrator. No violence. Only two actions allowed. The rest must be told through dialogue.