

Ep #47: Mapping Your Screenplay Part 2

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In this episode, we're talking all about having a sentence or two to convince someone your script is worth reading.

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Yes, today we're giving you the toolkit to make that sentence irresistible in part two of our four part series of mapping your screenplay. So listen in.

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This is the Script Reader Pro podcast, hands on advice, insider hacks and deeper discussions for the screenwriters who are serious about breaking into the industry.

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Hey everybody, this is Desiree, and this is the Script Reader Pro podcast, I am your host, and I'm here with Scott, my husband.

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Yes, I am your husband. I am also a screenwriter and mentor and analyst and all those wonderful things here as part of our beautiful Script Reader Pro team.

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Wow, wasn't that good? A little on the cheesy side, but we'll go with it. Okay, go with it. Hey, yes, we are doing a four part series, which we've never done a series before. No, I'm excited about it.

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This would be the part. Yes, the first part we talked about the part du, and the first one we talked to, if you haven't listened to it, go back. Listen to it. It is all about finding that spark, finding that idea. Desiree is mimicking me, and it made me laugh. All about, you know, how you find an idea, how you make it yours, what you should be focusing on, things to keep in mind. So listen to that. And this is a follow up on the next step.

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So make sure that you listen to the first part before the second part. Yes, I think there is something about that in Sesame Street.

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We probably learned how to go from one to two in Sesame Street? Probably, yeah, yes, exactly. What were you watching? The other day, you watched some sesame street thing of Ernie and Bert. Bert was walking around, no Ernie was walking around in his apartment. Missing Bert

because he wasn't there or something. He was it's all best friends or what? Couldn't function without Ernie around. No sleep. Who's which one's Ernie? Which one's Bert?

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Ernie's Orange. Oh yes, he's yellow. And Ernie was like, wandering around in the dark that he couldn't go to sleep without his best friend.

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We're next to him. That's so I love Sesame Street. It's such a great show. It's just, it's great show. It had everything, classics

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and, like, what you could get away with, like, back in the day, not away with but like, there was so much more inclusivity back in the day, I think, where there wasn't so much, ooh, watch where you're saying there, yeah, it was just wholesome, like, genuine kindness.

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And it was all about being kind, yeah, kindness.

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How the world has changed. To be like, You got to watch what you're saying, they're like, to a certain extent, right? Like, yeah, there are where it's like, okay,

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yeah, don't call a person a wheelchair, a cripple, but don't point out that they're in a wheelchair at all, right? Just be kind see them as a person, right? But then we learned a lot of those things from kids, just kids get different things to grow up on these days. So true story. You know what is, I'm old and you're older. You're getting up there, right? You're getting not older than me, but you're older than you were nice as a child. Y'all are older pearls of wisdom on the script, reader, pro podcast, hey, we are all older than we were when we were a child. Oh yes, we're here to educate you and

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teach you and teach you things you haven't heard before. Sesame ways you haven't heard before. Guys, where is wholesome as Sesame Street?

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Yeah, let's all be that typewriter who types on themselves words of the day. Who is your favorite character on Sesame Street? I always mix up Sesame Street in the Muppets because there was such crossover. There was not. Who is your Kermit, the frog is on Sesame Street, isn't he?

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No, he's not. He's on the Muppets. I thought he made appearances, hmm,

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mine was Grover, sesame's decay. This might sound like Grover. You like Grover. This might sound stupid. And maybe it's not even Sesame Street. Maybe it's Mr. Dress up, but it's the worm. You know, he had the tiny little almost sticks, and then worm would go and eat it. His back would go up. But no, but I loved how cute they made the worm move. That was my fat.

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Was Sesame Street, yeah, and I love Snuffleupagus. Yeah, me too, but had such a vibrant personality. Grover to the rescue.

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Yeah, right. Super Grover, allowed. Super Grover,

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I just hate he had just had a fun personality. Okay, well, let's stop. Hey, before we go into our episode, we always start by what we watched late.

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Yeah, we were what, and we watched this new show last night or the night before, right before,

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good, because I don't even know what this show is, the studio. Oh, this was the show, yeah. So it's all those writers out there, you're gonna freaking love Yeah, you'll love

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it, but don't watch it with your spouse that don't like writing. But no, yeah. Like, because I was like, oh, let's watch it. We need something light hearted. It won a ton of Emmys. I'm like, it's got to be good, right? And I love movies and the inside stuff on movies and business. So I was like, oh, let's watch it. So we watched it. And the whole, like, even. Five minutes in, I was like, looking, I was side eyeing Desiree to see how interested she was and if she was asleep already. And then when she said to me, okay, who's, who is that guy? And I said, That's Martin Scorsese. And she's like, and who is that guy? Mike, is Martin Scorsese, and what has he made? I'm like, like, good fellas and like all and she's like, Okay. I was like, This is not for her. But I was like, all that, but the writing was really smart. They connected everything, brought it full circle. But as soon as it was over, I didn't even ask desire. I just said, That's not your kind of show. That's exactly and then you said, Nope, but hey, you got a new show you can watch.

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That was when I was being very kind and polite.

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So this, that's like the Script Reader Pro podcast. This is like as far as Desiree will go with screenwriting.

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This is almost too far at times to catch me in a good day, to have me talk about writing and listen to him talk about writing for 45 minutes. Yeah. Never mind me watching an entertaining TV series. More about writing? Yeah, like, yeah. That's at the top of my job list.

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Anyways, I enjoyed it. I'll keep watching it. I thought the writing was really clever.

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So no movie stuff, and you know the basic premises, and

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you know names of writers and directors and stuff, you'd find it entertaining. So it

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was interesting. The most interesting part for me, and of that, is that it's not Steve Buscemi,

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it's Steve Buscemi, like, like, Bruce Chet, brucechetta buscami. But they were saying Buscemi, and then they were like, No, it's buscami. And then when he introduced himself, he said, Yeah, I'm Steve Buscemi. So, like, it was different every time. So I don't know how you say if you're listening to this podcast, we love Steve Buscemi, Chemi, semi, Semi. My am I? Hey, let

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us know how to say your name properly. Yeah, if you're listening,

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which you probably are, because everyone's listening. Everybody listens to us. Because how could you not listen to us? We're awesome. Yeah, give a shout. We'll get you on and we'll interview. We'd love to hear how you see writing your own name, Steve.

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Steve, how do you say your name? Okay, on this episode we're talking

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about, we're talking about packaging your idea. Because if you can't package your idea and sell it to someone screwed, then it may not be the right idea you've chosen to write. I was going with your screw. You're screwed. Yeah. And this isn't to say, like this, put a little asterisks here. This isn't to say, don't write a script you won't really want to write if you don't know if it'll sell, if you really need to write it, write it. No one can guarantee what will sell and won't sell. No one can say that. We talked

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in the previous episode too, that sometimes writing something can be a means of healing and going very therapeutic. Yeah, right. So, right,

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right, right. My sister, my sister, Carrie, says that all the time, her answer to everything, right? And you can just hear her. And then I had this guy who, like, wanted to be my friend once, and very few, one of your very few, but he wanted to be my friend, and that's how every sentence he would end. And so I'll just say that to Dez, and she'll know exactly who I'm talking about.

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Right? Also, Carrie is like, infamous, where, right, right, that's what it is, right,

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right, right, yeah, right. And I

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love your sister because she's just as messed up and vulgar in the head as

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I am, I know. And she doesn't like people, but loves to talk about them, just like you Me and her like meant to be sisters. Yep, more than me and her meant to be siblings. We're talking Yes. So, so, you know, so, so have have that idea, have that spark, but know how to package it. No, you have to be able to come up with a log line. And, yeah, this is all stuff that you're you're probably going to get ready after your script is done, right? That the one page is selling stuff, but you need to have it in mind, because when you go to write that story, you should, oh, you should be able to see your movie poster, see your trailer, see all these things in your head. So you know how you can get someone else excited about it. So that's we're going to talk about today. Some stuff we've talked about before with log lines and things, but just explaining that process of the actual how the business works, a lot of writers just don't know what they like. We had a question, I think, on the last episode. That was how what do I do when I'm done my script? Right? These are the things that you need to be able to do. If you cannot sell this to someone, then there's no point writing it.

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I think too, if you can't get excited about your own work, then how do you expect someone else to get excited for you?

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Right? Exactly. And you have to be excited about the selling part, the hardest part, the marketing that that's the hardest part. And have

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to be excited because that's where the because that's where the money is. It is. That's a whole. I mean,

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it's not like a like, that's a that's the main difference, right? With with writing a script for something, writing like a book, right? If you want to publish your book, you can publish your book yourself, put it up on the internet, sell it on Amazon. You can do that, right? But no one reads screenplays for fun. Accept losers like me. So okay, well, no, you know what I mean, like, it's not a literary literary it's not meant to be just a literary document, right? A screenplay is written so you can sell it, so they can make a movie out of it, or you can make it yourself, and not whatever, right? But if you you have to get a lot of people excited about something before they even read the script. You have to convince someone to read it. So these are the things you need to keep in mind before you get going on the idea. Okay, so that's what we're gonna be going over today. Okay, so what's the first thing? So let's talk about why, why being able to package your idea together matters,

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and I've learned a lot of this just a second. Yep. What does packaging your idea mean? So I've learned

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a lot of this recently, because I'm stepping into the producing realm, right? And so I've been having to put a package together, figure out the budget, realistically, figure out how I can get people interested, creating a pitch deck, creating a look book, creating all these things, right?

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This is the first time you've really had to do it that involved, I think, yeah,

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and a lot of writers are doing this now, because a lot of writers started doing it, and so now producers used to do it. Now expect writers to do it. So you'll get that question, do you have a lookbook? Do you have a pitch deck? I control people like, yeah, I've done your work for you. Yeah, exactly. Writers are just expected to do things for free, but you want to be able to we're not angry about that at all. No, not at all.

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We love that extra work to do for absolutely nothing.

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But, yeah, it's important because you want to be able to because it Making movies is about making money, right? Even if it's making enough money to make your next movie, it still has to generate dollars. And so you want to be able to see, you want to prove it's like proof of concept, right? You want to prove that this idea that you're pouring all this into is something that you can get people excited to read. Because no one's going to just read a screenplay by you sending it to them without an explanation, you have to convince them to read it. So that's kind of these. That's That's what building a package is all about. So, so the kind of, the the wisdom behind

things is that one to two. One to two sentences can get you in a room or get you ignored. Where would these one to two sentences be your log line? And preferably one sentence, right? The best log lines are one sentence

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long, but let's be real, let's not make that one sentence 75 words long. No, because you've written a log line not too long ago. And I was like, Whoa, oh, yeah, you did it for your was it for your look book? And I was like, I don't even know. Like, that is way more like a short synopsis, yeah. Why are you writing a story in a sentence? You cannot write a whole story in a sentence. I'm sorry. You can.

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You can't. It's because writers have all like, okay, so you write, you've written this entire script, right? And then you have to boil it all down to a sentence.

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That's hard, then maybe you shouldn't be writing, no.

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But the best way to come up with log lines is to get your writing group together people you know, and think, here's here's a whole bunch of log lines, or here's my idea. Help me come up with some ways to put in one sentence, right? Like it's hard to do on your own, right? I have our time with it. Everyone does. But yeah, it'll either get you, it'll either get you in a room, or get someone to say, Send me the script, or you'll just hear cricket. Well, like a

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good, good way to think of it, or to look into it too, is looking up log lines yourself, and which ones catch your attention, and which ones are you just like, wow, lame. That's not even a log line, yeah? Like a boy goes to the store and steals candy and then finds out that his estranged father owns the candy shop. That's actually a pretty good, Hey, I just came up. Yeah? That was gonna be a bad

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one, no, but, I mean, it's, there's, it needs more. It needs more. It needs more. But that's you were trying to think of a really bad log line kind of created an interesting, an interesting premise. So, yeah,

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actually, good story. Yeah, I see it taking place in like, the 60s, and finding out, like, a little small town, or like a fishing town, finds out this was in the 60s, and then he finds out that that was his dad, and, like, the 90s,

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and maybe he's, goes back, maybe he's or maybe he's mixed race, and he goes, and this shop owner is, is, is a black man. And maybe he his wife, his mother, was white or Asian or something, and, and, or maybe, you know, back in the 60s, you know, interracial relationships in that place might not have been good. And so he could never say he was his dad. Like there's so many ways you can go.

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He goes back on a search to find his dad, and then his dad has died, and he realizes he has all these siblings, and that they are to then take over this candy store,

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or they're like a crime family, and this guy might maybe he's a DEA agent or something, and now he has to figure out, do I have to take my family down? I've got no one. I now have this family, but they they're doing bad things, and what do I do?

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And their candy is actually not candy. They're Smarties. No, I'm serious.

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I know our powder, the crush. Powder candies are actually cocaine,

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and Scott, this could all take place at Christmas. It could, because it's a candy store, it could,

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yeah, so Steal This Idea.

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So the case of this here, just right here. This is perfect example of how you create a log line, how you create an idea, how you create a premise, and then you play with it, and you see, okay, is there enough there? And what's the tone, what's the genre, what's the audience? With myself right now, that story, and this is what everyone should be doing. That's why, as a writer, don't just stick in your bubble

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that I'm not a writer, and I hate writers, yeah, but you

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are very much a storyteller. When you have a dream, oh my gosh, if anyone next time you have a dream, we're gonna record it and put on the podcast. I had one last night. Holy, when Desiree has a dream, I see I barely Dream like, I'm sure I dream all the time, but I barely wake up and and remember I had a dream. Desiree doesn't very often, but every couple months, she'll wake up and be like, Oh, I had a dream last night. And she will then go on to talk for about three hours. I will every single little weird detail in that dream.

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Since I've been on the sleeping medication, I dream every night. Oh, really, last night was about our dog, Gracie, who's passed, and she went to Disney World with us, and for some reason, we decided to take her, and then I was worried about her overheating. And then there were noodles for sale, but then you had to be careful with buying the noodles, because they had poison in some of the noodles. And then they the owner wanted you to mix the noodles yourself with your hand, with all of the ingredients and stuff. And then we went to take them to Gracie. And Gracie was gone, but here she had gone along the other side of the street, and her leash was caught.

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See weird details. Her times are so detailed, like, you're like, It's so wild. How many? Because I don't think when most people dreamed, people dream, they don't remember every little detail you do, and they're very detailed. Anyways, yes, coming up with ideas, coming up with log lines, you have to be able to get excited about it so that the person you're telling can get excited. But listen,

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you don't always have to just talk with a writer either, like you and me. Just don't have this conversation. I just said

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a man, yeah, boy. Talk with interesting people that you know, and then you go crazy. Yeah? So that's so one or two sentences, right? You come up with a log line. It can get people excited, or it can get crickets, right? It it a lot of the time. It comes down to how that log line presents that idea.

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Log lines, do you think that you see in your job with what you do with as an analyst?

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Well, there's a log line. Usually when anyone submits something, they put their log line there, right? And so every script I read has a log line of some sort, and there's ones that you read, you're like, I have no idea what this is about. Or the log line does not equal the story that you get when you read the screenplay. Or you read the log line, and you're like, holy crap. Why is never one anyone

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thought of that. Then you come to the store and you're like, e that fell very short. Or it's amazing, right? Or the log line doesn't compete with the script. And you're like, that log line deserves to be

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so much bigger. The log line was great. The script didn't quite execute, or the log line didn't set up something. And it was unbelievable. Yeah, so, but, but patterns, patterns do emerge a lot.

You know, sometimes it feels very cookie cutter. You know that you're just, you're following that you're following that guideline, right? Here's the protagonist, here's what they're up against, here's the issue, here's what they have to overcome. And this is why, right? And so sometimes they just fit it in there. But the trick is finding a way to have that log line be infused with your voice, your style, right? Like, if it's a horror movie and I read that log line, I should feel fear. I should be scared. I should understand why this is scary, right? Like, that's hard, right? Comedy log lines are so hard, because it's hard to set up an entire comedy. And I talked about this before, but one of the funniest things I just knew this script was going to be funny when I read the log line, and I can't remember word for it, but it was something like, everybody wishes they could go back and relive High School. Those people are losers. Like it was, yeah, like it was, it was just me. I was like, that's clever, right? And it was like, you know, no one wants to go back this guy, like, but, but you want to make it's hard to set up. So it's tricky. Log lines will kill or, or win that pitch.

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And we have talked about log lines again in the past, in the past episodes, this course, is just like, almost like a combination of several different things to remember when you're mapping your screenplay. But you did talk about before the 5c of screenplays, right?

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Yes, the five C's. And keep in mind here that a log line isn't a summary of your script. It's a specific marketing tool. Okay, that's what you're writing it for, not to summarize it, but to make it sellable, right? So the 5c that we talked about, so we've got character, conflict, clarity, something compelling and the consequences. Okay, so character you want to set up, you know, who is the main character and what makes them unique, the conflict is. What they're actually up against in the story. You want it to be clear, right? Don't waste words. Don't add backstory. Don't, you know, use terms like, right, flip his world upside down, or, you know, things like that, right? And then you want to come. You want something compelling. You want that hook in there, compel us with the hook, right? The element that makes someone say, that's awesome, or, like I said, I've why has never any why has no one ever thought of this yet? Right? And then the consequences, right? The stakes. Well, what happens if they fail, or the or he loses his family, or, you know, he goes to death row, or whatever it is, right? There should be some kind of consequence in there. Okay, so those are the 5c that you can keep in mind,

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those are all in one log line, yeah, you should be able to fit that a log line, yeah.

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So, okay, so my script incision, for example, right when I was trying to come up with that log line, right? The concept is these two medical students are in a lab over a holiday weekend to get the first crack at an untouched cadaver, and when they get in there, they find an object that shouldn't be in a body. That's kind of the concept, right? But I had to try and figure out, okay, well, yeah, that tells us the concept. But where's the story? How do you show, how do you show the story within that? So, who they so the characters, right? To two medical students, right? The

conflict, they find an object in the body that shouldn't be there. The clarity, right? It can't be too wordy, right? It's finding what is, what are the most important details? Is it clear? Is it muddled? Right? Is it important that it's over a holiday weekend, not necessarily needed in a lock line, right? Do we have to talk about what the object is? No, but so that so, but it does have the hook, right? Compelling hook. There's, there's something in it, in a cadaver that shouldn't be in the body. It's like, ooh, but then the consequences are missing. So the consequences are and gunmen come to find it right or, you know, right, you're missing. You'd be missing that whole point. Yeah, that's the story. Yeah, that's the con. That's what makes the movie right hook, too. Yeah. So it's a matter of taking all those elements and trying to put it together. And I was looking at it on IMDb. IMDb, the actual log line the producers that have it put on there and with your script with incision, yeah, so the one they have is two overzealous medical students. So I thought that was a good word choice, right, fight for their lives. So they threw that in there before, after discovering a mysterious device hidden in a cadaver. So that kind of sums up, right? Two overzealous medical students fight for their lives after discovering a mysterious device hidden in a cadaver. Fight for their lives. They don't necessarily need to say bad guys are coming right? It's a way of fighting for for something, right? And then that's a lot fewer words. It doesn't get muddled, right? It's it's clear, right? We don't know why they're fighting for their lives, but we know they found a mysterious device in a cadaver, so it has all the bits and pieces, right? So, you know, it just comes down to making sure that you have, you know, everything you need in there. So, so the questions you want to ask is, in the log line, does it have your protagonist or protagonist, active or reactive, or even both, right? Does it show that this is a story that's going to have movement? You know, for incision, for example, they're fighting for their lives, so they're active, right? They found something. They're reacting, but they have to be active to get out of it, obviously, right? Is the conflict external, and is it cinematic? Well, they're in this example, right there. They're fighting for their lives. They're they have a cadaver. They're obviously at a medical school of some sort, in a lab, but they are going to have to be on the move, right? So there's, there's going to be, you know, some sweeping things. It's a contained story, but it'll be cinematic in how these characters are fighting for their lives. And are the stakes baked in? Well, they're fighting for their lives, so the stakes are there. Whatever they found is obviously important and maybe dangerous, because someone's after it, right? So those are some of the things you want to test in your own I'm not saying that's a perfect log line, perfect example, but those are the things that you want to be looking for, right? You want to make sure that those things are showing up, you know, in some way. But I like the

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idea of the 5c because, because then that gives some kind of guideline to make sure you're hitting all of those points, right? Yeah. And like with my example earlier, with the boy going into the county store realizing that he's his dad, well, that falls flat, because we know it's the character,

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but yeah, we've got the characters right. We got the conflict right. Estranged father and son. What's his dad? No, but that's a conflict, right? There's an estranged father. There clarity we don't really know. We don't know

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anything about it, right? The hook, but not being strange

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father and then the consequences. What are the stakes? So that's a premise, but, but not though, the log line that tells us this is a movie, yeah? All right, cool. Well, okay, so, so, when a lot of people are like, Oh, but, but do you need your log line at the beginning? Maybe you can make it after. You know,

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you mean your log line's beginning. You mean before you write the script. Yeah, like, do

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you have to create it before you write your script? Should you know your log line? Not necessarily, but it's good to know, to keep you, you know, going in that direction and remembering that. You need to market this, right? It's not just for you. I mean, if you want to write it and have it sit in your computer in your basement for the rest of your life, fine, right? But if you want to actually try and sell it, you should know how to sell it. But these are some of the things that you want to use to get people interested. A lot of the time it comes down to comps, what people call comps, which are comparable things. So what is, what's a comp for your script? What are, what are some comparable movies? What are some comparable movies?

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Comps is just something that's been done that is comparable to what

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you've written. Yeah? Or are writing Yeah? Because sometimes you can think of that in your log line, right? So it's Snakes on a Plane meets Murder on the Orient Express. It's about data, right? So a lot of times someone will ask, Oh, you know, what are some comps? Or, you know, give me your log line, or what are some movies, or what's the audience who watches this? It's good to know the comps that you need in there, right? So there's ways to do it, though, right? You want to communicate the tone. You want to understand who that your audience is the scale of it, how it's big, if it's small, the genre, you should know all those when you tell someone your log line, right? Like the incision log line tells you it's obviously a little bit of a thriller, right? It's, it's, you know, it's serious, there's high stakes, you know, those kind of things. But like, if you just say, Oh, it's, like, this movie meets this movie, right? It's, it's avatar meets inception. Okay, well, that kind of it can tell us, okay, those are two big movies. But how do those movies go together? Right? You want to be a little more, you know, little deeper than that. So you can say, for example, that right avatar and inception. So it's set within the exploration of the dream state on maybe an alien planet, and how those dreams pull human beings into the ethereal realm of the aliens, but then the humans break out of it and they control it and try to take over the planet. Okay, yikes. That's a lot. That's a lot, but that's mixing the basis of inception avatar, right? So, so if you're going to say two comparables, you have to explain, maybe, why, why?

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There's a terrible say, like with your lookbook, that was it your lookbook that you just did that with, where you said, but you didn't

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explain why? No, it just showed different movies that it's in the same kind of realm. Yeah, so they didn't do this versus this, no. So we don't you use that might. That's kind of like what you would use in a pitch, right? If you were querying someone, no,

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what I'm saying this comp, like, when would you compare, doing the comparison? When would someone see this comparison?

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Someone might say, Well, what kind of what movies are like it? So you should have that as an idea in your head already. You should know, yeah, like, you should, well, you mean, you don't have to, but when you're you want to be able to compare it to something that's made money. That's the big thing, right?

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Relate to that in some monetary way?

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Yeah, it's like, bridesmaids meets Barbie. If you say that to someone, they'll be like, okay, so immediately they see dollar signs, because Barbie made however much money. And bridesmaids it is too. And bridesmaids is an overtop comedy. And Barbie is, like a commentary on over the top right, like, and a commentary on, you know, capitalism and patriarchy and all that kind of stuff. So, like, Okay, I kind of it gives you an idea of, okay, all right. And then you have the log line that explains why, right? So, would say, why? Well, I'm saying, once you've got that comp of those two movies, for example, right then your log line. When you give them in your log line, they it should also they should see, Oh, I see why. This makes sense for that. I'm saying

28:28

your log line wouldn't be like what you said about that within the exploration of the dream, blah, blah, blah. Would it? Would that be your log line?

28:39

Yeah, like that. There is a really bad log line of Avatar meets

28:42

inception, right? I'm saying so you don't necessarily want the person to be like that is this movie versus this movie? No, without being they don't want, you don't want to have them be like, that's definitely this versus this.

28:54

No, no, not No, not necessarily because, but it's just kind of get to give them an idea of what kind of movie it is. Because sometimes, especially producers, they're not just looking for any script, they're looking for a specific movie. They like, they'll be like, Okay, so we want something that is, you know, like a grounded thriller in the same lane as Sicario. Okay? So if you have something, you've got it, you've got this thriller, and it's grounded, but it's in the lane of Sicario, or other kind of like cartel movies, then that's a good way to actually keep that pitch in mind as well, right? Oh, what's your new movie about that you're writing? Oh, you know, it's kind of in the lane of Sicario, or it's kind of like a new take on the godfather.

29:33

What I'm saying though is, do you want to have two separate log lines, though? Do you want to have one log line that's like, this is the story, or do you want to have a second log line where it's like, this is the story, but it's also this versus this?

29:48

No, not necessarily, yeah, no, not all at once. I think, unless they ask for, what is it like, right? I'm saying yes, you want to have that in your pocket if someone says, Well, what's it

29:58

like, right? So you're just to clear it up. It is a little confusing. I agree. Well, you're the one talking and you're not. You're not, I agree why you can confuse people. You're not confusing yourself. So the log line should just be what we've said before. The C's of the log line being unique and all, yep, in this other comp thing we don't want to be saying in the line of Avatar meets blah, blah, blah, right? That would not be your log line. That would be in the event that someone says, What would you say? This is like,

30:31

yes, or you should know that as you're writing it too, right? It's like, oh, I want it to be like, like, here's an example. We talked about it on another podcast. Yeah, I have it in your you do? You do? Because, yes, because it's easy to sell. Like, we talked about this in a previous one, but there's that movie called Hot Seat, right? And the comparable is, it's like, speed in a chair, okay, right? That's the that's kind of like, that's that also kind of sets up. Oh, okay, I understand the tone, I understand the style I understand, right? But the log line would be, you know, a man is trapped at his desk with a bomb in his chair, and if he stands up, it goes off. So he must do what, the whatever the terrorist or whatever need him to do on his computer, to write like that would be more the log line is, this is the situation stuff. It's basically speed in a chair, right? So you want to, at least kind of, you know, have an idea of, this is the kind of movie I'm writing. This is the kind of movie The producers who make these movies, that's who I'm writing this for. Okay, yeah, right, yeah. So it's just good to keep in mind. It's good to know, because, again, movie

making is a business, and people want to know who, what the audience is, right? So you can say the audience, who's who love avatar and Inception are going to

31:46

love this, right? Okay, yeah. And then you had said before, in the lane of, yeah, oh. So you can also, you know, lane of

31:55

exactly, because if sometimes, if you say, oh, it's Die Hard With A woman, well, that doesn't really tell you anything, right? And that's like, so is it just die hard redone with a with a female character, or it's in the lane, or it's in the vein of Die Hard and the Italian Job, right? It kind of gives you an idea of, okay, that's the tone, that's the style, that's the audience, right? It's not, doesn't tell them anything about what your story is, right? But you should be able to, and this is all just to make sure that the movie that you're writing, that you're investing your time in it, has a marketable aspect to it, right, right? So, so that's what you want to kind of like, think of, what are comps that genuinely reflect your project, and Are they realistic? Right? Don't say a lot of times people are like, Oh, it's like, Oppenheimer meets or, okay, well, those are like \$200 million plus movies. Is your movie? Oh, no, it's, it's a contained store.

32:48

So you're gonna not say something that's gonna be astronomically priced, if yours is a contained script,

32:53

exactly, or if it's like, yeah, I can do this for 10 million well, then think of some movies that are around that same thing, right? So when we talk about packaging, this is kind of thing is that you just, you always need to be keeping in mind, because you need to try and sell this to someone. So the listeners out there know that I really love you. Love talking business stuff, I know. But so you should have your you should have your log line, right? You should know your comps. You should you should have kind of like a short synopsis, right? And synopsis is difficult because sometimes people want a paragraph, sometimes they want half a page, sometimes they want a full page, right, right? And so you need to start practicing, you know, when you're even before you write your movie, you can write a synopsis, write a short synopsis. It'll help you kind of see, does this have is this sustainable? Does this have enough in

33:39

it isn't, isn't a synopsis, something that Script Reader Pro offers as well.

33:46

We will read your synopsis and give you feedback on it. Yeah, yeah. And in our development notes, the larger you know, longer notes, we will write out the summary of the movie. But, but yes, having a synopsis, I say, selling synopsis, right? That if someone only will read the synopsis before they read the script, you need to have a synopsis that excites them, that has your tone, your style, your voice, all of that in the synopsis, so that will tell them this, this is going

to be this kind of story. This screenplay is going to be good because the synopsis was good, right? So you want to be able to see the movie you're going to write. And you need to, like I said in the previous episode, you want to be able to you should be able to see the poster in your head, the trailer in your head. You should be able to see why people get excited about it. These are all things to keep in mind before you even write your screenplay. Right? That's how you start mapping it out, right? You don't want to have a synopsis yet. No, I'm saying, but what I'm saying is you should be able to provide one, right? And some people outline, some people don't, but you should be able to write a good paragraph on what your movie is, right, right? And a lot of this stuff comes after, right? But if you can't picture how you could possibly sell this, then that's what I'm saying, is. Maybe it's not the right version of the idea.

35:02

Haven't done the work yet. Yeah, the script started. Yeah, if you don't like, there's one thing about going and writing a script and having no idea where it goes, and then having the characters tell the story, yeah. But then another thing is, you know, to have it fully mapped out, to have an idea, you know, and that maybe there's not enough investment, right, put into that thinking wise, right?

35:26

It's like, it's like having the idea, or a young man goes into a candy store and doesn't realize that it's run by his estranged father. Okay, so that's a good starting point. But if you just then sit down to write the script and that's all you got, how do you know that that's going to turn into something that you can sell, right? You have to, like, we did talk about, here's some ideas, and here's just some bounces around, and by the time you've kind of, like, got that big picture, then, yeah, you should be able to take you should be able to write your log line. Should be able to write your little synopsis, even a full page, one page synopsis of this is what my movie is going to be. This is at least the starting point of it's going to change and grow.

35:59

Should this be in one page. Or what kind of document are we talking here? Yeah, are we saying it's a synopsis, or, I mean, a law a synopsis, or are we saying different parts to this information? Or what are you trying,

36:10

yeah, like, if you're creating this tool for yourself, right to make sure you're staying on on the right guidelines of, will I be able to pitch this to people? All of it should fit on one page, not in like six font, size six font, but like regular page. You should be able to have your log line, you should have your synopsis, you should have it matching the tone and style of your of your script. You should have two or three comps on there. And you should know this is something I can market if you if you can't do that at all, then maybe it's better as a book. Maybe it's better in a different way. But that's the and I think a lot of the times like, I'll read scripts, sometimes I'm like, I don't know how you can sell this. I don't know who makes this movie. You know, as great as it is to explore ideas and have fun, just remember that screenplays must be bought by someone.

Someone must read it and get so excited that they're willing to risk their reputation on it by saying to their boss, this is the movie we've been waiting for.

37:06

It like the first episode of that show we just talked about, which was about Kool Aid, which was really lame,

37:12

yes, but people got excited because it's about the movie industry, right? And so, you know it makes a difference, but just like anything, right? You have to be able to sell your idea for them to even ask to read the script. So not

37:26

just your idea, I think also you have to be able to sell yourself definitely. But so with just to clarify, then, when we're working on a synopsis, we're meaning I will never work on one. When you're working on a synopsis, though, how long should a typical synopsis even be

37:41

no more than a page. Lot of times, people it'll either be they want a short synopsis that's 150 words, right? One that's maybe 500 words, one that's maybe 1000 right? Who does? Producers, they might request, they might request it. Managers, whatever they might request, because a lot of times someone doesn't want to, they like the idea, and they're like, actually, yeah, that's a good idea. They want to see how you're going to execute it. But execute it, but maybe don't want to spend an hour and a half reading the script, so they'll ask for the synopsis. So that's the thing. Is, you should be able to before you even write the script. You should be able to write something that has enough in it to get people varying lengths, yeah, and if you can't, then maybe there's not enough to the idea. Again, these are all ways to test your idea to see if there's enough in it, right?

38:22

I think a good thing someone could do with homework, oh, is probably build. I was gonna say, Bill, I was gonna say, build a one page document with what you've already done. Yeah, right, and I see that down below, but I'm jumping ahead here.

38:37

No, that's okay. It's true, though. Like, basically, you should be able to fill a page, you know, with enough of here's why my story is worth me writing, yeah, right, even just for yourself to test it, right?

38:50

So what's a takeaway like? Because it's been a lot of information and I'm slightly confused, that's okay. So maybe those that need might need to listen to a gate. Or, I guess if you're following in the show notes, or you can have show notes. Gonna have show notes on this one? Yeah, every Yeah, there'll be some show notes for sure follow along. So yeah, as someone who

doesn't know writing that well, what are the takeaways that you want the listeners to get out of this?

39:12

Okay, so and again, some of these things you will you will tweak and perfect after the script is ready to go. But as you're going to write a script, these are the kind of Three takeaways to keep in mind, okay, a strong log line is, can be the doorway to your career, right? You should be investing in something that has excitement that people hear one sentence, they're like, boom, I see Right exactly. Good comps, right things you can compare it to, they will elevate that interest. But if they're bad comps, they will mislead. So I can't tell you how many times I ask someone, you know, what are these like? Or they do a career letter, and they'll mention a movie so obscure, or even two movies so obscure that I have no idea what that is, that even is, or a movie that made no money, no you have to be telling these com. That that people will, people will know the titles and know they made money.

40:05

So basically, if you want to share a comp with me, chances are pretty good, no matter if it's money making or not.

40:11

That's why you're not a movie producer. I will not know exactly, but you want to be, you know, it's good to give some thoughts to right? Because that's, that's something that we'll say, Well, who watches this, right? And then the third audience, yeah, yeah. But who is that? What have they watched? What are they liked? Oh, well, if you love pretty woman and Dirty Dancing, you'll love this movie, right? It's in that vein, right, that kind of thing. And then the other thing, a one sheet, right? A good synopsis, makes your script pitchable Even when you aren't there, because as a new writer, you're not going to be in a room, you're not going to be sitting across a desk from an executive. All you have is a one piece of paper, and that piece of paper has to be able to sum up a movie and make them see it. So if you can do that ahead of time, you're way ahead of the game. Those are and that this isn't saying you have to write none. This is all. You must do this. If you want to just sit down and write the script and not think about all this stuff, then do it. But these are things to think, yeah, something, some, some, you know, you're testing stuff out

41:06

guidance, yeah. So we did this in the last episode, and we'll be doing this for all of the four part series. Is we have listener homework this section people love,

41:15

yes, everyone loves homework. So homework we gave last time is to come up with a bunch of ideas and stuff, but this time, take your best idea that you really want to go with and write three different versions at least. I always go a dozen, but write at least three different versions of your log line. Okay, you should be able to see it from different ways and and you should make sure that okay, well, is that setting up the right tone? Is that misleading? Is that covering the right stuff?

41:38

Sorry, wanting people to choose their like, one of idea then, yeah? Like, if you're

41:42

mapping your store and you're ready to go, and you want to write a screenplay, and

41:46

you're going through this, choose one of the ideas you've come up with in the previous office.

41:49

Yeah, whatever one has knocked you off your seat, got you excited. You've tested with people, right, right? Try writing a really good log line. It'll just help you stay focused and get excited. Homework number two, choose two comps for the tone of your story and maybe one comp for the structure of your story, right? Like, Memento we mentioned before, it's such a strange one, because it goes back, like this guy, it's basically the movie goes backwards. And if that's kind of what yours is, or you tell your story is flashbacks, like, what's that TV show you like that made you cry every episode. Firefly lane. No, about the three siblings. This is us, yeah, this is us. The structure of that was present, past, present, past. So if you say, oh, it has a structure like this, people are going to know, oh, it's that kind of story, right? So maybe have something for the structure that it's told in, and then, and then a couple others for what else was like. This is the tone, yeah, the young

42:40

and the restless. Yeah? A lot of the soap operas do that, yep. They do side note true. Please don't say in the structure like

42:51

the rest, Yeah, cuz then people will be like, Oh, that's cheesy. How is a movie like? And then, and then, try building a one sheet template that you can use, even for all your scripts, if you have a template earlier, yeah, try and write a try and write a one pager, right? Because the thing is, if you can't sum up and get like, it's like, writing it's like, it's like, think of it as you're writing the book jacket. You're writing the back of the book that says, This is what the story is about. You should be able to sum it up so that if someone reads that, they're gonna ask for the script. And if you can't do that, you know, before your script fine, after script you definitely have to, or your script is not hitting the right beats,

43:27

but and just for that, so you don't have to necessarily rewind. The one sheet template should include the log line, 150 to 250 word synopsis. The tone in the voice should match the script. There should be two to three key comps, you said, and then writer bio, yeah,

43:45

if you want to put your bio on it, you know, just to keep, you know, to keep, to keep in mind that you're selling yourself as well, right? That it, this script can only be written by you because of this, right? Like that can sometimes be good for you to stay focused is the bio. I was a former Navy SEAL who did this, and this, okay, well, that movie you're writing does that, is that relevant to it, right? That kind of thing. So, you know, it's a marketing tool, but it's also for yourself to remember that this is something that has to be marketed. That's kind of what I'm getting at is, is keep that in mind, that if you're going to write a movie, can you sell it? And why can you sell it? And what, what else is it like that has made money and that kind of stuff, right?

44:27

Why do you sound like you're lose, like, becoming Kermit the Frog,

44:31

I think because he got Grover in my head. And so all your voice is, like, really weird. Thank you. So on that note, that is wrapping up our second part about getting your button gear to write a movie you can try to sell. So we're going to pause for a second and talk about one of our services here at Script Reader Pro.

44:52

Feel like you've taken your script as far as you can on your own. We know how frustrating it can be sometimes to get the great. Great ideas that are in your head properly on the page, but imagine having a professional screenwriter jump in and rewrite it for you to create a market ready script. Send us your script for a rewrite proposal, and the pro of your choice will write up a page or so of notes on exactly how they'd approach a rewrite head on over to www.scriptreaderpro.com/rewrite and use the code rewrite 15 during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

45:35

Hey everybody, thanks so much for sticking with us. We are going to the part of our episode where we talk about questions that have been submitted by you the listeners. And feel free to submit your questions or comments to hello@scriptreaderpro.com the first question that we have here comes from Sarah from Madison, Wisconsin. Madison. Hey, not Madison. Sarah from Madison, I

46:02

know, but isn't that where young in the restless takes place Wisconsin, in Salem a made up city, or is it real city? And they always talk about going to Madison, and there's always an ice storm when someone goes,

46:13

you have watched too much in the restless, which you say you never want. All right? What is her question? How do I make characters feel real and different.

46:21

That's a that's a hard one. Most writers have difficulty with this, but that's the thing. Every character should be different. Every character should be unique. What I always say is, look at the people in your life. Ask what makes them specific to each other? None. No one you know is exactly the same.

46:36

We did talk about listening into people's conversations. Yeah,

46:38

listen to people, meet people, ask people questions, get nosy, be like Desiree, sit down with a stranger, and 10 minutes later, people think you guys are best friends. I know they all do. It's just how it is, but yeah, how do you make them real and different? Give them idiosyncrasies. Make them specific. Give them like know who they are. I always say you should always know what made your character become the person they are. Every one of us has something that's happened in our childhood or youth, somewhere early in our life that specifically made us view the world a certain way. Know what that is for your character, and that will really help. And then try some exercises of just throw your character, even you don't have to write it down, just go for a walk and think about it. Throw your character in a bunch of different situations and just see how they react. That's how you can make them feel real. Okay.

47:21

Next question we have from Luke from Brazil, oh, Brazil, there's writers in Brazil. I think so. I think there's writers everywhere. They live among us. Be very fearful because they live among us. Is why? Oh, why does my script feel boring? Probably because you're boring. Joking.

47:43

Luke Desiree has no filter. If someone's told you that your script's boring, why does my script Why does your script feel boring? It's hard to say you think it's boring. If you think it's boring, then there's probably a problem, right? You should be excited about it. But a lot of times, if something's boring, it's because the pacing is off. It's really slow. There's not enough exciting things happening. We're sitting around waiting for something to happen. The scenes have really long intros and exits. They drag. Yeah. So if someone's told you it's boring, I would then ask them why. And then if other feedback comes and says it's boring, or it's slow or whatever, just kind of look for what people are pointing out. But get, get some more feedback, see what other people think.

48:28

Okay, next question we have from Denver, Colorado comes from Brent. Brent says, How do I build conflict without making it melodramatic? Oh, well, right question for me to answer, because I'm melodramatic all the time.

48:43

Maybe, if, okay, so melodramatic, Melodrama is such a Yeah, it's like, it's dramatic, but it's like trying too hard. That's what I always think of with Melo. Melo, if it's melodrama, right, it's like,

Oh, really? Like you're making us roll our eyes. But how do you build conflict without making it that way? Just, just remember that conflict doesn't necessarily have to be big, right? It can be small. It can be two people in a room having a conversation and both clearly wanting something different, and how do they try to convince the other person of it? That's conflict, right? A wife coming into a room and saying, Does this dress make me look fat? And the husband, knowing it does make her look fat, but doesn't want to say it, because he'll die. That's conflict, right? It's not melodramatic. It's just so it's just really, yeah. So I think if you're feeling that conflict is going to make something dramatic, I think maybe it might be that you're trying too hard. Don't think it has to be blatant and explosive. It can be very nuanced, and that's the trick.

49:43

It says here that the definition is exaggerated, sensationalized or overly emotional, yeah? So, like, over the top right, like he flung the door open, it says with a melodramatic flourish, yeah?

49:56

So, I mean, yeah, it's basically over the top. So the conflict, you can add conflict. And I think we did a whole episode on conflict, and if we haven't, we should, but yeah, just you build it by thinking that, is this creating tension? Is this creating something dramatic, right? Not over the top, if you, if you keep that in mind, that might help. I hope,

50:19

okay, hopefully that helps. Last question, doesn't Brent, then get in touch with us, yeah, send us an email if you have more, more questions. Okay. Question four, do I need to outline? Oh, this is from Steve from LA, oh, LA, do I need to outline? Or can I just start writing, do whatever feels right for you? Yeah, I know, because you've talked about that before, yeah, too, when we did an episode on outlining, didn't we?

50:41

Yeah, we, I don't know we've talked about it, though, anyways, but yeah, it did. Like I always use an outline myself. I think part of it is because I have extreme ADHD and I need to kind of know where I'm going, or I will just get distracted and suddenly my story will just not make any sense. So I always outline, and I find that outlining allows me to catch problems before I'm 72 pages into a script and I have to erase 52 pages. That sucks, right? Because I find the scripting part of it, yeah, it can go really quickly, like I can write 15 pages in a day if I have an outline, if I don't, I can still but it's just meandering. But it depends on you. I never say to someone you must do something my way or this way? If you feel you can just sit down and write your story. Write your story right. Still have ideas in mind of where it's going. Your mind knows what's going on. Have a log line keep you focused. But yeah, there's no Yes or No.

51:35

Thank you to Sarah, Luke, Brent and Steve, yeah. And if

51:39

others have questions, if you're listening, send us a script. hello@scriptreaderpro.com a question about about something Yeah. Or con, you know, show ideas, things like that, things you want to want to hear about. If you liked what you heard today. Five Star Review that would be wonderful. And subscribe to our podcast and share it with your writing friends. Our hope here is to educate, right, teach you something that maybe you haven't heard in a way that's made sense, and hopefully it does make sense, maybe better for you, and that you're entertained, that you have some fun, that you have some laughs. We don't take life too seriously here. We don't even take writing too seriously. It's you know, you got to have some life and passion in it. So check out all of our services at scriptreaderpro.com and we will see you on our next episode, which is number three of our four part series, where we're going to start to dive in on how to build characters that your audience will follow anywhere. That's the key. You've got your idea, you've logged it down, you've got an idea of where your story is going now, who is going to carry your story. That's what we're going to talk about. That's I love talking about characters. That'll be a fun one. And I'm sorry, Desiree, if you were bored with some of this marketing stuff, I know that it's not your favorite thing. I appreciate you sticking around and not just leaving and not leaving me for being a writer and driving you crazy and but anyways, we'll see you on our next episode at Script Reader Pro. We're all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time.