

## Ep #48: Mapping Your Screenplay Part 3

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In this episode, we're talking all about how your plot gets attention, but character gets heart.

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Yes, today we're diving into how to build characters your audience will follow anywhere in this the third part of our four part

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series. 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. I am your host for the Script Reader Pro podcast today. I'm with Scott.

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I'm Scott. I am not the host. I guess I'm the talker. Talker, I don't know teacher, doctor, who you are. I'm here to pass on information about screenwriting, useless information, as far as you're concerned, yes, but not useless information for people who want to hear about it, about writing. Yes, that's what we're here for. And Scott, yes, you represent a series of writers, readers, yes, our wonderful team at [scriptreaderpro.com](http://scriptreaderpro.com) I am just one of us today.

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We are actually in our third part of a series that we've been talking

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about, yeah, on how to map your screenplay, your feature film screenplay. If you haven't listened to the first two parts, go listen to them. First part's talking about how to capture idea and make sure you're choosing the right one. The second one gets a little bit more detailed about log lines and what to keep in mind as you're choosing your story and how you might market it, and that kind of thing. And today we we are what talking about characters. We are going to talk about wants and needs and fears and secrets and stakes and push, pull dynamics, all the fun stuff. Oh, sounds so fun.

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But before we do that, what do we usually do? Well, that's usually my line. But before we do that, what we usually do is talk about the most recent show or movie that we've seen lately. Yes

and Yes, and I wrote down here just I put in general cheesy Hallmark movies. But cheesy Hallmark movies are so good. I know it's that time of year cheesy ones. Yeah, but we've been taking, I guess this will be aired on the third week of December, yep, yep, yep, yep, so perfect timing. Yeah, we, I mean, we love cheesy Hallmark movies. There's actually a shirt that I wanted to go and get today about Hallmark cheesy movies and more races my favorite clothing store, but I find with us, it's interesting because we know within the first, like three minutes if we're like, this is cheesy factor, acceptable, and cheesy factor no go, yeah, where we're just

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like, yeah, we started one the other night, and before the credits were done, I said, are we watching this? And you're like, nope. This was about, like, angels and stuff. But then we started this other one, which was called Merry Christmas Ted Cooper. Oh, that was and it started out really cheesy, though, like, the first few minutes, we were like, but we kept going, and it got better and better. I don't know why they didn't just start not cheesy. Maybe when they were making it, it it started to feel less cheesy. And that's just they couldn't help it. But I don't know, but he, the guy was cheesy in general. That's but then he, then he wasn't, after a bit, oh, he still was pretty cheesy. A little bit. The news anchor was cheesy. Anyways, it was, it was cheesy, but it got good. It was, yeah, it was well done. Speaking about cheesy,

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lately, I've just been craving cheese all the time. Crazy. I watched an episode yesterday of 90 day fiance, the other way, talking about good TV. Yeah, lovely TV. The French woman, who's from Paris, took her husband there, and they went to a goat farm, and cheese came in, like, high heeled shoes, and he was, like, so excited to go and milk the goats. And the whole reason he took her there was to improve their romance and to bring something fun back, because they were actually at the farm where her favorite cheese was made. But she wouldn't look past the fact that it was a goat farm. And was like, Why would you bring me here? Verbal decision, right? Yeah. And you know what that leads us to, what talking about different character characters. Yeah, good. That sounds a good intro. How she was, like, he thought in his mind, she's gonna love this. It's gonna be so romantic, because we're going to be able to milk these goats and then you go enjoy cheese under the sunset with a glass of wine in Paris.

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Yep, sounds beautiful. Sounds like a really great she

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couldn't get past the fact that she had high heel shoes on and an outfit that wasn't the best choice,

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but shouldn't semen. Then that says a lot about the guy character that he didn't think ahead of time. Okay, I need to tell her the place we're going isn't really for heels and fancy, right? Because you're gonna you're you won't enjoy yourself as much. And then her to be have it be a surprise, I know, but still like so it says a lot about their communication style.

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Communication is bad poor and the whole. Reason for moving back from the states into Paris, where she was from, is for them to improve their marriage and ready to improve her relationship with her son.

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It's fun. It's funny that it's they deal with miscommunication, right? Poor communication, because that's pretty much every Hallmark movie comes down to a miscommunication of some sort, yes, and then they have to fix.

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And it's like, well, just tell them. Here's the thing I noticed with Hallmark movies. I know we're dropping you back and forth, then they go back to the Hallmark movie, The whole premise, and then, or like, the whole issue that happens in the Hallmark movie, they never say, right then, sorry, there's a misunderstanding. You don't understand what I'm saying. They wait till it's drawn out, and you're just like, come. Just say it already. Just say,

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anyway, it makes characters interesting. Yes, that's for sure, and that's what we're talking about today. Yeah, characters so I mean, people are messy, and the two main words that I want listeners to keep in mind here is they're thinking about the characters. Number one, messy, and number two, vulnerable. Those are the two words, yep, characters are vulnerable, characters who are messy, that instantly creates drama. So that's what we're going to talk about lots of things today. So we're just going to dive in, because I got a lot to cover and and you already say I talk too much. So so here we go. So first of all, we are going to talk about wants, needs, fears, secrets. We talked about secrets in a couple podcasts back. But secrets are a great way to make sure that your characters are interesting and they are always thinking of something important. So the first thing to make some some definitions here, because sometimes writers like I don't understand wants and needs in the difference and, you know, sometimes they just don't quite get it. So first of all, an easy way to think of it is a want is an external goal, okay? It's something that they are going after in the script. The need is the internal transformation so that what they need to become, who they need to be. Those are very different things. Okay? They lot of the times, they won't understand their need, and they think that their want fills their need, but it's really just masking there. That's where their fear comes into it. That's what your character will avoid at all costs. If you throw a fear in there, they will go in the direction opposite that they need to. So that's a great way to define if you can understand what your character fears. You're way ahead of the game. And then the secret.

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Hold on to the secret thing, the whole fear thing also says a lot about your character. Some characters will go and they'll go towards the fear, they'll conquer the fear. Yeah, that says a lot about your character. The majority of characters, they fear, and they pull away.

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Yeah. I mean, in most movies, if you have your main character going towards their fear, then there's not much of a movie there, no but at the same time, but at the same time, going after their fear. Could say it could put them in a situation that they need to stop and face. Then this where their want, need comes in. Yeah, what do they need to learn to stop thinking they have to rise for fear? So, yeah, always layers right. That's that it comes down to. And then the secret always have something that has that they feel they have to hide, right, a truth that they're hiding, that they're going to have to face, right, because that shapes them. Right. Whatever our secrets are, they shape everything right. Because if you don't want someone to know something, you're there. If you don't want someone to know something, you're going to do things that you normally wouldn't do because you don't want them looking at your secret. Right? Anytime someone lies about something and then has to hide something, they have to think of another dozen things they have to make up in order to hide the secret. It just makes it messy.

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So I it's like what you're discussing now, as listeners know, I never read up. I had to tell what we're discussing. Yeah, because very prepared, very prepared, and it's interesting all these things, because they're making ideas pop in my head of stupid reality TV. Maybe because I've been watching so much reality TV, but I am obsessed with below deck, the auditing show and the lies and stuff when you said lying and not being truthful? Yeah, I was gonna tell you a story. Okay, this woman was really one of the charter guests. Was really offensive towards her, and was like, you don't smile enough. You have a resting bee face, right? So she was really, really offended. And so every morning, they wake up and there's a different shape of a blanket put on the end of their bed. They form. And sometimes it's a heart, sometimes it's an anchor. This one was really ticked at this guy, so she did the shape of men's genitalia. Yeah?

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And I heard she lied that said, No, it was a rocket ship. Genitalia. Jenna, genitalia, yeah, yeah. She said it was a rocket ship, when she knew it wasn't.

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Everyone knew. Everyone knew. And there was pictures. And he was like, How could this be mistaken? And then I heard the

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captain be like, it wasn't a rocket ship. And she's like, it was a rocket ship. And then finally he's like, stop lying, or I'm gonna fight. Are you? And so she's like, fine. No, wasn't

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it until days later that she was like, it wasn't until the to the guy, the charter guest, said, I loved what you did on the bed. It was actually pretty hilarious. You thought it was funny that you did that to me after I was really rude to you. Kind of thing interesting. And so then she was like, Yeah, I meant to do that, but then I lied because it wasn't coming to the point that she wanted it.

Yeah. Anyway, the whole point is that that makes character. It does right? Yeah, it it shapes who the person is lying, how

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far they're willing to go to lie, right? Like our daughter, our daughter will think of 1000 lies to cover up the one line instead of just saying, fine.

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But that's what makes a script intriguing, or a story intriguing, is the lying or the secret behind things? Exactly. So that secret, though, if there hadn't been a secret and she just said it actually wasn't a rocket ship, how uncinematic and boring that was being boring, exactly, but it made the show that much better, because it was a secret, and who's gonna find out, right? Yeah, and

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that's, I mean, that's why a lot of scripts tend to be a bit boring or not interesting enough. It's because it lacks needs and secrets. If your character doesn't need something and they don't have something they're hiding, and they don't have a fear of whatever, then what's the what's the point of watching? That's what I'm saying with that, with that story I was watching. Yeah, movie story is supposed to be the most interesting snapshot of the specific person's life. And so if you can't fill it chock full of everything imaginable, it's they're just who cares, right? So a couple big questions you can ask as you're so you've got your idea, you've got your log line, you kind of know where your story is going. Now, two questions you can ask, what does your protagonist refuse to admit about themselves? Right? Classic case Yes, man with Jim Carrey, he is he absolutely refuses to admit that. He says no to everything, right? So what does he have to do, or somebody say yes to everything, right? It's an easy way to understand that idea. And then what belief must they release? Right? In that story? He believes that if he says yes to things, then he'll have to interact with people more, and he'll have to change who he is, and he'll have to look at himself and change his life. So it's all internal stuff, but it's all about the story should put that like, that's what I always say to people. You need to make sure that this story must happen to this character now, because blank, right? Don't just be like, Oh, here's a movie. God's gonna go to this thing, okay, but fine. But that thing should force him to change to that should be exactly what he needs to become the person he needs to be, and to grow as a person, yeah, and to not let that, like that fear, hold him back that secret, hold him back that thing that he's chasing. You know, like any addiction you have, whatever. Gambling addiction, for example, it's not the gambling you're addicted to. It's the feeling. It's the it's the ability for us to hide what you're dealing with. It's the feeling of of, here's something exciting, here's a rush, because I don't want to face the darkness like every addiction is based on a need or desire or some or a fear, right? So, so, yeah, so you want to give yourself, you want to give your character, you know, something like that, so that that should be your for sure, right?

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Got to have some depth, right? Like you all know, when you watch a show or a TV a TV show or movie, and then there's a character, and you're just like, wow, that character is really boring. It's because there's nothing underneath. There's nothing, no layers to them, yeah? And that's what I

think a lot of this want, need, fear. Secret why they fall flat is because a character falls flat is because there isn't enough depth, right? Yeah. And it's

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not just your, like, leading character, it's your secondary characters as well. Like we in our last episode, we talked about the movie champagne problems, right? The first episode of this series, and, like, we talked about this German character. He's just a side character. Doesn't have a lot to do with the story, but he was such a great character, you could tell that he had a whole story. He had he saw himself a certain way. He didn't have a lot of friends. He, you know, he's not very personable, but, but he's actually a really good guy, and he has interesting things to say and do. And he was a secondary character, but he had a story. He had a want and a need and a fear, but it didn't all come out, but you could tell it motivated that character to do certain things, meaning that the writer really thought that out. So this isn't just about your main character, but all your characters.

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Well, you think in that same movie, if we're talking about that again, the one character who was the whole reason he wanted to buy the company was because he loved to throw parties. Yeah, it was a champagne company, and he loved the champagne, and he just loved champagne in general, and that was his reason, and he stood by his reason. That was who he was. Yeah, I like throwing parties, and I love champagne,

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perfect fit for me. And he never changed, and he never apologized for it, and he never strayed from who he was as no person, and that made him memorable and unique and fun. So yeah, so it's all your characters you want to be giving this but especially, obviously. Your main character must be the most

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interesting. What does it mean? What police they must release?

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So what do they believe about themselves? Like, a flaw, right? Like, what's their flaw? What they believe they have like, they believe they have to be viewed as great by everybody. But do they they need to believe they're great themselves, right? That kind of thing, right? If you're like, I learned this about myself recently, right? Like, because of things that happened as I grew up, I have this, like, this, like, addiction, almost to validation. I was always thinking, people have to tell me I'm great. People have to see me as good. They can't see what I really am, right. Like, because I, oh, I don't see myself that way. And I had to release that and not let that control me anymore, so I could realize that I was worthwhile and I was worth right. So that's something that your character should have, something holding them back normally. It's just their flaw, is what we call it, right? And they have to overcome that, or they can never be who they're going to be. They can never become the version of themselves they're meant to become, right. So, and a lot

of these things may not even come out in the movie in different ways, but if you know them, your characters will be real and believable and and worth the time, right?

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Yeah, it's like, like making a character gay and talking about the depth of them. You don't necessarily see that the like in the words of the script, or when the film is done, you don't necessarily see that they hate the color red, right? But you might be like, Oh, they all they choose is neutral colors. They don't like color, you might notice. And then it might be like, I wonder why they only choose neutral colors, yeah, oh, maybe they're colorblind. Like, who knows? Yeah, I'm just throwing it out there exactly.

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You sometimes won't find the reason for something, but it makes that character unique and specific in their own way, right? Yeah, exactly. Interesting. Yeah. So, so those are the kind of things that you want to kind of start thinking about when you're building your character, right? So, wants, needs, fear, secrets, yeah. And if you can tie them into what the concept and the premise and the story actually is that you're brewing, you want to make sure that it's challenging all of those things, right? If you're sending a character down in a cage with sharks and it's going to snap it, they're going snap. They're going to be stuck in a cage. Well, you should know that their fear is claustrophobia. You should know that their want is to maybe they have a want that maybe they want to die because someone in their life died, and now they just have nothing to live for. And so then, then all of a sudden, they realize, no, they don't, they don't want to die. They actually need something to live for, and so they realize that in the cage, blah, blah, whatever, but it's something that you want to make sure ties into the actual story unfolding, right? It all has to make sense together.

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So you talked about wants, needs, your secrets with character, yeah. What else is there?

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So then you want to load up conflict, okay? And we did a whole episode on conflict, so you can go back and listen to that if you want, but there's four conflicts that you can really focus on. So the first is the internal conflict. That's the conflict they're having with them themselves, right? Their their moral tension, any trauma that they carry, their fear, right? What's holding them back in life? Okay? That's their internal

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conflict, Yeah, mine, I That's mainly without even seeing the types of conflicts I know. Hands down, that's the one I deal with the most. Yeah, I'd say so too, questioning absolutely everything, right?

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Yeah, yep. Then there's interpersonal conflict, which we all deal with, and that's relationships. So you want to make sure that they have some relationships in their life that are filled with

conflict. No, no one wants to watch a story about a happy person with a perfect family and a happy life and no problems and no problems, and all their relationships are great. That's boring, right? You want to watch someone who's got problems, who has conflict, who has a friend that's mad at them, or a mom that hates them, or they can't get their dad to pay attention to them. Whatever it might be. There needs to be tension there. Well, it all

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comes back to being able to relate to it yourself, right? For sure, being able to put yourself in that position, which makes you drawn into the movie, which makes you interested, which makes you wanting to know more.

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Yeah, because sometimes things feel so fake, like so much as and this doesn't happen as much anymore, but definitely, when we were growing up, you'd be like, I'm tired of seeing these movies with this perfect, happy family, and they all get together at Christmas, and there's 17 of them are on the table, and everyone's happy. It's like, that's not real. How is that real life? No one has families like that. Families like that, right? You don't see that as much anymore, right? Because that's not reality, right?

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So all times have changed, and with technology, you know, there's a whole new and

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like, politics and stuff too, around a around a table and dynamic, yeah, it's crazy. So, so put conflict there, then you want external conflict, which is the world pushing against the protagonist, right? There's something in their world that's trying to hold them back, that's pushing them down, that's setting up obstacles, person, place, thing, smell,

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taste, anything, right?

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A relationship? Well, no, it could. That could be too Right? But, but it's, it's something bigger, right? Like, yeah, there. So this person has to, they're going to they're going to lose their job if they don't find a way to sell this new product. That's that's the external conflict, and then all that stuff, oh, I'm not going to pay my mortgage. My house will be foreclosed. But at the same time, they're having problems with their boyfriend and their sister is mad at them, right? Like, load up. Conflict doesn't matter their genre. It could be comedy. It could be. Drama. It could be thriller. It doesn't matter. There should be some conflict there, and then the systemic conflict, okay? And this is just like the world building, right? You can't have them be perfect and happy. And even like on silly Hallmark movie, woman has to go to some small town in the middle of winter to buy this toy store. Okay? Well, the the problem with that is that she's from Florida, and she's going to the Arctic, yeah, and she doesn't know small businesses, and she's always been a big city

person, and, you know, she's she, she can't handle the pressures of this company, and, like all those things, that things are pushing

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a big city coming to a small town, and can't handle the the chill, laid backness

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of it all, yeah, or it's a very serious drama, and this person is dealing with racism or bigotry or discrimination around them, like something is happening in the world, not just their personal journey, but the world around them. So, so those are four areas that if you can identify what those might be in your story, then you're again, already ahead of the game, because conflict creates drama. If there's no conflict, the drama just won't be there. So you want to make sure that your protagonist is also doing things that create more conflict. And the first half of a movie is great to have your protagonist reactive. Second half they should be active. So in the first half, they should be reacting to the conflict, doing other things that make more conflict. Look at the movie Elf, for example, right? Woody? Woody. No, no. What's his name? Not Woody. The elf,

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I thought it was with a W. I can't remember his name.

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No, that's his real name. Yeah, bye, buddy. Oh yeah, Buddy. Buddy had the normal Yeah. So buddy goes and he heads to New York, and he's just reacting to everything. He's reacting to everything, but everything he's doing in his reactions creates more conflict, right? And then halfway through, he realizes the only way I can win this story is to be myself. I'm an elf. I got to do it. It's who I am. But I'm a person, so how do I figure it out? And then he actually starts being active and creating conflict in other ways for people to stop pushing back on him. So conflict should be very much fueling your story, and your character should create them, both purposely and accidentally. So that's a great way to keep your character on edge, and every conflict that they face will tell you more about them. And that's why I always say to people that rewriting is so much fun and it's so great, because every time you go through your story and you get to the end, you learn more about your characters than you did before you go back. You do another pass, you learn more about your characters. You'll start to see that, oh, that line doesn't make sense that they I don't think they'd say it that way. Or I actually don't think they would make that choice, knowing now what I know about my character, that was wrong. So that's where the real, organic nature of your characters dictating things comes about. So the more you know your character, the better it gets.

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Once you have something down too, you might think, Oh, they need a whole other direction. Scrap that whole section. Yep, because your character is leading the way, because of who they are

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as a character, exactly. So you wanted them to go here, but now you would never go there. So now maybe my story has to change. So that's why you always want to get to know your characters deeply. It's you'll learn about them as you go, but the more you know about them off the start, the better. So so that that's what you want to infuse there is that conflict. The next piece is you need to think about your antagonist, whether it's a person or a thing or a system, right? Doesn't have to not every story has an actual physical antagonist. It could be you're fighting against the system of oppression, or whatever it might be, right? But you want to make sure that that antagonist is the perfect antagonist for your leading character, right? It should be the person your character needs to face to become who they need to become. Just like overcoming their fear, they should represent something. But it doesn't necessarily, you know mean, mean that you have to have a character embodying everything a villain is right? It could just be an ex girlfriend or, you know, the your boss, or the idea of another job that you're not going to love, like there has to be something antagonistic pushing against them.

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You're saying it doesn't have to be a person. No, no. Doesn't necessarily have to be a person. Antagonist can actually be a fact, like a

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thing, yeah, even even, like, for example, we just, it's the time of year, right? But Hallmark movies, right? There's no actual, usually actual villain or antagonist. It's the situation, right? The miscommunication, the disbelief in yourself, whatever it might be. So sometimes that antagonism, it just it's in the air, but there isn't a person to fear or whatever, right? It all depends on that genre. So sometimes it's what's not even there, right? Like in horror movies, sometimes you don't even know what's there, but that's that entity, right? It's something is there? Yeah, so. But thing to reminder, thing to keep in mind is, if there is an antagonist, a physical person, they believe they're the hero of their story. They don't believe they don't believe they might be Hitler. Hitler believed what he was doing was right. As mad as that is, that's what makes him the ultimate antagonist, because all the horrifying things he was doing, he thought were good things, that's they. They can't think they're a bad guy. They can't think so it's a narcissist. Yeah, narcissists think they're good people. They think they're really nice people. That's the problem, right? So every antagonist is definitely a narcissist. It has to be. It has to be. There's no question, because otherwise you would stop and be like, Oh, I shouldn't do this. That's a poor choice, right? You're either a sociopath or you're a narcissist, which, so that's, that's the key there, right? But the best way to create the ultimate conflict dynamic is to mirror those two, mirror your protagonist to your antagonist. Your antagonist should be the opposite version of your your hero or heroine, right? Not, I'm not saying it should every single time, but if you can do that, then your protagonist can see, see that this is I have to be the exact opposite of this to continue, but I need to now battle my mirror image, right? So it just makes it more personal. And the more personal you can make it, the better. And your antagonist should be just as layered as your protagonist. You should know your antagonists entire story too. Again, doesn't mean it's all going to come out in the script, but it helps you as the writer, know them more, right? So some questions you can ask as you're building that antagonist, how is that antagonist, the kind of the darker reflection of your protagonist. And again, it doesn't have to be there every time, but

normal hero villain is that the hero represents something that the villain is against, right, and vice versa.

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So I think also, it's also having your hero, like looking at what your hero is forced to have to try to overcome or confront, too, right? That's a question to ask,

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yeah, for sure. What is it? What is the worst possible obstacle that they can overcome and then make them overcome, then throw it at them and throw it at them and throw it out, right? So, I mean, even in like, stories like The Matrix, right? It's like, yeah, there's, there's antagonist the system, right? And the system is trying to keep them in this matrix. That's the that's the antagonist overall. But there's other antagonists in the story. But the, you know, the thing that Neo has to overcome is, is he doesn't believe he could be, he doesn't believe he's good enough to be the chosen one. There's no way that he's the one who can change everything.

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I remember when this came out, and I remember watching it, and I remember thinking, what is the point of such

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a stupid I know you don't like things, you can't believe in that

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aren't that one, to me, was way over my head. I'm a smart person. That was complex. I was like, I don't get it. I don't I don't even care to get it, nor do I want to get it. Yeah? And I think I watched it twice, yeah, to try

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to figure it out, yeah, but, but that's the thing is, is, that's his. That's what he has to overcome, right? He has to believe that he is good enough, and he is the chosen one, and then when he does, bam, he wins, right?

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So, for explaining that, so he made no sense to me, what that's okay. So there's, there's that.

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So that system, it's, it's designed to keep him down. He believes that he should be kept down. He believes he should just be punching the time card kind of thing. So, so you want to, you want to have that in there. And then what do you what do they force your hero to confront? What does that antagonist force your hero to confront? That they must force them to overcome their flaw, to confront what's holding them back, to realize that they need to do this to achieve what they need to become better, that

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and that they're capable, I think a lot of the time, that's the piece, yeah, that they come to the realization I can do this, or I can fix this, or I am the one, yeah, to do such and such. You know,

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yeah, exactly, and and that, I mean, that's, that's the fun of watching it is watching them, because the best, the best antagonists, and I always say this to writers. You know, in any movie, we kind of know the hero is going to win 99% of the time. The hero wins, right? But the trick of it, the great part of writing, is writing an antagonist that is so effective and so good at what they do, and your hero is so flawed at what they can't believe in, that you think as you're reading it, there is no way they can ever win. There's no way they can beat that antagonist. Because that means that you're on board with the character, because the character doesn't believe it either, right? And then you're like, No, you just have to just do you have to believe? You have to. You're cheering on. And then they do it, and you're like, you know, then you're like, Yay, so you know it's coming, but it's the mechanics of writing in a way that you're just like, I don't know how that's ever gonna happen, right? I don't know they'll ever be able to take down Thanos, because literally impossible, right? And so that makes it work. Right? So, so your antagonist? People always say a great movie is only as great as its antagonist, right? And that's true. Because if there isn't a protagonist, too, I'd say, but not as much, no, because if your protagonist isn't facing a high enough hill to climb, then where's the drama big enough and it's not exciting if then, so you're it's only as good as what is standing in the way. So that's why in your log line, it's important to also identify who your antagonist might be, because that is tells you where that story is going to go and why the antagonist or protagonist both you should know like this person faces this person for this and if he doesn't do it, this happens, right, right? So, as I said, you want to make sure your, your hero becomes active in the second half of the story. So many screenplays I read, that character is just just reacting to everything and just going through the motions, and then it's over. Well, that's boring, right? Your, your your main character, she must realize the only way to win is to take the reins of my own story,

31:05

which means that the character ultimately determines their own story

31:10

or plot. They write their own faith. They take it where it needs to go. So they you have to get them reactive. It doesn't have to happen. They should be or so you have to get them active. They should be reactive for for probably the first half of your story. But if in the second half you don't want them to be no someone should happen halfway through your story that makes them realize, okay, wait a minute, if I keep going this direction, I'm never going to get anywhere, right? And you know, that's the best way to do it. And then you want to have something surprising that forces that character to come to life more. So couple of you know, like, a really good example is The Martian. Everyone remembers that? Do you remember the Martian Desiree? Nope. Do you remember when Matt Damon was stranded on Mars and he had to live on Mars and figure out, how do I survive and get through this before I can vegetables? Yeah, in the ship? Yeah? He's like, I am the first space pirate and stuff, yeah. So that was great, because his character, I

mean, not much happened in the movie before he was left there, but he was the perfect person to leave there because he didn't believe in himself. He didn't see that he was worthwhile, and he became this, the only person ever to like live on Mars alone, right? And so you're taking a character that has skills that they either already know about or or will have the ability to learn. They have to be that kind of person, but they also have to grow and change. And so taking a character and putting them in a situation that there's no way they could probably get out of, that's the best way to force them to be who they need to be, right? So that it's a, it's a, and the antagonism there, there was no antagonist, right? There's some antagonists on Earth who are like, Oh, I don't think we want it. You know, it's not worth going back and saving. The antagonist is Mars Island. It's yeah, Island, yeah. The planet, planet, the atmosphere. So, so not always a person. So that is kind of what you need to do. You need to make sure you know some takeaways here is you need to make sure that your character is driven towards something, that there's pressure on them, that they have a flaw, that there's internal, external, interpersonal and global, kind of like conflict pushing against them. Conflict is everything. And again, no matter, the genre doesn't have to be big conflict. It can be small conflict, it can be positive conflict, any kind of conflict. That's what will create movement, and it'll define to you who your characters are. So conflict is what fuels the plot. It is the engine of the story. If you have no conflict, it's dead in the water.

33:38

Okay, yeah, got it.

33:41

And the extra piece about someone, and you'll see this in life, right? You face an adversary? Does you face someone like this doctor who was awful to you in the hospital? Right? You had that antagonist truly reveal who you were. That antagonist probably had an idea about you when they came in that room, but you changed the idea. Oh, he had no idea. You changed it. You said, Okay, this character is forcing me to now bring the big guns. I'm going to show them messed with the wrong one, right? So antagonism said this guy

34:17

messed with the wrong

34:19

Yeah, exactly. So that's a great choice. Is that antagonist has to really push that protagonist. That's that reveals who they really are, and that protagonist learns that this person I'm hiding inside shouldn't be inside anymore, right? So those are the takeaways to keep in mind. And just it's all about knowing your character. So you've got your idea, you've crafted your log line, you kind of know your story, where it's going, why you can sell it, why it's marketable, why it should gain interest. Now you have to create characters that will get important actors and actresses to read it and think I will fight for this part. I have to play this person. If that character is not deeply layered, and they can't pull from all these different things, then no one's gonna care, right? When you. When you watch a movie, when you read a book, when you read a screenplay, it's not always the concept and the idea and the plot that you remember. It's the character. For me,

it's the character they stick with you. That is, that's what stays with you. And if you don't have a character on the screenplay pages that is compelling enough, then it doesn't matter how

35:16

great the ladies who made the blanket in the shape of penis.

35:20

Yes, you must have a penis shaper towel lady on your yacht, or no one's gonna remember what happened on the yacht. Like, do you remember everything else that happened to the yacht? No, not that episode. You remember the penis blanket, right? Hopefully no one's just tuning in. This is gonna be the clip for one minute that they put on Instagram. Remember, you have to have a lady with a penis blanket feel very like, what? Okay, what is this podcast? All right? So, yeah, homework. Homework time. Okay. So if you've stuck with me so far, you're doing your homework. So three things you can do, create a character. Quadrant, right? A quadrant of those four things for your character, want, need fear, respect. Secret, want, need fear secret. Create that for your character and all the other characters around that character, including your antagonist. Okay, that is your initial framework. You can then write one scene where the protagonist acts on their want just to get to know them. Might not be the scene that ends up in the screenplay, but you got, you have to get to know your character. It's like, it's like dating someone and being like, Oh yeah, I'm gonna marry you. And you don't know anything about them. You haven't seen how they react when something No, you didn't marry me instantly. No, but was you said? You said I'm gonna marry that boy. Yeah, I know. But if you married me then and then you found out all these other things, maybe you would have divorced me instantly, right? Like, you have to learn about a character to make them come to life. Okay? So write a scene at least one, and then write another one where they act on their fear, put them in this situation where they have to face their fear and see what they do and don't have them overcome it instantly, see how they react. You want to get to know everything you need to know about me. You have me at night, have to go upstairs from my office without running, without running, no, but just watch what I do. If I walked it out in the hallway and I just shut every light off and just walked slowly up the stairs like nothing was bothering me, then I've overcome my fear. If you see me, go to the hallway, turn the hallway light on, go to the stairs, to the stair light on. Go back, turn my office light off, go through the hallway, turn the hallway light off, and then run up the stairs, and then shut the light off every time, every time, because I'm so afraid of what's behind me. I'm afraid of the dark. I'm afraid of right, that. So that's more interesting than just me walking through and like no worries, right? As I'm leaving my child downstairs in their bedroom, I don't care I'm running. I don't care what's down there, you figure. So put, put, put. It just allows you to get to know your character, right? So that is kind of like, you know, the foundation, just a quick little foundation thing about character. So let that soak on, soak in your mind for a second while. We show a little promo here of what else we got.

38:00

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 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](http://www.scriptreaderpro.com/rewrite) and use the code rewrite 15 during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

38:43

We are back with our question section of our podcast. We're back. Sorry to tell you if you have

38:50

questions that you want us to answer, or even podcast suggestions for subjects and stuff. Where should they email us?

38:56

Desiree, at [Hello@scriptreaderpro.com](mailto>Hello@scriptreaderpro.com) that is right. These four questions have actually been submitted by our listeners. Yeah, keep them coming. They're great. We have the first one. What do pros do differently from amateurs? And that's coming from from Phil in Detroit, okay, what do pros do differently from amateurs?

39:18

Pro writers? I think I mean, my answer is, they write. They write continue every day, all the time. I mean, they're, you're gonna have days where you don't I think they also, I think, but you treat it like a profession. I think they also research, yeah, and learn, not just continue with the same path. They've got to grow in what they're doing. Yeah, and I guarantee you and that you'll hear this all the time. They read their colleagues screenplays, and they give their colleagues feedback. If you're not doing that, then, then you're not doing justice to the craft. But, yeah, write every single day, even if it's a half hour, even if it's 10 minutes, you should be able to sit down and write one page in 10 minutes. Should be do that each day for a month. You have a full screenplay. You're not an amateur, no. So you just have to. Treat it like a treat it like a job, not a hobby.

40:02

Question two from we have Beth from Kentucky. Ooh, Kentucky. How long should it take to write a script?

40:11

Ooh, how long should it take? Well, it depends on the person, right? Like some people work two full time jobs and they write on the weekends, or they write it might take them a year to write a script. Some people might write a script. And I have mentorship clients that will set up a session for next week. You're thinking they'll have their first 10 pages and they've written the entire script. So there's really no timeline. So don't put that on you don't have to put that on yourself. Set yourself a deadline. Be like, okay, line, but let's just be realistic here. No, but like Phil. Like, we've heard about Phil. He was on the podcast, mentor, former mentorship line Detroit. No, maybe, no. He does live in Detroit, but he he did this thing in our writing group, and he's like, he's like, he calls it Phil vember, where you write a starter script the beginning of November and

finish it at the end. He did that last year. And then everyone is like, are we doing film member? And so in anyway. So he makes a goal, I'm gonna write a script a month, and he does it. So you just have to set your own deadlines. Whatever's gonna work. Yeah, check out our previous couple podcasts ago. On on the talked about the mentorship program and how it worked for him.

41:11

Okay, question three, what's the best way to break in if I don't live in LA, and this came from Oh Samantha from Thailand. Oh Samantha from Thailand says, What's the best way to break in if I don't live in LA

41:23

write the best script you possibly can write. It doesn't really matter where you are. Yes, being in Los Angeles is ideal because that's where the business is. Well, business is a lot of different places now, but that's where you have the ability to actually physically be in person, to go to events and meet people in, you know, a network and be available if something comes up, right? But that doesn't mean you can't write wherever you are once you've got a script, like even if you're not in LA, you got to get feedback. You got to get people to read it. You got to get people to tell you how great it is. And don't stop until it is the greatest it can possibly be, and nobody has any issues anymore with your script, then maybe look at going LA. Maybe take a trip there. Maybe go up for a couple weeks and see if you can get to people and meet people. And, you know, but, but you don't have to be in LA to write a great script to break in. You don't either. I know a lot of writers breaking in, and none of them are in LA, so you'll eventually have to go there, you know, even just to be there to meet people. But even most screen readers don't even live in LA anymore, like working ones. So yeah, I wouldn't worry about that. Worry more about about someone telling you you're great.

42:28

Okay? And then we have our fourth question, Brad from Georgia. And Brad asked the question, how do I come up with original ideas?

42:37

Go back and listen to our number one in our series of four here, if you haven't yet, but in original ideas, just try and think of, has anyone done this? Has anyone seen this before? Those kind of things. If you do that, you're going to come up with stuff. Don't just regurgitate what you've already seen. If you're original, you should be able to come up with original ideas. Hey, that's the end of our podcast. That is it. So if you like the podcast and you want to let us know, please give us five stars. If you like, five stars are great. Subscribe to the podcast. So pops up on whatever you're listening on every time we are week by week here, and share it with your writing friends. And yeah, if you learn something fantastic. And if you want to let us know, let us know if you were entertained. I know you were, because desire entertaining. Desiree is entertaining and and keep going. So this is part three of our series. Next episode, we'll be wrapping it up. We're going to be taking talking about taking your story from that idea, from building your characters into actual movement structure, getting your scenes, your dialog, all that kind of stuff that makes

your craft visible. So until that time, check out our website, [scriptreaderpro.com](http://scriptreaderpro.com), for all the services you could ever need. And just remember that we are all writers first here at Script Reader Pro, where we are helping writers craft wonder one page at a time.