

show notes

EPISODE 4 – Structure, Scenes & Dialogue: The Craft in Motion

Questions:

- What promise are you making in Act 1?
- Are the payoffs surprising but inevitable?

Talking Points:

- Every scene must contain:
- A clear goal
- Conflict
- Stakes
- A shift (something changes)
- Dialogue should NOT be the primary mechanism.
- Scenes must escalate, pivot, or reveal.

Questions:

- What is the *value shift* in this scene?
- Can the scene be cut without harming the story?

Talking Points:

- Micro-turns within scenes.
- Macro-turns at act breaks.
- Why tension must rise even in dramatic, quiet pieces.
- Avoiding sagging middles.

Questions:

- What is the emotional trajectory of this act?
- Are your turning points character-driven?

Talking Points:

- People rarely say what they mean.
- Subtext vs. text.
- Action-based dialogue.
- Cutting the first and last lines of most exchanges.
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Exercises:

- Write a scene where two characters argue about *pizza* but are really fighting about *trust*.
- Rewrite a scene with 30% fewer words.

Takeaways:

- Structure is emotional logic.
- Scenes must shift the story forward.
- Dialogue is the *last* tool, not the first.

Listener Homework:

- Audit one scene: what changes?
- Rewrite a dialogue exchange focusing on subtext.
- Identify three setups in your first act and three payoffs you'll deliver later.