

## Ep #59: Craft and Creativity

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On this episode, we're talking about craft and

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creativity, yes, and using your creativity well.

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So listen in. 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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Scott Desiree. Desiree, hey, yes, it's the Script Reader Pro Podcast, Hi, I'm

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your host. Hi, host, Desiree. I am the person talking about writing. I don't know what that's called. I'm not the guest. I'm the expert.

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I hate to say it, I just am rolling my eyes in my head when

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I say just a guy, just a guy who loves to talk about writing. And this is a perfect outlet, because my wife doesn't let me.

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Wow, I'm just a guy waiting for a girl. What is it? I'm just a

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guy standing in front of a girl, waiting for her to tell him he can talk about writing.

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Oh, please. That would be a great bumper sticker. That would be good if you were you're a writer, if you're a writer, other than that, people would be like, What a weird thing to

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say that's Hi everybody. I'm part of the team here at Script Reader Pro, and this is a podcast designed to educate and entertain. I will try my best to educate you while Desiree tries her best to entertain you. I can only

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entertain on topics that are interesting to me

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while we're talking about creativity. And you're a very creative person, yeah, but before

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we start, we always talk about what we've

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seen lately. I know you're gonna remember this name, because loved this. It was a movie we went to Valentine's Day. Yeah, it wasn't we went, Oh no, we went to Wuthering Heights on Valentine's Day.

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Yeah, that was good. Solo me. Oh, solo meal.

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It was called with what's his face? Kevin James, yeah, interesting to see him in a romantic comedy.

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He was so good. It was so good. It was

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just such a good movie. It was just there was so much sadness in it, right? Because he had been left at the altar. I mean, it doesn't give it away, that's what that's the first shows couple minutes left at the altar, had this big, huge honeymoon thing planned in Italy, and then decided he's gonna have to just, instead of, he won't get his money back, so he's just gonna go. So he starts doing all these things with this group who are all newlyweds. It was a great idea, and it was so good. And the to me, the best part of the whole movie was the actress who played, I don't remember her name, but the coffee shop lady, when he falls she was really good. She was so good. She just had such charisma, and she would smile, and you would, like, believe her, that was a real smile. Yeah, it was just and she, like, she was so she was just constantly, she was like, a she was like, Desiree. She was constantly needling him, like, like, making fun of him, and saying and doing things that just without filter, like telling him, you know how awful his dancing is. And like, she was just so unfiltered and perfect, and she's just so real. And, yeah, really, really is refreshing. Really well done.

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Yeah, it was such a good romantic comedy because we've talked before about how that genre has really fallen short lately. There hasn't been a lot of good material, or they're just

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retreads of everything else. This was just, it was different to me, it was different because it was more about this guy's journey to believing that his wife, you know this woman, why? Why she left him, whether it was a good or bad thing, and finding himself again. That's normally. You see it from the woman's perspective. Most rom coms are more from a lot of times they're balanced, but it's more from the female perspective, probably because of the expectations of the audience. But this was from his perspective, which was really cool. And so, yeah, it was, check it out. It was, yeah, check it out. It's good popcorn. Yes, always have popcorn using creativity. Well, that's what we'll be talking about today. If you're a writer, you're you're probably creative, right? Probably always wanted to be a storyteller. Always wanted to be creating something. So we're going to talk about some things today that you can be mindful of as you are writing, to allow your creativity to just come to life, right, to be as creative as possible. Things to keep in mind to make sure you are being creative, that you're creating something new and original and unexpected and those kind of things, right? So using it well, these are the areas that you know, if you focus on, if you think about as you're writing, they're going to really help you create something no one's read before. Okay, well, here's the first one,

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how to write a better opening scene, yes. And these

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are all little tips and tricks, yes. So there's a subject, and then there's me saying these are the tips and tricks in Desiree as well. So first of all, how to write a better opening scene? Tell yourself that this is the most important page of your entire script. What the first page? Because it is. Yes, it's the most important page. If that first page. Bucks, or it's messy, or there's not enough stuff, or there's errors, or there's mistakes, or you're

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using word instead of, yeah,

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your margins aren't right, done. No one's gonna I mean, you send it in a coverage agency like us, we're gonna read the whole thing because we're giving you notes, right? But a producer or reader, an agency or something, looking for stuff, they can stop reading anytime they want. They'll just stop. So you have to make sure. So tell yourself that the most important page, and then when you've done that page, tell yourself that for the next one, this is the most important stage. This right keep following it up. So that's important to get the right mindset next remember that you have to grab someone's attention and interest before the first page is done. You must have something happen by the end of that first page that is memorable, that makes someone doesn't

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have to be like a big Whoa. It could

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just be a funny line of dialog. It could be an interesting detail. Something has to happen there that's

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intriguing. So people want to keep going.

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Yes, I always someone told me this long time ago, write the very last line on the bottom of your page to force the person to turn the page. Not that doesn't mean. What do you mean? I only have the first half of a sentence, but have something happen. I have a line of dialog that's a question or like a really interesting visual that doesn't complete itself, so they have to turn the next page to get the rest of that moment. It's just like you when a great novelist ends a chapter. It's not just ended and done, and everything's wrapped up, and you move on to the next one. It's something is left hanging in the air, and you have to, you're like, Okay, no, okay, one more chapter, and then you're up until 230 in the morning reading, right? Try to do that at the end of your page. Yeah. Okay. So that's something that you can try to do. May not work in everyone, but try

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to do it well. You also, I think you also want to, obviously, and we've talked about this is write something that's never been done before, and in a way, it's never been done, like the movie we talked about the solo Neo very like basic premise of a love story, someone leaves him at the altar, and then he's got to carry on, right? Yeah, but it was done in such a unique way with the idea of being on a tour with a bunch of other newlyweds, and he's a single guy, Yep, yeah.

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I think how it started now is thinking about it, wasn't it like a montage of him and her dating and then he went into her school classroom and had the kids proposed to her for him, which was cool. It was like, okay, so if I'm reading that script, and it's like, okay, this guy, he's crafty, he's clever. She's a teacher. He's probably a teacher,

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yes, but do you remember that too? Do you remember what I said about that? You don't know. Okay, I had, I had seen that actual proposal on why that's you did. It was on Facebook or Instagram years and years ago, and I saw the actual real life proposal. And then someone ended up getting that idea. Okay, what would happen? Why are you going because

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I'm just remembering. Remember, I told you there's a guy on Facebook that looks exactly and sounds exactly like Kevin James. He's a teacher. I'm now wondering if that video, I'm wondering if that happened, if that he proposed to his wife on there in class like that. We'll have to check that out.

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We will. But that is it was from a true story, a true not a true story, but a true moment, concept of a moment, or the kids

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asking her, or holding up the signs,

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and that is legit happened. Oh, I'm gonna like that. And then ended up going and using just that little piece of fact and making it into

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what it is. So caught your attention. Yeah, yeah. Man, if anyone hasn't yet go on Instagram, look up, you know, whatever, Kevin James, look alike. You would swear it's Kevin James. Yeah, his mouth moves the same voice to that. I'll look

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into it anyways. Okay, then back on track. Yes. The next point you have written down is the 10 page test, yes.

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So this is something you can do to help make sure that you are being unique. And so many screenplays I read, I'm like, this could have been written. These 100 screenplays could have been written by the same writer. They all sound the same, right? So give your first 10 pages of your screenplay, even if that's all you've written, or you have the whole script, give the first 10 pages of your screenplay to different people. Have them read it and ask if it makes them want to continue. Would you? Would you keep going? Would you hit the back button? If you were watching this? Is there enough in there to make you want to go? Yeah. Great way to test it.

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It is. But you have to be able to trust that person too. And if they say, yeah, it is or No, it isn't, yeah, don't

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give it to one person. They'll give it to a handful

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of people, a handful and just to the honest but then when you get the honest opinion. Take that honest opinion and don't become defensive over exactly

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like Aaron Falconer said, someone had told her once, when you get notes from some everything that they said was wrong, they are right, you have to believe that they're right and look at it okay, if they're right, what do I have to do? Right? Right? But yeah, ask yourself also if something happens before the end of those 10 pages to keep people going. It used to Okay. So these are

like the parameters right first page. If someone isn't hooked on the first page, they won't keep going. Then they'll maybe give it 10 pages. If by the end of 10 pages they aren't pulled into that, they'll stop. Then you got up to 30 pages. If they. Know where that movie is going, and they're not going to continue.

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No, right? We, and we find that too, when we're watching movies, we will stop a movie so quick,

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usually we give it five minutes, yeah, and then waiting for each other, each other, yeah, about five pages,

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yeah. So we're not talking 10 then I'm

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talking it's fine. No, pretty, you know, pretty quickly, like, sometimes we'll know within a minute. No, not for us. Yeah, I know, yeah. So you want to make sure there's something really interesting happening. People always say the inciting incident, you know, depending on what book or guide you use, inciting incident should happen on page 10 or 12 or 15, right? But, but whether it's an inciting incident or not, have something really interesting happen even on page 10, right? So that that they're like, Okay, I gotta, I gotta find out. I gotta keep going, right? So that's that's and then check how many characters have been introduced. We talked about this on another podcast. Figure out, you know, check how many do you have too many or too little? How many setups are there? Is there a specific voice? You just want to make sure that those first 10 pages are better than the 500,000 stream plays out. There's first 10 pages, right? That's the thing, yeah. So, so test it, right? Because that's where you're gonna you're gonna keep people going or lose them completely well.

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And I think, too, the voice, right? We want to always be aware of the voice, unique voice. Yeah, keep that unique voice. Next one you have is fixing weak second acts.

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Yeah, so second acts are daunting, and that's a lot of times where a script fails is it can't keep the momentum going.

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There's three acts, or how many acts are there? Yeah, there's

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usually, there's the first act, which is about 25 or so pages, the middle act, about 50 to 60. And then the finale, you know, 15 to 25 it's the biggest piece. You know, if it was a rom com, for example, an inciting incident would be them meeting and getting together. End of the first act

would be something happens in the relationship, or whatever they don't, you know, they finally get together at the end of the first act. Second Act is all the stuff that happens up to the point where girl loses boy, or boy loses girl. So that's the end of the second act. Second Act.

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Second Act is some kind

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of conflict, obstacles, characters, learnings, becoming active, all that kind of stuff. The third would be

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like cleaning up it, cleaning it up. And did they overcome their obstacle?

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It's the finale, right? They've fallen down the 17 flights of stairs. Now they got to get back up and finish the story. Right? It's that. But the second act is usually the part that's hard the hardest, because you have to keep the momentum going.

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Well, it's a longer act. It's the longest one. So it's like, how do you keep that person engaged constantly?

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So one of the best things you can do just break it down into pieces, even just read, like, three, you know, five pages at a time, right? Concentrate on those five pages. See if there's enough going on these to say, like, Oh, if it's an action movie, you should have an action sequence every 10 pages, right? If it's a horror movie, someone should die every 10 pages, or something like that. So try to see if you have something significantly interesting happening every seven to 10 pages based on the genre that you're in, okay, right? So it keeps the gun like, Okay, you get us excited, bam. And now we get to breathe, and then we'll build up to the next one. Bam. Then we get to breathe. It just creates a wave of momentum and

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Ebb and Flow. Yeah. So then what about like, could you possibly, like, break down? Like, I'm just thinking the second act being so difficult, could you break that down in sections at all? Like, compartmentalize it in any way? Yeah.

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I mean, the best way to do it is just to split it in half, right? Like, look for what is the middle because usually in the story that the middle moment is something big, because something should shift your character from being reactive to everything or most things to now something happens that makes them go, okay, you know what? I can't just react to this anymore. I need to take control, right? I need to go and do this, I need to to to drive my story forward, right? That'll

happen in pretty much every movie. So that's a good way to break it up. And then that way you can concentrate on the two pieces. That's how I do it. Anyways, I look at my structure as four acts, because it's broken in half at the middle, Okay, makes sense? So that's those are some things that you can do to help you get through that slog of that second act, okay? And then

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another thing you have here is raising stakes without adding explosions.

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Yeah, and we talked about this before we talked about raising stakes, because some people, I think, I think someone even asked that as a question or something, stakes are can be incredibly internal. They don't have to be if you're not writing an action, if you're writing a drama, you're not gonna have big explosions, but the stakes are gonna be higher because, Oh, someone found out that this person was cheating, or they caught this person in a lie. Or if they lose their job, then they lose their house, and if they lose their house, their kids will be taken away from them, and if their kids taken away from them, they'll never get them back. Like chains of events, right? So this is exactly

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like that movie that I saw, the one the homeless one. Oh, exactly what happened? Yeah. So it is. That's life, though. That's a truth.

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That's true story. We all have stakes in our lives, right? We all a lot of people live paycheck to paycheck. What are we going to do? Like, there's stakes. You make one choice, it goes bad. What does it do? It's a chain of events. So look at the chains of events that will happen. You can make sure that when you. Raise that stake. You know, something small can raise the stakes of any story without needing to be explosive or highly dramatic. Yeah, you think you're okay, here's a here's a wife in her in her bedroom, and she's putting laundry away, and she opens a drawer to put laundry away, and she sees something in there, and she pulls it out, and it's a ring, but she already has a ring because she's married. So why is there an engagement ring in my husband's drawer? It's a small moment, but big stakes, right? So doesn't have to be big. It just has to maybe upgrade. Could be an upgrade. I'm not thinking he might have four wives in

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different states. You never know thinking more

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that you're hoping

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because I would have my basement cleaned Nice.

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So that's that's something that you want to you know, most of the time, it's the small things that actually affect us in the biggest ways, right? Like life. Life isn't a movie like movies aren't just regular days of life, right? But life is also not every day like a movie. So we aren't saying that saving the world from nuclear destruction is going to happen on a daily basis, right? But, you know, gambling away your life savings with the push of a button or answering a text message from someone that isn't your spouse that you probably should just block, those are big deals that are small moments. So everything can come everything. Just try and just, I mean, the best thing you do to raise stakes, never make your story easy on your protagonist. Never, never make it easy. Well, life

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isn't easy. If they're in a

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tree and they're stuck and they want help, don't throw a rock at them. Throw 437 rocks at them. That's life. That's life. That's how I feel. Our life is hard lately. Yeah, it's been best year and a half year and a half, just bang, bang, bang, throwing rocks. Stop with the rocks already. We want some pebbles, pebbles, Fruity Pebbles,

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maybe some, maybe instead of pebbles, it can be some, like big coin, gold coins. Yeah, okay. Next one we have is dialog that sounds real without being boring. But I also want to add something. Yeah, cheesy,

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cheesy dialog. Don't be cheesy unless it's a cheesy movie. Yeah?

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But there is the any or that's not, it's not believable, too. It boring, cheesy and not believable, like when you talk to someone, you need conversing. Now we're not going to be like the sky looks quite blue today outside, looking in the back, I shall expect that we shall go for a walk later today. Shall we do? You know what I mean? Like it, yeah, yeah, exactly

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like it shouldn't be filled with stuff that doesn't need to be not real life. No, hey, honey, I'm gonna make some tea. Did you want me to make you some tea? I'll make it in one of your heart cups, and I'll use the decaf tea bag because I know it's a little late for you in the day, so I probably shouldn't give you caffeinated but I know you also need a pep in your step. So did you want me to like, you know what I mean? Like, that's not you may say that. You don't say that in real life, right? You know, dialog is supposed to be important, and it's hard for a writer who's created the dialog to hear it in their head as it as it should be. Because in our head, we know the

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delivery, right? You know, you know the characters inside and out too, right? Like, you know

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how a character is talking, like, when a character says, How could you possibly have done that to me? Right? It's like, well, how is, how is someone reading that? Gonna take it in your head? It could be highly emotional. How could you possibly do that to me? Or it could be, how could you possibly do that to me? You know, like you never know, or like rolling your eyes. How could you possibly do

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same with text messaging? Right? You never know how it's taking

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I mean, the great writing you as the scenes are moving along, you can tell how they're saying yes, but you should hear someone else say it so you know how it's coming across. What should also have a couple people get together and read your dialog aloud to each other and listen to it again.

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Me talking about the character that I already mentioned. You know what your character has been doing previous 25 years? You know your character's whole entire story. What makes them tick the ins and outs of them, we do not know that. So when you go and you have something on the page, it's like, that might make sense to you. It's like, I have no clue why you didn't say that, when you already know that. The reason they would say this is this, this, this is this, because you know the character

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right, because you have to make sure it's being translated that way on the page, and the only way to do that is to hear someone say it, right? Whether the computer is reading it to you, or you have some people reading it to you, or you just sit and print it out and read it out loud to yourself and to a recorder. But that's how you can make sure that your dialog is coming across as real, but not boring, not regular everyday conversation,

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and not just filler, right, right, just putting it in there for the sake of putting it in there, yeah? And I mean filler,

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some stuff's gonna have filler, yeah, no one's gonna talk exactly, you know, oh, every single line here is just fill the subtext. No, it can be like, are you gonna put the toilet seat down this time? And then husband puts it down, wife walks away, or whatever. That doesn't necessarily move the story forward, you know, it reveals some character, but sometimes there can be some, some filler, as someone's leaving the house. Oh, you mean to get anything today, I'm running late to work. Okay, well, that doesn't have anything to do with anything but, oh, but it shows, but it sounds real, right? But it

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also, there's also motivation behind that. So maybe should be, maybe the writer wants us to see that the person's compassionate and thoughtful, or that they forget stuff all the time, you know, like you don't. There's also there's there has to be a reason,

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or they're heading off to cheat, and they want to make sure that they have an excuse for not being home on time. Like, think, why are they saying that? What's the situation going on? Right? But it's hard, though that's a hard dialog is the hardest thing to write. And, you know, it's, it's, it's so difficult to have it not be filled with stuff that doesn't need to be there, you know, ask if every sentence is important. Ask if that needs to be said. Why? What is it doing there? What is it saying? Same thing as I've said before. Cross it out, see if it makes a difference. But it, you know, it's it, it's, it's about delivering information about character, like, are we learning about the character, and is it moving the story forward? If it's not doing one of those two things, it's probably not doing enough, or it shouldn't be there, or, you know, that kind of thing. So makes sense? You know, things to things to keep in mind.

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Writing female characters. Well, is the next one. What do you

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think people should keep in mind when they're doing

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that Desiree, because I'm a guy writing female characters? Well, yeah, like,

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if like, I would say obviously. So I think it goes both ways. Right? Like women probably write female characters better than men, and have maybe have trouble writing male characters, not trouble, but not as naturally as it would for them. Same with men. Men can probably, I mean, we see a lot men struggle with female characters a lot because they concentrate on the wrong things, or like caricatures of them. But what should you do if you're gonna like, if you were gonna write about, if you were gonna write a character that's male, what are some of the things you would, you would try to keep in mind, to make sure you're writing them in an authentic way.

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I like, it would be just re I think research, and I think, like, for me, a lot of it is just listening around you, you know, to and asking questions to people I don't know. Like, what would you what? What do

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you Yeah, I think, I think you're on the right track, right? Like, ask someone, you know, like, if, like, especially, it's like, anything. Oh, I don't know about physics, so I'm just gonna make stuff

up. Or should I talk to a physicist? Right? I will say, what would you do if this was the situation? How did that make you feel?

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I think people are all different, right? Right? So with you, you definitely would be fine with writing women, no problem. Okay, thank you. Because, like you're you're more of a sensitive type of guy. You understand feelings, you're very attentive. Yeah, do you know? Do I think? But I

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think that's part of the problem too. Is that, as that people get into stereotypes too much.

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No, no, I'm saying you as a person, yeah.

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Oh no, I so, you know. And because I mean that, because I learned something from James Cameron a long time ago where he said, because when he was writing, like the abyss and other stuff, where there were these really, like, out there female characters, he's like, I stopped writing characters as genders. I stopped this. I wasn't writing a female character. I was writing a person. That person specific. It doesn't matter if they're a man or a woman, she's going to be an awful human being. Most people wouldn't write an awful person, right? So I try to just write people as people, and I think that's the best thing. Is don't ask yourselves, oh, this is a woman. How would she react? Every woman's going to react differently in a different situation based on their truths in life, right? What I

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really, I really believe that the person that you are and who you are as a person will determine how well you can write, for sure, if

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you're a sexist person, and you think that women that's going to come across, that come across so you want to be a net person, yeah, yeah. And definitely, I mean, you know, but, but also, I always want to get if I'm writing a female character, I will have my script, I'll pass it to every female writer I know, and say, can you tell me if she feels authentic or if it feels like a man didn't understand

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the situation? But I think also, like, what's important is putting yourself in someone else's perspective, too, someone else's mind, yeah,

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yeah, for sure. I mean you. I mean they're your character, right? So you know their backstory, you know how they react to things, yeah, like we said, yeah. But again, not everybody can live like I cannot understand a specific perspective that anybody has lived because I haven't lived it.

That's the art of being a writer, is you try to understand the human condition and different perspective yourself, and I should. You should. You should, as a writer, learn about psychology, read books about psychology and about trauma and about the human experience and all these things so you can understand human people. Human people. Understand humanity. That's the word. So, yeah, I think, I think people can kind of get caught up in that sometimes. But, you know, my my daughter always, she hasn't for a while, but she would always bring me these screenshots that people have posted in different Reddits and stuff about men writing women characters, and it's always just really bad physical descriptions that don't need to be there. Yeah, you know, I think that's a completely different thing. Like, don't write women as objects. But like, if you're going to write a story about a woman, and you, you know, make sure you understand, try to understand what that other side would be. Like, yeah, the tricky one, tricky one.

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It is a hard, definitely a hard thing. It's funny that this is the next topic, because I was going to comment on it about being in someone else's shoes, I was going to say something about it, and now it's here. The next one is writing authentic disability representation, yep. So what I find really frustrating is, oh, is this what you say here? You're talking about it? Maybe not. What I find

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frustrating. Desiree never reads my notes ahead of time.

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What I think is more authentic, that's who I am. I find it so frustrating when we're watching something and I'm like, Oh, wow, that person's in a wheelchair, or that person has this or this condition. And then you look and then you find out, no, they actually aren't, they actually don't live with a disability. Yeah, and then it's just like, really, you couldn't have cast someone who authentically went through the struggles and understands the struggle. That's beyond frustrating for me.

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Yeah, most times when you see someone who is disabled in a movie, they are not disabled in life, no, which you know, but, but what we will see is there'll be a role where that person is in a chair, or has a disability, uses canes or whatever. But that wasn't written that way. They just found it like we don't see that. We just watched it, yeah, run away,

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yes, and then chair sometimes and not in the chair. Others, we were really

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confused, because she just got up at her wheelchair and walked. And it was brilliant, though.

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What I loved about it is that they didn't make a point of pointing that out. It was not because, you know what that is like said about it? Nothing. Nope. Sometimes she needs a chair, and

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sometimes, and then we looked it up, and that's actually she is in a wheelchair, but she doesn't use it all the time. And it was just they cast her because she was great, and that was it. But, you know, it's getting to that point like everyone's talking about inclusion, right? Inclusion? People need to see themselves represented. You know, still not. You can't. It's not bankable to put an Asian lead in place. You know, is this too is this too black? Is this too white? Blah, blah. But no one ever, no one ever talks about disabilities, which I mean, and if you are not, if you do not have something in your life that has, you think about disability. If you know someone who has a disability of any kind, or you yourself, do you just don't notice it and don't think about it, right? If you, you know, just like anything, right? You live your life, but you we just never see it and and it, it's, it's still at that point where, when you when we do see it, we're surprised. We are, holy crap.

28:05

Look, that person's in the chair. You know, wicked was a good example of that. Too Perfect. When she was the sister was in the chair, and I was just like, oh my gosh, amazing. Yeah. Why are more lead characters or supporting roles not made specifically with people in chairs for me representing, but also to have that commonality and the person looking just like that sense of identity and understanding, because that's life. Life is not just everyone walking around, getting from point A to B. People move around in all sorts of different ways. Yeah, so why are we not making that more evident in the shows that are made.

28:42

Yeah? And, I mean, it's the same. I see an article Lupita nuongo, she won the Oscar for 12 Years a Slave every role she was offered after. What do you think was it? What with the role? Was slave? Play a slave? So it's like, okay, so black people can only but play slaves. Yeah, ridiculous. It's that same kind of mentality. Oh, it's gonna be too complicated to put someone in a chair in this or there's in the house that we want to use so now, like, but it's life, and everyone deserves to see themselves up on this.

29:10

So hey, next one, why writers sabotage their own scripts? Yeah, there's a big, big

29:17

line between trying to be creative and come up with something cool and overthinking, right? You got to get out of your own way. Sometimes, you know, some people get stuck on stuff and they're just like, Oh, I just, I can't make this work. And, oh, either said this isn't interesting enough or unique enough, and I don't know how to do it. And, you know, how do I get around this? And like, you have to get out of your own way. You have to get out of your own head. A large part of why writers sabotage themselves is that whole idea of imposter syndrome, right? And I've gone through it most of my life where it's like, why am I even doing this? This is garbage. Like, no one's gonna like this. It might be the greatest thing that's ever been written.

But you tell yourself, no, I'm just not good enough, because that's what you've been told, or, you know, that kind of stuff. So sometimes you just. Just you have to, just like some writers will just work on the same five pages forever and ever and ever and ever, move on. Write something different. Write something new. Get out of your own way. Get out of your own head. Stop telling yourself It's garbage. If someone else tells you it's garbage, then maybe think about why. But you know, as creatives, we're always doubting ourselves, and sometimes we're so close to something that we can't see. It's not working, right? So you need to get other perspectives. Talk to writers all the time that I start working with. I'm like, okay, so how many other people have read this? What have their thoughts been? What kind of notes have you had? And their answer, oh, you're the only person who's ever read this. Yeah, that's a problem. Why? Like, don't be afraid to like people are afraid of someone telling him it sucks. Well, maybe it, maybe that'll happen. But if it doesn't happen, you don't know what sucks. You know what I mean? Like, even if you got to take the good with the bad, right?

30:49

The whole thing, like the whole idea too, with self sabotage, that's just a life thing. That's not just with writing exactly like you and overthinking everything subconscious.

30:59

You don't think that you're thinking, I'm not good enough, so I might as well not. You know, I don't want to take the risk of someone telling me I'm not good enough, so you then screw it up yourselves. You're not thinking about it, but you do it. So it's the same kind of thing you have to you have to realize you cannot write in a bubble forever, because you never know if that bubble is bleeding

31:16

poison or not. Hey, you know, I listened to something that a friend sent me by Brene Brown, in a line that she said in there just about like yourself just really stuck with me, and it was setting yourself on fire to keep others warm is not good. And I feel like that could be used in this sense too, right? You're constantly doubting yourself and doubting your abilities. For what reason is it for others? Is it for yourself? Are you beating yourself up? Are you starting yourself on fire for what? For what reason?

31:54

Yeah, yeah. Are you starting yourself on fire so that other people won't have the chance to burn you? Yeah, it sucks being creative. It sucks because you are just you're constantly telling yourself you're not good enough, because the only way to succeed in any kind of artistry and creativity is acceptance and someone seeing your vision. And it's very rare that that happens. Everyone has an opinion, especially these days, everyone loves to just tell you how much, how bad you are at stuff, Yeah, makes sense. So yeah, you don't sabotage yourself. Don't sabotage your own scripts.

32:26

Don't set yourself on fire to keep someone else warm. Set yourself on fire.

32:31

Set those pages on fire. Fire, figuratively,

32:33

these pages on fire. Hey, next one. Yes. Hey, speaking of fire,

32:38

yes. Look at that segue.

32:41

It was a good segue. Creative burnout, yes, and how to avoid it?

32:47

Yeah. Desires talks about how it's hard being a spouse of a writer, but it's hard being a writer like it's so and no one gets it right, like writers don't ever get vacation. They never get time off, they never get to just do nothing and relax. Their brains are always moving. They're always thinking about their stories, or characters are talking to them. And it's exhausting, like absolutely exhausting, especially when you're like writing more than one thing, or someone like myself, where you have to read dozens and dozens and dozens of things while trying to remember your own things. It's a lot. And then there's life outside of that, and life is pushing against you and being like, No, you can't do this because you got to do this. No, don't go to that movie. Write your stuff instead. Don't go to that party and interact with people. Sit at home and write your thing. So you you have to have days where you realize you just can't function anymore. When you're mentally exhausted and broken, it's okay to stop writing for a bit. Some people write every day. You got to write. No, you don't have to write every day. If you're killing yourself, if you're exhausted, if you have no energy for the things that are important outside of that, then you're just going to bleed that on the page. Anyways, your exhaustion just doesn't come through, and you're going to burn yourself out. I believe a lot of times that's what writer's block is. Is you burnt

34:01

yourself out from it. I feel like you're burnt out all the time.

34:03

I feel like that too, and I wish, I wish I could turn my brain off. Sometimes it's, it's, it's just hard, right? And so, but you have to be you have to refresh yourself. You have to take a break from writing, even like give yourself a deadline. I cannot write another page unless I go on a date with this person, or I go and hang out with this person, or I read a full book, or I binge that new series. Get away from your writing for a bit so your mind has a chance to empty all that out. So when you go back everything's fresh again. You need to do that, just like with anything else in life, right? You need to step away from stuff and take care of yourself and refresh your brain, because mental exhaustion, I find, is worse than physical exhaustion.

34:45

Yes, the problem, though, like, and it's all great on paper, is you go and you say that, but then for you personally, yeah, it's still very hard for you to turn

34:55

it off. It is. Yeah, it is. And I'm sure there are a lot of people like that, a lot of writers like that. And I mean, part of it, I mean, I celebrate it, because it's a great thing. My mind is always going, I'm always thinking of stories. I'm always thinking of characters. Oh, I can use this and this this, but it's just hard sometimes, because you just, you never get a chance to shut off. And so you have to be you have to be good to yourself too. You have to be kind to yourself. You have to remember that you can't do it all in one day, right? There's no, I mean, the only deadline you're going to have unless someone gives you one, right? But if you're writing your own stuff, your deadline is set by you, so don't make it harder on yourself so that you lose the joy of the process, right? You have to, you have to take a step back sometimes.

35:36

So Caden, next one we have here is how criticism actually helps if you use it, right?

35:42

Yeah. I always say when I ask someone for notes, when I give my script and I say, Hey, can you read this for me? I always want them to point and I don't say this to them, but I wait and I expect and excited to see what doesn't work, what's wrong. I want to know everything wrong in the script. I also like to hear what they loved, but you want to go into that mindset of, okay, I'm giving this person my script. I'm going to get back all the stuff that's wrong with this. You. If you expect that, then you have a different reaction to it. That's what I've taught myself, because I can't handle that negativity and that reaction if it's not good. So I tell myself, okay, this is going to so you you have to use it, right? You have to take that criticism and turn it into something

36:25

and look deeper. You know, what I think is a good example of that right now, yeah, and this will probably air after the fact, obviously, but with the Olympics, right? If you go and your coach is giving you feedback and saying that triple axel needed to be the toe loop, double whatever, Sal cow, whatever, and you're not incorporating it, and you're just doing it the same way, and you fall every single time, no matter how many times you try to do it like you're not gonna grow or learn

36:57

at all. Right? That's and that's a great way to look at it. Desiree is look at someone giving you notes as your coach, if you're on a team, right, they're the person that knows. You have to trust that they at least know what they're talking about. Well, yeah, you would

37:08

think, if you're paying coach to go to the Olympics with you, trust their judge, like hiring a personal just like, well, just the same with like, someone who is in the writing industry, you're

going you're submitting notes. You have to trust that person knows what they're talking about, that they just don't just not hiring random people, they've proven

37:25

themselves or what. Yeah, like, so you want to trust that, right? And it doesn't mean you have to agree with everything, but don't get defensive. Yeah? Like, no, they're all wrong. Why are you even getting notes? If all you're going to do is defend everything they say, that's a waste of time and money and everyone but you want to, you want to take everything with a grain of salt, right? Everyone has at least some kind of personal bias. Even AI has bias. But you want to make sure that you're you're understanding that it may not be if they say, Oh, this is wrong, that I didn't like this, do this instead, right? It doesn't mean that it's wrong for everybody, but you always want to think about, okay, why did that? Why did that? Why did they have a problem with that? And so you want to try and use it, use notes to make yourself overall better, make your script better. If you don't agree with

38:08

something, don't agree with, it doesn't matter, no. And the thing is, too though, they should be backing up why they don't agree with something that you've done.

38:15

Yeah, some places do that. Some don't

38:17

like I like. And if you don't understand, I would ask, can you explain? Clarify that for sure? Clarify that to me, because I don't understand what you meant by this, yeah, instead of just, no, it's just not the way it is.

38:29

Yeah, yeah. Character wouldn't do that. Didn't like it. Bye, so you, but you want to use it, right? Not everyone is great at giving criticism, either, right? Some people are better than others. I mean, I A lot of times what people tell me when I give them the feedback is, Oh, you do it in a way where I don't feel like I'm awful, like, if something doesn't work, you actually get me excited about how I can make it work. You know how I gave you criticism? Yes, Scott, don't do that and you suck. No, don't give criticism like Desiree,

38:57

I say you suck.

38:58

Yeah, yeah, I mean, but it's because you have no filter, and you know that that's all you need to say. But not everyone's good at it, right? Even people who criticize you in ways that don't help, right? Use it as fuel prove them wrong. Like my whole life I was told no, that you shouldn't do that. That's, you know, that's for special people. That's a dream. Go to university, get a degree, and this and that, and they use that, blah, blah, blah, right? I just use that as fuel to prove

everybody wrong. This is who I am. This is what I was born to. Do this, what I love. I'm doing it right. Use it as fuel. But also, if it's criticism of your of your writing, specifically use it as fuel to be like, can I make this better? Doesn't mean you have to 100% do everything. They tell you don't do every, every single thing. They may not even single thing. They may not even be right, but use it to really go deeper, right? Because, as creatives, most of us have had people tell us to get a real job, right? Have a backup plan, like a lot of us have heard that, use it, push yourself, make yourself better. Criticism only breaks you down if you let it. Right, just like in life, yeah, Desiree, someone says to you, oh no, you can't do that. You're you're in a wheelchair. How are you going to decorate? I do it. You're like, often, watch me, right? Watch me, watch me, and then they watch you. And they're like, holy crap, right? Like, you use it as fuel. You don't just be like, you know you're right. I'm in a wheelchair. I shouldn't leave my house. I shouldn't have everyone doing,

40:21

oh, but some people take that because that's

40:22

what, yeah, but, but don't be that person in your writing as well. Use it as fuel, right? But still strive to be better. And that's those are some tips to help, hopefully help you keep your creativity on a focused kind of pathway going forward. So you, if you're you wouldn't be doing this and trying to do this, trying to succeed, if you weren't a creative person. So So bottle it up and use it to your advantage positively as you can. That's it. So with that in mind, we're just going to take a quick break and tell you about one of our services, and we'll be right back to answer some questions.

41:00

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. Okay?

41:44

Thank you so much for staying with us. In this part of our podcast, we go to the question and answer section, and I want to remind you, if you have any questions, comments or ideas for future podcasts, you can submit those to [hello@scriptreaderpro.com](mailto:hello@scriptreaderpro.com)

41:59

right on what's first question

42:01

comes from Naomi in Sydney, Australia. Our brother in law is in Sydney or not

42:06

fighting fires in Australia, right?

42:07

Not Sydney, but he is fighting fires. Comes from Naomi. Naomi says, What does it mean when someone says that you've whitewashed your screenplay?

42:19

It means everyone's white? No, that's what it means. Oh, is that what it actually is? Yeah, because

42:24

I'm gonna go to up and craft and I'm whitewashing.

42:27

No, it's not decoupage. Oh no, it's, and I've seen this, and it's like, you stop and you look, you're like, what? There's no women in the script. Pretty much, there's, there's only white people. And it's not like, it's like, set in 1857 No.

42:39

But do they have to actually say Caucasian in a lot of these or do they just not clarify the race?

42:44

I I don't know. I think it's they don't clarify the race. Probably it's a weird thing, because when someone's Caucasian in the script, you don't list their Caucasian. You just only list if they're not. That's dumb. Interesting. Yeah, screwed up. But like, I remember reading this script, and it was about, it was, it was about a kid who was going to play on this sports team in this new city, and there was no one. Everyone, all these kids were white. Everyone on the team was white. And I'm just like, like, why are there no other races here? Like that makes no sense not to somewhat life is, like, especially on sports teams, and the writer was like, no, that's just no. I don't want to do

43:26

that. Like, oh, they outwardly said, yeah. I'm

43:28

like, why? What's who they are? I'm like, Yeah, but like, make someone black, make someone Brown. Like, mix it up. Matt, so someone's telling you your script is whitewash. You have more problems than just having a whitewashed nameplay. Probably, you probably,

43:40

probably, yeah. Funny, though, because the next question from Elliot in Wisconsin says, Should I have my characters be generic races, or should I list each person's specific race in the screenplay? We're talking about race? Yeah, yeah. It's funny.

43:54

I had a manager once I made this character Native American, because that's who he was, that's how I saw him as that's who he was. He had this, the personality fit, and I have Native American roots, and so I wanted to have that in there. And then I remember he said, Don't give us the race of your characters. It prevents them. It prevents people casting it properly. They'll think it's a problem. And I'm like, You're, did you just say that to me? Right? You're the problem. I'm supposed to make everyone just white or like, no race, like, race defines that doesn't define you. Your race comes with a certain life experience, depending where you live in the world and what era like it defines how the world sees you. A lot of the times sucks, right? But, yeah, I couldn't believe when he said that. I'm like, No, thank you. Like, this is who he is. And so it's a personal choice, right? If you don't want, if you just want it to be like, Oh, casting will do the races. Fine, go ahead, right? But, but, you know, I think if it's there for a reason, it's a reason, right? Like, and don't make it be like, Oh, this is a movie about interracial marriage. So I guess I have to, like, you know what? I mean? I. It goes

45:00

back to the whole disability thing.

45:01

Yeah, I define my characters down to the details. I know who that person is, what race they are, what gender, what blah, blah, blah. So it's a personal choice. You don't have to but do what you want.

45:12

A question from Marissa in Colorado. Marissa says, when I'm writing my pilot, should I have act breaks, or should I just leave them out? Yeah, that's a good question.

45:21

I mean, it really depends on on what the pilot is, right? If you're writing like a procedural, for example, oh, it's going to be a hospital Show on NBC. Okay, so that has commercials, so you're most likely going to break those acts up for commercials, have the page count land at a certain point. If it's more designed for something like a streaming service or specialty premium cable service. You're just going to write, you can write it without act breaks, because there's not going to be commercials. So you can still have your beats of Acts. You don't necessarily have to list them a lot of times. These days, we'll just see a pilot that's an hour long pilot, and it reads, looks like a movie script, right? So you can, there's, there's no one's going to say, Oh, I can't believe you put act breaks in there. And no one's gonna say, Where are the ACT breaks do what you feel creates the best experience when reading it.

46:06

Okay. Last question comes from Carl in San Diego. Carl says, What do you think of this new way of formatting a script where every single action line in a script is one line only, instead of two, three or four line paragraphs. Oh, it's a new way.

46:24

Well, it's something that happened. Someone did it not too long ago. But I'm seeing it more and more in scripts, for sure. And sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Like, is that? So it's like, Okay, so normally you have a paragraph that says, Desiree walks into the room. She picks up her hair dryer, she starts to curl her hair, and her hair sizzles. She drops it in the sink. It clangs on the sink, and she grabs a wet towel for her hand. That would be a paragraph. Yeah, this way is Desiree. Desiree rolls up to the sink. Next paragraph grabs the curling hair. Next paragraph curls her hair. It's way too.

46:58

Next paragraph makes a really long page,

47:01

yeah, and, but it makes no sense. Either

47:03

it's not like, it's not a new thought or a new action, right? It would be different

47:07

if you know, like, you know, desert grab the gun, next one racks the slide, next one bullet flies out, yeah, like, impactful, visual, visual, visual. But a lot of times I'm seeing it that people are just using it to describe the whole situation, and you're like, that whole page is gonna take seven seconds. Then you've got a script that's 82 pages long, but it's really only 45 like, it's you use it if it's effective. It works in like, an action type of thing, but in a drama, it's like, I'm out of the moment. I need to feel the emotion of the movement. And so sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, okay, be mindful of how, of how, how much running time your script play would actually be. Because normally, if that's how you're gonna write the whole script, you're probably gonna need 160 page script to tell the full story, which you can't have. So, you know, just be careful with it. Be careful. Makes sense. You don't overdo anything. Hey, yes, that's the end. That's it good. I'm getting tired. That was a long one. He was like, creativity. I'm shot. Now you're burnt out. I am burnt out. And I'm gonna go and I'm gonna make, what

48:13

am I gonna make? A cup of tea?

48:14

Say, make a whiskey. I don't drink whiskey. Yeah, a cup. I'm gonna go make a cup of tea, and I'm gonna get one of my way sugar cookies from the freezer and a chocolate chip cookie and a cherry chip cupcake and a biscotti.

48:26

Okay, there is no biscotti. But if the listeners would like to subscribe to this podcast, that would

48:35

be great. Subscribe on whatever platform you listen to, share it with your friends, if you were entertained, if you learned something, pass it on to other writers you know. Email us. Email us at [hello@scriptreader.com](mailto:hello@scriptreader.com). Check out our website. Give us a nice rating if you're liking what we're doing. Watch for us every week. Watch for our video podcasts that are coming soon, and check us out. We are Script Reader Pro, where we love to help writers craft wonder one page at a time.