

Ep #69: Complex, Messy Characters Are Worth Everything

0:00

On this episode, we're talking all about complex, messy characters. Yeah, I'm complex and messy, and Desiree is a character, so listen in.

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This is the

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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'm the host of the Script Reader Pro podcast, and this is episode 6969

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dudes,

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it is.

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Date totally dated myself. Bill and Ted, Bill and

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Ted, Scott is here with me.

0:42

Yes, I am.

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You know what, Bill and Ted, and Si Can Sino Matt? Nah, I think

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those were so they like epitomized that time.

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They did.

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They weren't at the same time, but they epitomized 80s and 90s movies. I think those are the best decades.

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What's the Ted and what the adventures?

1:01

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventures. Yeah,

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that one too is classic.

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Rufus, yeah.

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So, the

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best. Yeah,

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you know who else is the best?

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You

1:11

good answer, Scott?

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Am I sorta? Wow, that pause says everything. Hi, I'm Scott. I'm part of our team here at Script Reader Pro, we have a great team of writers who are readers and mentors, and, and all that kind of stuff, but we've all been in the game, we're all at different levels, and we all have that specific viewpoint that goes into our, our notes and our feedback that, that might be different from a lot of other places, so I'm here to kind of help educate if I explain something in a way that clicks to you, that maybe it hasn't before, that's my hope. So, I'm not a guru, I don't know everything, not everything I say is gospel, but I just

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know he thinks he knows

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I do

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not.

1:51

Let's be real,

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no, you know everything. I don't mind being argued with that, you just do. Yeah, especially where I put, put things in the house, I have no clue.

2:00

No, you don't have, like, the I just want to mention, too, we missed last week because we have been preparing for something very special.

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Yes, prepare yourselves, because we are about to launch our video version of podcasts. We'll still have audio as normal, but in two weeks from when this drops, we are going to have a two-part series to start our video, and so everyone gets to see how cute and sweet and beautiful Desiree is. And then I will be beside her.

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I'm gonna really have to like tone down the eye rolling. No,

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that's regular, that's just authentic.

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I'm gonna be like, hurry up,

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hurry up, get going. Yeah, you can still do that, because I'll still see it, and they'll get it, and people will laugh, because that's just that's who we are, anyways.

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Like, the live, though, I feed off of live, live is

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fun. Live was so fun when we did those Facebook lives. Maybe we'll do something like that again.

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Oh, that would be so fun. That'd be pretty cool. I loved the ads, the questions, and then that

3:02
it was

3:03
good.

3:03
I mean, I thrive off of like one liners.

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I would, I loved when you would like deliver a line, a one liner or something to burn, and then the messages would like light up with all of the laughter faces. Yeah,

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I know that's fun. That's fun.

3:18
Yeah,

3:18
hey Scott.

3:19
Yeah,

3:20
song sings. blue

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song song. Hey, what? Oh, I wrote it wrong. That's why my typos are the worst song. Sing blue, that's on me. People,

3:34
hang on. Yeah,

3:38
song

3:40
blue. I don't feel like you should be.

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Do you know the next line?

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Just wait.

3:45

Yeah,

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song blue. That's

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exactly what I thought. Anyways,

3:57

we

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always, we always start by talking about something we watched, and we watched this movie the other night. It's been out for a little bit now, but we watched it on On Prime. Yeah, I was in the theater a few months ago, I think it was like before the Oscars even. But yeah, we watched it, and man, it was such like the word I have for that movie, I think emotional riveting, but for me the biggest thing about it was no authentic. Those people were so authentic, they didn't make.. they didn't, you know, they made no apologies for who they were. They owned their messiness, they owned their past, and that's what really.. I was thinking, man, I can talk about that, but we got to talk about messy characters and why messy, broken, damaged characters are the best characters, they're everything. So, anyways, we watched the movie, and I just.. I was so, yeah, riveted, like you said. I even.. we never did a deposit. I was so upset that we had deposit, because you had me go out in a rainstorm to get some free Indian food at this festival in the park. I know. No, but, but I just didn't want to stop, and that was like that. Told me, okay, I am hooked. They got me in this,

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yeah, they got me pretty quick too. But, like, at the.. when I'm not gonna obviously spoil, but at the one part I looked over at you, and we were both like,

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my jaw literally, like, like you always say that. Oh, jaw drop, jaw dropping moment. My jaw was.. I was just like, and I never..

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that doesn't happen very often, where you know you find yourself literally having your jaw dropped, and you're like, that wasn't even.. it wasn't even a second thought that it dropped, it just dropped.

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It was insane. Like, I remember I'm sitting there thinking, my jaw is still dropped open right now. I was so in shock, and if you haven't seen Song Song Blue,

5:44

no, it's called..

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I would, I would highly recommend it, but we're going to be talking a lot about different aspects of it, so if you haven't seen it, just pause this, go to Prime right now, watch it, and then come back. We'll try not to spoil.. we're not gonna spoil everything, but we're gonna talk about some certain aspects to.. and it's best to know examples that we're talking about, so you can go out and put it together.

6:04

I do remember you making a spelling mistake one time, and instead of saying ask that you said ask Doc, do you remember

6:13

that was because I was dictating something, I dictated something, it was in, I don't know, I think it was in a message or you had had me writing a letter or something, and, and I didn't catch that, but the dictation thought I said ass back instead of aspect, and I said something like, I like, I really like this ass back. I was like, oh gosh, that's awful. Yeah, I did.

6:36

Yeah,

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proof, proofread people, proofread, even text messages,

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and

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and

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have your scripts refresh.

6:43

Oh, yes, yes, yes,

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because

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you never notice the little spelling mistakes. I'm a squat. The

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one spelling mistake that I love to see, and I see this often in scripts, is the word waste. Instead of spelling it like someone's waste, w a i s t,

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they spell it w a s t e.

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Yes, so it says she grabs his waist, and it's like

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waste,

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human waste, maybe. Yeah, proofreading is important.

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All right. Well, let's get started. Scott, we're going to be talking about complex, messy characters, and that they're worth everything, just like me. I think I'm complex and messy.

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You are.

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I don't think you are. I don't see you as complex and messy. I see me as complex. Would you agree, or would you say that you are?

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I don't see you as complex and messy. I see me as complex and

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messy. That's weird.

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Well, we don't see ourselves the way that others do, right, which is why narcissists don't know they're narcissists. I always have to say that, because it's true. But yeah, we don't see ourselves that way. I mean, there's obviously, you know, a self-esteem, self-confidence, trauma, history, blah blah blah, that's involved in that. But yeah, it's, I mean, shiny, happy people are boring, right? Like, they're boring in life, they're boring on the screen, especially television. Don't even

try to have a character that is happy, it just doesn't work, because is there any drama when someone is happy and life is perfect?

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No, there isn't drama, but we've also talked about this before on the podcast, maybe we haven't. Oh, it's been 69 episodes, so it's hard to remember. It's

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hard to remember

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just how boring people end up being with boring people.

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Yeah, yeah, it is true. Sometimes you meet a couple, and you're like, they're both so boring. How did that do? They know they're boring,

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but maybe he'll think we're boring, or

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maybe they just.. they brought the boring factor because we were boring. Who knows,

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right? Maybe they're like, who are these? We

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don't judge, we don't judge,

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they're weirdos. Maybe they think we're weirdos.

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We are weirdos, though. If you think about it, if you listen to our podcast, we're weirdos, anyways. We are talking about complex, messy characters, and I'm going to be like I said, you know, drawing examples from this movie, but if you haven't seen it yet, the rundown is it is about this this guy who wants to be a performer, he sees himself, calls himself Lightning, he just, he believes that he is his whole existence is to entertain people, right? We know everyone knows a lot of people, a lot of people know people like that. Anyways, he, he meets this, this woman, and she's a singer too, and she has dreams of being, you know, having it pay her bills, and she suggests that he should maybe become a Neil Diamond, not impersonator, a need Neil Diamond interpreter, which was just that, just the way she delivered that, told me who she was as a character. She knew exactly what he needed to hear. Anyways, it's about them getting together, trying that, trying to get this career going, and then just mishap after mishap. But

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I have a soft place for Neil Diamond.

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Yeah, I know, because I don't know. Here's a fancy little bit of trivia, but Desiree,

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I think that

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Desiree is named after the Neil Diamond song Desiree, and because Desiree is who she is, when she meets someone, she says, 'Hi, I'm Desiree,

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and they

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say, 'And they say, Oh, that's a nice name, and Desiree says,

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'I say, did you know that I was named after the Neil Diamond?' Song called Desiree, and Desiree was a prostitute, a woman of the night.

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No, you don't say that, that would make a lot more sense

10:08

to someone.

10:08

Hooker,

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you don't deliver

10:10

all you say

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that's what you say. Yeah, Desiree, did you know I was named after a hooker? That's what you say, you don't preface it at all. And then they stare at you, and they're like, I don't really know what I'm supposed to say to that, and then you follow it up. Yeah, you know the Neil Diamond song.

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Yeah, the night sounds so elegant.

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Yeah, it does.

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How's it going?

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Desiree, my Desiree. Yeah, so at yeah, anyway, so they formed this band, and everything kind of just, you know, stumbles around from there, but the main character is a perfect character study, because everyone liked him, and that was what was so endearing about the story, is that didn't matter who was in his life, everyone would risk for him, they'd give up for him, and they would stick with it for him. And what's interesting about it is the fact that the very first scene that we see tells us this guy's an alcoholic, this guy's had problems, this guy isn't necessarily successful, he struggles through life, and most people will just judge someone for that, right? Oh, you're an alcoholic, Kate. No, thank you. But everyone, because he's so honest, because he knows he's broken and doesn't try to hide it, that's what makes him likable. That's what draws us in, because this guy's trying, right?

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Well, and it's real.

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Yeah, exactly.

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I, and I really love the beginning, because at the beginning you wonder, the second you're thrown into the Belville mix, you're wondering, like, what the heck is this? What's this guy talking about? What's gonna.. where is he? Where is he talking to this?

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Yeah, is

11:51

he talking to himself?

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Yeah, you're like, or he's auditioning for something. Was I.. was one of those two things.

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And then you find out that he's at an AA meeting,

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yeah, and it's his 20th sober birthday, and he's singing a song, and, and it was a Neil Diamond song, but he wasn't being able not, and he's been himself,

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but

12:08

yeah, it was good. So then the secondary character comes in, right, and she represented this like sense of magic, right? There was something about her that just she walked in a room, and you couldn't help but use

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joy,

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joy, there you go, yeah, she pre.. she presented joy. There was an aura and an energy, but also there was a brokenness, right? She's work.. she's, you know, singing at this at this, you know, two-bit state fair. She has two kids, she is divorced, she's living in an apartment, the rent is overdue. We feel that this woman is broken, but that doesn't break her. she just has this. this aura, and you just were like, okay, she, these two characters have to come together, because, yeah, they're both broken, but they both have that hope, right? The best part of it is that they both had pasts, and that's something you always need to remember about your characters, what is their past, what made them this way? What broke them,

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but that's the thing with real life, though. True, too, is that everybody does have a past, and the way that people are in real life is a result of their past. Yeah,

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exactly.

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So, the reason people act the way they do, it's all traces back, it all traces back to how they, how they are, what their past story was,

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yeah. How they were built, what happened to them, right? So stress, real life, gritty, dark things, right? These are the things that just affect every single person on a daily basis, right? No one's life, it doesn't matter who you are, some lives are easier than others, but everyone, no matter how successful they are, or how easy their life seems to be they have a past, right? Lemme reminds me of that Amanda Marshall song, right? Everyone's got a story, right? Everyone has a story, everyone has issues that, that have, you know, defined who they are or played to they

want to be. So, the best, the biggest part of that is when you have a character like that, the best thing you can do for them is, is find

14:02

together,

14:02

yeah, find another person that, that, that equals that, right? That, but that also makes them have hope, right? And because that was the biggest part of this story, I felt that Rye really identified with was that they, their hope never died, they were always chasing, they were always hoping.

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Plus, I feel like with them connecting and meeting together, they really brought the very best out of each other.

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Yeah,

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that they became better people because of meeting one another.

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Yep,

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and then when crazy things happen in the story, and they're both in really dark places, they actually bring out the worst in each other, which was a really interesting character study, because they were just so good for each other. They were so sweet to each other. They just really, really loved each other. And then, when everything went dark, they just lashed out at each other, and and they had to fight through it. And that just showcases that life isn't perfect, and don't make these people's lives perfect when they start to go really. Well, the best thing you can do is throw them down a flight of stairs,

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that's what you want, like, want to remember when you're writing, though.

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Exactly,

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it's like, if you don't want them to be all perfect, you want them to have flaws, you want them to have issues that they have to overcome.

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Yep, and you can have them find, start to find success, and they should, but don't let them get too far ahead of themselves, so, so, the, you know, the hope, right, beyond how dark or messy or awful someone may be in a moment, or their life may be, that that hope keeps us in the audience hoping, right. Part of the idea of connecting with the audience is you have to have that emotional connection, and it's hard to root for someone when they don't root for themselves anymore, when they don't have hope, when they don't keep striving, right? Yeah, if they hit a moment where they're going to give up, fine, but it's hard to really care and root for someone if they aren't doing the work

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right to use if, if you're always around a Debbie Downer, really like it pulls you down too.

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It's

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totally

15:59

around someone who's always like,

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no, it affects you. I think you had a friend like that once in the past, and I remember saying to you, I don't like you, I don't remember, but I was like, I really don't like you hanging out with this person, because all they do is trauma dump, and they bring you down, and then you get pissy, and you start being down about things, people affect you, right? It's just how it is, right? So, it, the movie is also a perfect example of never making it easy on your characters, right? Like, and so many scripts I read, I'm just like, that's my note, this is just way too easy, right? Like, who has any? Do you have an easy life?

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I really do.

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I thought so. So, you're not interesting enough to be in a movie, then?

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No, I guess no. I have a really messy, chaotic, crazy life. The people don't even - a lot of people, when I go out, they just said she's really cool and fun and funny, and has lots of funny things to say, and comebacks, and kind. And then a lot of times I come home and I feel like I'm a whole mess,

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yeah. I mean, a lot of times we have to put on great faces, right? So people don't know what's going on, right?

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A lot of people do,

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yeah. And I mean, that's, that's, you know, it's important to remember that, you know, when you are, when you recognize, especially a character in a movie, when, when we can recognize that they're, that they're messy, that they're, they're kind of like really beat up, that the people around them aren't all perfect, right? That the people around them are also broken, they are also struggling, you know. In this movie, you know, he had a, you know, he had a daughter, and his daughter had issues with him, right? His alcohol was an issue when she was young, but she still loved him, right? And what you see over the course of the story, she loved him because she could, she, she loved the hope that he had, right? He never, never stopped trying. He always, he's, he was always lifting people up, always filling people's cups up, right?

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I think she also had hope in him too.

17:58

Yeah, for sure, she

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did hope that you know,

18:01

well, she wanted to see him succeed, for sure. Her daughter, you know, the female lead, her daughter hated her life. She loved being, you know, just a grumpy teenager, but she didn't want to let this new guy in, right? It was that thing of, I don't want to talk to him, I don't want to, you know, I don't need another dad to walk away, kind of thing, but she ended up seeing the goodness in him, that she saw the brokenness, you know, he's an alcoholic, he's broken, doesn't have a job, but she saw the hope, and, and he was just kind, and so, you know, that allowed her to see that maybe she isn't, maybe her life isn't any better than his, kind of thing, you know, the main characters, you know, he had a manager, and his manager, what was his manager, what did he do for a living?

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His manager was a dentist.

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Yeah, he was his dentist. So, here's this manager. He's not a perfect manager. He doesn't

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know you think he's just going to the dentist to get work done, but then you find out he's also his manager.

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Yeah, so

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it's like, oh, that's interesting.

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So, that guy isn't super successful, and you know he's not perfect, right? They're looking for a tour manager, and they sit down with this guy, and this guy's really kind of weird. He's kind of weird and strange, and but he seems to have connections, so they're like, 'Here was good to go. And then he gets up from the table and puts a hat on it with a megaphone.

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He's a bus driver,

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he's a bus driver who

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drives

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tour of Fanguina Casinos, or whatever. Yes,

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so it's like, but then when they saw that, most people will be like, what did we just do? This guy can't do what we need him to do, like he's a bus driver, they, but they don't judge him, because they realize that they're no better than him. Yeah, people have something inside of them, everybody does.

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Okay, so what's the point of all of this in terms of writing?

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So the biggest thing, the biggest

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takeaway,

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the biggest takeaway here, when you're looking at all your characters, is don't judge your characters. If you judge your characters, you're holding them back. Don't try to make them too good. Don't try to oppose. Apologize for them in your writing, right? Do not judge them, just let me apologize

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for them.

20:05

Like a lot of times, people like, oh, okay, well, that would really kind of.. like, I don't really like that aspect. If I met him, I probably wouldn't want to be around him. That'll hold you back from exploring who he really is and what other people are going to see in him, right? As a writer, sometimes you have to step back and view the characters, view that character world disconnect in a disconnected way, right? Otherwise, you, what I see is people end up being too good, too perfect, not not having flaws, not even, you know, addressing their flaws, not even seeing that they have a flaw. A character has to learn that they have problems over the course of the story.

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I also think people that want to watch someone who has a perfect life,

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exactly. It's boring,

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right? It's kind of boring. It is, and what, what makes you want to continue to watch that? Yeah, there's got to be so much conflict, and it's going to be conflict from different angles, like internal conflict, external conflict, like conflict from other people, conflict from your job, like it's just going to be layered.

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Yeah, yeah. There's this great scene in the movie where you know he's got his band together, everyone's believing in him, everything's going well, they're doing, you know, everything's got, and they have this first big shot, and it's this little bar, right, but it's this big shot, and it's supposed to be filled with these older mobile home travelers, but they get there and there was no mistake, and it's actually the crowd is a biker gang, and so here they are. They're gonna start with this song that makes no sense to start with for a biker gang, and his hot, his entire band, his manager, everyone's telling them, start with Sweet Caroline, start with something fun, start with something that everybody knows, right? And he didn't, and he stuck with that original song, and everything went bad, and people were throwing things, and they booed them out, and it made him stop and realize, okay, here's my flaw, I believe that there's there's more to tell about this guy's songs, and and I'm the only one who can tell people this, and he had to stop and realize it's not about him, right, that he couldn't have got there if it wasn't for everyone else, and everyone else, no one's walking away from him, they're just disappointed, and he learns from that, and he steps up, and he grows, and then that makes him even more likable, so a lot of

times a lot of writers would have just had him go ahead, and then okay, because that's what we thought, is oh, he'll turn it around, he'll get this crowd on his side, but he doesn't, right, and so a lot of writers just try to make it too easy, right, and they're like, oh, well, that's okay, he'll just do it, and look, he's grown, no, no, make him have your character make mistakes first, have your character really screw up, so they can grow, there's nothing entertaining and dramatic of someone who just sees, oh, this is what I'm supposed to do here, I'll be better and be better without being worse. First,

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I think it's.. it kind of makes me think of a puzzle, really. Like, you work on puzzles. We've talked about this before on the podcast, and the fact that, okay, puzzles are made, they're in pieces, they're made to be put together, just like something like a movie like this, where broken people, just like the pieces of puzzle, they're made to be put back together.

23:07

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And if, yeah, exactly, that's perfect. So you always come up with these perfect metaphors. If, if your characters are in a, are fully complete and they don't have any broken pieces, or they're not missing something, no one cares, right?

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To

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you know, like, like I said, don't, don't judge your characters, but give them a whole bunch of aspects and elements to them, aspects and elements to them that people would judge. Give them things that people judge, right, because then it just makes the story harder on them. It makes them have to prove to people I am more than what you think I am, I am more than what you see, right. It's the best way to give depth to your, to your characters. So, so if someone, for example, someone admits to being an alcoholic, most people will judge them for that, right? Like, or like an ex-con, you know, a drunk driver who you know had killed someone, a cheater, a liar, all these things that people, you know, life is about, right? That people, there's scars on people, right? So a character like that, who would be judged by people because of their flaws, is the perfect character to put at the lead of your story, right? Because they're interesting, they're an immediate underdog, right. We're just like, okay, this guy in the beginning, I want to see how he's like he's been sober 20 years. Holy, that's amazing. I want to see what he's going to do. You immediately want to know, so when? Yeah, exactly. So, like you said, broken people, they deserve to be put back together like a puzzle, right? And so that simple thought can help you find your movie story, right? What about them will help put the back together? Like, what is it that that person needs to be put back together, right, and that kind of marries well with the idea of asking what's the worst thing that can happen to this character, right, and then make it happen, and then have them grow through it, and realize that's the best thing I had to go through that, because that's what I needed to be put back together, if it's too easy of a road, if it's. Too simple of a line, it's just not going to be dramatic enough,

25:02
right?

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And no matter the genre, you still need drama,

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you have to have drama, right? Doesn't, yeah, exactly. I mean, comedy is drama, right? Comedy is conflict, so you know. So the worst thing you can do to your character, do it right, almost to the point that they would die in one more minute, if you know, not like literally, but like inside, or whatever, right? That's how you see who they come back as, right? In this movie, the worst tragedy happens to these people, and as it's unfolding, the whole point of it is these two can no longer live on their own, they can no longer. This man will never find joy in music again without her at his sash.

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She won't find joy.

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Yeah, and so they complete each other, right? It was less about him having all of his pieces put back together, but she became those pieces, right? And she became everything.

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The thing that was really cool about too is that this is based on a true story.

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Yeah,

26:05
and so I wonder what part, what part of it was factual and what was not. I'd be interested to know.

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Yeah, I haven't looked it up. I know that it's, I mean, every, and this is also important for writers to hear too. If you are writing a biopic of any sort, any kind of true story, it doesn't, it's not designed to be beat for beat, truth for truth,

26:26
exactly.

26:27
Yeah, and so many writers think, you know, and I'll have that in my notes, I'm like, this character maybe have this character do this, or what if the character this, and they're like, well, no, they

can't, because they didn't do that in life, well, really, who knows. So, for example, in Song Song Blue, they had a son, or he also had a son.

26:46

Oh, he did,

26:47

yeah. And that son was like, it was, was a consultant stuff on the movie, but I guess he didn't like some of the things where it went, or whatever. So then they just removed it from the story to remove issues. So that's another example. Sometimes you just take characters out that just aren't going to work for the dramatic movie story.

27:06

You, you have that ability as the writer to do whatever you think is going to be best to showcase the story, but also the characters,

27:13

exactly. And I mean, no one's going to be like, "Oh, well, I know that didn't happen. I mean, that's going to happen. People are being like, "Oh, that's not real, but that's the thing, is you have it, even if you're writing something based on something true, it's based on something true, or inspired by something true, you have to make it your story, right? Why are you the only person who can tell it? Because you can only tell it in the way you're going to tell it,

27:35

right? Everybody tells a story differently,

27:37

exactly,

27:37

and they pull from different experiences in their own lives, or what they've read, or what they know,

27:44

like if I was hired to write the story, if I was hired to write Song Song Song Blue, it would be nothing like what it ended up as. If you were to write it, it'd be completely different. I could never have been able to do it as well as this was. It was amazing. So, yeah, it's just every, just like every writer is flawed, and they bring something specific to a project. Every person is flawed. Every character should be flawed. Flaws make you messy, they make you broken, but they make you incredibly interesting. That's what you need to give your characters. So, the biggest thing to remember here is the best motivator for a character, and for the audience to connect with and care for

28:22

is hope. Hope

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that was the whole epitome of the entire movie, was just hope

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that was the theme. Yeah, that's what theme I picked up, and you picked up, right? But that's it. Give your character hope, because again, it always comes down to like a lot of times when, as a reader, when you're reading a screenplay, sometimes you're just like, I really, really don't care what happens to this character, because they're not trying, or they don't seem to care, or they're too, you know, like they're not learning from their mistakes, and so you cannot, if they have no hope to be better, if you can't even, whether they're thinking about it or not, right, having some kind of hope that their story will succeed, that's what you need to give your audience, and usually perfect happy people, they don't need hope, because everything's easy for them.

29:07

That's also what keeps the story moving forward.

29:10

Perfect,

29:11

don't having that hope, right?

29:13

Yeah, so that's your sticky post-it note you want to put on your computer is the word hope. That's a great way to make sure that things are constantly going to be moving in the direction of making us care,

29:24

got it?

29:25

So, give a character hope, and the story won't break them completely, right? It'll try, right? You should try to break them completely, but that is how character magic happens. It's finding that hope and that will and that reason to go on when nothing seems like it's just they don't want to put one foot in front of the other anymore, if there's something that's dangling there as hope it's going to work, so so go do it right hard as you go through it and digest that as you listen to this quick promo about one of our services,

29:57

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 and use the code rewrite 15 during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

30:40

And we're back, and this is the part of our podcast where we have questions and answers, questions that have been previously submitted by listeners like you, and you could submit your questions to hello@scriptreaderpro.com if you have questions, comments, ideas,

30:59

show ideas, anything you want. Yeah. hello@scriptreaderpro.com

31:03

So, first question comes from Matt. Matt didn't tell us where he is from, but the question comes and says, How do you write dialog when languages are being switched around? My characters speak English, but occasionally they may say something in Greek,

31:21

yeah, that's a good question. See, a lot of different variations. It's one of those things where there's not really like a specific rule to follow, right? The rule that you want to follow is, is it clear, and is it written in a way that it's not going to push the reader out or confuse them or remind them that they're reading, right? You always want to have a have a reader escape into your story and watch it in their heads, right? So you know it depends on how much is going to be there. If it's just once in a while, the easiest way to do it is have that character header, and then under the header have the parenthetical that says in Greek, and then write that in English, right? But just saying it's in Greek, sometimes a lot of times you can use like have that dialog be in italics after saying in Greek, there's no need to put like a lot of writers will say in Greek with English subtitles, no, that's just a waste of time, obviously there's gonna be subtitles,

32:15

yeah,

32:16

right, or there won't be, it'll

32:18

audiences and where it's being released,

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yeah, or sometimes the director be like, I don't want the audience to fully understand what they're saying, so I'm going to leave the subtitles, whatever. But you're just going to say it's in this language, and you're going to write it. If it's like a half and half, if half the script is in another language, always keep in mind that if the person who's reading it is most likely going to have,

you know, be versed in English, but maybe nothing else, it should all be in English. Don't have Spanish filling half the script, unless it's intentional, and you're trying, whatever, right? But try and have it in English. But if it's going to be half and half, a lot of times, instead of wasting all of that parenthetical space, you can always say, with like an asterisk in the beginning or something, you can say all dialog in italics is in Greek. And then, whenever someone's dialog is in full italics. We just know it's Greek.

33:01

Where would you put that, though?

33:03

Right? I would, I would either.. I would put it the first time, just above the first time someone speaks in Greek. So it's a note there that everything in italics is in Greek. And then here, this is in italics. So

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I think that I'm going to send you a note to put that in the show notes,

33:20

okay?

33:20

Because that is kind of

33:23

confusing,

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confusing to understand where exactly. I'll just say show notes Greek. Okay, perfect. Understand, I think that will help just the layout. If you have, have someone can see what it looks like.

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Good idea. Perfect. So,

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anything else? Want to add? Nope,

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that's

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that. Hopefully, that's helpful. If you need clarifications within the skeletal list, further clarification. Second question is Jessica from Portland. Justice says, I read a script where the writer used caps every time they had a character name, front to back, front to back,

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beginning to end. I would say,

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is this a new thing to do?

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No, it's not a new thing to

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do.

34:01

So, okay, so the first time we meet a character in a screenplay, an important character, their name should be in capital letters,

34:08

okay?

34:08

Right, that's what you, that's just the rule, that's just what is expected. So first time you introduce them, caps. I've seen screenplays like this, where every single character name throughout the entire screenplay is always in caps, it's going to be in caps in the character element before someone speaks dialog, right? When they

34:26

describe the character,

34:27

yeah. And every time, I mean, dialog is character name is in capital letters, but do not capitalize full word full names for the rest of the script. All that is is a distraction. It just distracts us. We don't need to. We're just going to see their name, so no, it's not something new to do, it's something you shouldn't do. Got it, got it, got

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it.

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Good, good. Okay. Third question, why this one here comes from Davis Portofino. Oh,

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Portofino,

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why

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do I need to have chemistry between my characters in a rom-com if the audience. Already knows they will fall in love and end up together.

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Oh, what would your answer be? What would your answer be?

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What's

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the point of writing?

35:09

Yeah, that's

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that story.

35:12

Yeah, that's kind of an odd..

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maybe that's not the story for you.

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Well, I mean, I see what they're saying, like.. like I'll have that known sometimes. Yeah, these characters.. I, I didn't feel anything. There was no chemistry. I need to believe that they're falling in love, and maybe that's the idea of, well, yeah, but if we know they're falling in love, it doesn't really matter if they have chemistry, because we know they're going to be together. No, it kind of does. I mean, yeah, like, like you said, what's the point? Well, there's no, if you're not interested in, if you're not interested in writing in a way that gets the audience to just really be swept away by the characters, and hope they get together, then don't write it. It's the same. It's like saying, oh, we know that the hero's gonna win, because the hero usually wins.

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So, what's the point of even writing?

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So, who cares if the antagonist is good? The hero's gonna win anyway. Yeah, that's that's called boring writing. Like, it's yeah, I mean, I'm not being facetious about this question, but, but that's a good answer, right? That the whole point is we won't care, so we'll stop reading. That's why you have to, or we'll stop reading.

36:06

Got it? And final question comes from Cory from Staten Island. Cory says some people to know some say to note a specific song to be played in a script. Is that smart, or will someone have an issue with that? That's a really good question, considering we just talked about Daniel Diamond, because they would have had to have his permission, right?

36:28

Yeah, yeah, I mean, if it's something like that, where, like, it's a biopic, or it's about a specific band, then obviously their music is going to be in that story. I think this is more of the question of you're writing a regular movie and you think, oh, this person's going to be excited and get up and get dressed for their new job, and this is the song that's going to play in the movie, whatever the song is. Well, some readers have pet peeves on that, and be like, oh, don't tell me the song, because you don't know how much it's going to be to get the licensing of that, and it might not even be that song. Well, that's just being petty, right, as a reader, that's finished being, we know. Okay, so whatever. The whole point of the writer putting it there is to put that song in our head, so we kind of feel it. We're like, oh, I feel the energy of the moment, I get what's going on here. If it's a very, if it's a very like a rare song like that, no one really knows, then there's no point in putting it on there, because the reader's not gonna look it up. But if you want to put that there, put it there. Don't do it every, don't do it 10 times in a script, don't make it a consistent thing,

37:23

right?

37:24

But if you want to put it there for a mood to, like, set something, you can put a song, or you can say a song plays like Barbie girl or this, or whatever, right? So to get the mood of what that's supposed to represent, I think that's

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making movie, then all of that will be fleshed out and worked out in the end. Yeah,

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you have no say in that,

37:41

no, right? And so they'll decide at the at that.

37:43

Yeah, it's like, oh, it's gonna cost, you know, \$40,000 for us to get the license to play

37:48

this song.

37:48

They're not gonna do

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it, probably not.

37:50

No. So, but I mean, the thing is, you can't control what a reader's pee is.

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But at the same time, I think, too, like, if it was me, I'd maybe on different.. if it was like, if I was Neil Diamond, I'd be like, holy cow, totally take all my sound, just do whatever you want, I'll give them to you for free for this. Do you know what I mean? Oh,

38:08

yeah, yeah.

38:09

And I wonder if there, there has to be people like that out there.

38:12

I'm sure there are, right? Anyway, yeah, so that's that's the answer. Yeah, use it if you feel like it's going to make that scene better, but be very intentional of the reason it's there. Yeah, that's it.

38:25

That's all we have.

38:26

That's it. So, if you have questions you want us to answer, or show ideas, or things you want us to talk about, email us at

38:32

hello@scriptreaderpro.com You can give us five stars for reviews. We like five stars.

38:39

Yeah, watch out for these videos, it's gonna be fire. We want, we would love five stars, just for seeing Desiree on screen. We should get five stars.

38:44

No, that means Desiree has to actually do,

38:47

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