

Ep #70: The Truth Characters Must Learn

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On this episode, part two, we're talking about character arcs, yeah, and about the truth that the characters must earn. So, listen in.

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

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Hi guys, this is the second time we are doing a video.

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Yeah, and if you're just listening on audio, it's gonna be the same show, but you're gonna miss out on Desiree's eye rolls and laughter at how dumb she thinks I am.

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Thinks is the word,

0:42

my wonderful supportive host, Desiree.

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I'm Desiree. This is Scott, and this is the Script Reader Pro podcast. It

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is, and we are people. This is not automated

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people. We are human beings. This

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is not well, so much of this stuff is AI these days. That's

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stupid.

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I know

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that's a stupid,

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stupid. Why do you say stupid like that? Stupid, stupid, that's stupid. I'm gonna have a character talk like that when I make a movie. You're why are you being like that? You're so stupid.

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Did you not watch the video I sent you the other day?

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Which one, the

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one of the guy, how he was like, what he was from the UK. Did you watch this one?

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I don't know.

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I'm eating a piece of cat hair.

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Nice. Realize

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people action AI doesn't do this. What was I saying? A

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video he watched about a guy from the UK.

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Yes, he was on there talking about how he's getting used to how I think it was how Americans say certain things, and he was talking about how the word farting is so ugly. Oh, did you not get

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no? You didn't watch it. I didn't see that.

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That people say, why'd you fart? People can't just worse words, they can't just say, 'Oh, I'm sorry, I farted. Oh, I'm sorry,

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that's true.

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Fart, so what in the UK? What did they say?

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Well, listen,

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I tooted.

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No, I farted, farted,

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right? But depends where in England, because everyone has such a different accent. One place would be, oh me, I farted. Another one will be like, I farted,

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right? The

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other one will say, I farted,

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right? But doesn't that sound better than farted?

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Yeah, I guess. Anyways, this is not an episode about farting, farting. No, I

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feel like you have to get your head in,

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get right in there. Anyways, welcome to our podcast. Desiree is a host, I am the one who sits here and talks about screenwriting, tries to pass on information and not life, while Desiree yawns at me, and then tries to entertain you. So today, take you on today. We're gonna continue from our last, our last one. If you have not listened to it or watched it yet, go back and watch it. It's the first part about character arc and character change and the differences, and you give examples

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of lies, and

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yeah, there's lots of good stuff, and we're just building on it. So, so give that one a listen and watch first, and we'll get going in a second here. We normally start each podcast with something that we've seen recently, and

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we just like the last podcast, which

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was.. I don't, I don't know, we recorded that a long time ago.

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Scott, we're wearing the same clothes, dummy,

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but no, we've been stopping

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such a fart face.

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Don't, don't we? Anyways, we've been so busy, we haven't really watched anything but the same kind of reality TV show. We're not going to bore you with the same thing. So, Desiree, though, I have been watching something, listening to a podcast, or watching a podcast, which is doing

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listening. Well, I watched a few of them on, I think, Netflix's Aids on Betrayal. I'm into the podcast. It's such a good podcast, especially if you like the murder mystery type stuff, and it's not all murder, it's just like examples of when men and women have been betrayed.

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Yeah,

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it's fascinating because you think this can't be real, and then the person's actually talking, and I love how it's like the person's giving their true account of what really happened, and then I can't remember the podcaster, what her name is, but then she.. it's like she's talking with the person, but not talking with the person, you know? She actually fills it

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in. Yeah,

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it's really.. it's done quite well. It's interesting. I've been putting it on mainly when I'm doing crafts, because, like, I can't watch a show because I can't pay attention, but listening really passes, I find, passes the time.

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Yeah,

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it's an interesting one.

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Yeah, seems like it.

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Yeah, there's a bunch of them on Netflix to watch too. But hopefully next podcast that we do for you guys, we will have some time.

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Yeah, we'll have probably watched something.

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Yeah, because it's kind of lame.

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We're lame,

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I. Say, were

5:02

okay

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anyways, and you guys are wondering what I'm drinking in here.

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Why she is drinking in there? Okay. Well, you

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guys ever tried drinking like a dog?

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Yeah, have once to try, and nothing happens. Just get wet. Yeah, your face just gets so

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weird.

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That's why dogs are not.. that's why they don't drink out of cups like people. Can you imagine their little lips going around their jowls? All

5:33
right. Anyways, tell this is episode two. Yeah,

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it's.. we don't spend this much time together face to face. We just annoy each other. So today we are going to be looking at that second piece of a character's change and the arc they go through. Today we're going to talk about how through that lie that they tell themselves, which helps create their flaw and gives them something to overcome, is the truth, right? But it's not always about them learning the truth, it's about them earning the truth. Okay, so they have to actually earn it. There's so many movies that you see where the character is just like, oh, they clue in, it's like a light bulb goes off, and they go, oh, okay, I got it, I'm done. And then that's it. They think that's enough, and that's over. What

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do you mean, that that's the end of the movie?

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Yeah, that's a lot of times that I'll see in a screenplay, is that piece will just click, and the guy will just say to the girl, oh, my problem was this and this and this, but I'm over that now, so now I can be with you, and then they kiss, and it's over, and it's just like it's not that easy, is

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what it comes down to.

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Yeah, and they have to go through the work, they have to realistically be challenged, they have to face things that make them understand that the lie they've been telling themselves, you know, for example, that love, love will always hurt me. They have to realize that that that isn't true, that if they keep telling themselves that, they'll never be happy, though they'll always be alone, or whatever the case is. But they have to actually earn it.

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They have to basically be in an uncomfortable state,

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definitely. Yeah, yeah, they have to be challenged and learn from it, so, so that's what we're gonna be talking about. So, the first thing to kind of like question is, why do some character

transformations move us as an audience, but others feel fake, right? It's normally because the change isn't convincing enough, right? When a character simply learns a lesson,

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do you think it's like the emotion too, though? Do you think that that plays a part to not move us when there's no emotion in the scene?

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Definitely, there has to be that emotion in the characters, but also the audience has to have emotionally connected to the character,

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right? And the convincing, like you were saying, I feel like you have to convince us of who the character is.

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Definitely, and the only way for them to learn it, and to convince us that they're they're actually learning things and they're stepping forward, is they have to earn new truths and learn new truths as they're going, so each obstacle they overcome in any genre, they should learn something new, right, about themselves and to move the story forward, right, but the more you know, if and it has to be stuff like you said that makes them uncomfortable, or they're just like, well, that's not me, that's not my problem, I'm not like that. Yeah, and they have to build through it, right? If you just hand them their answer, and they're like, oh, I guess I have to be this way, you know? Like, someone says, you will never succeed because of this and this unless you do this, and then they're like, okay, I guess you're right, right? Like, they have to earn it, they have to struggle through it, they have to hit rock bottom, you know all that kind of stuff, so, so that's important, so a few things to remember, remember, and some examples, so you can kind of understand this is that the truth should be the opposite of the lie, right? Because if it's just kind of like something different or not quite lining up, then it doesn't make it right in

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normal language,

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yeah, so example, if the lie is I have to do everything alone, right? The truth would be trusting others makes me stronger. So, it's the opposite of being alone, right? Someone wants me alone, the truth is they actually have to. They will be better if they let other people in, right?

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Instead of, I have to do everything alone, instead of being like I have to do mostly everything alone,

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then it's not you're not overcoming that enough, right? It's learning alone. If you do it all alone, then you see yourself empty after all, right? If you trust others, they can make you stronger, make you whole, you grow as a person, that kind of thing, right? Couple others showing vulnerability is weakness, right, which you talked about in the last podcast.

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The

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opposite of that is that being vulnerable actually creates connections and makes you stronger,

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right?

9:26
Right?

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Like in the boat show,

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in the boat show, exactly, exactly. Another

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tell up for the

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boat show is called Blow Deck, a bunch of seasons. That's what are we doing? That's what we watch.

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Were we doing the Mediterranean? Just

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finished the Mediterranean. Yeah, those characters are really messed up in that season, season five, I think.

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Yeah,

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that was a good one.

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It was good, but it really is that vulnerability piece, I think, for a lot of those people.

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Yeah, they just don't want to admit they're wrong, they don't want to let someone else have the control. Yeah, and by the end of the season, they don't even learn it, they learn it when they watch back the season. How bad? And then on the. On our uni show, they're like, "Oh, yeah, no, I was awful. So, sometimes hindsight, right? Yeah, it's interesting

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to see to have things that way.

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Yeah, exactly. Another example, just to kind of round it out, my worth comes from achievement, right? What would the truth be? What's the opposite of that?

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Well, you still, you still have worth, regardless if you achieve something, or you're successful, you still have worth, you're still a person,

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exactly. So, you don't have to, you know, that the opposite would be realizing you don't need to be recognized, you don't need to see that to feel like you've achieved something, to feel your worthwhile.

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Yes,

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so that makes sense.

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You know, my cousin, my fifth cousin,

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are you sure it's your fifth, not your eighth, twice removed through marriage, third time around.

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Remember, I met her not too long ago. I discovered a fourth cousin that I have through Marketplace, Facebook Marketplace, trying to buy a candlestick, and then we got chatting because of her last name, and blah blah blah. Anyway, her son, my fifth cousin, he just got his football ring,

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oh, not from the Super Bowl,

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yeah, yes, from the Super Bowl,

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oh,

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from being on the team,

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oh, okay, that's cool,

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that's achievement,

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that is achievement,

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but I bet you he still will work, even though he's achieved that,

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yeah, but even if he didn't, he

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still working and still doing the job, yeah, but what does a ring, what does a ring do? For ring

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doesn't suddenly make it worthwhile, that's what you're saying.

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That's my point.

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Yeah, yeah, same thing, like even especially like in screenwriting, right? Like, you'll have achievements and you'll have failures, and a lot of the time you'll have more of a more failures than achievements, but you know they're you as a screenwriter, it's not because, because people always say, "Oh, you're a screenwriter, or "What have I seen? What have I seen that you've done a lot of the times? As screenwriters, they can't necessarily mention that, right? They can't point out the things that have been made, because a lot of the things that we do just don't end up getting made, or we're hired to write, and we don't tell anyone about it, those kind of things. So, it's, you know, you're still worthwhile, even if you don't get those big achievements, or have other people you know not be able to recognize, you know, what you've done, because

you can't name it, you can't put that specific thing on it. So, you know, everyone's worthwhile to a certain degree. Don't let anyone tell you that you're not.

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No, it just made me think of that as, like, yeah, he's still worthwhile, regardless if he has this big diamond ring or not.

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Yeah, yeah,

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and they're ugly, they're

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big, man. I couldn't have, like, they weigh like 10 pounds, like I'd be like so off balance. My one leg shorter than the other, it would be even.. it would be no,

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I think it would even you out if you weren't on the right hand. If

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I weren't, you have a shorten my leg from the weight and making me.. who knows? All right, okay. So the entire story is often the battle between those two beliefs, right? What is true and what is a lie, right? And trying to understand the difference, and the character doesn't necessarily know they're lying, right? They believe that that's the truth, and but they have to learn that it's not right, and the things over the course of the story will will force them to stop and have them challenge their belief set,

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right.

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Okay, so the one of the best things that works in these, that, that is effective in a lot of these scenarios, and in movies like this, is that people around them give them advice to tell them what their problems are and what they need to do to fix them. I

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hate that,

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but the character never takes it, because I'm saying, in

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real life, too.

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Yes, but why does advice never work, usually?

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Well, number one, it's bad advice

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sometimes. Sometimes it's good advice,

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sometimes too. You just want to be heard, and you don't want people to give you advice. Just listen to me.

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Yeah, you just want to tell someone about what you're feeling. Yeah,

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yeah,

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yeah. But the reason why advice never works is because when you don't think there's something wrong, you're not going to take their advice.

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No, not if there's anything wrong. You need to stop

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drinking, because if you don't, you'll end up alone, and the person's going to be like, I won't,

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whatever, I'll drink, because I'm in my

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best cell phone, I'm drinking, right? Like, advice doesn't work right.

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It's interesting, I think it does work in certain situations too, because, like, I have a couple very, very close friends that can say to me, you know, what you keep doing is sabotaging yourself, or whatever you're doing, and I take that from certain people.

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Yeah,

14:11

right. I'll take them, and I'll say, yeah, they said that they know me, they know me as well, almost as well as I know myself.

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Yeah, yeah,

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but it's coming to terms with that, I guess, right? Getting it is, yeah,

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but in a movie, if they take the advice, there's no story, right? Like, advice can't work, right? You want to have them right, people giving them advice, but not taking it, because that's not gonna.. they have to experience something, they have to earn that understanding.

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I have to get my glasses adjusted,

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keep slipping down your nose.

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So, sorry, you guys, I keep going like this.

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That's okay. Apologies, I'm not doing anything annoying over here, because I don't talk with my hands. I don't do anything like that. No, she doesn't gonna reach over and like put my hand down.

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You said you don't talk with your hands, that's all. I said that

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at the beginning, I didn't know I did.

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Oh, really? You didn't?

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I didn't. That's all you do. I'm French, I guess that makes sense. Whatever, um. But characters really change because, because someone explains the truth to them, right? If you hear that cat crying, that's Shola, we can't control her because she's a cat, you cannot control a cat. So, if advice worked, then there'd be no movie, right? Like I said, so instead the characters have to fail, right? They have to suffer, they have to lose. And then what? What do they have to be,

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they have to be challenged,

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exactly. You have to challenge your character. So many scripts I read, a lot of us, is it easy, the easy way out? It's just, yeah, pretty much. It's just too easy on its character. Yeah, right. The analogy is, take your character, put them in a tree, and then throw rocks at them, and don't just throw three

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eggs,

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throw rocks, throw eggs, throw possums, throw, throw boiling water, throw a snake, elevating the things that are coming to challenge them.

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Boiling water in a squirt gun.

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Ooh, that's a super soaker. Holy,

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that would like be off. We are not telling anyone to do these

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things. Do not do these things, that would be awful, though. Do them metaphorically, right, to your characters. The story, for these things, will force them to confront the evidence that contradicts what they believe about themselves and about the world, because it's not just about themselves. They're seeing the world a certain way, and they have to understand that that's a lie. The way they're seeing the world is a lie, right? That they need to understand a different way to view it, and not be so against, you know, seeing that it's their own problem. Right, so, so the transformations, okay? That's the big thing. Remember that the transformation is not a speech, right? That's another thing that we see in a lot of amateur screen, feel

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like you give me a speech every time we do this podcast.

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Well, I'm trying to pass on information, I'm not trying to change, right? But one of the biggest mistakes is they have a character stand at the end and explain it, right? They explain how they've changed. This is why I've changed. I do this now, I do this now, I do this now, now I'm whole. Love me, right? Something like that, but, but that, that's not earning it right. The audience

is just going to ask, well, what did the character do differently? What, these are just words you have to show us, right? Because, as everyone knows, actions speak louder than words. You can tell someone that you're, you know, you're never going to lie to them again, but you have to actually not lie to them, right? You can tell someone that you're going to stop drinking, and then you go home, and you grab a beer, and you drink, right? Like, words aren't worth it. So, a character just explaining

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it, you can say isn't effective. You're going to say you're going to do a list of things in the house for your wife that are little things that should only take a total of five minutes, maybe two,

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but they get done. They sometimes take days. There's nothing wrong, although

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it's been promised for days on end.

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Okay, then I explain. I have now changed, and I am now going to do it faster and more effectively. Do you believe that, or will I have to show

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you? You're gonna have to show me. There's

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your answer. Guess

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what, guys? Good

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example.

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I have a list for him after this podcast is done.

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Like, that's a surprise, there's there's a list, never ends, it's one list just keeps adding and adding, and I'm

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going to go out and do some errands, and then I'm going to come home and magically it's going to be done.

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I have six sourdough loaves to bake for you today, is that on my list, or is it additional

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next point? Moving on, Who's gonna make here? It says the final test here. Yes,

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yeah. I don't know what

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that means.

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Okay. Well, the final test, that's the climax, right? It, but it's more than just like an action sequence or like the big sweeping romantic gesture, right? It's a test of belief, right? The character faces a moment, they have to have the moment, and think of the worst possible moment for them, what is the worst possible thing that they're gonna have to face that will force them to finally see the flaw they have, finally see the lie that they've been telling themselves. If they lie again, if they continue to believe that, that then, then they will never be victorious in anything. That's the climax, and just like the structure and and flow and movement, focusing on character, and having character be the thing that shifts the balance and shifts the plot and shifts everything. Having the character do it is always going to be more effective than just the plot making them do it for whatever it's time, right? It's like, no, this is the moment the character is going to do it. They have to hit that moment. If they don't, then then they someone tell, then someone just tells them, "Hey, this is your flaw, hey, get over it. That's not dramatic. The character has to, just like all of us, if someone tells you that, "Oh, you need to do this differently because of this and this, you're not necessarily going

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to do it. No, if it works well for how I can do it, then I'll do it the way I've been doing it.

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Yeah, so like if our daughter gets a job at McDonald's, for example,

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yeah,

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and she just goes up and throws the fries in the fryer, and the boss is like, "Ah, no, you cannot just throw the fries in, you have to lower them in softly, and they don't like to be told what to do, so that's their flaw, they don't let it, they can't, they can't let someone tell them how some. Is supposed to be done, so then she will do it.

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Just wait,

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instead of just saying okay, I will. You, you're telling me, so I'll do it. No, this one's not gonna work, right?

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I know how to do it. I put the fries in like once before.

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What you'll probably do is look at them and go, okay,

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okay, whatever.

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What is that? A question? Okay, you understand me? Okay, but she will then, instead of just listening to that person and being like, okay, I should do it, that's my flaw, I don't, you know, I need to listen. So he told me what to do. My flaw is that I don't want people to know more than me, so I'm gonna overcome that. I'm just gonna listen. No, they're gonna throw the fries in the fryer and have the oil explode all over them, and the

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manager, then

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they're gonna be like, oh yeah, I guess he was right. So I need to overcome that and listen, and they have to physically learn their lesson.

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You know what they're no, but before they go,

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ooh, I

20:51

guess that he was right. Wait,

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I see if what you're gonna say is the same thing. I was just thinking

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she's gonna go and fill that water gun with oil.

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No,

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that's what I thought.

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You know what I thought. What? Sorry, Asha. If you watch this back,

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Ash is gonna be listening right now,

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going to throw the fries into the oil. It explodes. She's gonna have oil splash all over her, and she's gonna stand there pretending it didn't hurt, so she can't admit, oh, she should have that face. And then the manager will say, "Whoa, you okay? And she's like, "Yeah, that's how you put the fries in. Are you sure? Okay? Are you gonna do it next time that way? Okay. Okay.

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Ah, anyways, does anybody

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have children out there that are around the 1718 range?

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Anyways, characterized to actually go through something rather than just be told, but hey, the water gun, I thought

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with the.. I thought the water gun with the oil was.. what

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would she do with the oil? Then

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spray it at the manager. See, this doesn't hurt that bad. So,

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yeah, to try to prove or does

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it on herself,

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prove the point. Yeah, she's burning. See, it doesn't hurt. Oh, the joy of parenthood.

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Yes. Anyways, okay.

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Talking about

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the character faces a moment. This is very works very well. The character faces a moment where they must choose the old lie, so the hot oil in your face, yeah, and it doesn't hurt, or the new truth that really hurts like a bugger,

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yeah, exactly right, that's it, right, the it's not discussed, it's not someone something that people just have a conversation about, it's not explained, oh, this is why I've changed and this is how I'm gonna be different. It's proven because they actually do it right. Prove it, and it's, I mean, it's a movie. It's supposed to be visual, don't rely on it being told, right? It's like, don't tell, show, show, don't tell. Yeah, we talked about it's, and a lot of people don't understand, but that's a perfect example of, you have to show it. You can't just tell us. You can tell us, but is it as dramatic as showing

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us, you mean with the oil and face,

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with anything, right, with actually going through something, going through with something. So I want to show some examples of some positive arcs, because there's different character arcs that people can go through, right? The characters can go through, it's always the same one, it's not always the same amount of change, right? So positive arc, negative arc, and flat arc. Okay, so the positive arc is where the character embraces that truth, right? Where they're like, okay, you know what, I learned this, I'm going to embrace it. The negative arc is that the character just refuses and they just embrace their lie. That can still happen. Antiheroes, I have examples here, go through, but it still happens. Characters don't always have to have that change. Yeah, and

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then here you have the flat arc,

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yep.

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Since he likes to talk a lot and hear himself talk, yeah. Go ahead, I'll just read this one. The character already knows the truth and changes the world around them.

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Yep,

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and this can lead to great discussion about which films fit each category.

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Yep, exactly. So my examples, where my examples go. Desiree, you're supposed to be my assistant here. So, there's your sheet.

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Mine's right here.

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And, oh, you have one. I just didn't have one. So, we have

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the positive arc. Yes, is the character embraces the truth.

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Yes. So, do you remember the King's speech?

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Nope,

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it was with Colin Firth, and he was the King of England, but he had a speech impediment, and he had to give speeches on the radio, and in front of people, and he stuttered and stuttered and stuttered. Remember, it was, it was a good movie, one best screenplay, and

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obviously wasn't that good.

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It was, it was great. No, I didn't

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remember, but so it wasn't that good.

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Okay, you don't, you don't, I, you don't remember any movie you watch 10 minutes after it's over, so don't even go there.

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Do you remember chores,

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so so the character embraces the truth, right? So the lie that they've told themselves is, I must hide my weakness. He's a king, he can't have weakness, right? The truth

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is, vulnerability doesn't diminish leadership.

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That's a great theme in the whole story, right? You can still be a great leader, even. You have, have something that you struggle with, right? And so the change that he goes through is that he learns to accept help and embrace the imperfection, and because of that, he, nobody cares, and he again gets over it, right? Because

25:14

of that burnt birdie,

25:16

burnt birdie,

25:18

because of that birdie becomes even more rad,

25:23

even more rad. Yeah, yeah. Where'd that come from?

25:27

I don't know.

25:27

Okay, never heard someone call it King Rad before.

25:31

That's why I thought it didn't kind of work. What's unexpected? It would be a different word. I was..

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I was like waiting here, and then you said rad.

25:39

Yeah. Next one is my favorite cartoon in the entire world.

25:42

That's nice. It is

25:44

called Up

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Beautiful. I challenge anyone not to cry within that first montage at the end of

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it. I've actually thought about getting a tattoo.

25:51

Yes, you have the grape soda bottle cap, right?

25:54

No, the

25:55

balloons,

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the house with the balloons.

25:58

Yeah,

25:59

because it's like even when life is tough, push forward, do whatever you can, and you will achieve greatness. Yeah,

26:07

see, but this would be like me, like I totally identify with that story, because if I was him and, and Carl, if I was Carl and you died,

26:16

yeah,

26:16

I would be like Carl, be like, that's it, my life is over, I can't go on, right? And that was his thing, my life ended when Ellie's life ended, right? That's the lie he's told himself, his life is now over, because his wife died, yeah. But what's his truth?

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Life can still move forward,

26:31

right. And so he has to let go of that, he has to learn from the people that he meets and the adventure that he goes through. Yeah,

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he lets go of the past and the sadness and the grief and the sorrow,

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yeah. And then he finds a new adventure and understands that just because she's gone, you know, he embraces it, right? It's a positive arc, as good as it gets. Amazing show, Jack Nicholson, one of the greatest performances, right? The lie is keeping everyone at a distance keeps me safe, right? It's that whole classic thing of if I don't keep landing anyone in, I can't, I can't be hurt, I can't be damaged, right? But what is his truth? What's the opposite of that

27:06

connection is worth the risk,

27:08

exactly? And he learns that in a really hard way, right. And so, at the end, he opens himself up to relationships with these people that he just treated horribly and didn't want anything to do with. So, he's a very positive arc.

27:18

Okay, those are some positive arcs there. So, let's move on to some of the negatives now.

27:22

Yeah, so Godfather is probably the best one, right? So the character, this is where the character embraces the lie, that's what a negative arc is. So the protagonist is presented with opportunities to change, but ultimately chooses a wrong path, and Michael Corleone, perfect example, he is, he's, he's the one guy who's not anything like his mafia family. He wants to be a good man, he's a soldier, he has all of these like immorals and ethics, and he just thinks, okay, well, maybe if I slip into this system, I can actually change it, and it goes complete other way, right? So his lie is, I can enter this world and still remain morally separate from it, no, like, oh, I can. I can be a bank robber, but I'll go to church, and everything will be okay, right? It's that kind of mentality. So, what is the truth behind

28:08

truth? Is that power corrupts?

28:09

Yeah, we see it all the time. Give someone too much power, and it goes to their head. It's just how it is. So, the result is that Michael embraces the family's criminal legacy and decides no, I'm going to be this person, so a lot changes, but in a lot negative way.

28:24

Shows are like that, like we saw that with Sons of Anarchy, you know that. And then what's that other one that we saw that's similar to that with the brothers?

28:35

Oh yeah, Animal Kingdom.

28:36

Yeah,

28:37

yeah, what? Yeah, you'll see that a lot when you have any kind of an antihero, yeah, when it's someone who is necessarily a good person, they're a bad guy, they're killing people, or they're stealing, or whatever, but they're engaging. We can't help but be entertained by them. But normally, over a TV series, if someone changes, it's over a long, long, long time. Yeah, but in a movie, you only have so much time. So, Godfather, perfect example.

28:56

You have also Whiplash. I don't know that one,

28:58

that's the drummer one, right? Famous, you know, that's not my tempo, and he's just an awful drumming instructor, and guys, hands are bleeding, and great movie, but the lie there is that grace, greatness is worth any sacrifice, right? And so many people tell them that doesn't matter, I'll sacrifice anything, because I, because I'll be great, that's the lie, right, that it's worth anything, you give up anything completely go against all of your beliefs, right? So, what is the opposite? What is the truth in that lie? You have achievement without balance can destroy you. Yeah, there has to be a line that you don't cross, right? Or you will no longer be yourself. Yeah, so in that it suggests at the end that that Andrew, the drummer, right, he might be embracing the actual obsession that threatens him. Right, it's such a.. I mean, it's such an ending. Everyone feels differently about it, but it definitely showcases what his flaw is, and just how far he's willing to go. And at the end, you're like, did he learn from it or did he not? So you. It's not a positive one, right? He doesn't become better as a human being, and that kind of stuff. Another one, Scarface, one of my favorite movies of all time, with Al Pacino. Scarface: The Lie. Desiree, put your paper away. What are you doing?

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I did, because I mean, I'm so tired of hearing about Scarface, I could like throw oil in my face,

30:20

say hello to your little friend.

30:23

Yeah,

30:26

that's

30:28

how I feel about him.

30:29

So, what is the lie that Starface 21 tenant tells? Power

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and wealth will satisfy me.

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Yeah, it's that it's just an obsession with power and money and all that kind of stuff, right? But the truth, as we all know, is that greed is self-destructive, right? When you're greedy and you get something, you, you always want more, you can never have enough, right? 100 billion dollars isn't enough, you need 150 billion for whatever reason, right? So Tony doubles down, and in the end it absolutely destroys him. So just because a character goes bad doesn't mean they aren't going through a change, it's just a negative arc, right? He is not the same person he was at the beginning, he's ambitious, he's excited to be a bad guy, he just wants his life, and then in the end he's willing to go as far as he needs to to keep it, to hold on to it, which is ultimately killing him, right? So, so a negative one that we have, well,

31:21

so we've talked about positive arcs, we've talked about negative. Here we have flat arcs, or next, yeah, just in your like flat arcs, or what?

31:30

So the flat arc is those movies where the main character doesn't actually change, but they change everyone else around them, right? Perfect example, Forrest Gump. Forrest Gump doesn't change over the story, but every single person he comes along and affects changes, right? Erin Brock, which she is the same person at the beginning as she is at the end, but she has changed the way everybody looks at her, looks at people like her. So that's that's the kind of story, right? Like, die, like most action movies, right? John Wick doesn't change, he changes everything, right? That's that's the easiest way to go about it, so it, that's the example that no, not every character has to change. If they are the agent of change, that's fine, but if they don't change, but nobody else does either, then then it's not working.

32:14

No, it's not, it's not interesting enough.

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Yeah, exactly, like you change everyone else around you, right? You don't change, you're the same person you were.

32:21

I am. I don't apologize for it anymore. I used to like, I used to apologize a lot for who I was, you know,

32:29

yeah. But you mean you, too, but you change everybody, right? Like, you, your positive force of change, so that's just another example, right? Be like Desiree. So, how do you, for the non-screenwriter brain? Yeah, how would you kind of sum that up for people about character arcs and what the greatest ones are?

32:48

Well, I don't think you need to necessarily leave who you were to completely become a new person. I think that you can still maintain who you are as a person, but do it in a new way,

33:05

that's perfect, that's a perfect explanation. Yeah,

33:08

still using the same values, the same core, not completely changing 100%

33:14

No, that's true. It's that lie, that one piece of you that's lying to yourself.

33:19

Yeah,

33:19

accepting that. Yeah, because if someone changes a completely different person, it makes no sense. No one does that,

33:24

no.

33:25

So,

33:25

and I think, too, however, the change ends up happening, ultimately that person that you become, like, and for me, dealing with all the things I've dealt with in my life, that's ultimately probably who I feel like I was meant to be all along. So, I welcome that in some sense.

33:43

Yep,

33:44

you know, if it's change is hard, yeah, and I struggle with it, but a lot of times when I do allow that change, that's when I notice that I become more authentic to who I'm supposed to be.

33:57

Yep, you are

34:00

such a granter of wisdom, grant her, you grant me wisdom every day, it's amazing. So, I hope that resonates. If all of the stuff that I talked about didn't quite make sense or resonate, because I know I view things in a very specific screenwriting way, but hopefully Desiree's little pearl of wisdom helps. So, pearls, pearls, so digest that while we take a quick break to talk about one of our services,

34:23

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.scriptreader.pro.com/rewrite and use the code rewrite 15. During checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

35:07

Okay, guys, this part of our podcast you all love.

35:12

Yes,

35:13

because I get to talk.

35:14

Yes, talk. Desiree, are you gonna answer the questions too?

35:18

No, I suck at that part.

35:19

Come on, I always love your answers.

35:20

Okay, I'll, I'll answer if I think that I can answer well.

35:23

Okay, sounds good.

35:24

Anyway, these questions have been previously submitted, and you can submit your questions too. It sounded like, and you can submit your questions to

35:33

sound like a podcaster,

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so you can submit them by going to hello@scriptreaderpro.com Send us your questions, comments, ideas for future episodes. If you want Scott to stop talking so much with his hands, wear different hats,

35:49

whatever you want,

35:50

whatever. We're open. So, this question here first comes from Rebecca from Atlanta, Georgia. Rebecca says, How can you tell the difference between a screenplay that has a weak concept and one that simply needs better execution.

36:06

What do you think?

36:10

I think it should be pretty early on that you can tell the difference. No, yeah, I mean, even though it's execution better, I mean, I think concept really is most important than anything else, because if you have a lame concept, then why do I even care about the end?

36:25

Yeah, it's, it's tricky. I don't think it's one, I don't think it's one of the other, right? Like, you'll see, I'll see a killer concept sometimes, and then it's just like, oh, they just didn't live up to what that set up, or it'll be a concept, I'm like, oh, it's really like low-key concept, but holy crap, like, these characters are amazing, and you know, like, so sometimes it's not whether or not the concept is good or the execution isn't. They, I mean, the answer is, they both have to work effectively,

right? But, but even soft concepts, I wouldn't call them weak. A lot of people, oh, that's a weak concept. No, it isn't, because it all depends on how you play it out, right? Like, it can be very simple, it's depending

37:00

on the movie, right? Like, well, drama usually have a softer concept,

37:04

yeah. And it's all about character, so usually if you have a weaker concept, but you don't have strong characters, and it's not that engaging, and the drama is low, then it's a mixture of both, right? So it's hard to kind of sound.. it's usually you're looking at it as a whole. Hope that answers that. Maybe doesn't, but I tried.

37:22

He tries Jordan from Manitoba, Manitoba,

37:26

Manitoba

37:28

in Canada. Okay, when you're reading a script, what makes you immediately trust that the writer knows what the heck they're doing? When you're reading a script, what makes you immediately trust that the writer knows what they're doing?

37:44

When they surprise me, when I'm surprised,

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not cliché,

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yeah, but not even not cliché, but like, whoa, what? Like, holy crap, like I was reading the script,

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said holy crap twice. No,

37:55

I'm sorry. I was reading the script just yesterday, and these people were in a house, and they opened the fridge, and there was a kid inside. You're still alive, he's just chilling, and I was literally

38:05

chilling,

38:06

literally chilling, and I was just like, wait, what? And I was immediately hooked. I'm like, Who's this kid? Why is he gonna refresh too gonna deal with him? Yeah, so it's like, if that happens in the first 10 pages, I'm just like, that's it, I'm let's go, because if they surprised me that quickly, and maybe pay attention, I'm in. I know it's going to go to a great, yeah. And

38:26

we've talked about that before in another episode, too. The element of surprise, right?

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Yeah, for sure. How important that is,

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especially with readers who have read every single thing that has been done. It's hard to surprise them. So, if you can surprise me, I don't see what's coming. It's a shocker, and it hooks me instantly,

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which is why when you go into the bathroom and Scott's in the bathroom, I don't

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know if I like where this is going,

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and you're pretty sure he sees you out of the corner of his eye, and then you come in and he jumps.

38:56

Holy, I get scared easy. I was okay. First of all, instead of saying when Scott's in the bathroom, say, when Scott's brushing his teeth, that's probably a better intro.

39:04

Doesn't matter, it doesn't matter where you are, you could be anywhere, and you get scared. Yeah,

39:08

because I was brushing my teeth, and all of a sudden you banged into the door, and I dropped my electric toothbrush out of my hand, bounced around the sink, threw toothpaste everywhere, and my heart almost stopped, and she's like such a baby, like for the well, who goes for like warmth and care,

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not when it happens all the time, every day, all throughout the whole day, when it's like you throw a paper at him and he's like

39:32
that's my flaw,

39:34
flaw, no, it's a pathetic,

39:38
I can't change it, actually tried, I can't change it,

39:41
you could try,

39:42
I can change it if you want

39:44
to. Okay. Weirdo. Hey Amy from Brisbane, Australia.

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Do

39:48
you think writers spend too much time trying to follow industry rules and not enough time developing their own voice?

39:56
Yes, and no. I guess I mean I. I've talked about this before. How, when Save the Cat came along, it was the book, it was like the screenwriting book, was like screenwriting for dummies, essentially. Because it really did an excellent job of breaking down how a movie is structured, right? It's like, follow this and you'll probably have a successful story, but people just took it too literally, and they just like cookie cutter, okay, here we go. Oh, and then these 10 pages, and on this page, okay, I've got this now, and oh, and then it just doesn't have that organic kind of like storytelling, right? That narrative flow, so that's when I can tell I'm like, okay, you know, I don't care about what's happening, don't care about the characters, they're just trying too hard to hit the beat. So I gotta have this happen on page 25 I've got to happen to have this page on 55 you know, it's just it's too stringent, right? I always say never worry about like page count and even like the length of your script until you're done, until your final draft. Then you go in and say, okay, here we go, right? Just get everything down on paper, organically, think about the story and the characters, and just write that beginning, middle, end, that's what you should focus on. And then you can make sure everything is, I mean, you're obviously structures inherent, and it's probably in your brain, how it works, and you just.. that's how it's going to happen, but that's when you can tell, is like, it's so.. it's just cold, I feel removed from it, and just like, let's get this over with, right? So,

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I think, too, like a big part of it, too, is the outline, like an

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outline..

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well, no, an outline, I think, would help you too, to not worry so much, you know. You get your voice put in there automatically when you know where you're going, when you don't have to worry so much about, you know, the technical stuff.

41:32

Yeah, that's true. And I think a lot of writers just feel like, you know, okay, as long as I follow the format and I follow the structure, it's gonna be good.

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No, and that's not the case, that's why, for me, I would think having that idea of where the story is going would take that worry and stress out a bit of

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it. Yeah, I think it does. I mean, I never sit down and start a script in Fade In this program I use. I don't sit there and just start a script in there, I talk it out. I used to every walk with my dog. I would talk to her about my story. We'd brainstorm. I dictate a lot of story ideas, you know. As I wander around, I have a pen and a notebook, and I write down, and I mind map, and I doodle. That's where the story comes to life. There's no structure in mind, it's just who are the characters, what's their story. That's a great way to start, because you have that organic development of creating something that has no boundaries at first, right? And then you figure out how do I fit this in expected basic structure. So, yeah, okay, I think that can definitely help, for sure.

42:35

Steven from Scotland says, What's a screenwriting lesson you believed early in your career that you no longer agree with today,

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it's so long ago I can't even remember.

42:45

I know it's been decades and decades and decades and decades. During this break,

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this is a hard question. What do I believe? What did I believe early? Well, the industry has changed so much.

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Yeah, long time ago with like emailing.

43:07

Oh, like

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email has changed. I know I

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used to make

43:11

that's I'm saying technology has

43:13

technology has ever made the world smaller, but I think I think that, and I so I thought if I can win a contest, my career is set. I just have to win a big contest, and everyone's going to just want to open my doors and just invite me into theirs, and it'll be set, right? I think, and I think a lot of writers still think that, and they're definitely, you win a contest, it can give you momentum, it can open some, you can meet some people, especially if you're like the winner out of 5000 people here, one script, but I won a number of contests, and none of them changed my career, right? And so they definitely help, and if you use it properly, and the bigger one, yeah, yeah, but you still have to do the work. I just thought, oh, I'll win it, and it'll be great, and then you know you don't, and then nothing happens, and so I think that that's one thing I used to really believe as you're starting out, and it's still in the culture out there, but you know it's not that every successful writer I know got success and started moving through the business in any other way besides winning a contest. I mean, contests are important because they let you know easily how you're doing, ranked against other people, you do well, it's like a validation, like you know that when you pitch someone, you can say yeah, and it won this, and they're like, oh well, it's obviously worth reading that, and so they're they're definitely important, and they have their place, but yeah, I think that was it's not the end all and be all, you will not all of a sudden be making \$4 million of screenplay if you win a contest, it's a good starting point, so I think that's that's the thing for me,

44:39

good answer,

44:40

good answer, good

44:41

guys.

44:41

Yes, that's it. We're done. Time to go.

44:46

We really hope that you enjoyed this video,

44:48

yeah,

44:48

aspect

44:49

and the audio, if that's all you're listening to,

44:51

and the audio, and if you can't see the video, then what the heck are you doing? Yeah, Desired had all done up for nothing, and then now it's your fault, but I guess you wouldn't know that, because you're not watching. I didn't really get done up, but anyway, we want to have you guys come back again. This is episode 2072

45:06

7171 7171 So

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we are cruising right along. I want to remind you again to check out our website.

45:16

Yeah, also subscribe to the podcast, so that when new episodes come out, you get that notification, right?

45:21

We would also like reviews.

45:23

Yeah, so five gold stars would be wonderful if you feel we deserve it. Of

45:28

course, I'm deserving.

45:29

If you were entertained and you also maybe learned something that you hadn't heard described in a certain way and it clicked for you, that's why we're here. That's our hope. If you did pass it on to other people, share. Yes, back.

45:39

I also want to remind you again, you can submit any questions, comments, ideas for future episodes to heelo@scriptreaderpro.com

45:46

Yep, and check out our website, everything a writer could ever need. We are human first, right? We just want to remind people that, because there's so much AI, AI out there, you don't even know what's being used, right? But we do not do that. We are all writers, we care about the craft, all of our staff, we are working writers, so just keep that in mind. You can be at ease with that, that you're actually getting some, some real thoughts. So, check that out at Script Reader Pro. We are all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time. See you later.

46:18

Bye.