



Merlin Works

h o w t o s a v e a s u c k y s c e n e

1. Figure out what information is missing and provide it (From inside the scene or making a cross on stage)
2. Be changed (Make a physical/emotional adjustment. Point and scream if necessary.)
3. Make things more important to your character (Raise the stakes)
4. Find a physical action (That expresses an emotion or objective)
5. Be honest about how you feel (“I have no idea what’s going on.” “This is lame.”)
6. Be honest about the suck (“This is awful.”)
7. End the scene. (Get off stage. Wave the lights. Make room for something better.)
8. Refocus on your partner and make eye contact (Stop for a moment and ask yourself, “What did my partner just say or do.” Then repeat it.)
9. Want something from the other character in the scene (Define an objective and start pursuing it.)
10. Make whatever’s going wrong the game of the scene (Repeat it and heighten it)
11. Think about what questions the scene has raised in the audiences mind and try to answer them. (Make a decision.)
12. Make the scene about your partner. Observe and reflect them. (“You seem distracted.”)
13. Make it Meta (“Ladies and Gentleman, this concludes our lecture on how to NOT get a date for prom.”)
14. Direct from on stage (“Did you hear me? I just said I’m leaving you! Shouldn’t you have a reaction?”)
15. Find a button, a zinger, or gag. (Say something funny, even at the expense of the story, to find the ending.)
16. Ask for clarification. (Especially if it’s directed improv) Recap what you know.
17. If it’s a confusing/nonsensical situation, try to acknowledge it and justify it. (“We Eskimos are at your New York Dental Office because our HMO is really screwed up.”)
18. (After the show) Practice practice practice. Practice starting scenes: scenes are often made an unmade in the first 30 seconds. Practice directing scenes, it makes you a better improviser