Merlin works Basic Story Structures

- Breaking the Routine

    o Begin an ordinary routine, such as cleaning the house or making a deposit at the bank. Along the way, something emerges from the routine that is new or unusual that makes this day important.

- Platform and Tilt

    o Create a world that is normal or routine (not necessarily boring) for those characters—a stable platform for their relationship. Then introduce new information that creates a mystery and changes the relationship between the characters and have the characters react strongly (hopefully visibly) to the new information.

- Pursuing Objectives

    o Have something your character wants from the other character. Try different physical, emotional, and verbal tactics to pursue your objective. React to your failures and celebrate your successes.

- Advancing and Not Advancing

    o Attempt a simple task that becomes increasingly impossible to you. First try obvious and then less obvious tactics to achieve your goal. The scene ends when you win or give up.

- Slice of Life

    o Let the audience see a few moments from your characters life. Don't worry about making things happen or being changed. Sink in to the details, history, and the connection between the characters.

- Finding the Game

    o Early in the scene recognize a pattern of behavior that has been established between the characters. Then repeat the game with new specifics and a heightened approach.

- Hero Centered Story

    o Establish a hero character, someone who wants something, who is suffering, who has the focus of the scene, and who the audience identifies with. Supporting characters continue to torture, test, and help the hero while raising the stakes of the hero's goal. The hero makes several attempts to achieve his goal. In the end answer the question of whether the hero achieves his goal or not.

- Suspense/Tension

    o Stay positive but introduce tension into the beginning of the scene and stretch it out. Play with dramatic irony and physical closeness to heighten tension. The moments that you feel the most uncomfortable is when the audience is most interested.

- Status and Emotional Transition

    o Start with a strong emotion or status. Somewhere in the scene some new information is introduced that changes your emotion or status to the opposite. Ideally, you and your scene partner both do this so that by the end of the scene you have (often literally) switched places.

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