

Screenwriting: A Whole New Language
September 1, 2019

As I said in my last blog, I've been flexing my creative muscles by stepping outside, or at least stretching the sides, of the "box" by delving into screenwriting. Since I have little to no experience whatsoever in this area I am still a novice. Everything I have learned since my first venture into that field has been like learning a new language. It's quite different than writing a manuscript, I promise you.

For instance: FORMAT.

Formatting a screenplay is very specific and, without the valuable assistance of a dedicated screenwriting program, very difficult to achieve. There are a multitude of programs out there to choose from. If this is something you'd like to try, take some advice and do a little research before deciding which program will be right for you. Most of them offer a free trial. There are also a few free programs you can download. Microsoft Office even has a version for screenplay formatting that you can use to dip your creative toes in the water. My preference is FADE IN. It's not the most expensive program out there but it is a little pricy and it's user friendly. But, as "they" always say, "You get what you pay for!"

Another suggestion I would make is to read other screenwriters' blogs. They are extremely informative and can give you a great deal of insight into what producers and directors are searching for when it comes time to start submitting queries. But, I am getting a little ahead of myself.

As with writing books, your screenplay will go through a multitude of drafts and incarnations. The big difference here, however, is that unlike writing a book, it's the page count that matters most. After the story/plot of course; that's a given. If you don't have a story to tell, why write it?

So, here's the crux of your script: THE STORY. If you're like me I'm sure you have a myriad of ideas for books, movies, etc. And, like me, you probably have several ideas brewing at once. Some people think I'm bordering on insanity when I tell them that my characters tend to vie for first place inside my head. If this happens to you my advice is: PICK THE ONE THAT SPEAKS THE LOUDEST AND THE MOST. "The squeaky wheel gets the oil!"

My next step is usually just putting it down on paper. There's no format, no outline to diagram and no real structure. It's just free-flowing ideas of what the characters are telling me should happen. Basically it's just a draft of the synopsis. I usually just use pen and paper for this part of my process. Some people use voice recorders or electronic notebooks. I say use what is most comfortable for you.

Well, I guess that's enough for one day and I hope it gives you a starting point if you are thinking about getting into screenwriting. I'm looking forward to sharing all the new and exciting things that I learn throughout my own journey. I'm sure there will be a few "oopsies" along the way. What learning experience doesn't have them? That's how you grow, right?

Well, it's time for another cup of coffee!

See you next time,

Kate

