

MAKING IT WRIGHT



Z. Sharon Glantz
206.523-7442
zsharon@thesanitypatrol.com

Bert
Angie
Playwright (male)
Dramaturge

[ANGIE AND BERT EACH WEAR A
STICK FIGURE BODY]

ANGIE

I am so mad at you right now, Bert. I could scream.

BERT

Like I told you yesterday, I was with the guys getting stoned. We watched *Dr. Who* all night and ate too many Dorritos. See? My nails are still orange.

ANGIE

I hate sci fi and Dorritos are gross.

BERT

Which is why you weren't there, Angie.

ANGIE

You stayed out all night. You could have called.

BERT

I'm sorry.

ANGIE

You're sorry. That's it?

BERT

What do you want from me? I apologized.

ANGIE

It's not enough. I think I'm leaving you. I need some space.

BERT

Angie don't leave.

ANGIE

I have to, Bert.

BERT

I screwed up. Can't we move on?

ANGIE

Your hurt my feelings. But if you make it up to me, I'll reconsider. [THEY KISS]

[DRAMATURGE AND PLAYWRIGHT
ENTER FROM AUDIENCE]

ANGIE

You're a surprisingly good kisser.

BERT

Which was more thrilling than--

PLAYWRIGHT

Why did you make the script sound so flat?

BERNIE

We didn't "make" it anything.

ANGIE

He means that we know it's only a first draft.

PLAYWRIGHT

For you but not for me. Besides, that's exactly what happened. There was nothing flat about it.

DRAMATURGE

Take a deep breath. Reality as seen from the inside can be far more intense than the theatrical reality. The characters are telling each other how they feel which in real life is a good thing. Onstage an audience wants to see them actually feel. Show don't tell.

PLAYRIGHT

More dramatic?

BERT

More real conflict.

ANGIE

I'm not a fan of soap operas.

DRAMATURGE

I'm asking you to dig deeper and reach for the drama. Conflict is hard to write. Emotions are complex. Give it some umph. I've seen how you do this in prose. Live theater is a different animal. And don't get me started on how writing screenplays is even more different.

PLAYWRIGHT

I get it, but I'd rather get feedback just from you. No offense. I'll come back next week with a rewrite. [EXITS]

DRAMATURGE

I know, I know. But give him a chance. I've read some of his prose and he's a good. Writing plays is so much harder, especially when actors act like they know it all. I know, I know. You've worked with many emerging playwrights. That's why you're here. Easy on the boy. Cocktails, anyone? [ANGIE AND BERT EXIT. DRAMATURGE TALKS TO AUDIENCE] I'm the dramaturge and t's my job to protect the play from the whims and insecurities of both the actors and the playwright and sometimes I can be manipulative and seemingly cruel, but it gets the job done. So don't you dare judge me. Got it?

[ANGIE AND BERT WEAR ARMOR.
PLAYWRIGHT AND DRAMATURGE
RETURN TO THE AUDIENCE.]

ANGIE

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, you are such a fucking bastard.

BERT

I said I was sorry. I'm allowed one fucking night with the guys, aren't I?

ANGIE

I can't believe you would treat me like shit after all I've done for you, you asshole.

BERT

You're supposed to be my partner, not my mother. Quit the fucking cunt routine.

ANGIE

You agreed to never ever call me that, you insensitive asswipe. And wash your god damn hands. You're getting orange smudges everywhere.

BERT

You're the only person in the entire world who hates Dorritos. Are you insane?

ANGIE

Don't hurt me. Don't even touch me.

BERT

That would be a hard no.

ANGIE

Even if you don't, I could so get your ass thrown in jail. But unlike you, I'm a fucking adult. Why do you make me suffer like this?

BERT

Sometimes I fuck up for reasons that have nothing to do with you, Angie.

ANGIE

Apparently nothing has anything to do with me.

BERT

And here come the waterworks.

ANGIE

You know treating me like shit makes me cry. Not that you care. No, you care more about yourself than me.

BERT

Don't we all?

ANGIE

You're right. No one cares about me. I'm nothing but a piece of shit.

BERT

That's not what I meant.

ANGIE

Then show me you care, Bert.

BERNIE

If try and comfort you, you'll suck me into having sex. We'd be all lovey dovey until the next time you pick a fight.

ANGIE

Selfish bastard.

BERT

No, I hate being emotionally manipulated.

ANGIE

You know you want to fuck me, Bert.

BERT

Don't. Please don't, Angie.

ANGIE

You're too stressed. Let me help you with that. Take me, Bert. Take me now.

[BERT LIFTS HER UP AND THEY
KISS]

PLAYWRIGHT

Dramatic enough for you?

BERT

That was disturbing but not in a good way.

ANGIE

I love swearing as much as the next guy but this is a little much.

PLAYWRIGHT

It's called drama.

DRAMATURGE

Not really. Too much swearing is offensive, not dramatic.

PLAYWRIGHT

This was fun to write.

BERT

I feel like your personal puke.

PLAYWRIGHT

Maybe you are.

DRAMATURGE

Take a deep breath. Rage porn is hard on audiences. They end up hating the playwright, the play, let alone the entire theater. Conflict is good especially with layers of emotion and meaning. Take yourself out of the script. It isn't about you, it's about your characters.

PLAYWRIGHT

Whatever.

BERT

Here it comes

ANGIE

I love this part.

DRAMAGURGE

You whiny self-righteous twit, do you want to shut down or produce a script worth seeing?

PLAYWRIGHT

I can't believe you said that.

DRAMATURGE

Believe it. This is crap. Why would I care about these characters? They're as whiny and self-righteous as you are. Worse, they're boring. Are you as boring as they are? Because if you are, I don't want to waste my time.

PLAYWRIGHT

That hurt.

DRAMATURGE

Good. Get over it.

PLAYWRIGHT

How?

DRAMATURGE

Use it. Give your characters back bones or remove them entirely. Either way, tell us who they are.

PLAYWRIGHT

Got it. Thanks. [EXITS]

BERNIE

He's fickle, but he's growing on me.

ANGIE

You have to admit – he writes good puke.

DRAMATURGE

We'll see where it goes. Off with you two. I've got work to do. [ANGIE AND BERT EXIT] I'm so glad he isn't a defensive asshole like too many wannabe playwrights. [TO AUDIENCE] That was pretty raw, yes? Building layers is no easy trick. I can see the layer thing doesn't make sense to some of you. I wish there was an easy way to explain it, especially for how it works in theater. Think of it as passive aggressiveness on steroids. Of course, actually writing that way is not easy. I tried and failed.

[PLAYWRIGHT AND DRAMATURGE
RETURN TO THE AUDIENCE. ANGIE
AND BERT ENTER WEARING LARGE
GLASSES]

BERT

Have I ever betrayed your trust? All right, I mean since we moved in together last year.

ANGIE

You know I have issues around trust. My father beat them into me.

BERT

I know. He was a bastard, and I would never treat you the way he did. You know that. You know that.

ANGIE

I do when I'm rational. Why didn't you just call me?

BERT

I wasn't thinking, Angie. I was busy smoking weed, eating Dorritos, watching space operas and thinking about what I want to be when I grow up. It was an especially bad day at work yesterday.

ANGIE

I'm not ready to hear it. I do know you work for awful people, bordering on evil.

BERT

Yesterday they hit a new low. I needed to be around guys who accept me just as I am.

ANGIE

I accept you.

BERT

Except when it comes to weed, Dorritos and space operas.

ANGIE

Dorritos and space operas are gross. Just look at your nails – they're orange. As long as I have my wine, I'm divine.

BERT

I can't believe you hate any type of science fiction.

ANGIE

I know, but I do. I prefer reality. Unlike you, apparently.

BERT

Next time I'll scrub my nails before coming home.

ANGIE

Next time?

BERT

And I'll let you know if I think I'll be out all night.

ANGIE

I get scared when you're not here.

BERT

Then do something to make you feel safe. I don't want that kind of responsibility.

ANGIE

Sometimes I feel so alone, so helpless.

BERT

I'm sorry my actions made you feel that way. And yes, I was. But you need to find ways to help yourself, too.

ANGIE

You're probably right. It's just that I love you so much. I miss you when you're not here and when you are – all I want to do is this. [THEY KISS]

BERNIE

You're getting better at this kissing thing.

ANGIE

You have no idea.

PLAYWRIGHT

So the kissing is all you got out of that scene.

DRAMATURGE

The fact that they're NOT talking about the scene is an excellent sign. That was the best rewrite so far.

PLAYWRIGHT

But it still sucks. Why is that?

DRAMATURGE

Take a deep breath. The first draft was you articulating a memory. The second draft was the passion and emotion behind that memory.

PLAYWRIGHT

The puke.

DRAMATURGE

This draft provided details that help us understand the characters. Now all you have to do is bring them all together.

BERT

Playwriting is hard, dude.

PLAYWRIGHT

I can see that but at least I don't have to wait for feedback.

ANGIE

And any feedback is up in your face.

PLAYWRIGHT

It's kind of refreshing.

ANGIE

Seriously?

PLAYWRIGHT

Better than no feedback.

DRAMATURGE

Even when the feedback doesn't help you?

BERNIE

Hey, I resemble that remark – but only sometimes.

ANGIE

Playwriting is too much work. I'll stick to acting – and maybe directing.

DRAMATURGE

You have your marching orders. Are you ready?

PLAYWRIGHT

Sorry but the characters were speaking to me in my head.

DRAMATURGE

Listening to them is fine, but they can easily screw up your intention so be careful. I've seen it happen.

PLAYWRIGHT

When I'm writing a story, it's similar, but the characters aren't as loud. I need to go before they start yelling at me. Thank you all. [EXITS]

BERNIE

I didn't expect a thank you at this particular juncture.

ANGIE

I've got a juncture for you.

BERNIE

I'll show you mine if you show me yours.

DRAMATURGE

Bye, you two. [BERT AND ANGIE EXIT] Most people fail as playwrights, me included. Yet some of the work of amazing playwrights never see the light of day. Just reading a play on the page challenges even the best of readers. [TO AUDIENCE] Who am I kidding? This is a short play and we want to make you happy so of course he'll do a good job. [RETURNS TO AUDIENCE WITH PLAYWRIGHT. BERNIE AND ANGIE ENTER]

BERNIE

Were you up all night? I'm sorry I didn't call, but you knew where I was. I had a horrendous day yesterday. Not because of you, but because of work – and because of me. I screwed up and I desperately needed escape. I needed a night of *Dr. Who* and I know you hate scifi. [LICKS HIS FINGER AND HOLDS HIS HAND OUT TO HER AND SHE SNEERS] After last night's binge, I may never eat another Dorrito ever again. I know you were worried and now you're angry. You also knew where I was even if I did ghost you a few times. Fine, a bunch of times. I can't justify my behavior. I was an asshole. All I can do is ask for forgiveness. I need you. You're the most important person in my life.

ANGIE

I know and likewise, but can we not turn rage into grinding make-up sex? I'm too tired. [THEY KISS] Damn, you taste and smell like Dorittos.

BERNIE

Why don't I clean myself up and meet you in bed. We can cuddle until we fall asleep.

ANGIE

You hate cuddling.

BERNIE

Usually, I do, but happy to break our usual pattern.

ANGIE

You've surprised me, Dorrito man. Now go de-Dorrito.

DRAMATURGE

Well, well, well. Do you know how I know that scene works? I want to know more – not just about the characters but about their relationship. How does it feel to you?

PLAYWRIGHT

I think I learned more about me than how to write a play. It's all kind of embarrassing.

ANGIE

Been there. No worries.

BERNIE

I still feel guilty, and I've been on both sides of that scenario.

DRAMATURGE

Speaking of bad days, I'm outta here. Let me know if you build a play around this scene. I want in. [TO AUDIENCE] I know you have questions, comments and feedback, but I'm not up to the task right now.

BERNIE

Who are you talking to?

DRAMATURGE

The voices in my head. He deals with his characters, I deal with the audience. [EXITS]

PLAYWRIGHT

To be honest, while this process has helped me with dialogue, no way I want to write plays. I'll stick with prose.

BERNIE

Cocktails anyone? Or weed? I wanna hear more about what you're writing.

PLAYWRIGHT

Really? I thought you hated me.

ANGIE

Don't take it personally, he hates everyone. Shall we?

PLAYWRIGHT

First round is on me.

END OF PLAY