



SCENES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

AUDIO NOTES OUTLINE

Books are written one scene at a time.

Scenes are building blocks. They are discrete units of stories that organise your story. Scenes tell stories and when they are put together – they become your whole story. Chapters are management tools for your reader to get a sense of the structure of your story.

WHAT MUST A SCENE DO?

1. Move the narrative forward.
- 2.
3. Flesh out the characters.
4. To moderate the pace.
- 5.

SCENES CAN HAVE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS IN THE STORY. THEY CAN BE CLASSIFIED AS:

1. WORKER BEE SCENES

2. SUMMARY SCENES

3. MOOD SETTING SCENES



4. TRANSITION SCENES

5. SET-PIECE SCENES

TWO IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Don't write your set piece scene first.
- 2.

EXERCISE: SCENE SUMMARIES

Kim talked about some of the things that scenes do:

- to move narrative forward
- to flesh out the setting
- to flesh out the characters
- to moderate pace
- to show off your wonderful writing

These form the basis of the **Scene Summaries Forum**. Use this **Scene Summaries Forum** to share and develop your understanding of scenes. Use the ideas below, and build and comment on each other's stories as you go.

In your reply, write down a few sentences that flesh out each of the following scenes and build on at least 3 other classmates' scenes:

- Romantic dinner

Audio Notes Scaffold



- Car chase
- Funeral
- Train journey

Remember to keep in mind the function of the scene (mood-setting, set piece, summary, etc.) and include these elements into a scene if you see it is incomplete.

Also analyse at least 3 of your classmates' scenes and:

- Rate the importance of these functions, eg. is it always imperative to move the narrative forward?
- Are there any good combinations of scene functions, eg. can fleshing out a character through introspection also moderate pace?

Feel free to debate these ideas! Everybody will have a unique perspective.

To get a feel for 'expanding' on ideas take a look at the below iterations of a scene by four different participants:

- Birthday Party: All is in happening in regards to the party, the guests have arrived, but a letter with the host's name is noticed, and so is his absence.
- Birthday Party: All is in happening in regards to the party, the guests have arrived, but a letter with the host's name is noticed, and so is his absence. A sudden hush descends amongst the guests as perplexed eyes are drawn to the white envelope beside the birthday cake. Matthew frowns as he tears open the letter and reads its content out loud. The party atmosphere evaporates.
- Birthday Party: All is in happening in regards to the party, the guests have arrived, but a letter with the host's name is noticed, and so is his absence. A sudden hush descends amongst the guests as perplexed eyes are drawn to the white envelope beside the birthday cake. Matthew frowns as he tears open the letter and reads its content out loud. The party atmosphere evaporates. Household noises dominate the scene, the ticking of a clock. The neighbour mowing the lawn. The normality of the scene contrasting with the emotion of the people. Time has stopped for Karen, if it ever existed.
- Birthday Party: All is in happening in regards to the party, the guests have arrived, but a letter with the host's name is noticed, and so is his absence. A sudden hush descends amongst the guests as perplexed eyes are drawn to the white envelope beside the birthday cake. Matthew frowns as he tears open the letter and reads its content out loud. The party atmosphere evaporates. Household noises dominate the scene, the ticking of a clock. The neighbour mowing the lawn. The normality of the scene contrasting with the emotion of the people. Time has stopped for Karen, if it ever existed. Each tick of the clock must, surely, mark a hundred-thousand years gone by--or a million. But that can't be right. There's Doug next door still mowing



the lawn, like he does every bloody Saturday. Surely lawnmowers won't exist in a million years, or even in a thousand.

Can you combine similar ideas from different scenes into another?

EXERCISE: YOUR SCENE SUMMARY

By this time that germ of a novel idea should have grown into a list of scenes that can populate your novel.

A scene summary might read like this:

Magda meets Manfred at family home; 30 secs to size him up then dispatched back to her room; younger sister tells her rumours that he had his first wife bumped off for not providing heir; Magda goes to sleep apprehensive.

WHAT TO DO:

1. **Share the first 5—10 scenes of your novel** with your tutor.
2. **Keep the submission to no more than 1 page.**
3. Submit to your tutor by email to this address: submissions@awmonlinelearn.com.au
4. Make sure your subject heading is: 'YONline – [Insert Your Name Here]'. If you do not appropriately label your email as specified in the subject heading your tutor may not read your piece.

Please remember that while your tutor will read them, they won't comment on them. This snap shot will serve as a prompt for the tutor to discuss your work in future as you build the picture of your story.