



# *Elements of a Play*

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Notes

September  
2018

# *Today's:*

## **Goals**

- analyze how plays differ from other genres
- -Identify the elements within a play through matching
- -determine a theme for a play

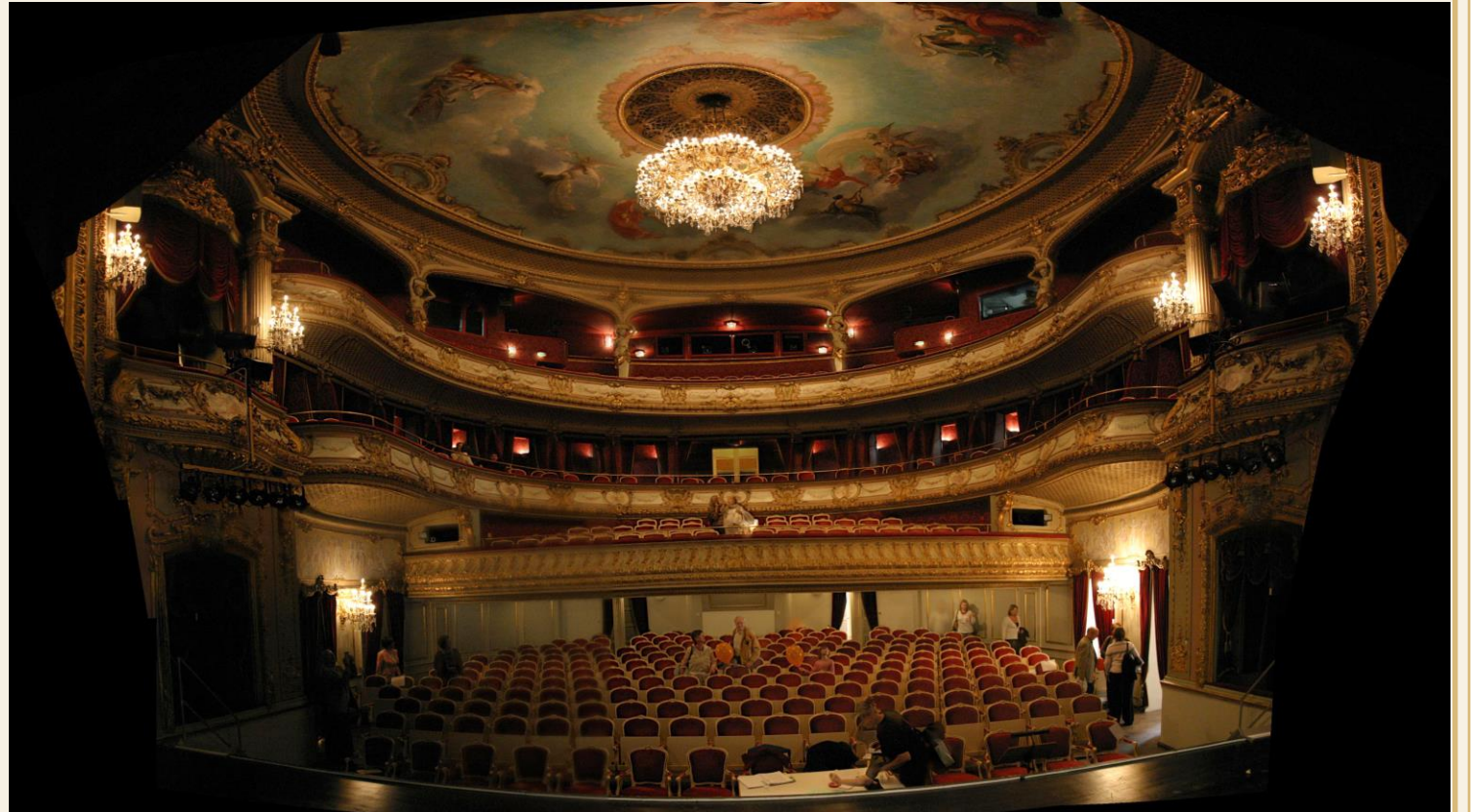
## **Focus Questions**

- How do we analyze a story in a play?
- What strategies can we use to determine the theme?

# *What is a Play?*

A play is a form of storytelling in which actors make the characters come alive through speech (dialogue) and action (stage directions).

It is meant to be experienced!!



Match the drama term with its definition

## *Matching Activity*

You may have to share scissors and glue

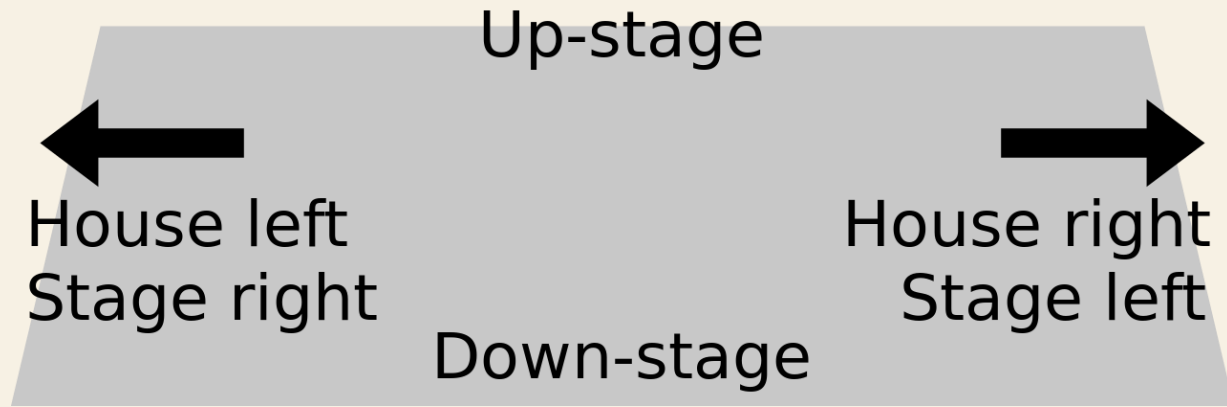
*On the second sheet, cut out the following definitions. With a partner or groups of 3, work together to match the definitions with their corresponding vocabulary word. Once you're 100% sure that the word and definition match, glue or tape them down. Use the Purple books!*



# *Reading and Analyzing*



- Read the following Play: “First Stop, Ellis Island” and complete the analysis worksheet using your notes.
- You may continue to work in pairs/small groups



## *How is a play written?*

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- The author of a play is called a playwright. Everything a playwright writes must appear onstage.
- A play in written form is called a script.
- The playwright must write the dialogue, or what the characters say to each other in conversation, as well as the stage directions, which tells how the play is to be performed.

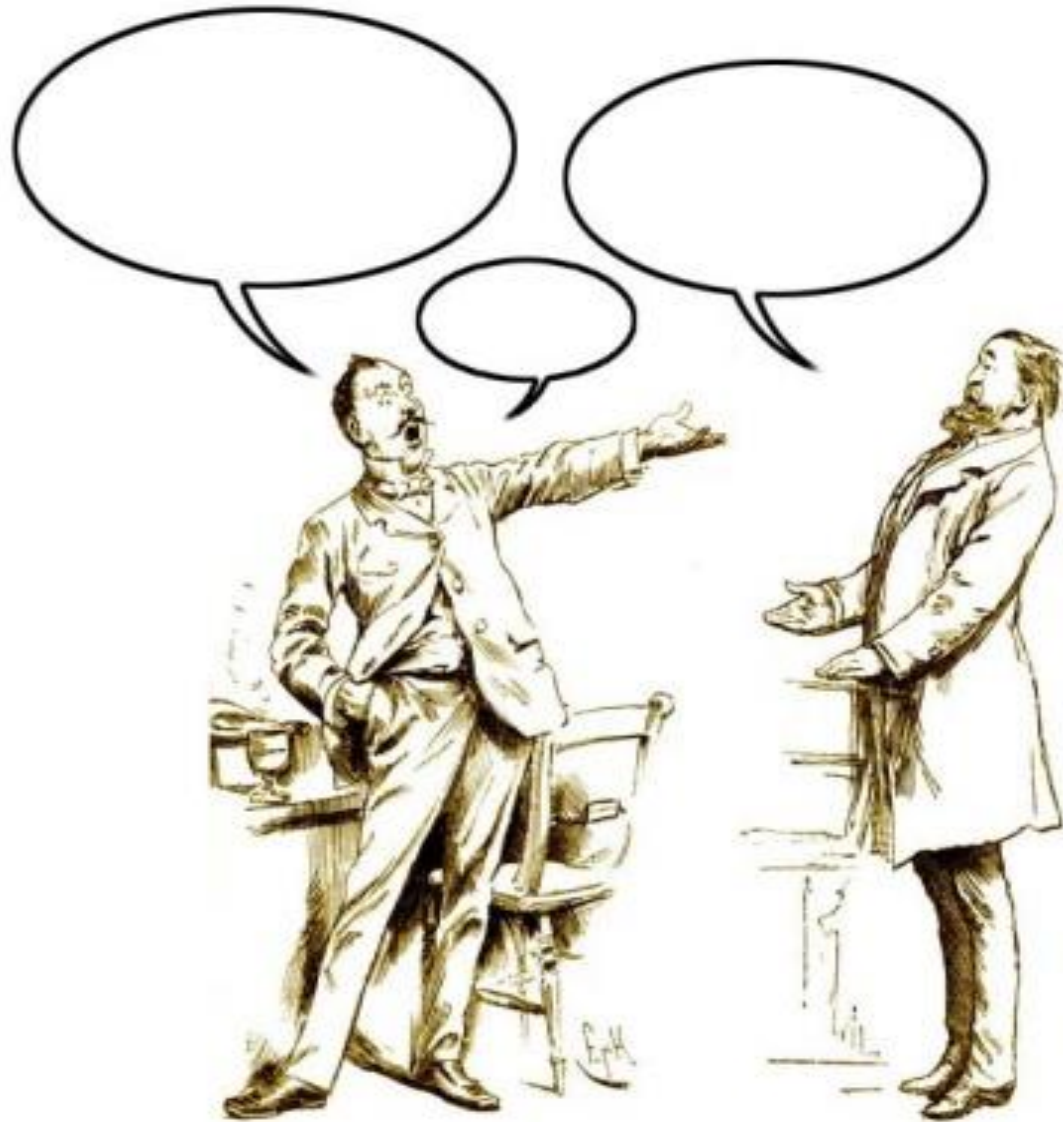
# *Dialogue*

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Dialogue is what the characters say, and it is used to reveal their personalities = Character Traits.

The name of the character who is to speak is listed usually in bold at the start of a line, followed by a colon.

Every time the speaker changes, a new line is started. **Dialogue is necessary in order to develop conflict and advance the plot.**

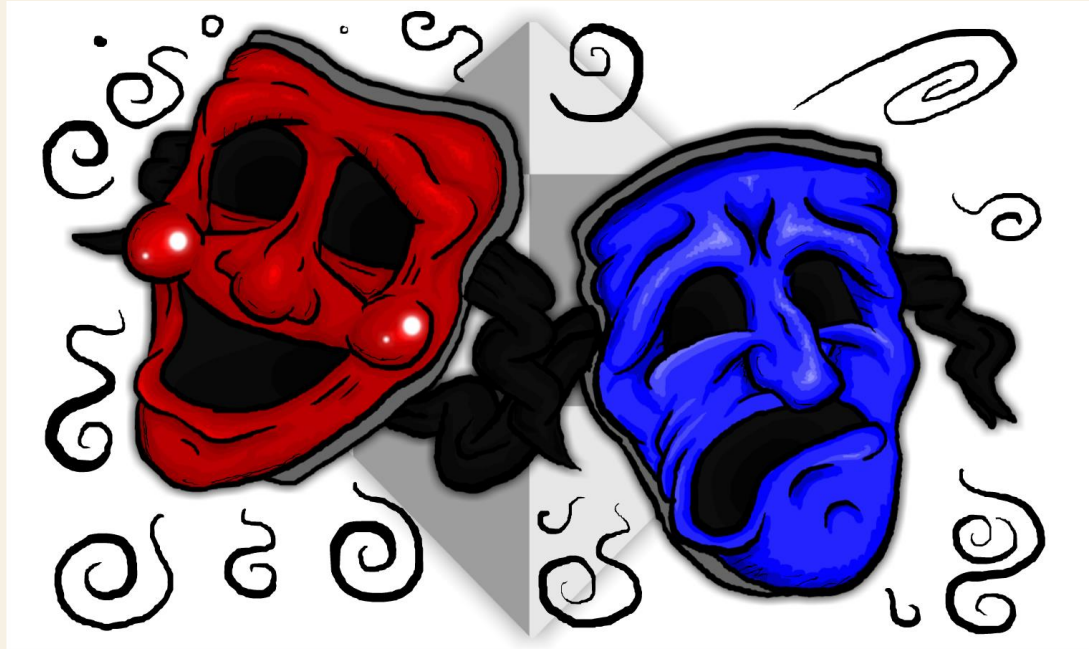


## *Stage directions*

- Stage directions are notes in the script *usually written in italics and enclosed in parentheses or brackets*.
- They usually describe where and when a scene takes place (setting), how the characters should say their lines, and how the characters should move onstage.
- They may explain the character's mood or how the character is feeling.
- Stage directions may also describe sets, costumes, props, lighting, and sound effects.
- Stage directions use certain terms to describe the stage.



# *How is the play divided?*



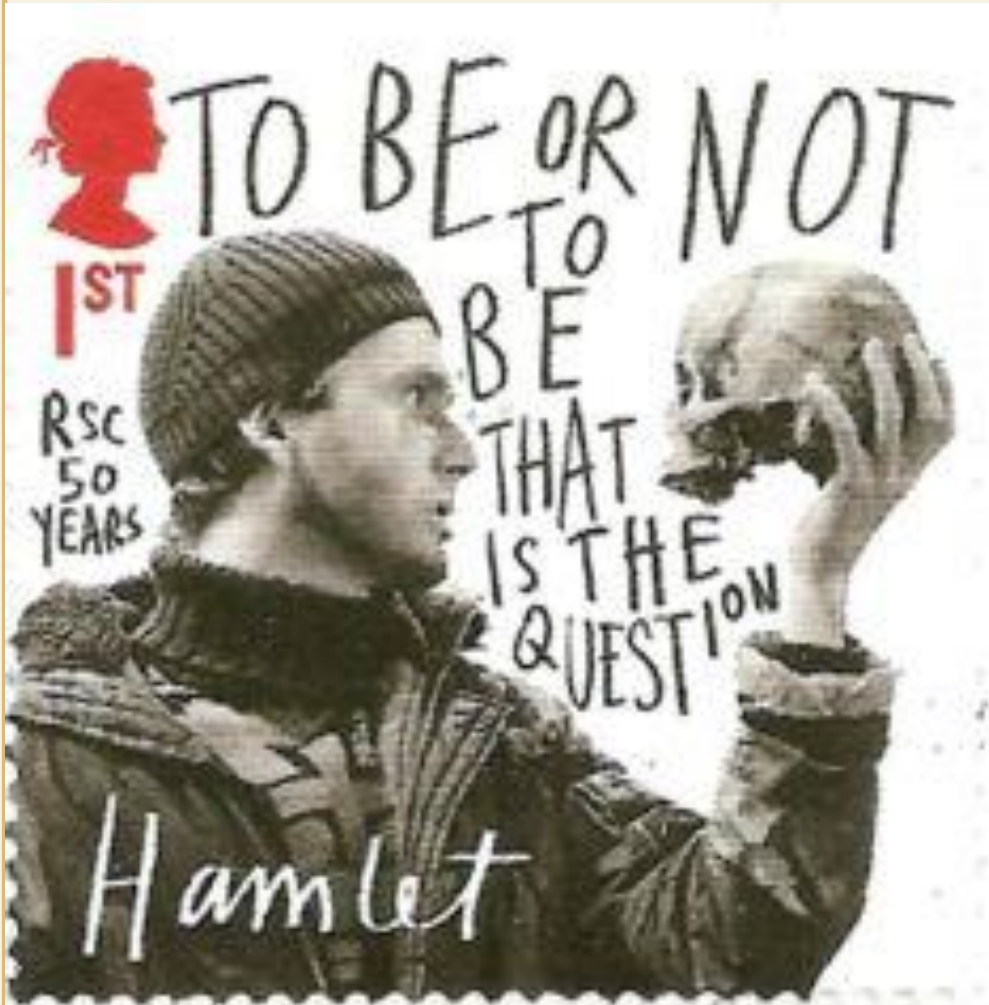
- A play is largely divided up into parts, or acts. The number of acts in a production can range from one to five, depending on how a writer structures the outline of the story.
- Acts may be further divided into scenes; in classical theatre each regrouping between entrances and exits of actors is a scene, while today it describes a quick change of setting.

# Prologue



- When a play starts, oftentimes it will begin with a *prologue*. In original Greek tragedy, the prologue is the action or a set of introductory speeches before the story begins.
- In a prologue, either a *monologue* (one person speaking) or a *dialogue* (between two actors with responses) would establish the play's background events.
- The prologue is often performed/delivered by the chorus

# Dramatic Speeches



- Mono = 1. monologue is a long speech directed at the audience or another character
- Sol= alone. Soliloquy is an internal conversation made external. It is intended only for the speaker (and the benefit of the audience)
- Aside= on the side. Aside is a short conversation directed towards the audience, usually as a piece of comedy or to explain what is happening on the stage.

# The 4th Wall



The imaginary wall that separates the audience from the action taking place on stage is called the *4<sup>th</sup> wall*. There is not a physical wall between the actors and the viewers.

Think of it like the TV screen- the action on the TV doesn't recognize you watching them- it's as if you're not there!

In some plays, especially in Shakespeare, the audience might be addressed directly from the actors (you see this on TV too like Dora the Explorer), this is referred to as "breaking the fourth wall."

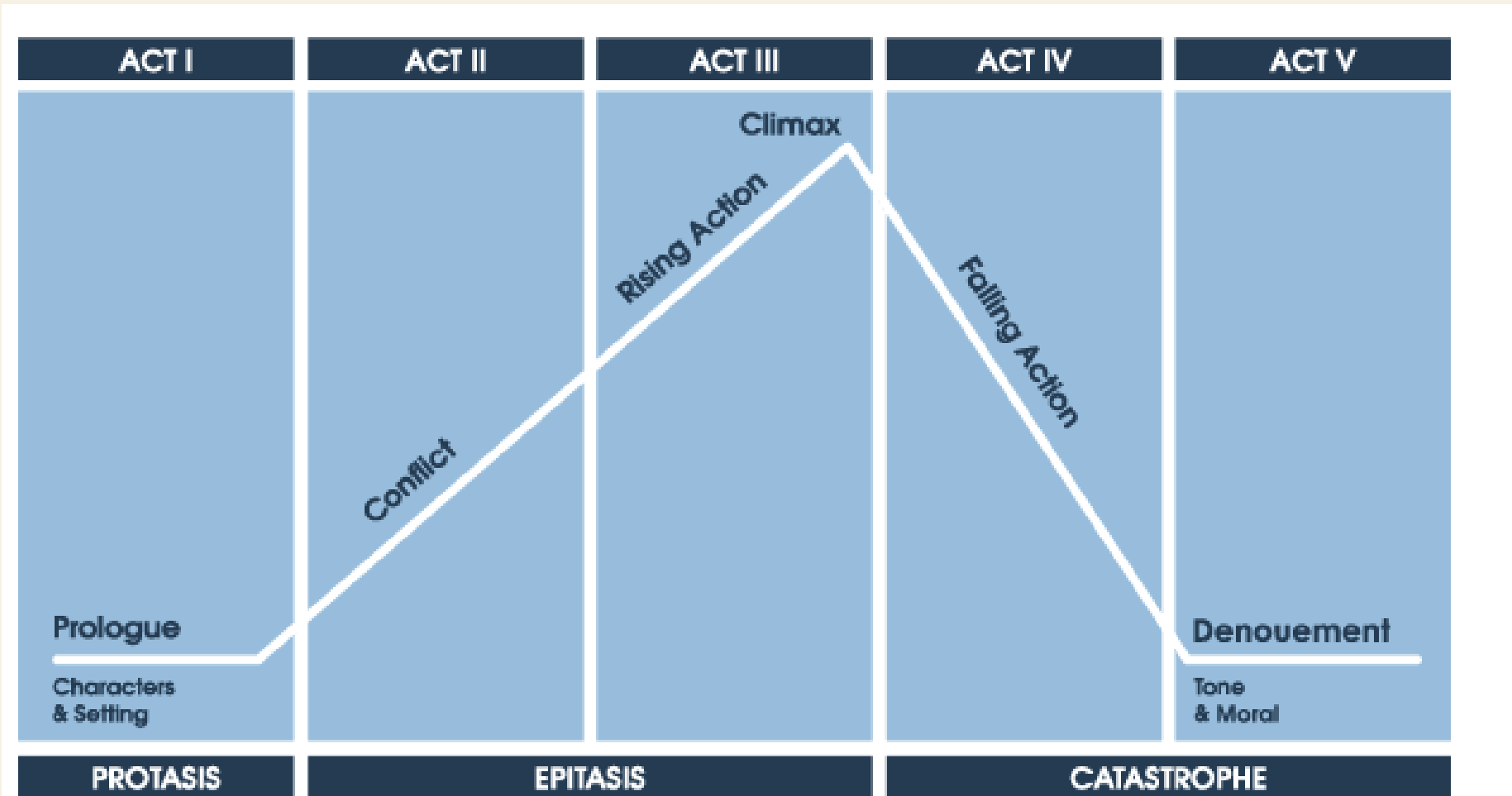
So if a character makes an aside or monologue to the audience, they are breaking the fourth wall.

# *How to analyze a Play*



- Analyzing a play is similar to analyzing a short story.
- Identify the type of play
- Identify the main character, main conflict, setting and mood, conflict and plot
- Identify theme
- Analyze for dramatic techniques:
  - Take note of any soliloquies and monologues
  - Take note of the time in which the story spans
  - Pay close attention to any **KEY LINES** that stand out, as these might point to the theme!

# The 5 act Structure



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ADD A FOOTER

## **Act 1: The Exposition**

Here, the audience learns the setting (Time/Place), characters are developed, and a conflict is introduced.

## **Act 2: Rising Action**

The action of this act leads the audience to the climax. It is common for complications to arise, or for the protagonist to encounter obstacles.

## **Act 3: The Climax**

This is the turning point of the play. The climax is characterized by the highest amount of suspense.

## Act 4: Falling Action

The opposite of Rising Action, in the Falling Action the story is coming to an end, and any unknown details or plot twists are revealed and wrapped up.

## Act 5: Denouement or Catastrophe

This is the final outcome of the drama. Here the authors tone about his or her subject matter is revealed, and sometimes a moral or lesson is learned

### ► Comedy

- In a comedy the protagonist attains his or her goal
- A comedy ends in a denouement in which the protagonist is... better off!

### ► Tragedy

- In a tragedy the protagonist does not attain his or her goal.
- A tragedy ends in a catastrophe in which the protagonist is... Worse off!

ADD A FOOTER



## *Things to watch for*



- Is your character the same person at the end of the piece as he or she was at the beginning?
- ► What are the events that change him or her?
- ► In a monologue each paragraph is a new event
- ► Thoughts change within events

*Thank You!*

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ALEXANDER MARTENSSON

Phone

770-555-0162

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Email

MARTENSSON@EXAMPLE.COM