Story Time Episode 9: It's All in The Details

PILAR: Hey, everyone and welcome back. Last time, you learned about the big thing that happens right away. Today, you'll be learning about how details help create relatable and original stories. The more details you have in your story, the more it'll differ from others thus making it your own. I have more words of wisdom from our friend, Chrissie. She's going to share about what details mean to her.

CHRISSIE: Hola, young storytellers. I'm Chrissie Fit. I'm a singer and an actress and whenever I get a script, one of the first things I look for are key details about my character. What's my character like? Where do they come from? What do they care about? What annoys them? Knowing these details helps me really connect with the character I'm portraying.

When I played Flo in Pitch Perfect, an interesting detail that stuck out to me was that she was a foreign exchange student. With that one detail, I was able to connect with the character because I know what it feels like to be the new girl, sometimes. The desire to fit in with a group of people while also showing your individuality is something I was able to connect with while I played Flo. I also believe that connection leads to a great performance.

So while you're writing, look for specific details that you can highlight about your characters that actors like me and your audience can connect with. Buena suerte and happy writing.

PILAR: So now that you've heard from an actor about how important details are, let's join Vira, Curtis and Tamara in the Imaginarium.

CURTIS: Hello, everyone. Welcome back. I'm Curtis.

VIRA: Vira here.

TAMARA: And I'm Tamara.

VIRA: Details are important in a story because they can add value to any character or thing.

CURTIS: Tamara, can you think of an example of a detail for a character in a story you've seen before?

TAMARA: How about that Humpty Dumpty looks like an egg?

VIRA: That's a terrific example. Humpty Dumpty is shaped like an egg to show how fragile he is and that's why all the king's horses and all the king's men have to put Humpty together again.

CURTIS: Details can also be used to highlight an author's style and personality.

VIRA: This can be done with details that show the type of movie you're writing or the genre.

"Genre is a specific type of story."

TAMARA: My favorite genre is comedy. So when I write, I have a bunch of silly details about how my character talks, walks and reacts to the stuff that happens to them.

"May I have a cheeseburger and fries?"

"Young lady, this is a library."

"Oh I'm sorry. I'm sorry. [Whispers] May I have a cheeseburger and fries, please?"

CURTIS: Good example, Tamara. Using descriptors about a character is a great way to give us insight into who that character is and the type of genre. Do you remember the Young Storytellers name game, Tamara?

TAMARA: Kind of but can you remind me?

CURTIS: Sure. The Young Storytellers name game is where we choose a word like an adjective that starts with the same letter of the first name and give it an action.

VIRA: Like when I was "Vivacious Vira." I could also be "Vicious Vira."

CURTIS: We can do the same thing with our characters in a story except now, it doesn't have to start with the same letter. It can be anything you come up with.

VIRA: Let's put all that together with what we like to call "The fast food scene." It's a game that helps us learn how to add details to a scene.

"Hi. Welcome to the fast food restaurant."

"Hi. Can I get a number one, please?"

"That'll be $11.95."

"Thank you."

VIRA: Well that wasn't very interesting, was it? This scene would be so much more interesting with a few details. How about we give these characters some personality by giving them something called an "Objective" or a goal.

"Goal -- what the protagonist is trying to accomplish."

TAMARA: Well, what if I was running late?

VIRA: Perfect. And for Curtis, he could be… oh, "Sleepy Curtis" and he wants to take a nap. All right, action.

[Sleepy] "All right, welcome to the fast food restaurant."

[In a hurry] "Can I get a number one?"

"That'll be, uh, $11.95." [Yawns] Long night. Super long night.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I had the worst nightmare last night. I mean these goats, they were chasing me. I tried to get away from them and this like giant alligator came out of nowhere. Got away from them and then like this giant bridge… It was crazy."

[Crying] "I have somewhere to be. Hurry, please. Please, are you done yet?"

"We all got some place to be, right?

"Lots of places, yeah."

"Well I just got here to be so… All right, here it is. One number… [Tamara grabs her order] one. You didn't want fries with that?"

VIRA: That round was more interesting because we added details to the characters. The dialogue was the same both times but knowing more about the characters' personalities helps us add details about how they are and how they respond to each other.

CURTIS: So pause the video. Go over what you've written so far and find details you can add to what you wrote. Think about your

characters and how details can better describe their personality and behavior.

[Pause]

VIRA: Well, that's it for us today. I hope everyone had fun learning about details for your story.

TAMARA: I know I did.

VIRA: Let's go back to Pilar to wrap things up.

PILAR: To wrap it up, today, you learned about how adding details to your script can make it your own. Adding details about the character in the world help your audience learn more about the story than what meets the eye.

If you want to share some of the details you came up with with us, ask an adult to email us or have them post it on social media. Remind them to tag us.

Join us next time when we'll be going over obstacles and the climax. See you then.

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