

NES STORYTELLING STARTER KIT

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Regarding Role-Playing in Storytelling Eric Miller C. 2016

A storyteller narrates what happened, and also has the option at any moment to jump into, act-out, and speak as, any of the characters in a story.

(Note: It is also possible to perform a combination of narrator and character -- by continuing to speak as the narrator, but having the narrator speak in such a way that she is illuminated by the emotions of a character.)

Choosing when to jump into a character and speak as that character is one of the important types of decisions a storyteller makes.

This is a decision involving editing. Because it usually is quicker and smoother to remain narrating - as narrator one can give a summary of what happened, and gloss over events.

It is often when one speaks as a character that the performer and listeners really "get into" what a character is going through.

Here we really discover -- we can see for ourselves -- what a character is thinking and feeling, step by step, as a conversation or other type of situation develops.

When one first decides to tell a story, one might think about, "What is this story is really about?" -- in terms of

- 1) the yearnings, motivations, and other emotions the characters are experiencing,
- 2) the relationships and the other situations they are in, and
- 3) the possible meanings of the story.

Then one might choose and plan at which times one might go into character. One may choose to do so at the most emotional scenes, at the Turning Points, etc, of a story.

Two ways one can speak as a character are:

- 1) Speaking words a character says to another character.
- 2) Speaking words a character says to herself.

When one speaks as a character, one puts one's listeners -- in a playful, fantasy psychological way -- in the position of the character who is being addressed by the character one is enacting.

Especially a listener with whom the storyteller makes eye-contact is put into the position of the character who is being addressed by the character the storyteller

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is enacting.

In the course of telling, one often reverses roles, first telling what Character A said to Character B, then telling how Character B responded to Character A, etc.

Being put in the position of one character after another is a big and fun emotional workout for listeners.

Tellers and listeners are often not aware of this type of audience participation. If you the storyteller are aware of it, you can play with it -- and increase the dramatic and participatory effect.

Eric Miller C. 2016