

DON'T TYPE AT ME IN THAT TONE OF VOICE

- Amanda Arista
- DFW Writers Conference
- 2023



DEFINITION OF VOICE

Distinct personality, style, or POV of a piece of writing that grabs reader's attention and **established a relationship**- Voice is what the readers listen to and fall in love

*"Not only a unique way of putting words together, but a unique sensibility, a **distinctive way of looking at the world**, an outlook that enriches an author's oeuvre"- Donald Maass*

Writing voice is the way an author expresses personal attitude-- through **word choice**, **asides**, **sentence flow**, **paragraph density**, and **other individual stylistic devices**

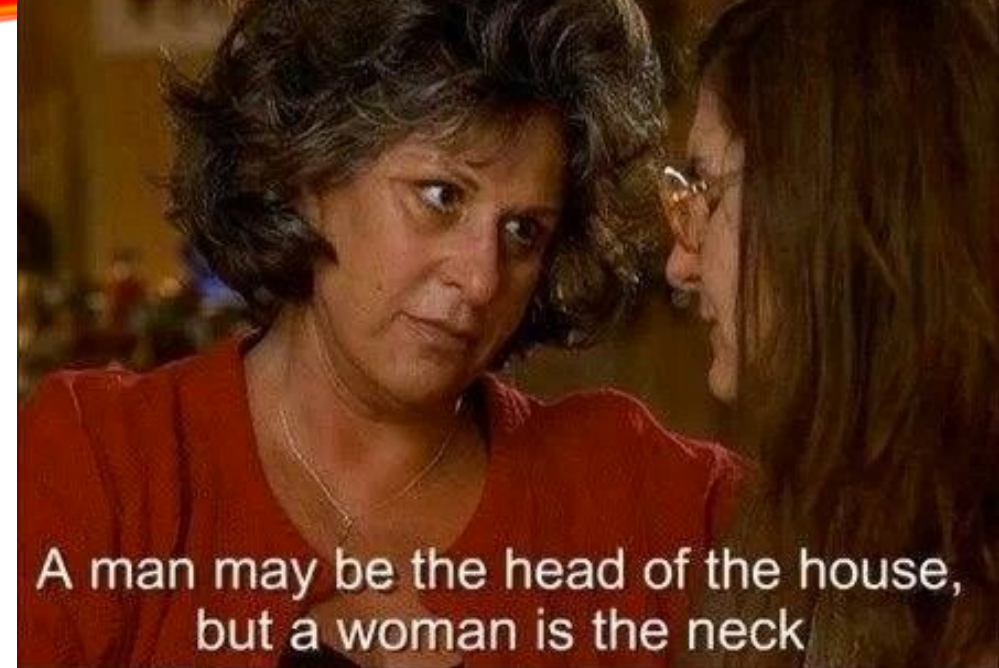


SO WHAT IS VOICE?

- Consistently described as the most indescribable of literary terms
 - “You’ve either got it or you don’t.”
- Hot Take- You either know the aspects that contribute to voice or you don’t

3 PARTS OF VOICE

- Audience Expectations
- Author Choice
- Character Voice



AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS



READING GENRES

FANTASY



a story that is not possible and may include talking animals or magical powers

MYSTERY



a suspenseful story about a puzzling event that is not solved until the end of the story

SCIENCE FICTION



a type of fantasy that uses science and technology (robots, time travel, machines)

REALISTIC FICTION



a story that uses fictional characters, but could happen

POETRY



verse written to create a response of thought and feeling from the reader; it often uses rhythm and rhyme

INFORMATIONAL



texts that provide facts about a variety of topics

AUTOBIOGRAPHY



the story of a real person's life that is written by that person

BIOGRAPHY



the story of a real person's life that has been written by another person

HISTORICAL FICTION



a fictional story that takes place in a specific time period; often the setting is real, but the characters are made up

TRADITIONAL LITERATURE



stories that are passed down from one group to another; (includes fairy tales, folk tales, myths, fables and legends)

AUDIENCE EXPECTATIONS

- Who is going to read this?
- What is important to them?
- What do you need to show to keep readers reading?
 - Historical readers don't care about the taste of lips
 - Romance readers don't care about this history of architecture

Developing a different writing voice for different types of writing is not only possible but mandatory



An abstract graphic on the left side of the slide, featuring flowing, layered shapes in shades of red and orange, creating a sense of movement and depth.

ADDRESSING THE AUDIENCE

- How you talk to your mother is different from how you talk to your friends
 - One might be slangy
 - One might be formal
 - Distinct vocabulary and syntax change deemed appropriate for each audience
- Specific Attitude and level that is needed to reach audiences
 - Attitude- cynical, flippant, wondering, nostalgic
 - Level- formal, informal, crude, elevated

AUTHOR CHOICE





AUTHOR VOICE IS AUTHOR CHOICE

- Made up of **YOUR** own ideas, attitudes and preoccupations
- Each writer has passions, opinions, prejudices, and information that are **AUTHOR SPECIFIC**

KNOW WHY YOU ARE WRITING THIS STORY!!!



AUTHOR VOICE = YOUR THOUGHTS

- What **you** want to focus on
- What **you** want to show
- What **you** want the reader to pay attention to
- What things do you choose to put in the way of the character to tell your story
 - Focusing on a dog versus the street versus the car that is about to hit it



AUTHOR VOICE AS CONVEYED BY TONE & STYLE

- Tone is a reflection of the author's personality, mood, attitude toward his/her subject
- Tone tells readers how they should **feel** about the subject- Take it casual or be serious about it
- Style: choice of vocabulary and sentence length to convey tone and intention.



EVERY AUTHOR HAS A DIFFERENT VIEW

Tis better to have loved and lost,
than never to have loved at all.

There is always some madness in
love. But there is also always
some reason in madness.

All you need is love. But a little
chocolate now and then
doesn't hurt.

Love is the only force capable of
transforming an enemy into a
friend.

CHARACTER VOICE



Protagonist



Antagonist



Guardian



Contagonist



Reason



Emotion



Sidekick



Skeptic

WHERE CHARACTER VOICE FALLS



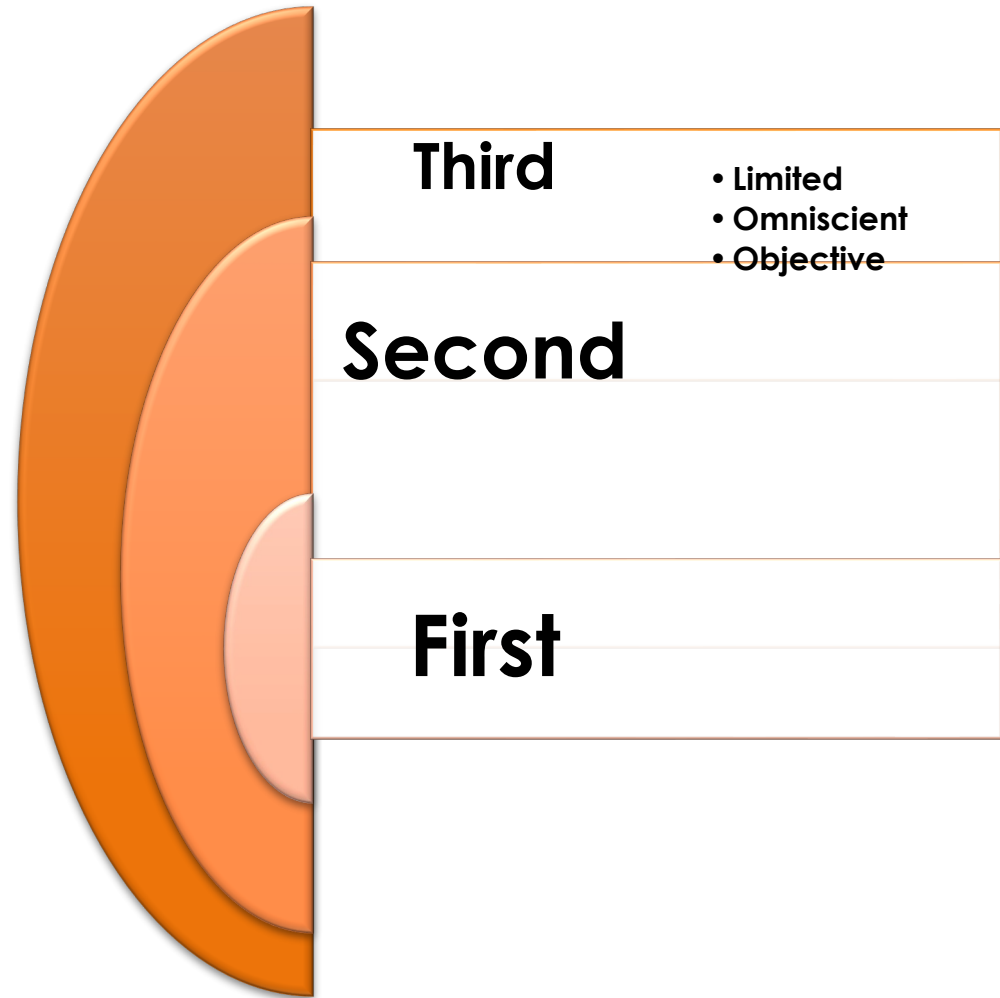
CHARACTER VOICE

- Word choice and patterns of language as influenced by:
 - Gender
 - History
 - Age
 - Education
 - Regional location
 - Time period
- Very much found in Dialogue, but can appear in exposition depending on narrative distance

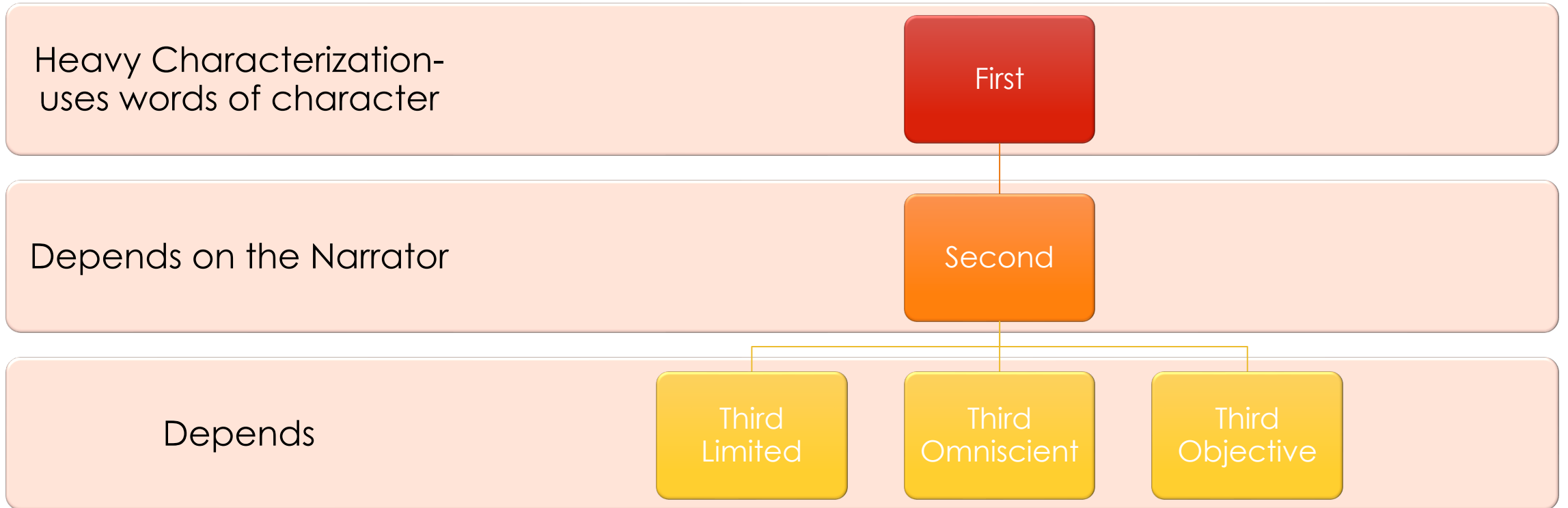



POINT OF VIEW

- Way in which the author allows the reader to 'see' and 'hear' the story
- Different characters will tell the same event different ways
 - Insert elephant metaphor
- Choose the POV character with the most at stake-strongest MOTIVATION in the scene



NARRATIVE DISTANCE= POV INFLUENCES ON CHARACTER VOICE





VARIABLES EFFECTING CHARACTER VOICE (LENS)

- Character Attitudes & Personality
- Moral Code
- Fears/Loves
- Backstory
- Character arc
- World view
- Goals and motivations
- Inner demons and conflicts

Don't let
your past
dictate
who you are
but let it
be a part
of who
you will
become.

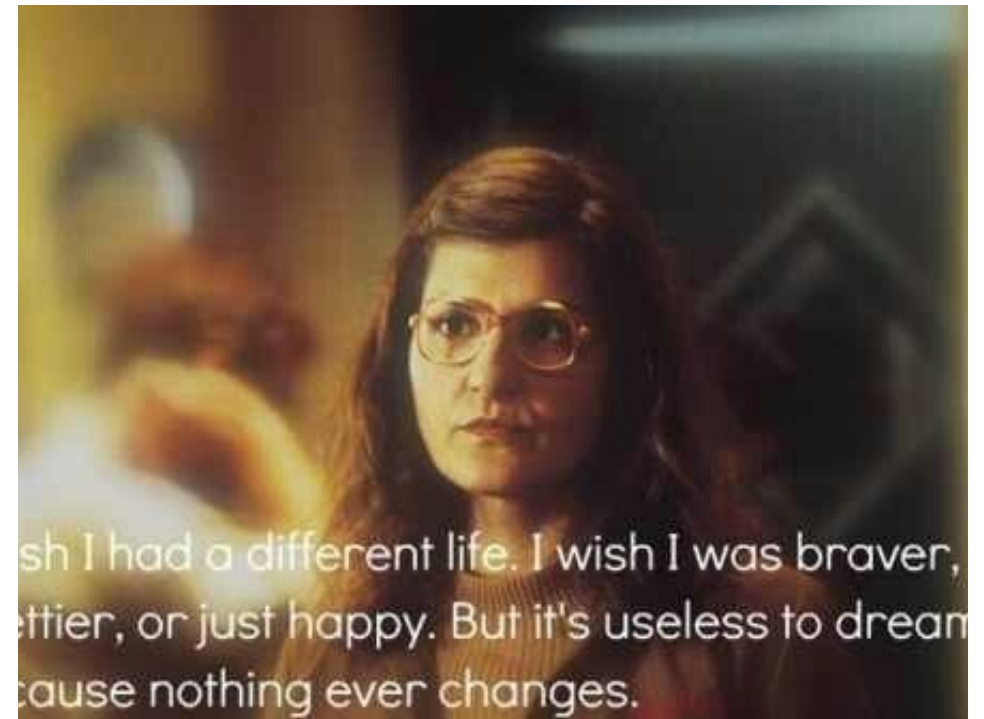
POV CHARACTERIZATION

- Experience THROUGH the heroine's focus
 - Not just about what is happening, but what the character FEELS about what is happening
 - Expressed through informed POV (reader mind-meld with the hero)
- Attitude of POV character
- Personality of POV Character
- Moral Code of POV Character
- Fears/Loves of POV character



ATTITUDE ABOUT THE SUBJECT

- Emotion, values, and beliefs.
 - How character regards the world and life in general
 - How character feels about someone or something.



CHARACTER PERSONALITY

- Does your character relate to the world of people or more easily to ideas?
- Does your character gather information from their senses or their imagination?
- Does character rely on logic or feelings to make decisions?
- Does your character live in an orderly fashion or in a spontaneous way?

Myers Briggs

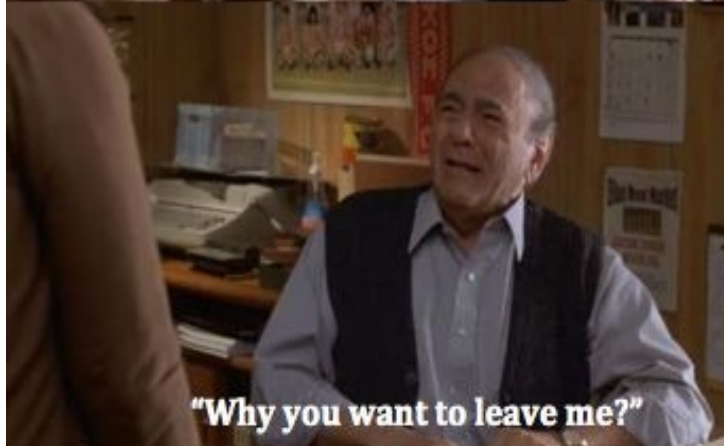
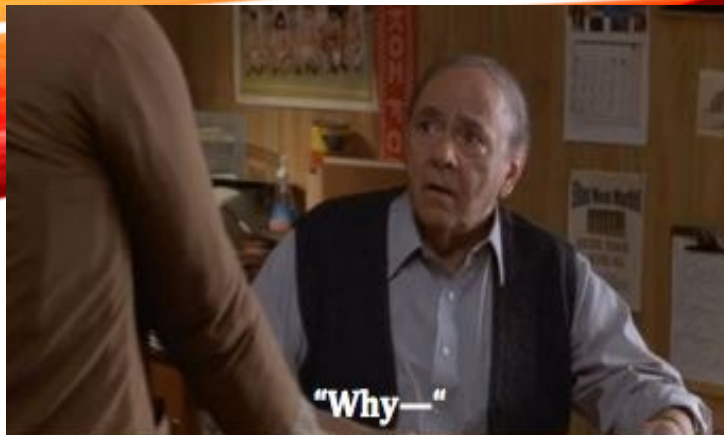
- Introvert/Extrovert
- intuitive/Sensing
- Feeling/Thinking
- Perceiving/Judging

MORAL CODE

- What is most important in life? Family, love, courage, sacrifice?
- Do the good guys always win? Or have they all been stomped on?
- What's *not okay* to character (poverty, selfishness, rape, orphans, infidelity, loneliness, betrayal)?



FEARS/LOVE



- What is their ideal place?
- What do their daydreams look like
- What would be the most terrifying/uncomfortable/lonely/boring place for them?
- What scares them?
- What line would they never cross?

FAMOUS EXAMPLES: DECONSTRUCTED

“How wonderful it would be never to marry but to go on being lovely in pale green dresses, forever being courted by handsome men.”

Gender?

Time period?

Attitude toward others?

FAMOUS EXAMPLES: DECONSTRUCTED

“They’re not going to lick me. I’m going to live through this, and when its all over, I’ll never be hungry again. No, nor any of my kin folk. If I have to lie, steal, cheat or kill, As God as my witness, I’ll never be hungry again.”

Gender?

Time period?

Attitude toward others?

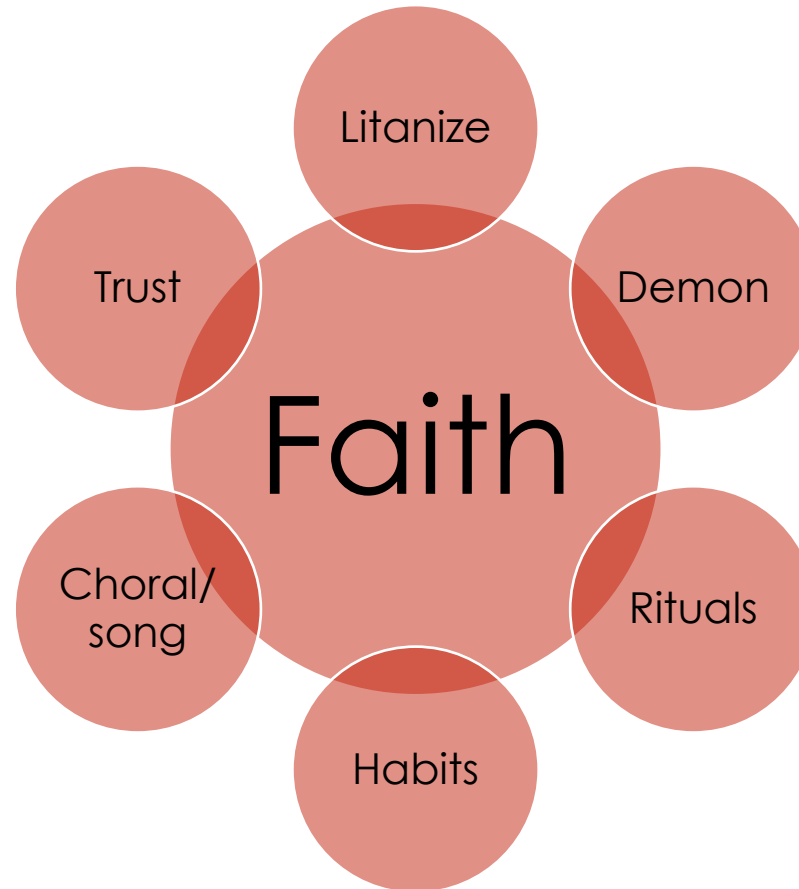


TIPS AND TRICKS



USE CHARACTERIZATIONS TO INFORM CHARACTER WORD CHOICE

Conviction
Devotion
Attempt
Ideal
Plan
Purpose
Congregation
Body
Doctrine
Communion
Dogma



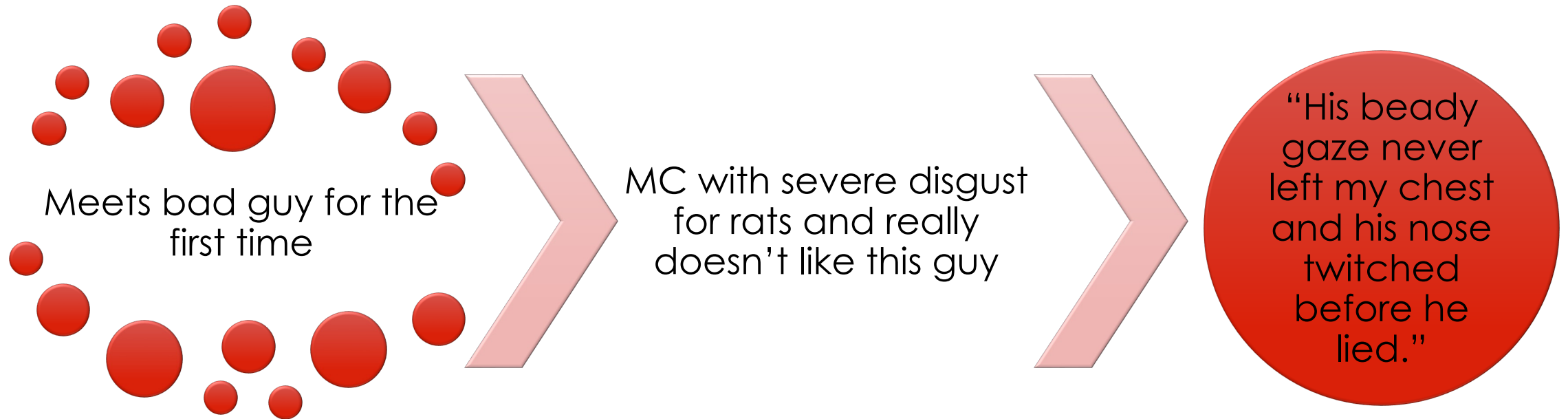
Cult
Schism
Faction
Disbelief
Doubt
Denial
Instrument
Old

DISTANCE WORDING

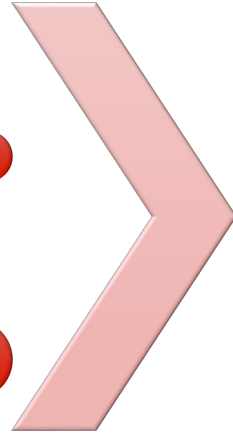
- Phrases that can distance the reader from the character thought
 - Sensing: feel, see, hear, touch
 - “She saw the horizon”
 - Thinking: realize, wonder, muse, puzzle
 - “She wondered what he was thinking”
 - Feeling: hate, mourn, rage, hopeless
 - “A hopeless rage boiled through her.”



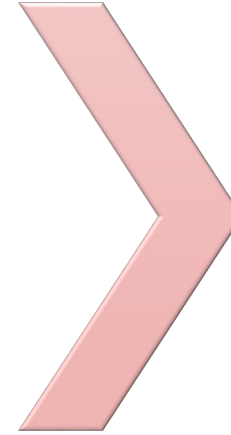
EXAMPLE: COP DRAMA



EXAMPLE: ROM COM

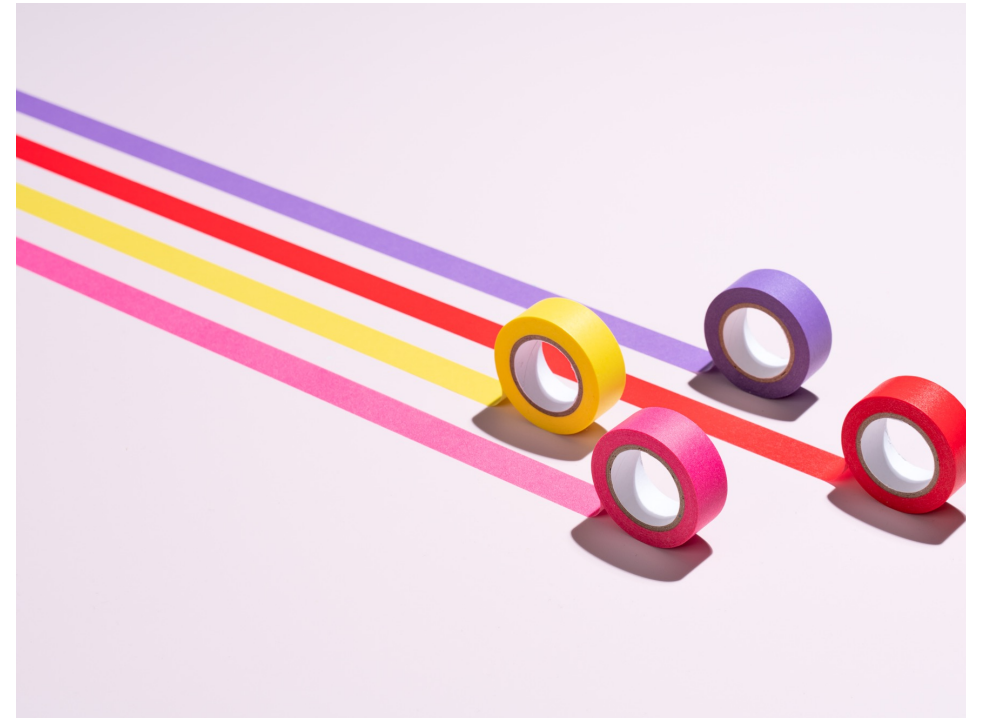


Waitress is a
spinster, not
attached to
material looks,
resigned to
work in family
restaurant the
rest of her life,
because she's
not worth the
bother



TROUBLESHOOTING VOICE

- Take the author out
- Listen to people talk
- Research, Research, Research
- Experience new things
- Figure out WHY you are writing this book



TAKE-AWAY (BIG METAPHOR)

- The audience is seeing everything in the camera- person who clicked on to the live feed
- The Author tone is where the author decides to point the camera
- The POV Characterization is the lens that is it all seen through
- VOICE- becomes the documentary that you have made



TAKEAWAYS

- Focus on some key characterizations
- Know where you and your character differ
- Know who is reading your story



Thank you!!



amandaarista.com
@pantherista

