**PENDRAGON THEATRE’S**



**YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS’ WORKSHOP**

* **Actors and Characters: The play should require no more than 4 actors. You may have more than 4 characters, but that will require some actors to play more than one character. Keep that in mind as you write.**
* **Format: You must write the play in the format that will be supplied to you through the workshops.**
* **Themes and Subjects: There are no restrictions on themes or subjects this year. But writers might consider the theme of connection and disconnection, which has become so relevant during the pandemic; also, since the plays will be presented online rather than in-person, you might consider stories that take place in a Zoom conference, or on Facetime, or at a Go-To-Meeting. There have already been a couple of professional plays that make use of this new norm (e.g. *What Do We Need to Talk About?*, by Richard Nelson).**
* **Narrators and Multiple Scenes: The following are strong recommendations and not restrictions – A) Avoid narrators, if at all possible. A narrator tells the story, but a play is intended to have the story come alive before our eyes. If you must have a narrator, see if it can be one of the characters in your story, rather than a detached observer.**

**B) In a short play, multiple scenes break up the flow of the story. Most one-act plays take place in one setting, in real time. If you intend to have multiple scenes, consider if they can all take place in the same location, at different times. If they must take place in multiple locations, can it be done on a set that allows the characters to move fluidly from one location to the other without the need for a blackout or scene change (which wastes valuable story-time in a brief play)?**

**HERE WE ARE**

By

Dorothy Parker

***CHARACTERS*:**

**HE** (in his late 20’s)

**SHE** (in her early 20’s)

***SETTING*:**

A compartment in a Pullman car. **HE** is storing the suitcases in the rack and hanging up the coats. **SHE** is primping. **HE** finishes disposing of the luggage.

**HE.** (*Sits and* **SHE** *looks up*) Well!

**SHE.** Well!

**HE.** Well, here we are.

**SHE.** Here we are, aren’t we?

(*A restless pause*)

**HE.** Yep. I should say we are. Here we are.

**SHE.** Well!

(*Another uncomfortable pause*)

**HE.** (*Suddenly, breaking the silence*)Well! Well! How does it feel to be an old married lady?

**SHE.** Oh, it’s too soon to ask me that. At least – I mean. Well, I mean, goodness, we’ve only been married about three hours, haven’t we?

**HE.** (*Checking his watch*) We have been married exactly two hours and twenty-six minutes.

**SHE.** My, it seems like longer.

**HE.** No, it isn’t hardly half-past six yet.

**SHE.** It seems like later. I guess it’s because it starts getting dark so early.

**HE.** It does, at that. The nights are going to be pretty long from now on.

(*Suddenly embarrassed*)

I mean. I mean – well, it starts getting dark early.

**PLAYWRITING FORMAT NOTES**

The above excerpt, from Dorothy Parker’s one-act play, *Here We Are*, demonstrates all the details of playwriting format that you should use as you write your play:

CHARACTER

* The character’s name is to be in bold and capitalized, whether it appears at the beginning of the character’s dialogue or within a stage direction.
* The character’s name should be at the left margin, followed by a period, at the beginning of the character’s dialogue.
* This format aids the actor and the director as they work on the play by making it easier to locate dialogue and who is speaking it.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

* Stage directions should be placed in parentheses and, preferably, italicized.
* When the stage direction occurs at the beginning or within a character’s dialogue, it is understood that it is meant for that character. If it is instructions for another character, then that character’s name should be presented as described under CHARACTER.
* Stage directions in the middle of a character’s dialogue should be set off as indicated in the excerpt from *Here We Are*.
* In addition to any stage directions for actors, any technical directions (e.g. sound effects, lighting effects, special effects) should also be presented in parentheses and italics.