

## **Dialogue: General tips from me**

(see also the section on Dialogue in *Screenwriting Updated* (also known as *Scriptwriting Updated*)

- Remember, use sound and vision and, when it comes to dialogue, use suspense, subtext and silence as well as words.
- Think hard about the way you plan to establish backstory, date and setting Can you try to do it with visuals and plot details as well as by words?
- Understand and mentally script the thought progression that happens in pauses between speeches. Make the speeches sound as if they've appeared at the end of a thought progression. Look at matters from the Point of View of both characters. Note that bad actors never think what is happening in the pauses. They work only from words. Weak scriptwriters never see the pause as a tool, only the words.
- Make it a practice not to make the characters express every thought in the progression.
- Work out what you are trying to do in this scene re characterisation etc. If this scene were in something you were writing you would have to be able to explain and justify the scene to your Producer/Director.
- If you want to get across some ideas, be subtle. Remember, you are writing a parable or fable, not a Newspaper Leader.
- Be lateral in the way you transmit evidence. Try to get over many things at the same time in this scene.

## **Don't fall in love with**

- your own dialogue skills ( so that you write real dialogue in real time)
- your own jokes. If you are including a joke just for the sake of it, think hard. Such things slow a script down. Try to find a legitimate place for the joke - for example, where it will help with character or plot.
- your own deeply-held ideas as articulated in stirring speeches.

If you need to get ideas across, couch them, as you would any other exposition, in a character point. Try to split them up.