



CITY VARIETIES
MUSIC HALL · LEEDS

The **GRAND**
Theatre & Opera House Leeds



Digital Drama Drop-ins – Teacher Notes

Storytelling with Robin Simpson

KS3 – Discussing Genre in *The Strange Visitor*

What is genre? Most stories belong to a particular type or genre. Some examples are: **Detective/Mystery, Science Fiction, Romance, Horror, Historical and Adventure stories.**

Using one of the above genres, the students can be asked to restructure the story that I started in the video and they finished, using either the positive or negative ending.

For eg, if the story was a romance story, how will the visitor now react to the old lady? What would be their motivations? What are the characters back story?

If the story is now a mystery, what is the secret that must be uncovered? Who will discover it?

These new, adapted, tales can be written down or even told out loud depending on the confidence of the students, either to a partner, a small group or to the whole class.

Plot guides for each genre

Detective/Mystery - tend to revolve around a character on a quest to solve a crime, reveal the answer to a mystery or the real identity of the antagonist only at the climax of the story. Clues, for the reader/listener, can be dropped throughout the plot so the audience can join in the investigation. A central mystery is already included in this story - why is the visitor's body in pieces and why is he here?

Science-Fiction - classic elements include: Time travel, mind control, aliens, space-travel and exploration, parallel universes / artificial intelligence or robotics. Usually concerned with the human condition (what it is to be a human being) and how the world copes with particular plot events. Is the visitor from another planet or a monster like in Frankenstein?

Romance - these stories usually have a central couple who fall in love and the stories generally end on a happy note. The couple may have a struggle or obstacle to overcome (eg, Romeo and Juliet) or even dislike each other at first but grow to love each other by the end. What are the old woman and the visitor to each other?

Horror - may contain a villain single-mindedly focussed on devastation to a particular individual. Can feature supernatural elements such as ghosts, witches, vampires,

etc...May contain such things as curses, hauntings and revenge. Can end on a positive note or negative. The story already has gothic horror vibes.

Historical - Set in a particular time and place in the past using references to that particular time. May include real people from history. Try to capture the details and feel for the time period in which they are set. Fantasy stories can fall into this category and are usually set in a vaguely medieval time period but with the added bonus of being able to include dragons, wizards, etc...

Exploration - stories that go on a journey from A to B. At the end of the trip is a person or item that the protagonist needs/wants. Otherwise known as a 'Macguffin'. Maybe the antagonist tries to stop the adventure or beat the protagonist to the prize. There will be obstacles and problems/puzzles to solve on the way. Is the old woman the 'macguffin'?

If you're stuck on how to begin, it might help if the new stories all start where I left off, with the words - **"I've come for you!", said The Visitor approaching the old woman...**

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