

## Writing With The Senses – Class 2/Day 2

### ADDING LAYERS TO DIALOGUE

Okay, last night I uploaded a tip sheet on how to find and add layers to sections of narrative description. Throughout the week, I'll read and respond to scene submissions on an ad hoc basis to be sure everyone gets a response. But I want to be sure that we don't overlook the opportunities for developing sensory tension and anticipation within dialogue tags and near dialogue through points of view (POVs). Actually, Tawny's critique, that was posted earlier today, was a great segue to this follow on topic.

The old adage, "it's not what you say but *how* you say it," applies. The "way" characters speak to each other, should engage our senses. So should what they "think" when they do. It's a manipulation of "sound" and pacing. If you add a "feel" to the words, and other sensory stimulation, a very bland conversation can sizzle.

#### Here's an example: (Jim and Jane go to the supermarket)

He rounded the corner with his cart, disgusted that his wife had insisted he go with her today. It was Sunday, the game was on, and this didn't make any sense. Why did they have to go today and not yesterday? That's what he wanted to know!

"We need fruit, like some mangoes, and strawberries. They're good for your health and you need to eat more fruit," she said.

"Whatever," he replied and kept pushing the cart.

"Okay, I'll be at the fish counter. I wanted to make something special. You like shrimp, so, I was thinking—"

"I really don't care. A pizza would work for me," he said, cutting her off.

"All right," she said. "Fine."

#### Now, let's turn it into an anticipation tension line--prelude to a love scene by tweaking tag lines and adding a pinch of dialogue in both male and female POVs:

He rounded the corner with his cart, disgusted that his wife had insisted he go with her today. It was Sunday, the game was on, and this didn't make any sense. Why did they have to go today and not yesterday? That's what he wanted to know!

"We need fruit, like some mangoes, and strawberries. They're good for your health and you need to eat more fruit," she said, **picking up a strawberry and biting down on it slowly. She licked her bottom lip, held his gaze for a moment, and then turned back to the shelves with a sly wink.**

“Whatever,” he replied and kept pushing the cart. He wasn’t going to allow her to work her magic on him, not today. But the way the juice had stained her bottom lip... and the way she’d breathed out the words. He tightened his grip on the cart handle, strengthening his resolve. The scent of strawberry still lingered and had wrapped around his senses. He glanced at her from the corner of his eye... she got on his nerves, but was gorgeous.

She smiled. It was working. He’d slowed his gait and wasn’t rushing her through the store anymore. She picked up a cucumber, absently stroked it while looking at the lettuce, and then let it roll back into the pile, one finger sliding down the length of it. Oh, he’d forget about sports for one Sunday all right.

“Okay, I’ll be at the fish counter,” she whispered, pausing to discretely brush her body across his as though accidental when passing him. She felt his slight shudder when she did. “I wanted to make something special,” she murmured, allowing her eyes to rake over him in a knowing caress. “You like shrimp, so... I was thinking—”

“I really don’t care. A pizza would work for me,” he said, cutting her off with a low, sensual reply.

At this point, strawberry had become his favorite fruit, he could still taste it on the back of his tongue just from the way it hung in the air. She didn’t have to cook tonight. Pizza in bed would be a much better compromise. She’d made his stomach knot from just one look. He let her know that by the way his gaze sought hers and held it for ransom. Forget shopping, it was time to go home.

“All right,” she said. Football, please... damned if the Eagles could score a touchdown like she could. She smiled, cocked her eyebrow, and let him taste the strawberry stain on her mouth with a light brush against his lips. “Fine.”

Okay? Soooo.... As you guys are tweaking your scenes, go into the dialogue too. Don’t assume the dialogue has to be all that snappy. It’s the action and sensory stuff “around” the dialogue that makes it become so much richer.

Have a GREAT night!  
Leslie!