

## **-Drama**

It is a story written to be performed by actors on a stage.

### **- The Elements of Drama**

#### **1. Plot (The Story Structure)**

The plot is the most important part of a drama because it is the arrangement of the actions or events that happen on stage. It is different from a simple "story" because while a story is just a list of things that happen in order, a plot is the specific way an author chooses to organize those events for the audience. For example, a writer might start the play in the middle of a big problem and then use "flashbacks" to show what happened earlier. A good plot must have "unity," which means that every scene is there for a reason; if you took one part out, the whole story would stop making sense. Most plots follow a pattern where a "crisis" or a big problem develops, leading to a "climax" or a high point of tension, and finally a "resolution" where the problem is solved. In some plays, this ending is called a "dénouement," which is the final untying of all the knots in the story.

#### **1.1- Traditional Structure**

1. **Acts:** These are the largest "units" of a play. Most full-length plays are divided into several acts—often between two and five—to help organize the story and allow for breaks in the performance.

2. **Scenes:** Acts are typically broken down into scenes. A new scene usually starts when the location of the story changes or when a different group of characters enters the stage.

#### **1.2 Types of Drama**

Based on the books provided, here is an overview of the one-act play and the full-length play in drama.

##### **1.2.1 One-Act Play (The Short Drama)**

A one-act play is a complete dramatic work that consists of only a single act.

##### **- Characteristics**

1. These plays are typically short, often lasting between twenty minutes and an hour.

2. Due to its short length, a one-act play usually focuses on a single episode, a single situation, or a very specific moment in time.

3. It often features only a small number of characters to keep the story concentrated and manageable.

4. The plot in a one-act play moves quickly toward a single "climax" or turning point without many subplots.

5. Like a short story, the one-act play aims for a "unity of effect," trying to leave the audience with one strong feeling or idea.

6. Famous examples include *trifles* by Susan Glaspell and *The Stronger* by August Strindberg.

### 1.2.2 Full-Length Play (The Complete Performance)

A full-length play is a dramatic work that is long enough to be the entire evening's entertainment.

#### - Characteristics

1. These plays are almost always divided into multiple "acts," usually ranging from two to five separate parts.
2. A full-length play typically lasts between two and three hours, including intermissions.
3. **Complex Plot:** Unlike short plays, full-length plays can have complex "plots" with multiple subplots and several different problems happening at once.
4. There is enough time for deep "character development," allowing characters to grow, change, or face many different "crises".
5. Most famous "tragedies" and "comedies," like those written by Shakespeare or Molière, are full-length plays.
6. Full-length plays require more elaborate sets, costumes, and a larger cast of actors.

### 2. Character (The People in the Play)

Characters are the people (or sometimes animals or ideas) that the actors imitate for the audience. In a drama, what a character is like is usually shown through their "actions"—the choices they make and the things they do on stage. Some characters are "flat," meaning they only have one main personality trait, like being always funny or always mean, and their behavior is very predictable. Other characters are "round," meaning they have many different sides to their personality and can sometimes surprise the audience, just like real people. There is often a "protagonist," who is the main character we follow, and an "antagonist," who is the person or force that works against them. A special type of character is the "chorus," which can be a group or a single person who stands apart from the main story to explain things or tell the audience how they should feel about what is happening. There are two primary types of characters that drive the conflict and action in a drama:

#### 1. Protagonist (The Main Hero)

The protagonist is the central character of a play or story. In drama, this person is the main figure the audience follows, and the entire plot usually revolves around their journey or struggle. Originally, in ancient Greek drama, the word meant the "first actor," who played the lead role against the chorus. While we often think of them as a "hero" or a "good person," a protagonist can also be a flawed or even a bad person, as long as they are the main focus. They are usually "round" characters, meaning they have complex personalities and can change throughout the play. The audience often feels a deep connection to them, especially during their "soliloquies," where they reveal their private thoughts.

#### 2. Antagonist (The Opposing Force)

The antagonist is the character or force that stands in direct opposition to the protagonist. Their main role in a drama is to create "conflict" by blocking the protagonist from reaching their goals. Often, the antagonist is a person, like a "villain" who is morally corrupt and enjoys doing evil deeds. However, the antagonist does not always have to be a person; it can be an animal, a group of people, or even an internal force like a character's own fear. In many plays, the antagonist provides the "tension" that keeps the audience interested in what

will happen next. They can be a "flat" character who exists only to be mean, or they can be as complex and "round" as the hero. When the antagonist is a person, they often act as a "foil," which is a character whose traits highlight the protagonist's qualities by contrast. The struggle between the antagonist and the protagonist usually leads to the "climax," the most exciting part of the play.

### **3.Character Development**

Character development refers to how a person in a play is created and how they change as the story moves forward. Most characters are revealed to the audience through their "actions"—the specific choices they make when faced with a problem. Some characters are "flat," meaning they stay exactly the same and have only one simple personality trait throughout the entire play. In contrast, "round" characters are more complex and go through significant changes or "development" based on what happens to them. A playwright can show this growth by placing a character in a "crisis" or a difficult situation that forces them to react. Sometimes, a character's development is highlighted by a "foil," which is another person on stage who is their complete opposite.

### **4. Dialogue (The Words Spoken)**

Dialogue refers to the words that the characters say to each other on the stage. This is the primary way that drama tells its story, unlike a book where a narrator might explain everything. Sometimes a character will speak their thoughts out loud while they are all alone on the stage so the audience can understand what they are thinking; this is called a "soliloquy". There is also the "aside," where a character says something quickly to the audience that the other people on stage are not supposed to hear. In some older styles of drama, like the "Theater of the Absurd," the dialogue might seem crazy or repetitive to show that the characters are having a hard time communicating with each other.

### **5.Monologue**

A monologue is a long speech given by a single character in a play. It is a way for a character to share a lot of information or express deep feelings without being interrupted. A famous type of monologue is the "soliloquy," where a character talks to themselves while alone on stage so the audience can hear their secret thoughts. This allows the character to reveal things they would never say to the other people in the story. Sometimes, a play is made entirely of one person speaking; this is called a "monodrama". Another variation is the "dramatic monologue," where a character speaks to a silent listener who is present but never says a word. Monologues are important because they give the audience a "window" into a character's "interiority" or private mind. In Greek tragedy, a single actor might perform a "monody," which is a special type of monologue used to mourn someone's death. Overall, monologues help the audience understand the "inner state of being" of a character.

### **6. Setting (Mise en Scène)**

This includes the scenery, the lighting, the costumes, and the "properties" (or props), which are the movable objects like chairs or cups that the actors use. It also refers to the "blocking," which is where the actors stand and how they move around the stage. The staging helps to create an "illusion" that the world of the play is real, even though the audience knows they are just watching a performance.

### **Traditional Types of Drama**

These categories are based on the plays' subject matter, tone, and the message they send to the audience.

**1. Tragedy:** This is a serious play that focuses on the downfall of a noble or high-ranking protagonist. The hero usually has a "tragic flaw" or makes a big mistake (*hamartia*) that leads to their destruction. Example: *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, where a prince struggles with revenge and his own indecision.

**2. Comedy:** A type of drama intended to amuse the audience and which typically ends happily, often with a marriage. It focuses on the funny side of human behavior. Example: *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, which pokes fun at social rules.

**3. Tragicomedy:** This type of play blends serious or tragic elements with funny or lighthearted moments. It often features characters who face danger but reach a happy ending. Example: *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett, where characters experience deep despair but also engage in clown-like humor.

**4. Historical Drama:** These plays are based on real historical events or famous people from the past. They often interpret history to comment on current times. Example: *Henry V* by William Shakespeare, based on the life of the English King.

**5. Absurdist Drama:** This type of play shows the "absurdity" of human life, suggesting that the world is chaotic and has no clear meaning. The plots are often repetitive or circular. Example: *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett