

OUTLINING LAB – STEP #6 – HANDOUT #1 DEALING WITH FEEDBACK

Here is an example of two different approaches to dealing with a question about a scene: In this story, the vampire Andrei has just made his servant Randolph into a vampire against his will. Randolph has tried to escape, so Andrei has decided to punish him. The playwright now needs to find a way to get Randolph, locked in a coffin, onto Andrei's train so that when the train goes through a special pass and is hit by the light from the red moon, Randolph will get the unexpected opportunity to be changed back into a human. The playwright also wants to introduce Randolph to the vampire hunters, Nandor and Sandu, whom he will use later in his battle against Andrei.

ORIGINAL OUTLINE VERSION:

Scene 4. Aboard the train. After Andrei closes the coffin lid on Randolph and locks him in, he opens the freight car door and lets in the vampire hunters, Nandor and Sandu, who have just arrived. The vampire hunters don't know that Andrei is a vampire; they think that Andrei is human. Andrei tells them that he wants them to guard the body of his friend Randolph. He leaves the coffin in their care, tells the engineer to start the train, pays the vampire hunters well, and leaves the station.

RESPONSE FROM DRAMATURG:

- Why does Andrei ask vampire hunters to accompany a dead body? Shouldn't they be hunting vampires?
- Why does Andrei need to send Randolph on the train? Why not just have the vampire hunters guard the coffin at his home?
- If Randolph is dead, why would his coffin need to be guarded at all?

REVISION A: ATTEMPTING TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

Scene 4. Aboard the train. After Andrei closes the coffin lid on Randolph and locks him in, he opens the freight car door and lets in the vampire hunters, Nandor and Sandu, who have just arrived. The vampire hunters don't know that Andrei is a vampire; they think that Andrei is human. Andrei tells them that his friend Randolph got sick and died after being bitten by a vampire. He can't keep the body in his house. It might become a vampire. Andrei asks Nandor and Sandu to help him move the body to a vault in a warehouse for safe keeping until he can arrange a proper Christian burial for Randolph. For this night only, he asks them to watch the body, just in case Randolph does become a vampire and tries to escape. Andrei tells that them he has locked the coffin, but he doesn't know if this cheap coffin is strong enough to hold a vampire and he hasn't had time to get a better one. Since Andrei is an expert on vampires, Nandor invites Andrei to ride along with them, but Andrei can't. It's very late, and if he can't get back home to rest soon it could be bad for his health. Nandor offers to make sure that Randolph is dead with a silver dagger, but Andrei doesn't want them to touch the body at all. This ride is just a precaution. He leaves the coffin in their care, tells the engineer to start the train, pays the vampire hunters well, and leaves the station.

REVISION: MAKING THE QUESTIONS GO AWAY

Scene 4. Aboard the train. Andrei welcomes Nandor and Sandu into the train compartment and warns them to beware of the locked coffin because it contains the body of a freshly dead victim of a vampire – his servant Randolph. Nandor and Sandu instantly offer to hunt down the vampire that did this evil deed – they are, after all, vampire hunters! Andrei explodes with anger – where were these valiant vampire hunters when the evil vampire was threatening his own beloved wife, and attacking his faithful servant? They must now redeem themselves by seeing that this body is buried in the sanctified ground of his ancestral burial grounds. Only that way will they be able to prevent Randolph from becoming a vampire himself. No matter what horrible sounds they hear coming from the coffin during the trip – they must not open the coffin in case Randolph has already become a vampire. Their mission is to see that this coffin remains closed and is safely buried. Nandor and Sandu complain that since they are vampire hunters, they could handle this Randolph if he became a vampire. In fact – they are really looking forward to an opportunity to use their vampire hunting skills on a real vampire. Andrei explodes again and reminds Nandor and Sandu that they work for him and will do as he bids. When they return from this mission – he will expect them to do a much better job of finding and killing the vampires that threaten him and his loved ones. Andrei sweeps out of the train compartment, leaving Nandor and Sandu curiously approaching the locked coffin.

Which revision do you think would make a more dramatic scene?