

The dramatic elements I have explicitly employed in the construction of the scene between Rose and Mr Morton are as follows:

## ACTION

The scene contains physical actions and dialogue.

## CHARACTERS

Rose is the protagonist (anti-hero). The audience should be on her side because they were introduced to her before she was seduced and exploited by Reggie: when she actually was an innocent, demure young woman. Jean Gould, the housekeeper, who when a young widow, was Morton's mistress but is no longer, is the antagonist. Elsie, the cook, is the mirror. Reggie Roberts is the romance. Morton is eventually the murder victim.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL ARC

This scene marks an important point in the development of Rose's transformational arc. After she rejects Morton's attempt to blackmail her into sex, her relationship with Morton is never the same and she becomes the most powerful figure in the household. Her petty crime and the lies she tells in order to protect herself have set her on a path to ever greater deceit and criminality.

## FUNDAMENTAL FLAW

Morton's fundamental flaw is his weakness for attractive young women. Rose's fundamental flaw is her inability to say no to Reggie.

## STATUS

At the start of the scene Morton's status is high and Rose's status is relatively low. At the conclusion of the scene the situation has in many respects been reversed.

## STORYLINE

There is an obvious sequence of events: the "and then, and then".

## PLOT

The events of the scene explain why Rose suddenly became so dominant in Morton's life and his household. They also explain why Morton eventually came to marry Rose.

## SUB-PLOT

Rose's affair with Reggie is a sub-plot that impacts strongly upon the main plot.

## BACKSTORY

Morton has been widowed for ten years.

Reggie has been Rose's lover for some months.

Rose has been stealing money from Morton.

## OBJECTIVE

Rose's overall objective for the scene is, "I wish to find out what Mr Morton wants and if it is to accuse me of being a thief, vehemently deny it."

## SUPEROBJECTIVE

Rose's superobjective is "I wish to always deny my guilt and evade detection."

## SUB-TEXT

Rose's sub-text is that she is the thief. Also, that she is now sexually experienced and is having an affair.

Morton's sub-text (initially) is that he is convinced she is the thief. He also has sexual designs on her.

## INCITING INCIDENT

Rose's theft of money from the cash-box.

## TIME-LOCK

Norman Collins, the butcher, will only wait ten minutes for Rose; after that he will set off for town without her.

## OBSTACLES

For Rose the interview with Morton is an obstacle preventing her from getting her lift into town and spending the day with Reggie.

Morton's accusation against Rose is a more serious obstacle that presents a threat to her liberty and has to be strenuously denied.

Rose's denials of her guilt present an obstacle and an impediment to Morton's ulterior sexual motives.

The time-lock is an obstacle.

## THE STAKES

The stakes are raised for Rose when Morton accuses her of theft and threatens to call in the police. It then becomes apparent that she might lose her liberty. The stakes are raised even higher when Morton offers not to contact the police if, in exchange, Rose will have sex with him. Rose remains calm, continues to lie about her innocence and triumphs at the end.

The stakes are raised for Morton when Rose calls his bluff, refuses to have sex with him and dares him to call in the police. There is a very real danger that she will complain to the police and destroy his reputation, or worse. That's why he apologises profusely.

## CONFLICT

Morton tries hard to get Rose to admit she stole the money from his cashbox but she refuses to do so. Morton also tries to coerce her into sex and she resists. He makes sexual advances to her which she repels.

There is also internal conflict. Rose very much wants to get out of the hole she has dug for herself but she knows that if she admits she is the thief she will be finished.

Morton is also internally conflicted. He wants to believe Rose is the thief but it is hard for him to sustain this belief in the face of Rose's vehement protestations of innocence.

## RISING CONFLICT

This scene is the first of three conflict peaks and comes at the end of Part One of the script, the Set Up. It is the start of a rising conflict that will eventually end in Morton's murder.

## CRISIS

The crisis begins when Morton accuses Rose of stealing money from his cash box and it intensifies when he tries to blackmail Rose into sex. The crisis ends when Rose dares Morton to call in the police and he retracts his accusation and apologises.

## CLIMAX

The climax for Morton occurs when he decides to retract his allegations and apologise to Rose.

The climax for Rose occurs when she refuses to have sex with him in return for immunity from prosecution and dares him to call in the police.

## RESOLUTION

Morton's justification of his behaviour.

Rose's sympathy and commiseration with Morton's predicament.

## TURNING POINT

The turning point for Rose comes when she decides to reject Morton's sexual advances and offer him sympathy and commiseration when he retracts his accusations and apologises. Her decision takes their relationship in a new direction.

The turning point for Morton comes when he offers Rose immunity from prosecution in return for sex, makes a pass at her, is rejected and, being threatened with exposure is forced to apologise. Relations between him and Rose will never be the same.

### THREE PART STRUCTURE

The end of the scene concludes Part One: The Set Up.

### EXPOSITION (INDIRECT)

The conflict of the past, i.e. the theft of the money from the cash box, has created the conflict of the present i.e. Morton accuses Rose of being the thief. The exchanges created by this conflict show that Rose is a liar as well as a thief, is quite strategic and capable of brazening her way out of any situation. We also learn that she has her own moral code which prevents her from saving her neck by going to bed with Morton. At the end when sympathising with Morton she appears to be either kind or cunning.

Through the exposition we learn that Morton is convinced that Rose is the thief, that he has a sadistic streak and enjoys toying with vulnerable people's emotions. We also learn that he is a sexual predator who will use the threat of imprisonment to coerce Rose into sex. In the course of his apology and justification for his behaviour we also learn something of the nature of his frustrated and lonely life.

### INFORMATION (WHO KNOWS WHAT?)

Morton knows that money has gone missing from his cash box. He knows that he is going to accuse Rose of taking it. Depending on the actor's interpretation, he might also know that he intends to use Rose's vulnerable position and natural wish to avoid gaol to coerce her into sex with him. He certainly knows that he is besotted with Rose.

Rose knows that she has stolen money from Morton and that he is lecherous. She also knows that she is quite sexually experienced and not the naïve young woman she appears to be.

The audience knows that Rose is a thief and her protestations of innocence are a pack of lies. They also know that she is sexually experienced.

The audience knows that Morton is an habitual lecher.

## DRAMATIC IRONY

In the scene the conditions for dramatic irony exist. The audience knows that Rose is a thief and sexually experienced and that Morton has been a lecher all his life. That's why they should find Rose's protestations about her innocence and her attempt to appear naïve laughable; and why they should find Morton's attempt to excuse his dishonourable and unpleasant behaviour as a solitary lapse, caused by his loneliness and frustration, as equally risible.

## FORESHADOWING

The notion that Rose is capable of great dishonesty and capable of even more extreme criminal actions is planted in the scene. This will be paid off when Rose eventually poisons Morton who by then is her husband and has made her the beneficiary of his will.

Morton's fundamental flaw, his weakness for young, attractive women, is planted in this scene. It will be paid off when Rose becomes pregnant with Reggie's child. She persuades Morton that he is the father, and he agrees to marry her.

## SUSPENSE

A certain degree of suspense is created because the audience should be uncertain why Rose has been called to Morton's study and whether it has anything to do with the stolen money. They should also be uncertain whether Rose's lies will persuade Morton not to involve the police, and what Morton's reaction will be when Rose rejects his advances.

## SETTING

The setting of the scene is Morton's study. It is an affluent setting in which Morton feels at ease and in which Rose feels intimidated. Morton uses the dominance the setting gives him to exploit Rose's vulnerability as a member of the servant class. The script's overall setting, a large country house set in a substantial estate is liberating and empowering for Morton who is the owner. It is restricting and repressive for Rose who is at everyone's beck and call and cannot call her life her own.

## GENRE

The scene is from a detective drama.

## THEME

Crime doesn't pay.