



Chapter Five – Place - Transcript

So in this chapter, we're going to be talking about 'Place' and how grounding place in our writing can make it stronger and more connective with our audience. Throughout this chapter remember the five senses, so sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. Because they help to evoke a sense of place in your writing and they also help you remember minute details about the places that you're trying to write about.

CHAPTER 5 – SPARK & SCOTLAND

The setting of Scotland is so, so strong within 'Spark'. Not just physically with the show being set out in the Scottish woodland but culturally and historically as well. I was lucky with Scotland because it is a place with such strong histories and a strong identity. Things like its cultures and mythology and its places, its vast nature and even to an extent the Scots language (as much as I don't speak in Scots - my accent, I could play around with, um, dipping in and out of Scots.) So it's such a rich place to set something. So deciding that I wanted to write about 'Jenny Horne' and my cultural heritage as well I had so much to play with before I even started writing the show. I didn't have to, like, dive really deep into anything that I was wanting to talk about, um, when it came to, like you know, the setting of the show because Scotland already comes with so many strong feelings. It made writing the show so much easier.

TRANSCRIPT FOR 'WILDERNESS'

If you ask me where I hail from I will tell you from a place of giants a place where the mountains were made by goddesses who carry them in their skirts a place where the land is as wild as the creatures that live on it my home a place I carry through the grit in my spirit the grit under my fingertips the waters, clean and cold, lace around my mouth fill me with so much wonder fill me with so much wilderness alipa her name tumbles down my spine until I'm standing straight it tumbles off my tongue and knocks me off my feet she leaves such big shoes to fill my bare unworthy feet kick up the dust of the roads they've never seen before they could swear they've seen them before there's something in the whisper of the wind that's telling me to run run with all the strength in my legs anywhere everywhere but never backwards to see the sea and her curved coast neckline craned for the kissing of rocks and sand to live like no one is watching like it's just us to scream with abandon, she understands there's a song in my veins it sounds like the hills in the morning sounds like the rivers drumming their own thunder to answer the sky it sounds like my Grandmother humming in the quiet moment she thinks that no one is watching it sounds like my Grandfather playing the spoons his whiskey fingers hammering out songs and beats my Father's chest inherited it sounds like a story I was destined to hear it sounds like a song lost to the years if only I could find her I'd ask her to make me brave to sing the song of the

ancients raise this truth from its grave I'm a descendant of the forests and the hills and glades
 I'm a child of alipa I was born to be brave I will not falter or choke because I was baptised in the
 water straight from her throat and maybe I will never find the giants with mountains in their
 skirts for they don't belong in this world full of buses and coffee makers and collarless shirts but
 this is still her land where the wild women grow and I can walk her roads they always lead me
 home and I can sing the songs that we all forgot that we know.

CHAPTER 5 – PLACES HAVE STORIES

Using 'Place' as a starting point for writing is so strong because places have such strong memories. So I was ten when my family first took a holiday to Australia. My dad's best friend (growing up) lives there, um, so we did this long family holiday over Christmas and New Year, um, in Sydney. And, of course, it's, it's Summer, um, in December there, uh, in Sydney. So I still remember so clearly the first day. Because I remember getting off the plane and - I was ten, my sister was five. It was long. It was a long trip, um, to be taking two kids on um - but I remember. We were finally there and we came out through arrivals and we were getting, um, a hired car. We had to kind of go out through the, the airport and go into the car hire garage place. And I remember the double doors opened and the heat physically hit me - it was a wave. But it wasn't just me it stopped all of us in our tracks. We, we stopped as this wave of heat just, a, overpowered us. Like we just felt it and all of us were like - 'Wow!' I don't think we'd ever felt heat like that before (not in Scotland anyway) and it just hit us that we were finally there. Um, and it wasn't just the heat. It was the smell of the place as well and I was so jet-lagged and my Mum (who was really into aromatherapy) knew that, like, lavender helped kids sleep and lemon, haha, lemon oil helped them stay awake. So she just kept shoving tissues with, like, little drops of lemon oil under our noses like, to try and wake us up. And, um, we met my Uncle, like my, my Dad's best friend, and we went for, um, Malaysian food. So it was kind of like a buffet but people wandered around. Like a table service buffet, it was very strange, um. But anyway, they had the best, like, noodles I've ever tasted in my life. Um, and this is just a really long way of saying that, at one point, my sister and I went out for food, uh, in Glasgow a couple of years ago. And we ordered, like, a side of noodles to share for the two of us. And we both took a bite at the same time and we both froze and looked at each other and we both had the strongest feeling of Australia. We both felt the heat. We both smelled the outside. We both tasted these noodles and were just instantly taken back there and we could remember. And she was only five at the time; we could remember everything about that day, like, we could, we could smell the lemon it was the strangest thing. And that's because places hold so much sensory memory for us. Using that as a starting point for your writing would be so clever. If you wanted to write about something, a, about a specific place. And it doesn't even have to be a physical place, it could be a place in time, it could be a summer when, like, in your early teens, it could be a specific holiday which is one place but it could be different things around there. You will think of feelings and smells and tastes and things that happened and, and you don't even need to consult your grid before. You already have all of that knowledge and experience and memory to use as part of your writing and it's so rich. Describing how something smells and linking it to how you felt at the time - there's so much to play with. Places have stories too - use them in your writing to make them your own story.

WRITING EXERCISE – THAT STREET

So for today's main exercise, we're writing about Place. Before we get started what I want you to do is to pick a street. A street that you know very well, it could be any street in the world but one that you can really clearly picture in your mind. You can remember all the details about it - just one that you can see very, very clearly when you close your eyes. Pick that street. And that's what we're going to write about today. So what we're going to do in our mind mapping section is that, we're going to take a new page and in the middle, we're going to write down the name of your street. You don't even have to know the name of the street if it's just 'My best friend's street' that's absolutely fine. Now, what I want you to do here is to write down as many memories as you can - coming off here. So, for example, it could be, um, you rode your bike for the first time or just you rode your bike. Um, that you, uh, stayed up late. Maybe you had to come home when the street lights were on. It can be any of the memories that stick out in your mind. And then after you've written down the memories we're going to think specifically about the five senses: so sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. And I want you to go around all these memories that you've written down of this street and then add something that you can remember for sensory detail. So if it was for riding your bike; remember the time you fell off and skint your knee. Which was sore; you could feel the gravel. You could hear, uh, people running after you. If it's coming home when the street light's on; what colour was the sky - do you remember? What sounds could you hear? Think about the senses and then add it to your mind map section. So take five minutes to get down as many details as you can remember - memories and sensory details. Just fill up your mind map as much as you can. Happy writing.

FIVE MINUTE TIMER

LESSON CONTINUES

Well done! I hope that your mind map is really full. So now we're going to do our main exercise today which is a piece of writing called 'That Street.' I want you to use everything you had to tell us why you chose that street? Why it's important to you? If you want to make it an ode or a list poem then please go ahead and do. If you get stuck the supporting poem in the workbook is called 'An ode to Anniesland Cross' which is that. It's an ode to a piece, uh, it's an ode to a street or like, a, an intersection that, um, I live near where, lo, I remember lots of specific things happening. You can make it an ode, you can make a letter, you can make it a list, you can make it whatever you want. Just take 15 minutes and happy writing.

FIFTEEN MINUTE TIMER

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION

The places where you spend time in your life shape you as a person. The memories you make there, the, the people that you meet, the things that happen all impact you - use those things in your writing. If you're ever writing a poem and you get stuck and you think: 'I don't know where I'm going with this. I don't really know what to say next. I'm not too sure what to do to get to where I want to go.' Just take a moment and think about 'Place'. Think about where your poem is taking place and then think about what it smells like? What does it feel like on your skin? What are you wearing at the time? Like, think about all those things and see if that loosens anything up. More often than not it helps you get unstuck.

UP NEXT – CHAPTER SIX – PRESSURE & PERSECUTION

