

# Differences in prose and screenwriting content and format

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## **Prose character introduction:**

Elizabeth's long, blonde hair scurries around her face as she bounds down the courthouse steps into the windy, bleak day. Her three-inch heels click on the concrete. A lot of good the black Armani suit with power red blouse did today. The only thing she hates more than losing cases is working for that jerk of a boss she has. And here he comes. Oh, how she'd like to find a new job. One with real importance and a boss who appreciated her. Thirty-three years old and still trying to find her way. Life sucks.

## **Script character introduction:**

FADE IN:

EXT. FEDERAL COURT BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Cloudy sky. Treetops dip and sway in the wind. Swirls of sand dance on the steps.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Clad in a designer pant suit and high heels, Attorney ELIZABETH CARROLL, early 30s, bursts through the double doors and scampers down the many stairs. She carries a small briefcase and appears distraught. Her losing streak wreaks havoc on her dreams of success.

A small crowd of Reporters and Cameramen intercept her. A REPORTER shoves a microphone in Elizabeth's face.

REPORTER

Do you have any words about the jury's decision against Eastview Manufacturing?

Elizabeth tries to push her way past without answering.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Or do you believe it was a good ruling?  
Where do you stand on freedom of speech?

Elizabeth glares at her. Then, aware of cameras, smiles.

ELIZABETH

A corporation is free to set guidelines for communication within the workplace. Anyone who doesn't like those guidelines should find employment elsewhere.

REPORTER

So, you don't believe in freedom of speech and religion?

ELIZABETH

I didn't say those words, did I?

A Lady and Lawyer emerge from the building. The crowd moves from Elizabeth to them for their responses.

Relieved, Elizabeth hurries down the steps.

An older man, her BOSS, stops her. He's angry.

BOSS

Elizabeth, when are you going to win one for the team? This is your third loss in a row.

He tosses a cigarette to the concrete and steps on it.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Companies don't like to pay the plaintiff on top of our fees.

She tries to hide her embarrassment with a glare of anger.

ELIZABETH

If you'd give me a win-able case --

BOSS

If it were that easy, our clients wouldn't need us, would they?

ELIZABETH

I said "win-able," not "easy." Give me something we're in the right on. They shouldn't have fired her for expressing her opinion.

BOSS

Then redefine what's right.

ELIZABETH

I can't redefine freedom of speech.

He turns away but looks back at her.

BOSS

You'd better win your next case or you'll be looking for another job.

Nearby, a tall, handsome man with dark hair stops and listens. He is DAMON MORTEMAN, 30, dressed in a black suit. He stares sinisterly at Elizabeth. Plotting something.

Her boss struts away.

Elizabeth sucks in her breath and glares after him. Doesn't notice Damon.

### **Prose character introduction continued:**

If you're a prose fiction writer, then you know how you would write this scene in prose. And you know that on the page, it would look different.

### **Your Challenge:**

Take a short scene or part of a scene from your prose writing and plan how you would write it as a script. After the next session, on formatting, you will be able to actually set it up the right way. But there will be things you have to leave out and other things you might have to insert to get it to flow right for the genre.