

# WRITER'S BLOCK

By Matt Thompson

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**SYNOPSIS:** It's the afterlife and some of the world's greatest playwrights are guests on *Inside the Writer's Studio*! Our hosts, George Bernard Shaw and Edgar Allen Poe, are having a hearty discussion on the life and times of our famous authors, until George Lucas stops by and tells them that he is going to digitally reformat their lives. It's a quick humorous laugh at literature!

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5-6 EITHER)

*Though these are male parts, since this is rather tongue-in-cheek, these roles may easily be played by either male or female.*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (m/f) ..... Upbeat host of *Inside the Writer's Studio*. Speaks with an English accent.

EDGAR ALLEN POE (m/f) ..... Co-host of the *Inside the Writer's Studio*. Very serious. Think Emo. Speaks with an English accent. May double with George Lucas.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (m/f) ..... A guest on *Inside the Writer's Studio*. A bit of an airhead. Speaks with an English accent.

AESCHELUS (m/f) ..... Famous Greek playwright. As a guest on *Inside the Writer's Studio*, he becomes a little annoyed.

MOLIÈRE (m/f) ..... The famous French comic playwright. He thinks that everything is a joke. Also, a guest on *Inside the Writer's Studio*.

GEORGE LUCAS (m/f) ..... The unexpected guest. May double with Edgar Allen Poe.

**AT RISE:**

*As the lights rise, we see a table with five adjacent chairs. Behind the table sits our host of the Writer's Studio, GEORGE BERNARD SHAW. His mannerisms may be a bit like James Lipton from "Inside the Actor's Studio." In the chair closest to the desk sits his co-host, EDGAR ALLAN POE, dressed all in black.*

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** *(Addressing the audience.)* Hello everybody, and welcome to another edition of *Inside the Writer's Studio*. I'm George Bernard Shaw, here with my co-host, Edgar Allan Poe. On our program, some of history's greatest magnets of literature discuss their contributions to history and their reflections of the written word. Edgar, how are you feeling today?

**EDGAR ALLAN POE:** Like death.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Right. So, let's begin. Our first guest is considered to be one of the finest writers of the English language. He has written some of the most admired plays in the Western Hemisphere, he also transformed the English theatre by expanding expectations about what could be accomplished through characterization, plot, action, language, and genre. He never traveled the world but wrote all about it. Ladies and gentlemen, the Bard of Stratford-upon-Avon, William Shakespeare.

*Applause SFX. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE enters and shakes hands with GEORGE BERNARD SHAW and takes a seat closest to EDGAR ALLAN POE.*

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Our next guest is one of France's most beloved *commedia dell'arte* performers. A true comic genius in the vein of such greats as Charles Chaplain, Harold Lloyd, and Pauly Shore. An all around man of theatre, please welcome Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, better known as Molière.

*Applause SFX. MOLIERÈ enters with a funny wig, a rubber nose, while honking a horn. HE does a pratfall, pulls himself up and goes to shake GEORGE BERNARD SHAW's hand, but pulls his own hand away at the last moment. HE finally takes a seat.*

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Our final guest... Edgar, would you like to introduce our next guest?

**EDGAR ALLAN POE:** (*Quickly.*) No.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Very well, our next guest considers himself one of Greece's most esteemed playwrights. Winner of the Dionysia Festival of 458 B.C. and the inventor of tragedy, and he just signed a four year endorsement deal with Kalamata Olives. Please welcome Aeschylus.

*Applause SFX. AESCHYLUS enters in a toga and sandals and takes a seat.*

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Thank you all for joining us here today. Let's start with you, Bill. There has been a lot of controversy surrounding your writing, and there is one looming, burning question that has been sitting in the minds of scholars for centuries: who wrote the plays of William Shakespeare?

**SHAKESPEARE:** I did. Me.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Good enough for me. Your *Hamlet* leads the canon as the English speaking language's greatest piece of literature put down into words. It speaks of the poetry of the mind, of the body and of the soul. In your masterpiece, the central character, Hamlet, in act three scene two speaks to Ophelia, the object of his love, and he says, "Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?" In which she replies, "Tis brief, my lord." And what does Hamlet retort?

**SHAKESPEARE:** "Poetry is what gets lost in translation."

*Beat.*

**AESCHYLUS:** That's Robert Frost.

*SHAKESPEARE looks away, a bit guilty.*

**AESCHYLUS:** You just plagiarized the poet Robert Frost.

**SHAKESPEARE:** Oh.

**MOLIÈRE:** Nice goin' Shakespeare.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Let us move on. (*Stressing the short "e."*)  
Now, Aeschylus.

**AESCHYLUS:** That's (*Stressing the long "e."*) Aeschylus.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Right. Let us discuss *Agamemnon*, the first play of three brilliant works discussing the curse on the House of Atreus.

**AESCHYLUS:** Yes.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** In that first play, Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, attempts to persuade him to step on a purple carpet. Some scholars say the tapestry is cyan or even magenta. The hue of this carpet is exceptionally important to the main character, since stepping on this tapestry indicates hubris on Agamemnon's part. (Very intense and serious.) Aeschylus, what...is your favorite cartoon?

**AESCHYLUS:** (*Beat.*) Cartoon?

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Yes.

**AESCHYLUS:** What does my favorite cartoon have to do with anything?

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** It can say a lot about a person.

**AESCHYLUS:** We didn't have cartoons in my time.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** A shame. So, let us get back to your plays. You wrote seven in your lifetime.

**AESCHYLUS:** No, I wrote 76, but the others are lost.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** So you say.

**AESCHYLUS:** I have the original tablet manuscripts in stone.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** And you brought them with you?

**AESCHYLUS:** Of course not, that's thousands of pounds of granite.

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** And so they remain lost, I suppose.

**AESCHYLUS:** No, I can go home and get them, I mean...

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** No, that's not necessary.

**AESCHYLUS:** But I...

**GEORGE BERNARD SHAW:** Aeschylus, if Zeus exists, what would you say to him as you entered heaven?

**AESCHYLUS:** (*Very serious.*) An artist has arrived.

*MOLIÈRE honks his horn.*

**AESCHYLUS:** Do you mind, Molière?

*MOLIÈRE honks his horn twice.*

**AESCHYLUS:** Please.

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MOLIÈRE honks his horn once.

**AESCHYLUS:** (*Upset.*) Everything is a joke to you isn't it, Molière?

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