THOSE PROBLEM PARAGRAPHS

'I Just Can't Get It To Sound Right'; or
'It Doesn't Say What I Want It to Mean'

We have all been in the position of not knowing exactly how to describe something or how to present some dialogue in the best manner. You know what you want to say, but you cannot express it with precision, or it sounds awkward.

For convenience, let's call this kind of text a «problem paragraph», and let's name it Paragraph A.

You tinker with the wording of A, and you come up with a different version, which is Paragraph B. You like some of B, but it is still not what you want. So maybe you create a Paragraph C. It is pretty good, but A and B also have some strong points.

What do you do? You decide that you ought to go on with your work and come back to the problem after you have more of your script finished. This is a wise decision, because later action and later dialogue can provide insight into how you ought to handle earlier text.

Can I Save My Golden Words?

You want to save the different versions of a problem paragraph and decide about them later, maybe after you have a better sense of where you are going. So the question is: How can I conveniently save these paragraph versions?

Through the years I have tried several approaches.

- I have kept a second file, which I used as a clipboard for unused materials.

- I have performed a cut-and-paste operation to move paragraphs into storage at the end of the current document.

- I have even left several versions in place in the current document, with the «less satisfactory» paragraphs in brackets or commented out with C-style /*comment*/ codes.

But none of these methods is entirely satisfactory. Having all that repetitive text on the page is really messy and distracting.

'Fade In' to the Rescue!

Fortunately, FADE IN provides an excellent feature that lets you save your paragraph versions in a way that is not at all cumbersome. You create «alternate paragraphs» as you work.

As always, an example explains best. I will keep the directions very simple, and I will only give two versions. In this case, the paragraph is dialogue, but you can have versions of any

paragraph element, not just dialogue, and you can create more than two versions.

Let's suppose that I have a speech by MRS. SCALIA. Here is the original.

```
                    MRS. SCALIA
          Don't worry about that, dear. I've
          known him my whole life. By the way, we
          own the property where he has his
          clinic. You just let me arrange things
          for you. I'll bet I can get you in to
          see him tomorrow afternoon.
```

I decide that this speech is too wordy. Also, I want to identify «him» as DR. OSWIN for greater clarity. And I want to delete the reference to who owns Dr. Oswin's clinic, because later the heroine is going to see a sign at the clinic that identifies the corporate owner. In the context of everything happening, that sign raises a sense of mystery and threat. The story dynamics are better with no prior reference to clinic ownership. To create my alternate paragraph, I take the following steps.

- I right-click the dialogue.

- I see a pop-up menu that has an item Add > Alt. I choose Alt.
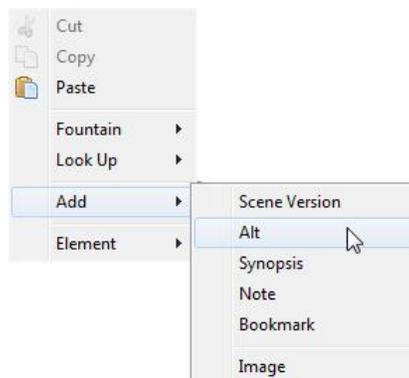
- The paragraph is automatically selected. It is ready for editing.

```
                    MRS. SCALIA
          Don't worry about that, dear. I've        ②
          known him my whole life. By the way, we
          own the property where he has his
          clinic. You just let me arrange things
          for you. I'll bet I can get you in to
          see him tomorrow afternoon.
```

- A small gray circle with a number in it appears out to the right of the paragraph. That number corresponds to the number of paragraph versions available. The

numbering scheme starts with 2, because I am about to create version 2 from the original version.

- I edit the paragraph. I do not have to worry with saving anything. Any edits that I make are part of alternate 2.

Although FADE IN does not use highlight colors for alternate text, I am going to use colors for illustration purposes, so that the reader can better follow the changes that I am making. The material to be deleted is in pink, and the material to be revised is in aqua. My version 2 will include deletions or changes as marked with those colors in my original, presented here.

```
              MRS. SCALIA
    Don't worry about that, dear. I've        ②
    known him my whole life. By the way, we
    own the property where he has his
    clinic. You just let me arrange things
    for you. I'll bet I can get you in to
    see him tomorrow afternoon.
```

So I make my changes to the original paragraph and end up with the following for my alternate 2. The deleted text is gone, but the revised text is in aqua.

```
              MRS. SCALIA
    Don't worry about that, dear. I've        ②
    known Dr. Oswin my whole life. You just
    let me arrange things for you. I'll bet
    I can get you an appointment with him
    tomorrow afternoon.
```

This new version of the dialogue is my alternate 2. It is available for me to select if I want to use that version in my screenplay.

Adding, Deleting, Managing Alternates

Cycle Through the Alternates. Whether I have two, three, or four alternates, I need to be able to display each of them individually. The first step in managing the alternates is to place the cursor over the tiny circle containing a number. When I do so, the circle changes into several symbols: left and right arrows, and plus «+» and minus «-» signs.

◄ ►
⊕ ⊖

To cycle through the alternates, I use the arrows.

Add an alternate. If I want to add a third alternate (I have not typed it out yet), I click the plus «+». The paragraph is automatically selected again, and I can edit the paragraph as my alternate number 3. I do not have to save it.

Delete an alternate. If I want to delete an alternate, I cycle to it to display it. Then I click the minus «-».

Display all the alternates. If I want to see all the alternates (which can be really helpful when more than two are available), I right-click on the paragraph to pop up a menu. I choose Alternates > Show All Alts for Element.
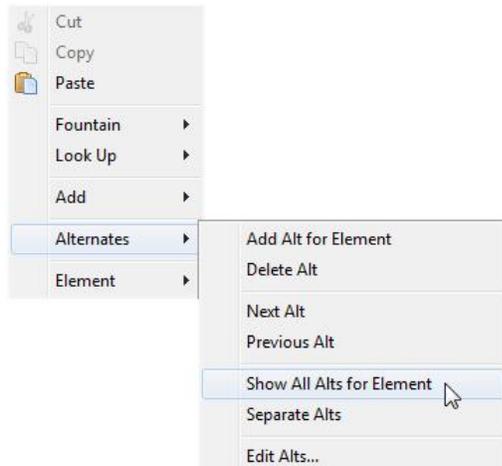

Doing this displays all the paragraph versions in one paragraph, with two forward slashes // between them. I have color-highlighted the two alternates of the paragraph, though FADE IN does not do this.

```
                    MRS. SCALIA
          Don't worry about that, dear. I've
          known him my whole life. By the way, we
          own the property where he has his
          clinic. You just let me arrange things
          for you. I'll bet I can get you in to
          see him tomorrow afternoon. // Don't
          worry about that, dear. I've known
          Dr. Oswin my whole life. You just let
          me arrange things for you. I'll bet I
          can get you an appointment with him
          tomorrow afternoon.
```

You can edit any of the versions right in place here. Changes are automatically saved.

If I want to hide the alternates again (with only one of them still displaying), I right-click the paragraph, then select Alternates > Separate Alts.
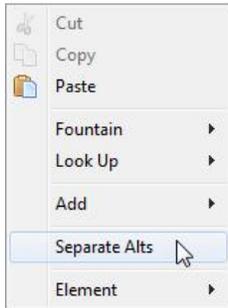
If I have made any changes to any of the versions, those changes are retained.

You should try playing around with this great feature in FADE IN. You will quickly figure it out, and you will realize how powerful and helpful it is.