



WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

SPOT: Luis Garcia: End Zone Hero

Third Quarter

Characterization
(character's thoughts)



Quoted Monologue: A Window Into the Character's Thoughts

One reason fiction stories are so appealing to many readers is the ability to enter the mind of a character that is impossible to do with real people in real life. Readers learn the unspoken thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the character and share their viewpoints, opinions, hopes and fears, and their most secret dreams or wishes.

Authors often use quoted monologue to convey the inner speech of the character. It may or may not be marked by tags such as "he thought" or "she wondered," quotation marks, or italicized print. If any of these cues are omitted, the reader may be left wondering if the thoughts are spoken, as when the character thinks aloud, talking to him- or herself, or if it is true inner speech. No matter, it still reveals the character's mind. This technique is often used to advance the plot.

The following example uses both tags and quotation marks:

Eeyore ... thought about things. Sometimes he thought sadly to himself, "Why?" and sometimes he thought, "Wherefore?" and sometimes he thought, "Inasmuch as which?" – and sometimes he didn't quite know what he was thinking about.

Winnie the Pooh, pp. 44-45

The following example uses neither tags nor quotation marks:

Well, I'm eleven now, folks, and, in case you haven't heard, I don't wet my bed anymore. But I am not nice. I am brilliant. I am famous across this entire country. Nobody wants to tangle with the great Galadriel Hopkins. I am too clever and too hard to manage. Gruesome Gilly, they call me. She leaned back comfortably. Here I come, Maime baby, ready or not.

The Great Gilly Hopkins, p. 3

References:

Milne, A. A. (1992). *Winnie the pooh*. New York: Puffin.

Nikolajeva, M. (2002). *The rhetoric of character in children's literature*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Paterson, K. (1978). *The great Gilly Hopkins*. New York: Crowell.