

(parentheticals)

The words inside the parentheses are the writer's way of giving clues about subtext.

Think of how this scene changes by keeping the dialogue the same and just switching what is written in the parentheses.

Parentheticals can appear under the character before the dialogue or within the dialogue itself.

ALLISON
Why are you making that face? And what's with all the frosting?

STANLEY
(guilty)
I ate the last piece of cake.

ALLISON
Why are you making that face? And what's with all the frosting?

STANLEY
(mischievous)
I ate the last piece of cake.

ALLISON
Why are you making that face? And what's with all the frosting?

STANLEY
(proud)
I ate the last piece of cake.

Kinds of Parenthetical Clues:

Tonal such as: (tense) OR (discovering)

Dialogue Rephrasing such as: (my bad) OR (got it)

Technical such as: (loudly) OR (overlapping)

Pacing such as: (beat) OR (rapid fire)

Parenthetical Words Every Actor Should Know:

incredulous: can't believe it

earnest: honestly

covering: trying to hide something

severe: not joking around

skeptical: not convinced

vulnerable: not hiding

sotto: quiet voice

then: change the subject

MACK

Let me get this straight: You *don't* want us to throw you a birthday party?

SAM

(you're correct)

No.

MACK

Is this because of what happened last year?

SAM

(lying)

No.

MACK

Because if you're still embarrassed, I can just explain that the whole thing was my idea. Let me just send a group text to all your friends --

SAM

(panic)

No.

MACK

Don't you think that after a year, everyone has forgotten about ?

SAM

(obviously)

No.

WENDY
Hey. How are you feeling?

PARKER
(covering)
Okay.

WENDY
Well, he says he's sorry. I can
tell he really feels bad about
everything.

PARKER
(whatever)
Okay.

WENDY
There's something else... I don't
want you to freak out...

PARKER
(curious)
Okay.

WENDY
He's sick. That's why he's been so
weird lately. I think it's bad...
like 'life-or-death' bad.

PARKER
(thrown)
Okay.