

**The Governess** by Neil Simon  
**Literary Analysis: Setting and Character**

Playwrights have few tools with which to develop **characters** and establish **setting**. **Stage directions** describe the scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound, and tell how the characters feel, move, and speak. Stage directions are usually printed in italics and set in brackets. The following stage directions describe the setting of a play.

*[It is late evening. The stage is dark, except for the glow of a small lamp beside the bed.]*

When you read a play, use the stage directions to create a mental image of how a stage production would look and sound.

**DIRECTIONS:** Fill in this chart with the information the stage directions give you.

<b>Stage Direction</b>	<b>What It Describes (scenery, costumes, lighting, sound; characters' feelings, movements, tone of voice)</b>	<b>What It Tells You</b>
1. <i>[A young governess, Julia, comes rushing in. She stops before the desk and curtsies]</i>	Scenery Character's movements	The room probably belongs to someone important. Julia is young, a governess; she is energetic and humble.
2. <i>[But her head has a habit of slowly drifting down again]</i>		
3. <i>[She turns away, softly crying]</i>		
4. <i>[She curtsies again and runs off. The mistress looks after her a moment, a look of complete bafflement on her face. The lights fade.]</i>		