Elements of Drama: Tension

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My definition of tension:

*Tension can sometimes be used as an interchangeable term with conflict.  But where it differs, lies in the development of suspense in a performance.  As the audience anticipates certain outcomes in the plot, the tension builds.  An obvious example of rising tension is in a mystery or whodunit.  The development of tension usually parallels the advancement of the plot, leading to a crisis or climax. Tension is closely linked with timing.*

After a bit of workshopping and analytical discussion, my Drama students concluded:

* tension should preferably have the opportunity to build in the drama
* if tension builds too slowly, it will die in the middle of a scene
* if tension builds too quickly, it may appear ineffective or artificial
* pace now becomes a key factor in the development of tension
* tension can occur when performers raise their voice > shouting
* the opposite is also true, as tension can also occur with stillness and silence in the drama
* tension can be created by the unknown
* tension can be created simply by the audience following where characters look on (or off) stage
* tension can be created via heavy use of emotion/s with and between characters
* blocking (positioning of actors) can also create tension