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Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

Character Development

By Jeff Colburn

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How much character development you do really depends on your writing style. Personally, I do little or no character development. My characters, to varying degrees, are living full-blown in my mind. I may make a few quick notes, but not much more than that. However, most of my writing is in the short story and novelette areas. I have not worked on a novel, and all of my books have been nonfiction. If I were to write a "War and Peace" beastie, then I'm sure I would do at least a minor outline on all of my characters.

But why do a character development? To add depth and life to your characters. Most writers flesh out their characters to varying degrees before starting their story. Especially in a novel, this can prevent you from needing to go back and rewrite scenes because a character did something that, earlier in the story, he would never do. Or to make sure the characters are dissimilar. There's nothing more boring than having two or more characters with similar habits, attitudes or ways of speaking.

One writer I met, Elizabeth George ("Playing For The Ashes") goes into great detail for her novels. She creates a map of the area where the story is taking place, takes photographs of the area, or an area like the one she envisions, and has pages of information on each character. How they look, dress, comb their hair, their family tree, schools attended, etc. Elizabeth writes long novels, and says, "Why say in one hundred words what you can say in one thousand?" So with long, detailed novels like this, an indepth development of each character would be necessary.

When doing a character development, you will want to know as much about the main characters as you know about your family or best friend. As with your story, you should use all of your senses when describing your characters. Following are some of the things you should know about your characters.

Physical Characteristics: Name (It must fit. Don't call a 98 pound weakling Thor, unless it's some kind of nickname), appearance, age, voice (sexy, gravely, lisp), annoying or unusual habits (knuckle cracking, nail biting, pencil chewing. I wrote a fictional piece called "One Per Customer," and when the main character gets upset, he likes to throw his heavy glass paperweight through the office wall. He's a cop, and his office looks like it's made of Swiss Cheese.), wardrobe.

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Mental Attributes: Personality, how they relate to their relatives, their intelligence and schooling, fears, wants, goals, dreams, priorities, drives, skeletons in their closets.

Environment: Where they live (house, trailer, apartment, condo), it's condition (new, old, dirty), how it's decorated (salvation army, creative on a budget, antique, fashionable), their job (politician, crook (if there's a difference), manual laborer, computer work), sports, hobbies, friends, enemies, pets (I have a pet wind-up goldfish in a jar of water. Low maintenance and high neglect threshold.), relationships (single, married, divorced, widowed, dating, kids).

As I said earlier, it depends on your personality and your writing style. I often don't do much of a character development because I like to see how my characters grow, and I like to be surprised by my

characters and stories as I write them. Because of this I sometime have to go back and make changes in paragraphs, or chapters, but the surprises are worth it.

So experiment and find out what you feel comfortable with. You can change it whenever you like. Above all, find a way to write that you enjoy. That's what it's all about.

Have Fun,
Jeff

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If The Viewpoint Character Is A Secondary Character, Have You Established Who He is?

By Nick Vernon

Creative Writing Tips -

I have said above that if a secondary character tells the story of the main character, then the spotlight should be kept on the main character.

This shouldn't be taken to the extreme though.

In other words, you don't just write the story of the main character without telling your readers a bit about your secondary character.

Unless the reader understands the reason a secondary character is telling the story, it will seem peculiar that the main character isn't telling it himself. It is, after all, the main character's story.

So, the following have to be answered... Who is this secondary character? Why is he telling the story instead of the main character? What is his connection with the main character?

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Weave in some information about the secondary character so we can gain a better understanding of his role in the story.

Besides his passion for writing, Nick Vernon runs an online gift site where you will find gift information, articles and readers' funny stories. Visit

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Creative Writing Tips – Have You Established Your Main Character At The Start?

Character or Reputation

Do You Plot With Your Character In Mind?

What Can Go Into A Plot?

Character Counter Software

Self Improvement PLR Kit

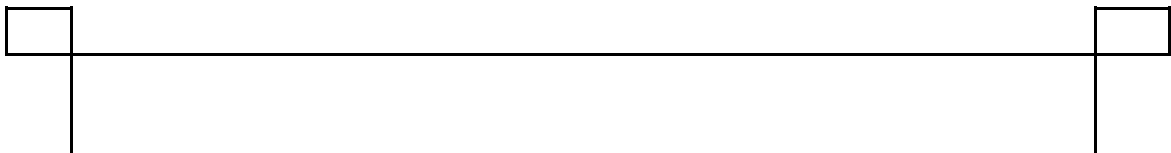
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