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In The Flesh: 3 Tips To Journaling Believable Characters

By Barbara Carr Phillips

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Word Count: 520

In the Flesh: Three Tips to Journaling Believable Characters

By Barbara Carr Phillips

Writers are natural observers. We note characteristics about people that others miss. How many times have you observed someone, and then revealed that observation to a friend who said, "Yes, yes, that is exactly right! I could not put my finger on what impressed me about that person before." Here are three journaling tips that will develop your skill of observation.

Tip #1: Choose a Character of the Week

You might not describe your character's physical appearance at the beginning of your novel, but knowing what he or she looks like will open opportunities to you as you write. Every day we are in contact with others, whether it's our family, the grocery store clerk or the woman sitting in the car ahead of you at the stoplight. Choose one real person every week to write about in your journal. Write a page about this person, as though you were looking at her through a one-inch picture frame. Include every physical detail: clothing, jewelry, hairstyle, skin tone, fingernails, facial expressions and mannerisms. If you don't know her name, give one to her. You may discover a character who is ready to bump into the main character of that novel you are working on!

Tip #2: Create your Character's Goal Log

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Select one character of the week (from Tip #1). It's time to develop this character's motivation. Step into your character's shoes and write a personal goal log. It will be similar to a goal log that you would write for yourself. Write about both long-term goals, (saving a million dollars, retiring to Tuscany) and short-term goals, (losing weight, learning to play guitar). Write about why these goals are important to your character. Include all the steps your character will have to take to achieve his or her goals, along with the obstacles he or she may encounter along the way. Some of the goals should be very difficult to achieve or open-ended, just like they are in real life. As you log your character through a difficult goal, which challenges will she or he overcome? Which ones will cause them to give up?

Tip #3: Interview a Character

Leaf through a copy of an old magazine. Cut out a picture of an interesting character. Tape it in your

journal. On the opposite page, write interview questions to this person. Answer the questions with your imagination. Having a picture of the person to focus on will help you do that. Write detailed questions, in the present, that relate to the setting of your story. For example, if your story unfolds in Biloxi, Mississippi, but your character looks like a New Yorker, don't ask him, "Were you born in New York City?" Ask, "How did you end up here, at the Whistle Stop Café, with one beat-up suitcase and no money for a return ticket?"

Your writer's journal can help you create characters for your short stories and novels that readers will understand and enjoy. If your reader believes your character, he or she will also believe your story.

Barbara Carr Phillips, journal instructor, believes dreams come true when you learn to journal your way to success. Visit <http://journalworkshops.net> to order your one-on-one journaling session or to sign up for her free e-zine.

Do You Know What A Plot Is?

By Nick Vernon

Creative Writing Tips -

What a plot is and what a story is can be sometimes confusing. If you think they are the same... They are not. A plot is the outline of your story. The story is everything included.

I will illustrate the difference by asking you to visualize two pictures...

1. Visualize a skeleton.

Then

2. Visualize a body.

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The skeleton is your plot. It's the outline of your story. It won't be visible when we flesh it out but it will still be there, holding your story together.

The body is your story. It's everything, which our story will contain, including the plot. The story is the plot fleshed out.

What does it mean to `flesh it out?'

Let me show you.

I'll take a brief plot...

A man meets a woman and they fall in love. They encounter great difficulties because their family are against the relationship.

This is the outline of the story.

Now we are going to flesh it out and make it into a story. Fleshing it out means adding things to make this basic plot into a story. To do this we will add the rest of the ingredients such as... Setting - Where will our story take place Dialogue - What will be said and by whom Characters - How many characters will our story contain? Who are they? What is their role? Problems - What and how many problems will the couple encounter Goal - What is the couple's goal? Conflict - What is the conflict? Climax - How is the conflict going to come to its peak? Ending - Will their love win in the end? And anything else I'll need in my story

Once we have written up all these ingredients, this will be our plot fleshed out into a 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

Do You Know What A Plot Is?

The Power Of Scrapbook Journaling

Stress-Free Scrapbook Journaling Ideas

Four Keys to Successful Journaling

Think It and Ink It

Character Counter Software

EmailMasterPro

The Art of Kissing

Ezine Filter and Format software

101 tips to stay fit and live longer.



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