



Exercise Four – The Characteristic Moment

Before you can craft the perfect Characteristic Moment, you must first know something about your character. Answer the following questions for starters.

What is this character's role in the story?

- Protagonist
- Antagonist
- Mentor
- Sidekick
- Love Interest
- Other

What is your character's name?

How old is your character?

What nationality is your character?

What is your character's occupation or primary identity (e.g. stay at home mum, rebel soldier)?

Does the character have any important physical characteristics (e.g. limp, purple scales)?





Name three prevailing aspects of the character's personality (e.g. kindness, quick temper, wit):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What one important personality trait, virtue, or skill best sums up your character?

How can you dramatise this aspect of your character to its fullest extent?

How can you dramatise this aspect in a way that also introduces the plot?

What do you want readers to find most sympathetic and/or interesting about this character?

How can you dramatise this aspect of your character in an opening scene?





What is your character's overall story goal and/or the Thing She Wants Most?

How can you set up this goal or show the coming need for it in an opening scene?

What is your character's scene goal in the opening chapter?

How will you dramatise this scene goal right from the start of your opening scene?

How will the character's pursuit of this goal meet with an obvious obstacle (i.e. conflict)?





How will this goal move the plot, either by immediately causing consequences or setting them up for later?

How can any of the above help you demonstrate, or at least hint at, your character's Lie?

How can you craft the above elements to make your protagonist immediately appealing to readers (e.g. what's keeping them from looking away)?

Which of your character's strengths can you show readers right away?

Which of your character's pertinent weaknesses (especially Lie-driven weaknesses) can you show readers right away?





List events or activities you can use in your opening chapter to dramatise all of the above. Try to think of “big” moments that are unique, visually engaging, and keep the characters in motion.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Write a summary of your opening chapter and how you will introduce your character in a memorable and engaging Characteristic Moment:





Which of the following does your proposed Characteristic Moment accomplish?

- Introduce character**
- Reveal character's name**
- Indicate character's gender**
- Indicate character's age group**
- Indicate character's nationality**
- Indicate character's occupation/main identity**
- Indicate any important physical characteristics**
- Indicate role in the story (i.e. protagonist)**
- Demonstrate prevailing aspect of personality**
- Hook readers' sympathy and/or interest**
- Demonstrate scene goal**
- Indicate story goal**
- Demonstrate (or at least hint at) Lie**
- Move plot directly or through foreshadowing**

If you're unable to combine the majority of the above elements into one scene, answer whether it would work better to divide the necessary characteristic elements into two or more scenes.

