



Issue 9  
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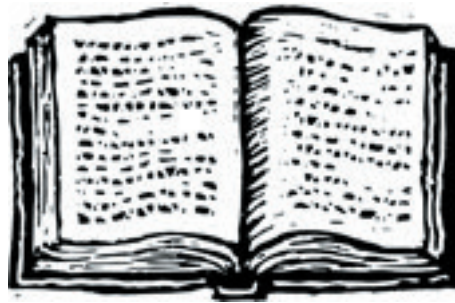
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## From the Editor

Happy New Year and welcome to the new and revived edition of Squills! We're back, after a long nine-month hiatus, and – we hope – better than ever! A huge thanks to all the columnists for their amazing work, and Kitty15 and PenguinAttack for pulling extra duty and copyediting, and Alteran for designing the fantastic layout!

Read and enjoy YWS's first edition of Squills in 2009!

Meshugenah

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# Announcements

## New YWS

Coming soon, YWS will be getting a major facelift and upgrade thanks to Nate's hard work. The projected completion is late February, and YWS will be down the week prior for the upgrading process. In the meantime, register at the YWS Back-Up Site, where we'll be staying during the dark week!

## YWS Lit Journal, Volume Two

Submissions for the second Journal began on the 1st, and continue until February 3rd. Poetry, short stories, and artwork will be accepted. For more information, see <http://www.youngwriterssociety.com/topic38190.html>

## Mentors!

Kitty15 is resurrecting the Mentor Program! Look for more details on YWS!

### Featured Article

## Interview with Kyran



Connie- Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Kyran- Well, I've been writing fiction for fun since first grade, something I attribute

heavily to the fact that my parents took time to read to me every day before I even began school. I think that if you want a successful kid, read to him/her as much as possible, because reading is the foundation of the universe. Period. I'm a Junior in high school and I've been published in the YWLJ and The Midnight Times, an online e-zine, and a couple other poetry mags that I really don't want to talk about. I like long walks on the beach. White male, non-smoker, non-drinker. Likes to cuddle. Likes the outdoors. Contact: 555-5555.

Connie- What influenced you to start writing?

Kyran- Like I said, my parents probably. But who influenced me to start writing in seriousness was (don't kill me) Christopher Paoloni, and the fact that I got this nice leather journal for my twelfth birthday that was just crying to be filled up with genius. I was inspired by the idea that someone as

young as Paoloni could achieve such fame and position. Of course, I was writing before then, but it was more casual and less earnest. I also attribute my passion for writing to all of my English teachers from fifth grade on up. They were always incredibly supportive. I remember that in fifth grade I was writing this story/ novel about fairies in the old west or something (after reading Artemis Fowl) and, being the snotty little praise-leech I am, I asked the teacher if I could read the first chapter in front of the class. Everyone ended up loving it. I wound up reading three or four more chapters in front of the class after lunches over the next month or so until I got bored with the story. I guess I've been telling stories all my life. My brother and I used to sleep in bunk beds, with me on top, and him on the bottom, and I'd tell him ad-libbed stories in the dark until I was too tired to talk. Usually they included poop and dragons.

Connie- What is your favorite kind of story to write?

Kyran- I love trying new things. I've written novels, short stories, scripts, science-fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, horror, steampunk, experimental, literary, thrillers, westerns and loads of other types of fiction (not to mention poetry). So I couldn't pinpoint a

particular kind of story that I enjoy writing. I just enjoy the new. I enjoy stretching myself.

Connie- Why did you join YWS?

Kyran- I saw an advertisement in The Writer's Digest in April of 2007 and I just kind of...did it. I just signed up, skipped the Welcome Forum, and started reviewing and posting. I wanted to improve myself and I wanted to help others. Simple as that.

(Little did I know that YWS is ten times more addicting than Methamphetamine.)

Connie- What was it like being a new member?

Kyran- Kind of scary, I guess. I was a little fish in a big pond and I was frantic to be read and to be respected. I think my first PM was from Suzanne telling me not to bump my posts, which made me feel a little smaller. I apologized, she was cool with it, and I'd have to say she was my first YWS friend. I was a new member for another three months maybe, and then I applied for Instructorship, which made me feel like I was the big man on campus (but I wasn't). One of the reasons I felt lonely for the first little while was due to the fact that I never made

## Featured Article

# Interview with Kylan

a Welcome Forum thread, I never told anyone about myself, and I avoided the chat. I was here for business, man, and nothing else. After maybe six or seven months, though I started getting privy to the whole social aspect of YWS and never turned back. I guess I'm still sort of a hermit to some...

Connie- Have you grown as a writer since then, and if so, how?

Kylan- I have grown incredibly. And I attribute it all to YWS. I was able to harness this passion and turn it into something that others could appreciate, too, with the help of some amazing people. I just kept practicing, practicing, practicing and using the braintrust of experience and know-how that YWS provided me with. I can guarantee all of you that YWS will not only change your writing (for the better), but how you think and talk and feel as well.

Connie- What is the best story that you have ever written?

Kylan- See, that's a hard one. The best story of today is the worst story of to-

morrow. And that's just how things go, especially when your style changing at such an astronomical rate. I really like *The Elephant Boy*, a novella I finished recently (and am in the process of editing), posted in full here on YWS, I like *Fanny* a recent experimental short, and I'm in love with my current novel *And The Skies Are Not Cloudy All Day*. There are many other stories that are pretty good out there by me, but I could never pin down one in particular as my best. 'Best' is a dangerous word. But I could sure as heck point out my worst, though...

Connie- Where do you see your writing taking you? (Published or whatever.)

Kylan- I would love to make writing my career. I'm leaning more and more in that direction every day. But unless you're really, really good, it's not a career you could support a family with, which is something I want. I would love to publish a novel, and get off my backside and publish some more short stories, but when it comes down to it, I'm just a kid still getting to know all the curves and nuances of my first

love. There's a lot to be tamed, a lot to be experienced, a lot to be improved upon. When I publish in seriousness for my first time (such as getting an agent for a novel, or putting together a chapbook), I want the writing to be at such a high quality that I can look back ten years later and nod and approve.

Connie- Last question, and it's kind of obligatory. What advice do you give to other writers out there?

Kylan- Talent is fertilized by practice. Read. Writing is a lonely, lonely and often loveless hobby/career. Read. Dialogue is the window into a character's soul. Read. There is more out there to the literary world than bestsellers like Stephen King and Dean Koontz. Read. Don't EVER give up on writing, or I will hunt you down and put shattered pencils between your fingernails. Read. If you write for yourself, then you will be poor and happy. If you write for others, you will be rich and miserable. Find a happy medium. Read, and then study what you read.

By Conrad Rice

## Purps vs Blues: Who's Better?

Many new members ask this question when they feel they're ready and willing to apply for a particular role in the YWS community. We have the Greeters who welcome new members and help them around the site, and we have the Instructors who give in-depth critiques and give input on their work. It's a tough decision! To which job will I dedicate my membership on YWS? Oh, man. Scary question.

Maybe the better question is: Which job is harder?

Let's take a look at what the Blues have to do. YWS gets new members every day, and so it's up to the Greeters to make each individual feel at home and welcome to post their work and have fun. They must be friendly, helpful, and patient when dealing with new members who are unsure of how to navigate the site. Admit it: The site's big and getting bigger. Who's going to be responsible in assisting our new members with the site and its many buttons to choose from?

Blues have the difficult job of remaining friendly twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. They have to be ready to help a member with whatever question they may have, and they should look after the new members like a mother hen. Greeters befriend new members and help them learn how to work the site so they can go off on their own.

The Purps have a tough job just as well. As Instructors, it is their jobs to

# Purps vs Blues:

## Who's Better? (Cont.)

critique the projects on the site and provide information that will help the author or artist improve in what they love to do and possibly get published in the future! That's quite a load on their shoulders by the sounds of it. That's why Instructors are carefully chosen like Greeters are: They have the literary future of YWS in their hands.

It is important to be helpful and friendly as an Instructor, but you must also be constructive and considerate. If the member is old enough or mature enough to handle tough criticism, then the Instructor can give full force; however, if the author is young and just beginning or is sensitive to harsh criticism, use nice words and put in a bunch of emoticons. It is the Purps' jobs to make the authors and artists feel like they can write, draw, or photograph and help them improve in what they do.

Now that we know what the Greeters and Instructors each do, let's ask our question again: Which job is harder? I'll give you no time to think about it.

Neither is harder than the other. Both have very tough jobs to accomplish, and all new and old members look up to these teams. Greeters set an example on how to be friendly and encouraging to members while Instructors show how to criticize and be helpful. They're both not easy! Some people can critique better than they can say hello—this is understandable and explains why a lot of people are not in both teams. (Yes, some members are both Blue and Purp!)

Greeters and Instructors help keep YWS moving along. It's a team effort, really. The Blues welcome new members and encourage them to post their work, and the Purps take it from there; however, if one team was missing, what would happen? It would offset the nice balance the site currently has. Purps can only critique if there are members, and there can only be mem-

bers if the Greeters love and cherish the many new members of YWS.



I see some new members are considering which team they really want to be on now, and I see old members are rethinking their position. New members: Choose the team that will benefit with your skills. Old members: You may or may not have a new perspective,

but I hope you continue blessing YWS with your activity. Purps and Blues: Friendly competition is fun, but harsh competition is what will tear this site apart—drop the weapons. Yes, Squall, you too!

But the question still remains! Who's better?

I'll let you answer that one.

By: JabberHut

## Writing Humour: A Beginner's Guide

by Kitty15

Surprise, timing and structure are the three key elements of humour. You might think different, that man sitting in the corner; wearing his striped dungarees and playing the banjo, might think different. But if you're going to argue, you can leave my class room.

### Lesson One: Surprise

Remember that first time you saw one of those cartoon characters slip on a banana skin and fall flat on their back? I bet you found that pretty funny. But

what about the second time and the third and the fourth? Too often and it gets dull. It's the same with any joke because the more often you witness it, the weaker the element of surprise. That's your first rule: surprise the reader.

The best way to do this is by adding a new spin to an old joke and because I'm lazy, I'm going to let Charlie Chaplin explain what I mean: "You take a woman walking down the sidewalk. Show the audience a banana peel in front of her. Everyone knows

that she is going to step on the banana peel and do a pratfall. At the last instant, she sees the banana peel, steps over it and falls into an open manhole that neither she nor the audience knew was there." You could have the manhole without the banana skin and the situation would still end the same but it just wouldn't be as funny. When you throw the banana skin in there, you play on the audience's expectation and a good portion of their laughter is directed at themselves for foolishly underestimating the writer. Or at least I'd like to think so.



# Writing Humour: A Beginner's Guide (cont.)

by Kitty15

Another form of surprise is the absurd but this one's more difficult. When adding a new spin to an old joke, you've got your foundation there ready and waiting but here you have to do all the work yourself: you have to fashion this bizarre situation and then tie it to something ordinary. Take for instance The Hitchhiker's Guide to the

Galaxy and in particular the character Marvin. He's a robot. He's a robot who's so highly intelligent that he suffers from boredom and depression because he couldn't possibly ever find a task that would require the entirety of his brain. It's very hard to imagine that such a being could exist but his bouts of depression and boredom make him

normal enough that we can relate to him and thus humour is created. But of course, it's not that easy and there is much more to know before you can consider yourself one learned in the craft of laughter.

So look for Lesson Two on Timing in the next issue!



## Pirate of the Month Calico Jack Rackham



John Rackham (pronounced Rack-em), better known as Calico Jack, was a mediocre pirate at best. The only source of his lasting fame is the fact that the two most famous female pirates in history, Anne Bonny and Mary Read, sailed under his flag. His pirate career was abrupt, but very successful. In his time, he was known for ruthlessness – even for a pirate – throughout the Caribbean and West Indies.

It is believed that Calico Jack was born in England. In 1717, he was first mentioned on the books as Charles Vane's quartermaster aboard the *Treasure*. Calico Jack first gained power after an unsuccessful raid on a promising French vessel on November 23rd (Hey! That's my birthday! I'm connected to pirates! Woo! Sorry). The crew of the *Treasure* mutinied, and Calico Jack became the new captain.

Rackham never accumulated enough manpower to attack the big treasure ships. He preferred to pirate mall fishing vessels and local merchants, sailing a small sloop at all times. Rackham captured many more vessels, all of them small in size. The captain's share of the wealth was not big, but in 1719, Rackham returned to New Providence and received a King's Pardon from governor Woodes Rogers, officially retiring from piracy for a short while.

In the New Providence, the colourfully-dressed captain (hence the nickname Calico, which is the name for cheap and unfinished clothing from India in the 18th century) fell in love with Anne Bonny. However, Anne



was married to James Bonny. After several threats from James Bonny to Rackham, Anne and the former pirate eloped. They stole a sloop named the *William* and returned to piracy in the Greater Antilles.

During one occasion, Rackham captured an English ship and forced several sailors to serve. One of these captured sailors was Mary Read. The two women both served on Rackham's ship, both disguised as men. In fact, the two women only discovered their common dilemma when one walked in on the other as she was changing clothes. It is believed that after this discovery, the two women and Rackham became lovers.

Calico Jack and most of his crew were captured in October of 1720, near the western coast of Jamaica. The ship

was anchored and defenseless, as the day before, they captured a Spanish commercial ship and had been celebrating all night. According to historical testimonies, only Read and Bonny resisted. Calico Jack and the rest of the crew were reportedly too drunk to defend themselves.

If it was not for a surprising twist at Rackham's trial, the pirate would most likely have faded from history. Read and Bonny were more than just female pirates – they broke society's rules and escaped traditional restrictions, truly an act of piracy. The names of Rackham and the two women spread quickly throughout Europe and the Americas, becoming instant legends, although they were really just minor nuisances.

While Mary Read and Anne Bonny were released for allegedly being pregnant (most likely by Rackham), the remaining crew and their captain were found guilty and hanged. It is unknown if the two women actually were pregnant and had Rackham's children, for they both faded from history after Rackham's death.

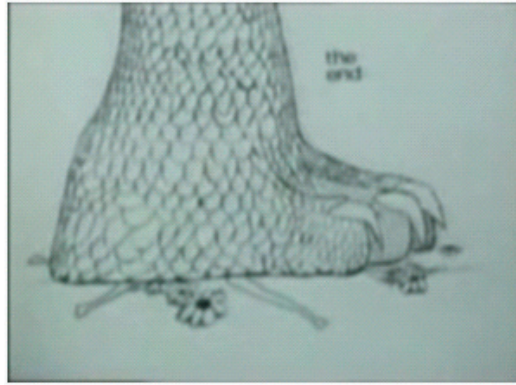
Rackham and his crew were hanged on November 16, 1720 at Gallows Point, Port Royal – much like the modern Captain Jack. The executioner was heard to say at the hanging: "Ladies and gentlemen, you will always remember November 16, 1720 as the day you actually hanged Captain Jack Rackham."

By Teague

# Bambi Meets Godzilla

I've been reading *Writing a Novel and Getting Published for Dummies* for the past while, and there's an interesting section on what it calls Bambi Meets Godzilla. Basically, it points out that, in a battle, the worst thing you can do is to have the "good" army ten times the size/strength of the "evil" army, and still win. Because then, the reader is more interested in the "evil" army since they stand no chance, and there'll probably be a sense of pity for them. If it's necessary to show that your character has an evil side, then fine, so long as later on you can explain their evil sense of massacre, in which case the battle will be less important than the character, and thus mind that you don't make it the climax of the novel.

The US invasion of Grenada is hardly heard of. Why? Because America is one of the most powerful countries in the world, when it invaded Grenada, it faced a day of fighting against five old men with Zimmer frames. However, by looking at another side of history, namely the Battle of Thermopylae, you'll see 300 Spartans manage to hold back an army of millions of men, and until they were betrayed, were winning, which is why this battle is still remembered.



## Going Further

It doesn't have to be just a battle of guns and swords—in Romance stories, you might be tempted to make your main character popular, who might convince a girl to go out with him, with the antagonist as a weedy boy who is too clueless to stand any chance. I personally would care more about the little guy who gets pushed around, and yourself? It's also where you have to ask what defines a protagonist from an antagonist. It's not to do with morals, or winning, certainly—1984, anyone? It's about getting Bambi to jump back around and bite off Godzilla's foot.

Think about Superman. He is invul-

nerable to flying cars, can make the world go back in time, save cities from falling rockets, but at the sight of a bit of green rock, becomes useless. By endowing your hero with far too much, your antagonist is easily dead by page one, and thus you have no story.

## Practice

Try writing a Bambi Meets Godzilla story. At the last moment there has to be a convincing escape route, but not one that's ridiculously obvious to the reader, nor one that will alienate him. Bambi can jump onto a tree, hide beneath bushes, or trick Godzilla into walking onto a pointy rock. By putting in some thought, the reader will be more interested in reading all the way until the last page.

Remember that the protagonist doesn't have to win on every account. If the story is about a man who wants to free his parents and a million other slaves, he can do so, but only by giving up his own life. There is loss, and sacrifice, all essential as so that we don't get a typical happy ever after.

By Blink

## Pez's Picks by PenguinAttack

### Featured Poem Moth – Palantid

As a member of the Poetry Crew, one of my jobs is to keep an eye on the poetry forums. I can say that there's some truly wonderful talent slinking about in those depths. To my delight, the other day, I found myself reading a little bit of awesome that I'd like to share with you all. "Moth" by Palantid was posted on Sunday the 4th of this month, and placed in the Other Poetry section. While I think the piece is placed wrongly – Lyric Poetry may have been a better place for it – it's a

lovely poem. Moth develops an ode of sorts to a moth that sits on the bookcase in the narrator's view. Well written and using some beautiful description, "Moth" is something to note in Palantid's poetry.

### Featured Story The Lights Begin To Twinkle Firestarter.

When one is zipping in and out of the forums, critiquing this, commenting on that, and giggling at something else, it's often that different pieces of work can be missed or looked over. Today I'm here to point out something that

should be looked at, perused, considered and thought about. Firestarter's "The Lights Begin To Twinkle" tells the story of Felix Desdemona and the luck that he has, or doesn't have. The initial lines hook the reader in immediately, they certainly did for me, and the following narration not only keeps the reader's attention but begs to be completed. Firestarter exhibits an excruciating amount of talent here (no, really, I'd kill for some of that) and it looks like there'll be even more improvement given to "The Lights Begin To Twinkle" itself – nothing's ever so perfect as to not need more revision.



# God of the Month

## Hades

Alright, so what are you thinking? A dark, scary predator wanting to drag humans down to his domain? Nah. A black-dressed and dark-skinned man with blue flaming hair? Sweet.



A pretty princess with sparkles and diamonds? Can't get any more epic.

Originating in Greek Mythology and continued within Roman Mythology as Pluto, Hades is well known as the god of the Underworld and wealth. He is sometimes called the Rich One because gems are found below ground—the Underworld.

Hades' domain consists of multiple areas. It's not just one dark, dreadful place—completely, anyway. Each incoming soul must pay one coin to the ferryman Charon so he may lead them across the River Styx (the bridge between Earth and the Underworld) and into the land of the dead. If the tax is not paid, they are destined to haunt Earth for over a hundred years without rest. This began the tradition of putting coins under a dead body's tongue or on their eyes so as to be prepared for the transport.

My personal favorite part of the Underworld is the guard dog Cerberus. A three-headed dog, he helps to prevent anyone from coming in or escaping.

The Underworld provides two special areas for the dead: The Tartarus is home to the extreme criminal and politician, filled with dread and horrid life, while the Elysian Fields is open to the grand and noble spirits who have done great deeds above ground. Some choose to

use their second or third life (of three) to better their character and hopefully end up in this plain.

The god is not a mean bad guy with blue flaming hair but a dark-bearded man sitting upon his throne and holding a bird-tipped scepter. Sometimes, he's depicted with a helmet upon his head—a magic helm with the ability to turn the wearer invisible; hence, Hades is sometimes known as the Invisible One or the Unseen.

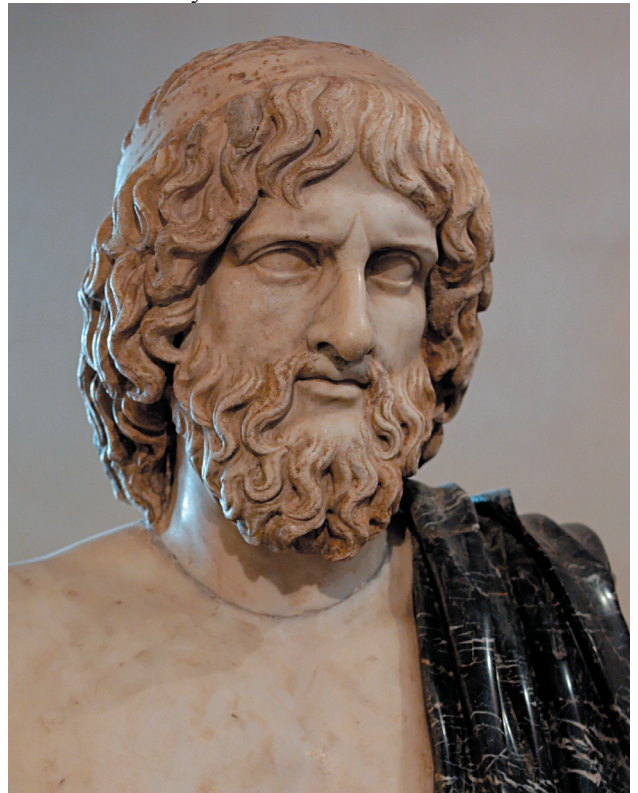
Many of us have heard of his wife and queen Persephone, daughter of Zeus and Demeter. Once she ate the pomegranate seeds below ground, she was destined to live there for eternal life, but she knew

this; for she grew a love for her role as queen and for Hades. This resulted in a famine because Persephone is goddess of spring growth. Because Persephone ate six pomegranate seeds, Zeus proclaimed that she would only live six months of the year underground with Hades, fall and winter, and the rest she would spend with her month, spring and summer. This appeased both Hades and Demeter's demands for Persephone

Teamed up with his lovely wife and queen, Hades is known for being a fair god in his dealings with criminals sent to the underworld. He is inventive in his punishments, which range from Sisyphus' eternal struggle to push a boulder up a mountain, to Dainades who was charged with the task of filling a bottomless bath.

I suggest you don't get on his bad side.

By JabberHut



# Instructor's Corner

## Protagonists

By: Teague

Protagonist is a big term for the hero or heroine of the story -- the valiant knight in shining armour, the big bad detective/spy/government agent/astromonaut/all of the above. Your protagonist is the helmsman of your story, and typically the very first character your reader gets to know. So it's very important to have your protagonist be believable and likable -- even if they're not very nice.

Let's take the example of Dr. Gregory House from the television show, *House M.D.* Dr. House is the hero of the story -- for those that don't know, he's the antisocial head of a team of diagnosticians at a hospital in New Jersey (played by the wonderful Hugh Laurie). Dr. House is a great protagonist for several reasons: one, he has a critical flaw and a number of smaller flaws. Two, he has his own unique set of the quirks and idiosyncrasies that every human has. Three, he's human and you know it through a number of different ways.

Let's take a look at Dr. House's flaws. His major critical flaw is his antisocial behaviour. Dr. House rarely meets his patients face-to-face. Around people, he is often short, blunt, and sarcastic, which generally makes patients uncomfortable or angry at him. This particular flaw is a personality flaw, but flaws come in all shapes and forms. Every character needs to have something debilitating (and no, clumsiness is not debilitating, despite what Stephanie Meyer might think passes as a flaw) that hinders them significantly as the plot progresses. Now, Dr. House has some other flaws as well, including a physical flaw -- because of a misdiagnosis and a botched surgery on his leg, he's condemned to walking with a cane for the rest of his life. This hinders him as well -- he can only walk to a certain extent and he cannot run at all. Some of his smaller flaws include his cynicism, addiction to Vicodin, and lack of empathy for others.

Why do all these things matter? It's very simple -- nobody is perfect. The best characters are the believable ones, and if you have perfect characters, they're not believable and therefore pretty lame. But it's the mixture of major, incapacitating flaws and smaller, less noticeable but just as important flaws that make a character really believable.

Next on the list is quirks and idiosyncrasies. Let's go back to Dr. House. In a word, he's an extremely sarcastic person. One of his favourite things to do is manipulate people using his sarcasm to make them look foolish. This is a fairly minor quirk and, to the viewer who isn't watching for it, is only in place to amuse the audience. Another lies in his pattern of speech -- he speaks very rapidly and very bluntly, often blindsiding the other participant in the conversation. These are both very small, but they add a new layer of depth to the character. Everybody has his or her own idiosyncrasies that make them human. If you forget these in your character, you're losing a small but crucial layer of depth. These things can range from their speech patterns to their posture to their style of communication.

Lastly, you have to ensure that your character is human. Let's look at how Dr. House pulls this off. Clearly, there are a lot of things he has lost as a result of his leg. This invokes sympathy in the viewer, as even though he hides it well, the effects occasionally make their way to the surface. Additionally, select episodes reveal pieces about House's past that remind the viewer that he's human. House is visited by ghosts of his past -- the ex-girlfriend who had a hand in botching his leg surgery, the death of his foster father, and so on. These "tragedies," if you will, give House something that viewers can relate to and empathize with. This everyday thing is part of what makes him human, for reasons that we instinctively understand.

And when you're writing, you always need to listen to your instinct.

## Antagonists

By: OverEasy

I am a big fan of incredible antagonists, as in the antagonist who, by the end of the story, has you rooting for him, the "bad guy," to win.

This can be seen in movies like *The Dark Knight* and the *Hannibal* series. Is the Joker twisted and disturbed? Of course he is. But he is also fantastic and well loved as a character. I believe this is because as cruel and twisted as he is, he is also a person with a strange stutter and interesting thoughts. He has ideals, as morbid as they are, and he sticks to them to the end, hoping the whole time that everyone will prove him right but twisting to his evil ways. He is manipulative and creative, and all around interesting and new in the villain world.

And then there is *Hannibal*, who is by all accounts a twisted serial killer that ate the flesh of human beings. He is also a brilliant man, a doctor, and easy to love because of how witty he is. The only movie I did not like that involved *Hannibal* was actually *Hannibal Rising*. The reason why is because they almost tried to justify murder. Almost like the entertainment industry realized that people loved watching a serial killer too much and had to make him seem vulnerable for a second to make up for it. I liked *Hannibal* more as the sadistic killer that killed and ate a man from an orchestra to make it sound better. Making *Hannibal* a victim more than a villain almost ruined him for me.

Now I am going to make a rather large jump from *Hannibal* to *Harry Potter*. The *Harry Potter* series was good on all accounts except for one thing; the antagonists were either pure evil without any ounce of good in their bodies, of morons. Take for instance, Lord Voldemort. He was evil and sadistic



# Instructor's Corner

and... well that is about all there is to him. You never found that one moment when you realized he could almost be human. Even his appearance told you how bad he was. And then there was Draco Malfoy, he was not evil by any means, he was simply a moron. I could say the same thing for Wormtail, and Crabb, and Goyle, and almost everyone that Voldemort surrounded himself with. The only exception to this was Master Malfoy. He was a twisted soul, he had no qualms about preying on children (Ginny Weasley) but he also had a wife and child of his own. And of course, his wife Narcissa was a fantastic character. When she was younger, she had no issues following the Dark Lord. And then she had a child and her priorities changed, to the point where she would risk death for her son.

The problem I have with most forms of entertainment is they try to make the antagonist the most hated, evil creature of all. What about making them human as well? What is the one thing that's said about most serial killers? "Well they just seemed so normal..." I love villains that continue to have human characteristics. Though they are twisted and horrible, they are still capable of love and anger and fear. A character that is not is bland and boring. A character that can only be evil, and never show an ounce of kindness gets old terribly fast. I like those characters that you can't really tell if you want them to live or die, or if you want them to escape or be captured. Those to me are the real classics in the character world.

Human on human destruction is far more terrifying than a monster that doesn't exist.

## Side Characters

By: Springrain2693

Tales are most commonly centered on the main character, usually a hero or person in distress. The audience's

focus is often kept away from the characters who have the most effect on the piece; the side characters.

Side characters, which are often known as stock characters, or in some cases, referred to as archetypes, help to structure the piece effectively. How the main character treats their side characters tells us a lot about both the position of the main character and the side.

The sidekick is often the confidant who knows the main character (most often a hero) better than anyone else and gives a convincing reason to like them. The way the sidekick is treated by the main character shows the audience what type of personality the main character has. The main character of a piece may have more than one sidekick. Ron and Hermione, in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter are a perfect example of this. Often, the sidekick contrasts the skill of the hero, possessing capabilities that the main character may lack.

Another important stock character in tales is the villain. The villain usually is the antagonist, the character who tends to have a negative effect on other characters. A villain may have several aids in helping them complete their evil plots. Their sidekicks are often called minions.

The Ingénue is a stock character in literature and film, generally a girl or a young woman who is endearingly innocent. Often the ingénue is referred to as the damsel in distress which the main character, usually the hero, has to try and rescue. The ingénue is typically beautiful, and falls in love with the hero.

The stereotype is the character or characters in a story that conform to generalizations and pictures in our heads.

Often the stereotype personality is observed multiple times, especially in an oversimplified manner of such a type. They are often the unimportant characters in a story, starring in brief roles.

Most often, stock characters are not elaborated on. Take Alan Rickman's over-the-top Sheriff of Nottingham in Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves. Did we want to know what made him the way he is? We did not. We wanted him pure, unadulterated evil. Any explanation would have made him less fun. What makes cartoon villains and stock characters good is the sheer verve with which they're portrayed. We love to hate the Wicked Witch of the West, or any of the James Bond villains. They revel in their own evil, and we get a kick out of it. The stronger the impression your villain makes, the greater the obstacle for the hero, the better the conflict, the more drama.

The same goes for all other stock characters. The stronger their personality, and the more developed they are gives the audience a better impression of the plot. A good stock character can be great fun for the audience such as an obnoxious store clerk or the befuddled grandfather. Do we really want to know their angst? No, they wouldn't be as enjoyable.

By keeping some of the roles brief and expanding on others, we give the audience an in depth description of the focal point of the story; the main character.

