

Chapter One – Create A Character Clinic

By Holly Lisle

Chapter One is by far the shortest chapter in **Create A Character Clinic**. But I decided to post it because I think it gives clear representation of what is to follow, and the style in which it will follow.

I ~ Character & What It Isn't

My first character – at least the first one I actually remember writing with an eye toward selling the story he was in – was Draegan Dankmire. Feel free to snicker. I do.

*I remember two things about poor Draegan, and the **other** thing was the fact that he had a hat like those worn by the Three Musketeers. Except it was purple.*

Draegan was supposed to be a serious character in a serious fantasy novel. He was planned as the hero. He made it thirty pages, more or less, before he turned into a puddle of mush in the middle of the page and I realized the story wasn't going to work.

*Now, not everything about that first failed novel effort was a total loss. The world that Draegan Dankmire inhabited showed up in **Hunting the Corrigan's Blood**, as Cadence Drake's home world. It was, if I say so myself, a damned cool world. But Draegan never made it to the land of published – or even finished – fiction, because a character cannot make it through the world with nothing going for him but an*

unfortunately memorable name and a pimp hat.

He needs to have character.

Here are all the things that character isn't. It isn't a catch phrase said at stressful moments in the story. It isn't an interesting scar, or a habit of twisting hair around a finger, or a propensity to dress in yellow.

Character *in your fictional character is precisely the same thing that it is in you. It's who you are when no one is looking, and who you are when someone is looking, and how those two people are different, and why.*

Do you need to have a story already in mind to use this book? No. If you do, you can use the techniques and points given here to strengthen your work. If you don't, the act of creating characters will spawn more stories than you could write in a lifetime.

With that in mind, then, onward.

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