



10 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHARACTERS

TIP SHEET

GREAT STORIES START WITH GREAT CHARACTERS THAT YOU LOVE.

Our job as novelists is to create characters that our readers love. Or love to hate. Or want to be. Or want to jump into bed with. Our characters need to feel real, engaging, and compelling, not just our main characters, but also our secondary characters and villains. But how do you actually do that?

A GREAT WAY TO FEEL AND KNOW YOUR CHARACTERS IS TO INTERVIEW THEM.

Imagine one of your characters is sitting across the table from you, sipping a beverage, and looking at you. Interview them and take notes. Keep your story in mind as you ask them questions. If you don't know the story at all yet, all the better. Let the interview unfold their story. Ask for specifics. Be detailed and use the five senses.

1. **WHAT** would you like? What goal do you have? What's your big vision for your life?
2. **WHY** do you want these things? What would happen if you didn't get them? In other words, what's at stake?
3. **WHAT** is in the way of you getting what you want? Other people? Circumstances? Fears? Concerns?
4. **WHAT** are the biggest fears you have? Where do you think they come from?
5. **WHAT** are your strengths? What are you good at? What natural and learned skills do you have? Aptitude? Things you were given, both literal and figurative?
6. **TELL** me about the most trying event or time in your life. How does that relate to your goals?
7. **WHAT** are your most prized possessions, things you can't live without? What do you carry with you everywhere and how – car, purse, backpack, etc.? What meaning do these objects have?
8. **WHO** are the important people in your life and why? Describe who they are and what kind of relationship you have with each one?
9. How do you like to dress? What do you wear for formal occasions? Informal occasions? Why do you make these choices?
10. **WHAT** is your impossible dream, the one no one knows about?

