

# *How to Create the Perfect Villain*



*By Annette Young*

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*"Often I'll find clues to where the story might go by figuring out where the characters would rather not go." Doug Lawson*

## Creating the Perfect Villain

In writing terms, to be able to create the perfect villainous character, it is important to have a clear idea of the potential for development and also the intended place of your character within your storyline. This means planning your character properly before starting to write wherever possible, and although you may feel that as a writer this restricts your creative flow to a certain degree, it is worth the time and effort because the benefits are that you will spend more time writing productively and less time re-writing.

Creating a powerful character with impact is important and adding layers of imperfections will create a flawed character that will have the reader both fascinated and enthralled. Free writing may allow you to be creative and enjoy the flow when inspiration strikes, but it will not help you to write with purpose or with a sustained sense of direction. Having a full profile will help you to keep the character developing and a profile will also enable you to add in important facts at key points and of course add to the profile as well if your character suddenly starts developing in an unexpected way.

Assuming that you are planning a story with considerable word length, such as a novel, it is worth mapping out the chapters prior to starting as it will make the journey and commitment that much easier. A short story will not give you much chance to expand on a character or to build up slowly revealing only a little bit at a time so it is important that the main characteristics are evident right from the start, therefore a character profile can still be useful even if it is not as in-depth.

Many writers think that writing a character profile means adding in only the basic details but this couldn't be further from the truth. It is even more important if the character is a dark or troubled one. To be able to write well, the author would need to share specific aspects of the character at moments of importance, and 'show, don't tell' is an important fact to remember. A reader needs to build up their own perception of the character but can be guided by your writing and of course, led where you want them to go when it comes to understanding your creation.

For example:

*Bob held his ground, his impressive size filling the doorway. His glare was fixed and frozen as he waited for the intruder to back away; the only thing that belied his nervousness was the slight tic of his left eye.*

What can we depict from this? That Bob was a large and powerful man? That he was a force to be reckoned with?

This could certainly be the perception but the latter part of the sentence should help the reader to comprehend that this big man was not as confident as he might appear. This 'subtly' helps the reader to have insight into the character without saying that actually he was afraid.

To make a deep lasting impression on your reader, characters must be larger than life and this is so important within a novel. The characteristics should be believable and identifiable and their journey should start at a significant moment in their life and allow the reader to follow them throughout their development. Starting at the very beginning of a story and allowing it to build up slowly can often frustrate the reader, so hook them from the start and add in clever hints about the character's history and psychological make-up so that the reader is tantalised by this gradual unveiling of the villain.