

BEYOND THE CHARACTER SHEET

A WORKBOOK FOR CREATING MEMORABLE
CHARACTERS IN FANTASY AND BEYOND

DISCOVER
DEVELOP
BRING THEM TO LIFE

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Each chapter includes lessons, examples, guided worksheets and writing challenges. Use the spaces provided, and add extra pages whenever you need them.

THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WORKBOOK

Chapter One

Character Foundations

Before a character can change the world, the writer must understand who is standing in it.

Before you build a character

Every story begins with a possibility: a stranger at a crossroads, an apprentice hiding a secret, or a ruler afraid of losing power. At first, you may know only one striking detail. This workbook helps you turn that spark into a character who can make choices, create conflict, and change as the story unfolds.

A character concept, a profile, and a developed character

A character concept is the first compelling idea. For example: “A former magical apprentice cannot remember why a powerful Order fears them.” It gives you a direction, not a complete person.

A character profile records practical facts: name, age or life stage, appearance, occupation, home, relationships, and habits. It helps you stay consistent, but facts alone do not make a character feel alive.

A developed character has recognizable desires, fears, contradictions, values, and the capacity to make consequential choices. Readers begin to understand not only what this person does, but why they do it—and what it costs them.

Think of the process as three layers: CONCEPT → PROFILE → PERSON. You do not have to complete all three today. Chapter 1 establishes the concept and the first layer of the profile; later chapters reveal the person underneath.

What this workbook is—and what it is not

This workbook is a guided creative tool, not a test with correct answers. You will learn a principle, see it applied to one continuing fantasy character, answer questions about your own creation, and test your ideas through short scenes. You can use it for a protagonist, antagonist, companion, or recurring supporting character.

You are not expected to invent an entire history, magical system, or personality before writing a scene. Leave questions unanswered when uncertainty is useful. Mark guesses as provisional. Revisit earlier pages whenever your story teaches you something new.

Your purpose as the creator

Before deciding what your character looks like, ask what you want them to contribute to the story. Will they challenge another character’s beliefs? Carry the emotional heart of the plot? Force a difficult choice? Reveal the cost of magic? Your answer can change, but a working purpose keeps the details meaningful.

Try this now: Complete the sentence, “I am creating this character because I want readers to experience or question _____.” Then write one sentence about the role they may play in the story.

My intention: _____

Their possible story role: _____

A continuing example: the forgotten apprentice

Our example begins with a concept, not a finished biography: a former apprentice discovered that a secret Order shifted the cost of Essence Magic onto innocent people. The Order erased their memories and altered their essence. Now fragments of an earlier personality surface in different circumstances. They want control over their own mind but fear losing the identity they have built since the erasure.

Notice what remains undecided: their name, appearance, current livelihood, and ultimate transformation. We will develop those details deliberately, showing how an author moves from an intriguing premise to a believable individual.

Chapter 1 promise

By the end of this chapter, you will have a usable starting profile, a sense of your character’s ordinary world, a first impression for readers, and a clear statement of why this character belongs in your story. Depth comes next; clarity comes first.

Welcome to the beginning

A memorable character is more than a name, a face, or a collection of impressive abilities. A character is a person—or a person-like being—whose choices matter to the story. This chapter helps you establish a clear starting point before exploring deeper questions of psychology, backstory, relationships, and transformation.

You do not need to know everything yet. Treat these answers as a first draft, not a permanent contract. Characters often become clearer as you write. You may return to these pages and change anything that no longer serves the story.

What you will create in this chapter

- A basic character profile you can reference while drafting.
- A clear sense of the character’s everyday role and place in their world.
- A working description of how others first perceive them.
- A statement of why this character belongs in your story.
- A short scene that reveals personality through action.

How to use this workbook

Read the short lesson, study the continuing fantasy example, answer the prompts for your own character, and complete the challenge. Beginners can answer in plain sentences; experienced

writers can explore contradictions and alternatives. Skip any field that does not apply to your genre or story.

A note on the example: Our continuing character is a former apprentice of a secret magical Order. Their memories and essence were altered after they uncovered how the Order displaced the costs of Essence Magic onto innocent people. We will deliberately leave some details unresolved to show how a character can be built in stages.

Worksheet 1 • Character at a Glance

LEARN | A short lesson

Begin with a usable snapshot, not a complete biography. Names, life stage, occupation and place in the world help a reader orient themselves. A placeholder is perfectly acceptable; clarity matters more than permanence. Choose details that will affect how the character acts on the page.

SEE | The forgotten apprentice

Working title: The Forgotten Apprentice. Life stage: young adult. Former occupation: student of a secret Order. Present role: a quiet worker who trades small repairs for lodging. Their name and ancestry remain open because neither is necessary to understand the central concept yet.

DEVELOP | Your character

Working name, pronouns and life stage:

Species or ancestry, and why it matters (if relevant):

Current occupation, responsibility or social position:

Home or starting location:

Introduce the character in one sentence:

CHALLENGE | Apply it

Read your one-sentence introduction aloud. Does it describe a person in a situation, rather than a list of adjectives?

Worksheet 2 • Appearance and First Impressions

LEARN | A short lesson

Physical details become useful when they communicate story. Instead of cataloguing every feature, choose two or three that affect movement, social encounters or expectations. A first impression is especially interesting when it turns out to be incomplete or wrong.

SEE | The forgotten apprentice

The apprentice keeps their hands covered, pauses before entering unfamiliar rooms, and watches exits. Strangers interpret this as arrogance. In reality, the habits arise from unexplained flashes of fear and forgotten training.

DEVELOP | Your character

Three distinctive visual details, and what each suggests:

Clothing, object or tool they habitually carry:

A gesture, posture or physical habit:

What does a stranger assume about them?

Which assumption is wrong, and what might reveal that?

CHALLENGE | Apply it

Write two sentences describing the character entering a room. Show one revealing detail without explaining its cause.

Worksheet 3 • The Ordinary World

LEARN | A short lesson

Before the plot interrupts a life, there is a pattern. Routine establishes what a character values, what they fear losing and what counts as normal. A small daily problem can make a fantasy character feel more human than a dramatic prophecy.

SEE | The forgotten apprentice

The apprentice earns meals by repairing household objects. They prefer predictable tasks and quiet spaces. Yet when a neighbour becomes frightened, their hands move with a confidence they cannot explain.

DEVELOP | Your character

Describe a typical morning from waking to first task:

What work or duty fills their day?

Who or what relies on them?

What task is surprisingly easy or difficult for them?

Where do they feel safest, and what would disturb that safety?

CHALLENGE | Apply it

Sketch a brief moment in which one ordinary routine goes slightly wrong.

Worksheet 4 • Their Place in the Story

LEARN | A short lesson

A character profile becomes a story tool when the character has a role in conflict. Decide what changes when they enter a scene, what pressure they face and what questions they create. The answers can be provisional; this is a compass, not a contract.

SEE | The forgotten apprentice

The apprentice is the protagonist. Their shifting personality makes ordinary safety impossible. Their forgotten knowledge threatens an Order that has secretly made innocents pay for powerful Essence Magic. Readers should wonder why the Order fears them.

DEVELOP | Your character

Story role (protagonist, antagonist, ally, foil, other):

What disruption brings them into the story?

What might they lose if they refuse to act?

What makes their viewpoint distinctive?

What question should readers ask after meeting them?

CHALLENGE | Apply it

Write a two-sentence pitch: who they are, and what suddenly makes their life difficult.

Worksheet 5 • The Author's Intention

LEARN | A short lesson

Character development also begins with the writer. Ask why this person deserves space in your story and what emotional experience you hope readers have. An intention is not a rigid ending: it gives direction while leaving room for discovery.

SEE | The forgotten apprentice

We want the apprentice to make readers question whether identity comes from memory or choice. Their fear of losing their current self gives emotional weight to the mystery, while their wish to control their mind drives action.

DEVELOP | Your character

Why did you choose to create this character?

What feeling should their first appearance evoke?

What theme or human question might they explore?

What kind of change could challenge them?

What would make a reader follow them to the final page?

CHALLENGE | Apply it

Complete: "I am writing this character to explore _____ through a person who _____."

Worksheet 6 • Show the Character in Action

LEARN | A short lesson

A worksheet records what you believe about a character; a scene tests whether that belief feels convincing. Give them a modest objective, introduce an obstacle and make them choose. Let behaviour reveal a trait instead of naming it.

SEE | The forgotten apprentice

During a simple repair, the apprentice sees a stranger collapse after an Essence spell performed elsewhere. They could remain safe and silent, but instinctively step forward to help. The choice suggests compassion despite their fear of losing control.

DEVELOP | Your character

Where does the scene happen?

What does the character want in this moment?

What interrupts them?

What decision reveals something unexpected?

CHALLENGE | Apply it

Write a 200–400-word scene. Keep the focus on an action and a choice. Use the next page for your draft.

This image shows a full page of blank, cream-colored paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or note-taking. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Worksheet 7 • Reflection and Foundation Summary

LEARN | A short lesson

A strong foundation is not a finished person. Review your answers for specific, useful details and contradictions worth exploring later. Preserve unanswered questions; they can become the fuel for future chapters.

SEE | The forgotten apprentice

Our apprentice now has a visible routine, recognizable habits, a role in the plot and a driving wish: to control their own mind. We have deliberately not settled their name, the full history of their magic, or how they will reconcile their past and present selves.

DEVELOP | Your character

Which answer surprised you?

Which detail still feels generic or unclear?

What do you most want to discover in Chapter 2?

Write a 4–6-sentence introduction to your character:

CHALLENGE | Apply it

Check your foundation: Can you describe the character, their ordinary world, their story role and one compelling unanswered question?

NEXT • Chapter 2: Personality & Psychology — strengths, flaws, values, fears and contradictions.

CHAPTER TWO

Personality & Psychology

THE INNER LIFE OF A CHARACTER

“The world sees a face. The story reveals the choices beneath it.”

From description to understanding

Chapter 1 gave your character a place in the world: a name, an appearance, a daily life, and a role in the story. Those facts help a reader recognize someone. Psychology helps the reader understand why that person acts as they do. A convincing character is not a checklist of virtues and faults. Their behaviour emerges from a combination of temperament, beliefs, habits, feelings, pressures, and choices.

This chapter works for a farmer, a queen, a vampire, or a mage. Fantasy may change what a character can do, but it does not remove the need for recognizable emotional logic. A frightened sorcerer may wield enormous power and still avoid difficult conversations. A ruthless mercenary may be unexpectedly tender with animals.

How to use this chapter

For each worksheet: read the short lesson; study the continuing example; answer the prompts for your own character; then write the challenge scene. You may leave answers provisional. The aim is to discover patterns, not lock your character into a rigid personality type.

Our continuing example

A former apprentice of a secret magical Order uncovered its deception: Essence Magic obeys the Law of Equal Exchange, but the Order secretly shifts the costs onto innocent people. The Order erased the apprentice's memories and altered their essence. Their present personality is fragmented. Emotion, familiar people, magic, and danger awaken different remnants of their former self. They want control over their mind and fear losing the identity they have built since the erasure. Their deeper emotional lesson remains open for later development.

WORKSHEET 1 | CORE PERSONALITY TRAITS

LEARN

Choose a few traits that affect action, not merely adjectives that sound attractive. A trait becomes useful when you can show it in a decision. Consider how it helps and hinders the character.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice is observant: they notice a stranger's trembling hand. Their observation helps them spot danger, but it also leads them to overinterpret harmless gestures.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Which three traits most often guide their choices?

◆ When is each trait helpful, and when does it create trouble?

◆ What would a stranger mistakenly assume about them?

CHALLENGE

Write 150 words showing one trait through an action without naming the trait.

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WORKSHEET 2 | STRENGTHS AND FLAWS

LEARN

A memorable strength can become a weakness when taken too far. A flaw is most compelling when it once helped the character survive or obtain something important.



SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice's caution protects them from manipulation. Under stress, caution becomes paralysis: they delay asking for help until a situation worsens.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What can your character reliably do well?

◆ Which strength becomes harmful when pushed too far?

◆ What flaw creates the most trouble for other people?

CHALLENGE

Put your character in a situation where their greatest strength makes the problem worse.

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LEARN

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SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

When threatened, the apprentice sometimes becomes unnaturally calm; when offered genuine kindness, they grow suspicious and retreat. Neither response matches what observers expect.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ How do they react to fear, anger, joy, and grief?

◆ Which emotion do they hide most carefully, and why?

◆ What behaviour betrays an emotion they refuse to admit?

CHALLENGE

Write a short dialogue in which your character says they are fine while their actions suggest otherwise.

Use this page to complete your scene or exercise. Continue on separate paper if needed.

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LEARN

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SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice values fairness but believes every authority figure has a hidden agenda. Their belief makes cooperation difficult even when they meet an honest ally.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What three values would they defend at personal cost?

◆ What belief about people or power might be wrong?

◆ Where do their stated values conflict with their actions?

CHALLENGE

Create a scene where protecting one value requires compromising another.

CHALLENGE — CONTINUED WRITING SPACE

Use this page to complete your scene or exercise. Continue on separate paper if needed.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 5 | FEARS AND DEFENSES

LEARN

Fear is more than a threat. It often produces protective habits: avoidance, control, humour, aggression, or emotional distance. These defenses can shape the plot.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice fears that recovering their past will erase their current self. They cope by obsessively recording daily decisions, believing written evidence can anchor identity.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What do they fear losing most?

◆ What protective habit do they use when that fear is triggered?

◆ How does that habit harm a relationship or goal?

CHALLENGE

Have someone gently challenge the character's protective habit. Show the reaction.

CHALLENGE — CONTINUED WRITING SPACE

Use this page to complete your scene or exercise. Continue on separate paper if needed.

This image shows a full page of blank, cream-colored paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

WORKSHEET 6 | CONTRADICTIONS

LEARN

A contradiction feels believable when its conditions are clear to the author. Rather than random inconsistency, build a pattern: a trigger, a response, and a consequence.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice may be brave during physical danger yet terrified when a familiar voice calls an old name. The triggers awaken different fragments of their altered essence.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What two apparently opposing traits coexist in your character?

◆ What circumstances activate each side?

◆ What consequence follows when the wrong side emerges?

CHALLENGE

Write two short moments that reveal opposing sides of the character while preserving the same underlying emotional logic.

This image shows a full page of blank, cream-colored paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

LEARN

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SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

Essence Magic, emotional intensity, familiar faces, and immediate danger each stir different fragments of the apprentice's former personality. The character begins to notice a pattern.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ List four triggers and the distinct response to each.

◆ Which trigger does the character recognize? Which remains mysterious?

◆ How might an ally misread one of these responses?

CHALLENGE

Write a scene in which a trigger changes your character's behaviour and another person notices.

Use this page to complete your scene or exercise. Continue on separate paper if needed.

This image shows a full page of blank, cream-colored paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

WORKSHEET 8 | PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSISTENCY

LEARN

Consistency does not mean a character always makes the same choice. It means their changing choices make sense in light of pressure, information, relationships, and growth.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice initially avoids the Order. After learning that someone else is paying the price for a spell, they risk contact—not because fear disappears, but because another value becomes more urgent.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What internal rule currently guides your character's decisions?

◆ What kind of evidence could challenge that rule?

◆ How might the same character respond differently near the end of the story?

CHALLENGE

Describe a difficult choice twice: once at the start of the story and once after meaningful growth.

This image shows a full page of blank, cream-colored paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

◆ What hidden fear or belief explains their most troublesome behaviour?

◆ What contradiction makes them interesting?

◆ Which trigger would create the strongest scene?

◆ What question about their inner life will you explore in Chapter 3?

One-paragraph character portrait

Write a paragraph describing your character without listing physical traits. Focus on how they think, what they conceal, and what they do under pressure.



CHAPTER THREE

Backstory & Hidden Truths

THE PAST THAT SHAPES THE PRESENT

“The past does not need to be remembered to leave its mark.”

The history beneath the surface

A backstory is not a biography that readers must memorize. It is the collection of experiences, influences, choices, and losses that explain why a character behaves as they do today. The best backstory details create visible consequences in the present: a habit, a belief, a relationship, a skill, or a fear.

In this chapter, you will distinguish established facts from rumours and unknowns; build a meaningful timeline; trace formative relationships; connect the past to present behaviour; and choose which truths belong on the page. You do not need to reveal everything to your reader—or even decide every answer today.

How to use these pages

Each worksheet includes a short lesson, a continuing fantasy example, prompts with space to write, and a challenge. Start with rough answers. If you are writing a mystery, mark some details “unknown to character” or “unknown to author.” Revisit them after drafting scenes.

Our continuing example

A former apprentice of a secret magical Order learned that the Order hid the real cost of Essence Magic. Under the Law of Equal Exchange, qualities can be transferred but not created or destroyed; the Order secretly redirected costs to innocent people. It erased the apprentice’s memories and altered their essence. Their personality is now fragmented, with different traits surfacing under emotional stress, magical exposure, familiar encounters, or danger. They want control over their own mind and fear that recovery could erase their present identity. Their final path to healing remains undecided.

WORKSHEET 1 | KNOWN FACTS AND MISSING PIECES

LEARN

Separate what happened from what the character believes happened. This prevents accidental contradictions and turns uncertainty into a deliberate storytelling tool.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice knows they can read magical inscriptions and sometimes recognize Order symbols. They do not know who taught them or why the sight of an Order seal provokes dread.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What three facts about the character's past are definitely true?

◆ What does the character believe about their past that may be false?

◆ What is unknown to the character, and what is still undecided by you?

CHALLENGE

Write two versions of a childhood memory: the version the character believes and the version that may be true.

WORKSHEET 2 | FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

LEARN

Choose events that changed a belief or a behaviour. A formative event matters because it leaves a trace in the present, not because it sounds dramatic.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice once received public praise for a spell. Later they learned its hidden cost had fallen on someone else. Even without the memory, praise now makes them uneasy.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Which early event taught your character what safety means?

◆ Which event shaped their understanding of authority or fairness?

◆ What visible habit or reaction remains from each event?

CHALLENGE

Write a present-day scene where an ordinary event unexpectedly echoes a formative experience.

WORKSHEET 3 | TIMELINE OF TURNING POINTS

LEARN

A timeline should highlight causes and consequences. Include ordinary transitions alongside dramatic events; both can shape identity.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

Possible sequence: enters the Order; becomes a promising apprentice; performs celebrated magic; discovers the redirected cost; confronts evidence; undergoes erasure; begins a new life. Exact dates are deliberately open.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- ◆ List five turning points in chronological order, including approximate age.

- ◆ Which event changed the character's direction most sharply, and why?

- ◆ Which event would the character tell differently from an outside witness?

CHALLENGE

Write a six-entry timeline. For each entry add: event → belief formed → present consequence.

WORKSHEET 4 | PEOPLE WHO SHAPED THEM

LEARN

Relationships leave patterns: trust, defiance, imitation, shame, affection. Give influential people both a role and an effect.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

A senior instructor may have encouraged the apprentice's curiosity while teaching unquestioning obedience. The apprentice now both seeks guidance and resists it.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Who first made the character feel valued or safe?

◆ Who taught them a belief they still follow—or fight against?

◆ Which person from the past might trigger a strong reaction today?

CHALLENGE

Draft a short encounter with someone the character no longer remembers but instinctively reacts to.

WORKSHEET 5 | SECRETS, LIES, AND MISINTERPRETATIONS

LEARN

Not every secret must be a twist. A concealed fact becomes compelling when revealing it changes a relationship, a decision, or the meaning of earlier events.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The Order claims Essence Magic demands sacrifice from its user. The apprentice discovered that powerful practitioners can redirect that sacrifice onto uninformed victims.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What truth is being concealed, and by whom?

◆ What lie protects the secret? Who benefits from it?

◆ What would change immediately if the character learned the truth?

CHALLENGE

Create three clues: one subtle, one misleading, and one decisive. Explain what each makes the character believe.

WORKSHEET 6 | THE PAST IN THE BODY AND HABITS

LEARN

History often appears through practiced skills, reflexes, and routines. Avoid treating any one reaction as a universal response to trauma. Show this particular character's individual pattern.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice's hands draw an Essence sigil before their conscious mind identifies it. Near Order relics, they become precise and detached; under threat, forgotten training takes over.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Which skill survives even if its origin is forgotten?

◆ What situation triggers an automatic reaction, and what does it look like?

◆ How does another person misread this behaviour?

CHALLENGE

Write a scene in which a physical habit reveals something before the character understands it.

WORKSHEET 7 | REVELATION AND EMOTIONAL STAKES

LEARN

A revelation should alter what the character believes, chooses, or risks. Decide whose version of events the reader encounters first and what it costs to learn more.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

Finding a record of redirected sacrifices could give the apprentice proof of the Order's wrongdoing. But reading it might force them to question whether their current identity is stable.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What is the first truth your character can safely discover?

◆ What later truth would threaten a valued relationship or self-belief?

◆ What might they sacrifice to obtain proof—and what would make them stop?

CHALLENGE

Write a discovery scene in which the character chooses not to pursue one clue. Show why.

WORKSHEET 8 | BACKSTORY WITHOUT AN INFORMATION DUMP

LEARN

Reveal history through present conflict, selective dialogue, objects, and consequences. Give readers the detail they need when it changes the scene.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

Instead of explaining the Order in a paragraph, an old classmate addresses the apprentice by an unfamiliar title. Their body responds before they can ask what it means.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Which three backstory details must readers know early?

◆ Which detail should emerge through action rather than exposition?

◆ Which mystery can remain unresolved until much later?

CHALLENGE

Rewrite a paragraph of backstory exposition as a scene using dialogue, an object, and a choice.

FINAL EXERCISE | THE HIDDEN HISTORY

Create a one-page “truth map” for your character. Write what happened, what they remember, what others believe, and what the reader will discover. Then identify the first present-day choice their history changes.

What actually happened

What the character believes

What other people claim

What the reader learns first

The present-day choice affected

CHAPTER THREE REFLECTION

Backstory becomes useful when it creates meaningful action in the present. Before continuing, test the connection between history and behaviour.

◆ Which past event most strongly shapes your character today?

◆ What contradiction between memory and behaviour is most interesting?

◆ Which revelation would change their next important decision?

◆ What have you deliberately left unresolved for later chapters?

Writer's note: Your character's past can remain mysterious to them while being coherent to you. Record provisional answers, but let the draft challenge them.

CHAPTER FOUR

Motivations & Goals

WHAT DRIVES A CHARACTER FORWARD

“Every character wants something. The story begins when getting it becomes difficult.”

Desire is the engine of story

A character profile describes who someone is. Motivation explains why they act. A goal is a result the character consciously pursues; a need is the deeper truth they may resist. Both can change as the story unfolds. A convincing character does not need a noble goal, but their choices should make sense in light of their beliefs, fears, and circumstances.

This chapter moves from clear external objectives to deeper emotional needs, competing desires, obstacles, sacrifice, changing priorities, and the arc that connects them. You can revise your answers at any stage: discovering your character is part of writing.

How to use these pages

For each worksheet: read the lesson, examine the recurring example, answer the prompts about your own character, and complete the challenge. Use the lined space freely. If you need more room, continue on a separate sheet.

Our continuing example

Our unnamed protagonist was an apprentice of a secret Order that concealed the true cost of Essence Magic. The Order redirected magical sacrifices onto innocent people. After the apprentice discovered the deception, their memories were erased and their essence altered. Their personality now shifts under emotional stress, exposure to magic, encounters with familiar people, and danger. They fear losing the identity they have built and consciously seek control over their own mind. Their deeper need is deliberately left open for the author to decide.

WORKSHEET 1 | THE EXTERNAL GOAL

LEARN

An external goal is concrete enough that a reader can recognize progress or failure. Replace vague wishes such as “be safe” with actions and measurable outcomes.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice wants to identify a safe method to stabilize their unpredictable personality shifts without surrendering control to the Order. Their first tangible objective is to locate an independent scholar who studies Essence Magic.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What does your character actively want to accomplish?

◆ How will they know when they have succeeded?

◆ Why must they pursue this goal now?

CHALLENGE

Write a three-sentence premise: your character wants ___, but ___ stands in their way, so they must ___.

WORKSHEET 2 | THE HIDDEN EMOTIONAL NEED

LEARN

A need is not another task. It is an emotional understanding or change that could help the character live differently. Writers can leave the answer provisional until the story reveals it.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice believes perfect control will make them safe. Perhaps they need to accept change, trust someone, or reconcile past and present selves. We have not chosen which lesson they will ultimately learn.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What does your character believe will make them whole?

◆ What deeper understanding might challenge that belief?

◆ What would they have to stop doing to grow?

CHALLENGE

Write a brief scene in which the character gets what they want for one hour but still feels unsatisfied.

WORKSHEET 3 | WHY THE GOAL MATTERS

LEARN

The same objective becomes compelling when its emotional stakes are personal. Connect the goal to values, experiences, relationships, or a specific fear.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

For the apprentice, a personality shift could erase a newly formed friendship. Seeking stability is not simply an intellectual puzzle: they fear that the person they are now might disappear.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What personal fear gives the goal urgency?

◆ Who else would be affected by success or failure?

◆ What belief makes this goal feel essential?

CHALLENGE

Describe a moment when the character must explain their goal to someone who does not understand it.

WORKSHEET 4 | OBSTACLES AND OPPOSITION

LEARN

Obstacles should force choices rather than merely delay the plot. Include practical barriers, opposing people, and the character's own habits or false beliefs.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The Order controls archives and monitors Essence practitioners. Independent research may require forbidden tools. The apprentice's suspicion and unstable responses also make collaboration difficult.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What physical or practical obstacle blocks progress?

◆ Who benefits if the character fails?

◆ Which flaw or fear makes the situation worse?

CHALLENGE

Design an obstacle that cannot be solved using the character's greatest strength.

WORKSHEET 5 | CONFLICTING DESIRES

LEARN

Characters become interesting when two genuine desires cannot both be satisfied. Neither side of the conflict should feel trivial.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice wants to recover enough truth to understand the Order's actions, yet fears that recovering their former essence could destroy the self they have built since the erasure.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What two things does your character want that cannot coexist?

◆ Which desire do they admit openly, and which do they hide?

◆ What would choosing either option cost?

CHALLENGE

Write an argument between the character and a trusted ally who believes the opposite choice is right.

WORKSHEET 6 | THE PRICE OF A CHOICE

LEARN

A meaningful sacrifice is specific. Ask not only what the character gives up, but whether they understand the price before acting. In Essence Magic, gains require losses, and the Order has hidden who pays.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice could gain temporary stability through a spell, but must first discover whether the cost falls on them or an unsuspecting stranger. Refusing the spell preserves their ethics while leaving them vulnerable.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What is your character willing to sacrifice?

◆ What would they refuse to sacrifice, even for success?

◆ How could a shortcut threaten their values?

CHALLENGE

Offer your character a guaranteed victory at an unacceptable price. Show their decision through action, not explanation.

WORKSHEET 7 | GOALS THAT CHANGE

LEARN

Events should test a goal and may transform it. A change in priorities feels earned when it grows from experience rather than sudden author convenience.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice begins by seeking private control over their mind. Evidence of the Order's victims might shift their priority toward exposing the hidden exchanges, even if doing so risks their own stability.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What new truth could change your character's goal?

◆ Which event would make the old goal seem selfish or incomplete?

◆ What remains emotionally constant as their priorities shift?

CHALLENGE

Write two versions of the character's goal: one at the beginning and one after a major revelation.

WORKSHEET 8 | MOTIVATION ACROSS THE CHARACTER ARC

LEARN

A character arc connects choices and consequences. Track how the goal, underlying belief, and behaviour interact at the beginning, midpoint, crisis, and ending. An arc can be growth, decline, or deliberate resistance to change.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

At the beginning, the apprentice seeks total control. At the midpoint, they learn that stability may come at others' expense. At the crisis, they must choose between personal safety and protecting someone else. Their final response remains open for development.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What mistaken belief drives early decisions?

◆ Which event most strongly challenges that belief?

◆ What final choice would prove the character has changed—or refused to?

CHALLENGE

Outline four turning points: opening choice, midpoint reversal, crisis sacrifice, and final decision.

This image shows a single sheet of cream-colored paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

CHAPTER REFLECTION | THE MOTIVATION MAP

◆ My character's external goal is:

◆ The deeper need they may not recognize is:

◆ Their strongest motivation comes from:

◆ The biggest external obstacle is:

◆ The biggest internal obstacle is:

◆ Their two conflicting desires are:

◆ The sacrifice they cannot easily make is:

◆ The decision that could transform them is:

Keep this map nearby as you write. A goal may change; a believable motivation should remain traceable through the choices your character makes.

CHAPTER FIVE

Relationships & Connections

THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPE OUR CHARACTERS

“No character exists in isolation. Every bond can become a refuge, a wound, or a turning point.”

Relationships reveal character

A relationship is not merely a name on a family tree. It is a living exchange of expectations, memories, power, affection, resentment, and choices. Two characters may describe the same relationship differently—and both can believe they are right.

In this chapter, you will build connections that change what your character does. You will explore who knows them, who misunderstands them, what they owe, what they hide, and how their relationships evolve under pressure.

How to use this chapter

Read each short lesson, study the example, then answer the prompts for your own character. Use the writing space freely. You may invent details now and revise them later; the goal is to discover relationships that generate scenes rather than simply fill a chart.

Our continuing example

Our unnamed protagonist was once an apprentice of a secret magical Order. After learning that the Order shifted the costs of Essence Magic onto innocent people, the apprentice had their memories erased and essence altered. Their personality is fragmented, and they now seek control over their own mind while fearing the loss of their present identity. Their relationships are possibilities for exploration—not fixed answers to the central mystery.

WORKSHEET 1 | FAMILY & CHOSEN FAMILY

LEARN

Family relationships can offer belonging or pressure. A character may be loyal to relatives they dislike, or find family among strangers. Describe what each bond demands—not just who is related.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice lives with a kindly bookbinder who offers a place to sleep. The bookbinder calls them family, but the apprentice avoids discussing the past, fearing that closeness might be lost if their former identity returns.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Who raised your character, and who considers them family now?

◆ What expectation or obligation comes with this bond?

◆ What can this person do that makes your character feel safe—or trapped?

CHALLENGE

Write a dinner-table scene in which an ordinary question exposes an unspoken family tension.

WORKSHEET 2 | FRIENDSHIP & COMPANIONSHIP

LEARN

Friendships become compelling when they include reciprocity, differences, and moments of strain. A loyal friend is not necessarily an agreeable friend.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

A travelling courier befriends the apprentice because they share a dry sense of humour. When a personality shift makes the apprentice unexpectedly cold, the courier challenges them rather than silently accepting the change.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What first brought these two people together?

◆ What does each person give and receive from the friendship?

◆ What disagreement could threaten the bond without ending it immediately?

CHALLENGE

Write a brief exchange in which a friend tells your character something they do not want to hear.

WORKSHEET 3 | MENTORS & AUTHORITY

LEARN

Mentors provide knowledge, opportunity, and sometimes a distorted view of the world. Authority can inspire loyalty even when it is undeserved.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice encounters an elderly mage who once taught at the Order. The mage recognizes a forgotten technique in the apprentice's hands but refuses to explain why. The apprentice must decide whether to trust another teacher.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Who taught your character an important lesson or skill?

◆ Which belief did they inherit from that person?

◆ When might respect for this person conflict with personal judgment?

CHALLENGE

Write a scene in which your character challenges a mentor for the first time.

WORKSHEET 4 | RIVALS & ADVERSARIES

LEARN

A strong rival exposes a weakness or value the protagonist would rather ignore. Rivals need not be villains; they can want the same good outcome by incompatible methods.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

A former Order investigator believes the apprentice's unstable essence endangers others. The investigator wants to contain them, while the apprentice insists on deciding their own future. Both claim to be protecting innocent people.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What does the rival want, and why is that understandable?

◆ What quality does your character envy or resent in them?

◆ What shared belief could make them reluctant allies?

CHALLENGE

Write a confrontation where neither character can honestly call the other entirely wrong.

WORKSHEET 5 | ROMANCE & EMOTIONAL INTIMACY

LEARN

Romance is not defined by attraction alone. Emotional intimacy emerges through vulnerability, boundaries, mutual attention, and the risks of being known. This worksheet also works for deeply intimate non-romantic bonds.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

Someone who knew the apprentice before the erasure returns. Their tenderness feels familiar, but the apprentice cannot tell whether the affection belongs to the person they are now or to someone they no longer remember.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What makes your character feel understood by another person?

◆ What boundary must the other person respect?

◆ What truth would your character hesitate to reveal, even in a loving relationship?

CHALLENGE

Write a quiet moment of closeness interrupted by a question neither person can answer.

WORKSHEET 6 | TRUST, BETRAYAL & REPAIR

LEARN

Trust is built through repeated choices and can be broken in a moment. Repair requires changed behaviour, not just apologies; some relationships should remain fractured.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice discovers that a trusted contact has been reporting their magical episodes to the Order. The contact claims they did so to prevent a catastrophe. The apprentice must decide whether protection excuses deception.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ What action would your character experience as betrayal?

◆ What evidence would they need before trusting again?

◆ Is there a betrayal they could understand but never forgive?

CHALLENGE

Write an apology scene where the injured character does not immediately forgive.

WORKSHEET 7 | POWER, DEPENDENCE & BOUNDARIES

LEARN

Relationships contain power differences: knowledge, wealth, status, magical ability, emotional leverage, or access to safety. Show how power is exercised and resisted.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

A healer can temporarily steady the apprentice's essence but demands strict obedience in return. The apprentice must weigh relief against surrendering the autonomy they desperately want.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Who has leverage over your character, and what form does it take?

◆ Where does your character set a boundary—and where do they fail to?

◆ How could the power balance change over the course of the story?

CHALLENGE

Write a negotiation in which your character says no despite a meaningful cost.

WORKSHEET 8 | RELATIONSHIPS THAT TRANSFORM

LEARN

Relationships should not remain static. Events can turn affection into resentment, rivalry into respect, or dependency into equality. Track the cause of each change.

SEE: THE FORMER APPRENTICE

The apprentice begins to trust the courier with their unstable episodes. Later, the courier learns that the apprentice once served the Order. Whether the friendship survives depends on present choices, not simply the forgotten past.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

◆ Which relationship changes most from beginning to end?

◆ What event forces each person to reconsider the other?

◆ What specific action proves the relationship has changed?

CHALLENGE

Write two versions of the same interaction—one early in the story, one after a major revelation.

THE RELATIONSHIP MAP

Choose four important people in your character's life. Record the outward relationship, the hidden tension, and the decision this connection may force.

CONNECTION 1

Person and relationship:

What each person wants from the other:

Unspoken truth or imbalance:

Possible turning point:

CONNECTION 2

Person and relationship:

What each person wants from the other:

Unspoken truth or imbalance:

Possible turning point:

CONNECTION 3

Person and relationship:

What each person wants from the other:

Unspoken truth or imbalance:

Possible turning point:

CONNECTION 4

Person and relationship:

What each person wants from the other:

Unspoken truth or imbalance:

Possible turning point:

[illegible]

CHAPTER REFLECTION | THE RELATIONAL CORE

◆ Which relationship reveals the most about your character?

◆ Which relationship makes their main goal harder to achieve?

◆ Where does your character have power, and where are they vulnerable?

◆ What relationship must change for their character arc to feel earned?

WRITER'S NOTE

You do not need a large cast. A handful of relationships with distinct emotional functions can reveal more than dozens of names. Carry your most important connections into Chapter 6, where character voice and dialogue will bring them onto the page.

CHAPTER SIX

Character Voice & Dialogue

The words they choose. The truths they hide. The silence that gives them away.

A character may have a rich history and complex motivations, but readers experience that character moment by moment through speech, thought, gesture, and silence. A distinctive voice is not a collection of accents or catchphrases. It is the expression of a particular mind in a particular situation.

What you will build

- A recognizable speaking style grounded in personality and experience
- An inner voice that differs meaningfully from spoken dialogue
- Subtext, silence, and body language that reveal hidden feelings
- Voice shifts under pressure without losing consistency
- A reference sheet to keep your character's voice steady across a story

How to use this chapter

Every worksheet follows four steps: LEARN the technique, SEE it demonstrated by our recurring fantasy apprentice, DEVELOP your own character through prompts, and CHALLENGE yourself with a short scene. You can revisit your answers as your draft changes. The example character is a demonstration, not a model you must copy.

Our example: a former apprentice of a secret magical Order. Their memories and essence were altered after they discovered the Order had hidden the true cost of Essence Magic. They want control over their fragmented mind but fear that recovering their old self may erase who they are now. Different triggers briefly awaken conflicting parts of their former personality.

WORKSHEET 1

The Sound of Their Speech

LEARN

Dialogue rhythm reveals how a character processes the world. Some speak in short, guarded statements; others think aloud, qualify every claim, or use elaborate metaphors. Choose patterns, not gimmicks.

SEE • Fantasy example

“I did not say the seal was safe,” the apprentice said. “I said it was quiet. Those are different things.” Their careful distinctions hint at a trained, analytical mind.

DEVELOP • Your character

Does your character speak quickly or deliberately? Why?

Do they favor plain words, technical language, humor, or imagery?

What is one sentence only this character would say?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Write six lines of dialogue in which your character asks for directions without naming their emotion.

WORKSHEET 2

Vocabulary, Background & Social Context

LEARN

Education, work, culture, age, and relationships shape vocabulary. A character can shift registers depending on whom they address. Avoid using dialect spelling as a shortcut for depth.

SEE • Fantasy example

When examining a broken ward, the apprentice says “the exchange is unbalanced,” not “the spell is bad.” Around a child, they say simply, “Something was taken.”

DEVELOP • Your character

What experiences or profession shape their vocabulary?

Which words do they avoid, and why?

How does their language change around a friend versus an authority figure?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Describe the same dangerous object twice: once to a child, once to a specialist.

WORKSHEET 3

The Inner Voice

LEARN

Internal narration may contradict speech. A character can say “I am fine” while privately cataloguing every exit. Their thoughts can expose bias, denial, longing, and private logic.

SEE • Fantasy example

Spoken: “You may keep the key.” Thought: If I touch it, I may remember whose door it opens. And then I may not be myself.

DEVELOP • Your character

What thoughts would they never say aloud?

Do they think in images, arguments, questions, or sensations?

What assumption about the world distorts their inner narration?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Write a paragraph of inner thought while your character outwardly agrees with someone.

WORKSHEET 4

Subtext & What Goes Unsaid

LEARN

Subtext is the tension between literal words and actual meaning. It emerges from context, stakes, and withheld information—not from making every line cryptic.

SEE • Fantasy example

“You kept my old room,” the apprentice says. The mentor answers, “No one needed it.” Neither says: I hoped you would come back.

DEVELOP • Your character

What truth does your character routinely conceal?

What do they ask when they cannot ask the real question?

Which topic makes them change the subject?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Write an exchange in which two people discuss tea while actually negotiating trust.

WORKSHEET 5

Gesture, Silence & Physical Voice

LEARN

Voice also lives in posture, movement, pauses, and attention. Use a few meaningful habits rather than attaching an action to every line. A repeated gesture becomes powerful when its meaning changes.

SEE • Fantasy example

The apprentice presses a thumb against an invisible ring when they lie. They do not know the ring was once real. When threatened, their hands become perfectly still.

DEVELOP • Your character

What habitual gesture appears when they feel safe?

How does their body signal stress before they admit it?

When do they choose silence over speech?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Write a silent encounter of 150 words using action alone to show a change in trust.

WORKSHEET 6

Voice Under Emotional Pressure

LEARN

Emotion alters pace, word choice, politeness, and coherence. Changes should relate to established patterns. The same person may become terse when afraid and unusually precise when furious.

SEE • Fantasy example

At ease: “Perhaps we should examine the markings.” Under danger: “Back. Now.” Near Essence Magic: “Do not complete the exchange,” spoken with the authority of a forgotten teacher.

DEVELOP • Your character

How does fear change their sentence length?

What happens to their speech when they are angry or grieving?

Which trigger reveals a fragment of their former personality?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Write one warning in three states: calm, frightened, and furious.

WORKSHEET 7

A Different Voice for Every Relationship

LEARN

People reveal different facets of themselves with friends, rivals, mentors, strangers, and loved ones. Their voice may shift in openness, status, humor, or vulnerability while remaining recognizable.

SEE • Fantasy example

To a stranger: “I cannot help you.” To a trusted companion: “I do not know how to help without making it worse.” To an Order official: “You taught me the cost was mine.”

DEVELOP • Your character

Who makes them speak more freely?

Who makes them formal, defensive, or unexpectedly gentle?

Which relationship makes them sound most like their forgotten self?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Write the same confession to a friend and to an enemy; compare what changes.

WORKSHEET 8

Consistency, Change & Voice Signature

LEARN

A consistent voice is governed by underlying beliefs, not identical wording. Track baseline habits, situational shifts, and deliberate growth. Let a change in speech signal a meaningful change in character.

SEE • Fantasy example

Early: “I need to know which part of me is real.” Later: “I can choose what I do, even if I cannot choose what I remember.” The voice retains its careful reasoning but becomes less fearful.

DEVELOP • Your character

List three speech habits that remain stable throughout the story.

What voice pattern changes as the character grows?

How will readers recognize the character in an untagged conversation?

CHALLENGE • Put the voice on the page

Write a before-and-after exchange showing growth without explaining it.

THE VOICE TEST

A scene-writing challenge: Your character meets someone who knows their forgotten past. The other person asks a question that only the former self could answer. Write the scene without naming the character's emotions. Use dialogue, silence, thought, and gesture to make the tension visible.

What the visitor wants:

What your character wants to conceal:

Write the scene (continue on the next page):

THE VOICE TEST • Continued

Character Voice Reference Sheet

Three defining speech habits

Favorite vocabulary or repeated constructions

Words, topics, or names they avoid

How their inner voice differs from spoken voice

Gestures and silence patterns

How fear, anger, and affection change their voice

Voice shifts caused by people or Essence Magic

One line that captures their voice at the beginning

One line that captures their voice after growth

Chapter Reflection

Read one of your scenes aloud. Does the character sound like a person making choices, or like an author delivering information? Revise one exchange so the character's desire, fear, or relationship shapes every line.

What makes this character's voice distinct from others in the story?

Which contradiction between their words and thoughts is most revealing?

What will change in their voice by the end of the story?

Remember: a memorable voice is not simply how someone speaks. It is the pressure of their history, beliefs, relationships, and desires upon every word they choose.

CHAPTER 7

MORALITY & DECISIONS

What will your character do when every choice has a cost?

A character may claim to value honesty, mercy, or loyalty. Those values become meaningful when a story forces them into conflict. Morality is not a scorecard of good and bad traits: it is a pattern of choices, explanations, and consequences.

What you will create

By the end of this chapter, you will have a moral compass, a set of boundaries, a map of conflicting loyalties, a pivotal decision scene, and an account of how your character responds to harm they have caused.

How to use the worksheets

Read the short lesson. Study the continuing fantasy example. Answer the questions for your own character. Then write the challenge scene. There are no correct moral answers; your aim is believable cause and effect. You can revisit earlier answers as the story develops.

Our continuing example

A former apprentice of a secret Order has fragmented memories and an altered essence. They discovered that the Order redirects the cost of Essence Magic onto innocent people. The Law of Equal Exchange remains real: strengthening one quality weakens another. The apprentice wants control over their own mind, yet fears that recovering their original identity will erase who they are now. Their final emotional lesson remains undecided.

Before you begin

Write one sentence describing the kind of choice you want your character to face.

Worksheet 1 — The Moral Compass

LEARN | The principle

Values become dramatic when they guide action rather than merely appearing in a character profile. Distinguish what a character says they believe from what their decisions demonstrate.

SEE | The former apprentice

The apprentice insists that no innocent person should bear the cost of another person's magic. Yet when offered a chance to stabilize their own mind, they hesitate before refusing a spell that would shift the cost onto an unknown stranger.

DEVELOP | Your character

What three principles does your character publicly defend?

Which principle is hardest for them to follow in private?

What recent action proves—or contradicts—one of those principles?

Worksheet 1 — The Moral Compass — Writing Challenge

Write a scene in which your character makes a small choice that reveals one value without stating it aloud.

Reflection

What did this exercise reveal about your character that a list of traits could not?

Worksheet 2 — Lines They Will Not Cross

LEARN | The principle

A moral boundary is most useful when the story threatens it. Define the line, why it exists, and what might tempt the character to cross it.

SEE | The former apprentice

The apprentice refuses to alter another person's essence without consent. A frightened companion begs them to change a dying child's essence, but the required exchange may harm someone who cannot agree.

DEVELOP | Your character

What act would your character refuse even for a worthy goal?

Who or what taught them that boundary?

What exceptional circumstance might make them reconsider?

Worksheet 2 — Lines They Will Not Cross — Writing Challenge

Put your character under time pressure and make the easiest solution violate their strongest boundary.

[illegible]

Reflection

What did this exercise reveal about your character that a list of traits could not?

Worksheet 3 — Conflicting Loyalties

LEARN | The principle

Loyalty becomes conflict when two obligations cannot both be honored. Avoid making one side obviously worthless; give both relationships or duties real weight.

SEE | The former apprentice

An old Order mentor claims they protected the apprentice from worse harm. A new friend insists that the Order must be exposed immediately. The apprentice cannot satisfy both without betraying someone.

DEVELOP | Your character

Which two people, communities, or promises demand loyalty?

What does each side have a legitimate claim to?

Who will be hurt regardless of the choice?

Write a confrontation where both sides make persuasive demands and your character must answer.

[illegible]

What did this exercise reveal about your character that a list of traits could not?

Worksheet 4 — Justifications & Self-Deception

LEARN | The principle

Characters often explain a harmful choice in terms that preserve their self-image. Show the gap between motive, explanation, and impact.

SEE | The former apprentice

The apprentice considers using a forbidden transfer to quiet their fractured thoughts. They call it a temporary necessity, though they cannot guarantee the cost will ever be repaid.

DEVELOP | Your character

What questionable act can your character justify?

What story do they tell themselves about why it is necessary?

What uncomfortable fact do they avoid acknowledging?

Worksheet 4 — Justifications & Self-Deception — Writing Challenge

Write an internal monologue immediately before the act, then a brief passage from someone harmed by it.

Reflection

What did this exercise reveal about your character that a list of traits could not?

Worksheet 5 — The Price of Sacrifice

LEARN | The principle

Sacrifice matters when the lost thing is genuinely valuable and the character understands the cost. In this magic system, a gain requires a corresponding loss; the ethical question is who pays.

SEE | The former apprentice

The apprentice could restore a companion's courage by surrendering their own ability to trust. They must decide whether the rescue is worth changing their future relationships.

DEVELOP | Your character

What does your character most fear losing?

What goal would tempt them to surrender it?

Who else would bear indirect consequences?

Worksheet 5 — The Price of Sacrifice — Writing Challenge

Create two possible sacrifices. Write the moment of decision, showing why neither option feels easy.

Reflection

What did this exercise reveal about your character that a list of traits could not?

Worksheet 6 — Guilt, Shame & Remorse

LEARN | The principle

Guilt concerns what someone has done; shame can concern what they believe they are. Remorse becomes visible through repair, avoidance, confession, or repeated mistakes.

SEE | The former apprentice

After learning that their training harmed strangers, the apprentice feels responsible even though their memories were removed. They cannot undo the harm simply by recovering the truth.

DEVELOP | Your character

What harm has your character caused intentionally or unintentionally?

How do they respond when confronted with the consequences?

What form of repair is possible, and what cannot be repaired?

Worksheet 6 – Guilt, Shame & Remorse – Writing Challenge

Write a scene in which someone refuses your character's apology. What do they do next?

This image shows a single sheet of cream-colored paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

Reflection

What did this exercise reveal about your character that a list of traits could not?

Worksheet 7 — Accountability & Consequences

LEARN | The principle

An action has moral weight when the story allows consequences to persist. Redemption is not a reward for feeling sorry; it involves changed behavior and sometimes a cost that cannot be reversed.

SEE | The former apprentice

The apprentice can expose the Order, but doing so may reveal that they once helped perform transfers. Telling the truth risks losing the trust of the people who now protect them.

DEVELOP | Your character

What truth must your character eventually admit?

Who has the right to demand accountability?

What action would show genuine change even without forgiveness?

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Worksheet 8 — The Evolving Moral Code

LEARN | The principle

A moral arc traces how a character's beliefs are tested and revised. The ending need not make them morally perfect; it should make their final choice meaningful in light of earlier decisions.

SEE | The former apprentice

At first the apprentice values control above all else. Later they may have to choose between controlling another person's essence and living with uncertainty. Their final decision remains open for the writer to determine.

DEVELOP | Your character

Which belief guides your character at the beginning?

What event most seriously challenges that belief?

What final choice could demonstrate change—or tragic refusal to change?

Worksheet 8 — The Evolving Moral Code — Writing Challenge

Write two alternative endings to the same moral dilemma: one showing growth, one showing regression.

Reflection

What did this exercise reveal about your character that a list of traits could not?

THE IMPOSSIBLE EXCHANGE

Capstone challenge: Your character can save someone they love by transferring a permanent loss onto a stranger. Refusing the magic may mean losing the loved one. Neither person has consented to the proposed exchange.

Plan the dilemma

What exactly is gained and what is lost?

What does your character believe is the right thing to do?

What do they actually choose, and why?

Who experiences the consequences?

The Impossible Exchange — Scene Draft

Write the decisive scene. Show action, dialogue, hesitation, and aftermath rather than explaining the moral in narration.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

MORAL DECISION REFERENCE SHEET

Core values

Strongest boundary

Competing loyalties

Most persuasive self-justification

Worst moral mistake

Unpaid moral debt

Decision that defines the character

How the moral code changes

Final Reflection

How will the reader understand your character differently after witnessing their hardest choice?

CHAPTER 8

CHARACTER ARC & TRANSFORMATION

The character who enters a story need not be the one who leaves it.

A character arc traces the relationship between what a person believes, what they experience, what they choose, and who they become. Not every arc is positive. Some characters grow; some fall; some hold their values against immense pressure. The key is to make the outcome earned.

What you will create

By the end of this chapter, you will have an arc blueprint, a sequence of turning points, a crisis decision, and a final-state portrait. You will also know what must be dramatized on the page so readers can witness change rather than simply be told about it.

How to use these worksheets

Each worksheet offers a short lesson, a continuing fantasy example, questions, and a scene challenge. Use the lined spaces to answer for your own character. Return to earlier chapters whenever a new answer changes an old assumption.

Our continuing example

Our unnamed former apprentice once served a secret magical Order. They discovered that the Order secretly transferred the cost of Essence Magic onto innocent people. The Order erased their memories and altered their essence. Now they experience fragments of conflicting personalities, fear losing their present identity, and consciously seek control of their own mind. Their eventual emotional resolution is deliberately left open so you can compare possible arcs.

Before you begin

What is one way your character could be different by the final chapter of their story?

WORKSHEET 1 | THE STARTING SELF

LEARN

An arc needs a clear starting point. Show your character's habits, worldview, coping methods, and ordinary choices before the plot tests them. Do not mistake a biography for a starting state: readers need to see behaviour.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice keeps a notebook recording their moods and refuses to make promises when their personality feels unstable. Their desire for control is visible before any confrontation with the Order.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What does your character believe about themselves at the beginning?

- What routine reveals this belief without explanation?

- What does their current way of coping protect them from?

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 2 | THE BELIEF THAT LIMITS THEM

LEARN

Many arcs are organized around a belief that once helped the character survive but now restricts them. This is not necessarily a foolish belief; it may contain a partial truth. Identify both its protective function and its cost.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice believes: “If I cannot control every change in my mind, I cannot trust myself.” Careful record-keeping protects them, but they begin avoiding relationships and opportunities that demand spontaneity.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What belief governs your character’s choices?

- Where did that belief help them in the past?

- What opportunity or relationship does it now damage?



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WORKSHEET 3 | RESISTANCE & DEFENSES

LEARN

Change is rarely immediate. A believable character protects their familiar identity, rationalizes their choices, and may retreat after progress. Resistance should have emotional logic rather than existing only to delay the plot.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

When a companion offers to help the apprentice investigate an episode of lost time, they refuse. They insist on solitude, even though the companion possesses evidence they need.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What change does your character resist?

- How do they justify resisting it?

- What does this resistance cost another person?

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WORKSHEET 4 | TURNING POINTS & PRESSURE

LEARN

A turning point should change the available options or the character's understanding of the world. Build a chain of escalating tests, each demanding a more difficult response to the same underlying problem.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

A familiar face triggers a lost skill; later, the apprentice finds evidence that their own past spellwork harmed strangers. Finally, the Order offers a procedure promising control at a price someone else would pay.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- List three events that force your character to reconsider their belief.

- What new information or consequence appears at each event?

- How does the character behave differently after each one?

[illegible]



WORKSHEET 5 | SETBACKS & CONSEQUENCES

LEARN

Progress is not a straight line. Setbacks make an arc credible when they grow out of character decisions and have lasting consequences. Avoid resetting growth without cause.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

After choosing to trust an ally, the apprentice suffers a frightening personality shift and retreats to isolation. The ally feels rejected; the setback costs the apprentice a relationship they had begun to value.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What progress does your character make before a setback?

- What specifically triggers the regression?

- What consequence remains even after they recover?

WORKSHEET 6 | THE CRISIS CHOICE

LEARN

The climax of an internal arc often requires the character to act without certainty. Design a choice that makes the old belief tempting but tests the emerging one. Both options should carry a credible cost.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The Order offers to stabilize the apprentice's essence by transferring instability onto an unsuspecting prisoner. Accepting promises control; refusing preserves another person's autonomy but leaves their own future uncertain.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What does the old belief tell your character to choose?

- What would a changed belief ask them to do?

- What irreversible price comes with each option?

WORKSHEET 6 | WRITING CHALLENGE

Draft the crisis scene without explaining the lesson. Show the decision through action and dialogue.

Draft / notes:

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After writing, identify the choice your character made and the emotional reason behind it.

WORKSHEET 7 | TRANSFORMATION, FALL, OR STEADFASTNESS

LEARN

A positive arc changes a harmful belief; a negative arc deepens it; a flat or steadfast arc proves a guiding truth under pressure. Choose the arc that fits your story rather than assuming every character must improve.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

In a positive version, the apprentice refuses to sacrifice a stranger for control. In a negative version, they accept the bargain. In a steadfast version, they have always rejected coerced exchange and inspire others to challenge the Order.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- Which arc type best suits your character and why?

- What belief is changed, corrupted, or affirmed?

- What visible choice proves the arc's outcome?

WORKSHEET 7 | WRITING CHALLENGE

Write three brief alternate endings—growth, fall, and steadfastness—then select the strongest.

Draft / notes:

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After writing, identify the choice your character made and the emotional reason behind it.

WORKSHEET 8 | THE FINAL SELF & ARC AUDIT

LEARN

The ending should echo the beginning so the reader can measure change. Compare the same kind of situation, choice, or relationship at both points. A convincing transformation changes behaviour, not just the character's description of themselves.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

At the start, the apprentice records every shift and hides from others. At the end of a positive arc, they still keep records, but share uncertainty with a trusted companion and refuse to make others pay for their security.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- How does the final self respond differently to the opening situation?

- Which traits remain recognizable despite the change?

- What unresolved tension keeps the character human?

WORKSHEET 8 | WRITING CHALLENGE

Write a closing scene that mirrors your opening scene, then underline the differences in action.

Draft / notes:

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After writing, identify the choice your character made and the emotional reason behind it.

Scene A: Before the transformation

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[illegible]



CHARACTER ARC REFERENCE SHEET

Starting belief:

The belief's protective purpose:

Cost of holding the belief:

Inciting pressure:

First meaningful change:

Major setback:

Crisis decision:

Final belief:

Final behaviour that proves the arc:

FINAL REFLECTION

What is the emotional argument of your character's story?

Where might readers struggle to understand a change in behaviour?

Which scene best demonstrates change through action rather than explanation?

What should you revise in earlier chapters to support this arc?

NORTHERN BLUEJAY PRESS • BEYOND THE CHARACTER SHEET

CHAPTER 9

FANTASY & SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS

Power does not define a character. What they choose to do with it—and what it costs them—reveals who they truly are.

In fantasy, abilities can be dazzling, but spectacle alone cannot sustain a memorable character. The strongest supernatural elements place pressure on identity, relationships, values, and choices. This chapter will help you build powers that serve character rather than replace character.

WHAT YOU WILL CREATE

By the end of this chapter, you will have a supernatural character profile: where power comes from, what it can and cannot do, who pays for its use, how society responds, and what moral choice it forces upon your character.

HOW TO USE THESE WORKSHEETS

Read the short lesson, study the continuing example, then develop your own character. You may write a character with no magic: treat a rare skill, curse, lineage, or extraordinary social role as the “power” under examination. Keep your rules specific and your costs consequential.

OUR CONTINUING EXAMPLE

Our unnamed former apprentice once studied Essence Magic, the art of perceiving and altering the defining qualities of people and things. The Law of Equal Exchange means strengthening one quality weakens another. The apprentice discovered that a secret Order diverted the cost of its workings onto unsuspecting innocents. The Order erased their memories and altered their essence. Now the apprentice seeks control over a fragmented mind, fearing that recovering the past may erase the person they have become.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

In one sentence, describe the extraordinary element that most affects your character’s everyday life.

WORKSHEET 1 | THE SOURCE OF POWER

LEARN

A power source shapes worldview. Is the ability inherited, learned, granted, stolen, or awakened? Decide who can access it, what training requires, and why your character relates to it differently from others.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice learned Essence Magic through the Order, but the capacity to perceive essence may predate their training. They know the techniques by instinct even though they cannot remember their teachers.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- Where does your character's power originate?

- How did they first encounter or gain access to it?

- What do they believe about its origin, and what might they be wrong about?

CHALLENGE

Write the moment your character first recognizes that their relationship with power is different from everyone else's.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

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WORKSHEET 2 | ABILITIES & MAGICAL RULES

LEARN

Readers need to understand what a power reliably does. Establish observable effects, activation conditions, range, and boundaries. A precise rule creates more suspense than an ability that solves every problem.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice can sense an object's defining quality and, with deliberate concentration, shift one quality by weakening another. They cannot simply create courage or restore a damaged essence from nothing.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- List three specific things the ability can do.

- What must happen before the ability works?

- Which tempting use is impossible under the established rules?

CHALLENGE

Write a scene in which the character attempts a useful spell, but one clear rule prevents an easy solution.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 3 | WEAKNESSES & LIMITATIONS

LEARN

A limitation should affect decisions, not just combat strength. Consider time, skill, access, precision, environment, fatigue, and imperfect knowledge. Give your character a reason to improvise or ask for help.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice can recognize an imbalance but cannot always identify where the exchanged quality went. Their altered essence also makes sustained concentration unreliable during emotional stress.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What practical limitation regularly frustrates your character?

- When is their ability unreliable or unavailable?

- How does this limitation expose a personality flaw or force cooperation?

CHALLENGE

Create an obstacle that could be solved with magic if not for one limitation; show the character adapting without changing the rule.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

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WORKSHEET 4 | THE COST OF POWER

LEARN

A cost gives a magical choice weight. Make clear who pays, when payment occurs, whether it can be hidden, and whether consent matters. A cost that never affects the story is only decoration.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

Essence cannot be created or destroyed. When the apprentice strengthens resolve, an equivalent quality must weaken elsewhere. The Order secretly redirected that loss onto innocents while teaching apprentices that the exchange was harmless.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What exactly must be surrendered or diminished?

- Who pays the cost, and can they consent or refuse?

- What consequence would make your character hesitate before using the ability?

CHALLENGE

Write a scene where using power would help immediately, but the character pauses because the true price is visible.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

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WORKSHEET 5 | HERITAGE & SUPERNATURAL IDENTITY

LEARN

Heritage can influence identity, but it should not dictate personality. Explore the difference between what the world assumes a lineage means and what your character chooses to believe about themselves.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice's association with the Order gives them status in some circles and suspicion in others. Their forgotten training is part of their history, but they resist allowing the Order to define their present self.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What expectations come with your character's heritage or affiliation?

- Which expectations do they accept, reject, or misunderstand?

- How would they describe themselves if that heritage or power disappeared?

CHALLENGE

Write a conversation where another person defines your character by their supernatural identity and the character pushes back.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

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WORKSHEET 6 | SOCIETY'S RESPONSE TO POWER

LEARN

Power exists inside a culture. Laws, institutions, myths, prejudice, privilege, and fear determine how people respond to it. Show differences between communities rather than a single universal reaction.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The Order publicly presents Essence Magic as disciplined service. Villagers admire its healings, unaware that some suffer unexplained changes after the Order performs great workings.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- Who benefits socially from this power, and who is excluded?

- What law, custom, or taboo governs its use?

- How does one group view your character differently from another?

CHALLENGE

Write the same brief encounter from the perspective of someone who admires the power and someone who fears it.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

Use this page to develop your answer, revise your idea, or draft the challenge scene.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 7 | TEMPTATION, CORRUPTION & RESPONSIBILITY

LEARN

Temptation becomes interesting when a forbidden shortcut answers a genuine need. Do not assume power automatically corrupts; show a series of rationalizations and choices that could lead toward harm—or restraint.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice could seek to stabilize their fragmented mind by transferring instability to someone else. The method would work, but it would repeat the Order's hidden exploitation.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What desire makes unethical use of power attractive?

- What justification would your character give themselves?

- What boundary might they defend even when crossing it would help them?

CHALLENGE

Write the character alone with an opportunity to use forbidden power. End the scene on a decision, not an explanation.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

This image shows a full page of blank, cream-colored paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

WORKSHEET 8 | MAGIC AS A REFLECTION OF CHARACTER

LEARN

The most satisfying powers mirror a character's inner conflict. Ask how the ability expresses a want, exposes a flaw, tests a value, or dramatizes change. The climax should demand a meaningful choice, not merely a stronger spell.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice wants control of their own mind. Essence Magic offers control over fundamental qualities—but mastering it without violating another person's autonomy is their central test.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- How does the power embody your character's conscious goal?

- What internal weakness does using it reveal?

- How could a final use—or refusal—demonstrate growth?

CHALLENGE

Draft two versions of a decisive magical choice: one made by your character at the beginning of the story, and one near the end.

Write your response or scene below. Continue on the next page if needed.

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CAPSTONE EXERCISE | THE PRICE OF POWER

Your character can accomplish something urgently important through supernatural means, but the exchange will injure someone who has not agreed to pay. The easy solution is available. The ethical solution is uncertain.

PLAN THE DILEMMA

- What immediate danger or need makes the choice urgent?

- What does the supernatural solution accomplish?

- Who pays the price, and what do they lose?

- What alternative might exist, and why is it harder?

- What choice does your character make—and what does it reveal?

This image shows a full page of blank, cream-colored paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or note-taking. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

SUPERNATURAL CHARACTER REFERENCE SHEET

Character / role:

Source of power:

Three reliable abilities:

Activation requirements:

Hard limits:

Cost and who pays:

Rules governing consent:

Social status / stigma:

Greatest temptation:

Ethical line they resist crossing:

How the power reflects their internal conflict:

FINAL REFLECTION | BEYOND THE POWER

Review your answers and consider whether the supernatural element creates difficult choices and meaningful consequences, rather than merely making your character impressive.

- Which rule creates the strongest story conflict?

- Where might your power system still allow an effortless escape?

- How does the cost affect someone besides your protagonist?

- What does your character's final relationship with power say about who they have become?

Carry this reference sheet into the next chapter. You have not only built an ability—you have built a source of conflict, consequence, and character revelation.

CHAPTER 10

BRINGING YOUR CHARACTER TO LIFE

A character becomes memorable not when their profile is complete, but when their choices begin to matter.

This final chapter brings your foundations, personality, backstory, goals, relationships, voice, morality, arc, and fantasy elements together. The aim is not to complete a perfect questionnaire. It is to create a character who can carry a scene, respond to pressure, and change—or deliberately refuse to change—in a believable way.

WHAT YOU WILL CREATE

By the end, you will have a practical character reference, a test scene, a revision plan, and a clear understanding of what your character does on the page. You can use the same process for protagonists, antagonists, or supporting characters in any genre.

HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

Each worksheet follows LEARN → SEE → DEVELOP → CHALLENGE. The former apprentice is a teaching example, not a template you must imitate. Answer for your own character; leave unanswered mysteries intentionally only when you know what dramatic purpose they serve.

OUR CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The former apprentice of a secret Order has fragmented memories and a personality altered through Essence Magic. They uncovered that the Order secretly shifted the cost of powerful spells onto innocents. They want control of their mind but fear that restoring their former essence may erase the person they are now. Their ending remains open: this chapter tests possible choices rather than imposing a final arc.

YOUR CHARACTER IN ONE SENTENCE

Write a sentence that includes identity, desire, and the central complication.

WORKSHEET 1 | THE CHARACTER AT A GLANCE

LEARN

A useful reference captures what a writer needs while drafting, not every fact imaginable. Distinguish established facts from questions you still need to answer.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

An unnamed former apprentice, now a travelling scribe, wants control over unpredictable shifts in personality while the Order that altered them still holds the truth.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What role does your character play in the story, and how would you describe them in one sentence?

- What three observable traits distinguish them on first meeting?

- Which two details are still deliberately undecided?

CHALLENGE

Write a 120-word introduction to your character without listing profile facts.

Use the following page if you need more room.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 2 | THE OUTER SELF AND INNER SELF

LEARN

Readers observe actions before they learn explanations. Pair an outward habit with the inner motive, fear, or belief that produces it.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice carefully records every conversation. Others call them meticulous; privately, they fear they cannot trust their own recollections.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What behaviour does the world notice first?

- What private fear or desire explains that behaviour?

- When might someone misread this outward behaviour?

CHALLENGE

Show one outward behaviour in a scene, then reveal its different inner meaning.

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WORKSHEET 3 | A GOAL THAT DRIVES ACTION

LEARN

A goal becomes dramatic when it is specific enough to pursue, blocked by resistance, and costly enough to matter.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice seeks an unaltered record of their essence. The only known copy is held by the Order, and retrieving it risks exposing a friend.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What can your character actively attempt in the next scene?

- Who or what stands in the way?

- What might achieving this goal cost them?

CHALLENGE

Write a scene opening in which your character takes a concrete step toward the goal.

Use the following page if you need more room.

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WORKSHEET 4 | RELATIONSHIPS THAT REVEAL CHARACTER

LEARN

Different relationships should draw out different sides of a character. Show a contrast between how they behave with someone trusted and someone feared.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice speaks openly to a fellow scribe but becomes unnaturally formal when an old Order mentor enters the room.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- Who makes your character feel safe, and what changes in their behaviour?

- Who unsettles them, and what is the observable difference?

- What does one relationship need to change during the story?

CHALLENGE

Write two brief exchanges on the same subject with two different people.

Use the following page if you need more room.

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WORKSHEET 5 | VOICE, GESTURE AND SUBTEXT

LEARN

A distinctive voice is a pattern of choices: sentence length, vocabulary, silence, gesture, and what the character refuses to say. Avoid making every line an explanation.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

Asked whether they remember the Order, the apprentice says, “I remember enough to be careful,” while gripping a notebook they have not opened.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What words, rhythms, or silences distinguish your character?

- What gesture betrays an emotion they deny?

- What truth would they avoid stating directly?

CHALLENGE

Write eight lines of dialogue in which the character hides something important.

Use the following page if you need more room.

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WORKSHEET 6 | THE DECISION UNDER PRESSURE

LEARN

A character becomes real through choice. The strongest test pits two genuine values against each other and makes the outcome consequential.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

The apprentice can repair a wounded ally's essence only by transferring the cost to an unwilling stranger. The Order calls it necessary; the apprentice must decide.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- Which two values collide in your character's hardest decision?

- What options are available, and what is the cost of each?

- What choice would reveal a flaw or a sign of growth?

CHALLENGE

Write the moment of decision without explaining which option is morally correct.

Use the following page if you need more room.

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WORKSHEET 7 | CHANGE THAT THE READER CAN SEE

LEARN

An arc needs visible evidence. Compare two similar situations and show a meaningful difference in action, not simply a statement that the character has changed.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

Early on, the apprentice hides every unexplained change. Later, they may voluntarily disclose one to a trusted friend—if they learn that accepting help is not surrendering autonomy.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- How would your character respond to a challenge at the beginning?

- What experience could pressure them to respond differently?

- What action near the ending would demonstrate change—or refusal to change?

CHALLENGE

Draft paired opening and ending moments with a repeated image or line.

Use the following page if you need more room.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 8 | THE SCENE READINESS AUDIT

LEARN

A strong profile should support drafting. Test whether your character has agency, specificity, tension, and room for surprise while remaining psychologically credible.

SEE: CONTINUING EXAMPLE

In a market confrontation, the apprentice wants to escape unnoticed, fears an Order agent, protects a companion, and reflexively uses a forgotten magical technique—revealing several layers at once.

DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER

- What does the character want in the scene you will write next?

- What will they do if their first attempt fails?

- What detail makes this scene unmistakably theirs?

CHALLENGE

Draft a one-page scene and underline each moment where character is revealed through action.

Use the following page if you need more room.

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FINAL CHALLENGE | THE CHARACTER IN MOTION

Write a complete scene (500–800 words recommended) in which your character wants something urgently, encounters resistance, interacts with someone who matters, and makes a choice with a cost. If your character has supernatural power, obey its established rules. Reveal backstory through behaviour, not an information dump.

SCENE PLANNER

- Where and when does the scene take place?

- What is the immediate goal?

- Who opposes or complicates the goal?

- What choice forces two values into conflict?

- What changes by the final line?

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MASTER CHARACTER REFERENCE

Keep this concise. Return to it while drafting and revise it when the story earns a change.

Identity and role:

External goal:

Inner need:

Core fear:

Strength and corresponding flaw:

Defining relationship:

Distinctive voice or gesture:

Moral boundary and likely temptation:

Key backstory truth:

Opening belief:

Crucial choice:

Ending change or steadfast belief:

Fantasy ability, rule and cost (if applicable):

FINAL REFLECTION & REVISION PLAN

- What surprised you about your character during the scene?

- Where did the character feel generic or inconsistent?

- Which unanswered question would improve the story if explored?

- What one change will you make before drafting the next scene?

A LAST WORD

A character sheet is a beginning, not a cage. Keep what helps you write. Let the story challenge what you thought you knew. Your character comes alive when the reader can understand their choices—even when those choices are difficult to forgive.