



Bonding With Your Characters: Traveling, Interviewing, Talking and Dreaming

If you're going to write excellent fiction, then you should probably create some excellent characters to populate your fiction. This doesn't mean that your characters have to be exceptional people: wizards, kings, astronauts, and folks of that nature. However, you should try to make your primary characters well-rounded and interesting—characters that your reader will enjoy spending time with. And to create these rounded characters, you have to know your people inside and out. Often this means understanding your character beyond the scope of the story. In real life, most people have pasts, hopes, dreams, attitudes, and individual hang-ups that affect how they act in any given situation. By taking the time to explore who your character is as a person in a variety of situations, you might learn more about who this person is in the context of your story. And you might stumble across some new ideas for the plot, too. The following exercises are meant to help you bond with your character in a purely platonic sort of way.

Bonding Experience #1—Take a Trip

Your character yearns to travel, so allow him or her to take a trip. Pick a destination and place your character there. Think about why your character chose the place that he or she did. Consider which activities your character might enjoy while he or she is there. What are some problems this person might have in a foreign place? What does your character hate about being in this place and what does your character love? Write this out as a scene.

Bonding Experience #2—The Interview

Your character really wants to meet a celebrity, so let him. Decide which celebrity your character would want to talk to and think about what this says about him or her. What kinds of questions would your character ask the chosen celebrity and how does this reflect the character's feelings towards that celebrity? Write this meeting out as a scene with dialogue.

Bonding Experience #3—The Talk

There is a lot you want to know about your character so ask him or her directly. Write a dialogue between you and your character in which you ask questions and your character gives you detailed answers. Feel free to ask anything.

Bonding Experience #4—The Dream

Your character's dream life is fascinating, so describe it. What does your character dream about? How does this dream change a reader's understanding of the character? What does it reveal? Write the dream out as a scene.