

## USING SEQUELS AS A TOOL FOR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

By Mike Klaassen

The first phase of a sequel provides you with an opportunity to show your character's temperament, his emotions and how he demonstrates them. A character's reaction may range from little or no emotion to such emotion that his behavior borders on irrational. The type of emotion demonstrated by a character tells you a lot about his personality. How does your character react to success? With humility or with bravado? How does he handle failure? With quiet resolve, or with anger? What does that tell you about your character's personality?

The thinking phase of a sequel allows you to show how the character's mind works. Sequels often show a character caught in the horns of a dilemma: a situation involving a choice between equally unsatisfactory alternatives. What is the character's thought process? Does the character make snap judgments, or does he consider the situation from all angles? How does the character make sense of complex problems? Does the character think deftly or clumsily? How does the character work out an answer? What better way to understand a character than by learning how his mind works?

The final phase of a sequel is the decision. How does your character make a decision? Does he procrastinate? Brood? Agonize? Forge ahead? Does the character second guess himself? Worry? Does he have nagging doubts? Does the character take fate into his own hands, or does he wimp out? What does that tell you about his personality?

As you can see, the emotion, thinking, and decision phases of a sequel are powerful tools for character development.

### LEARN MORE

Mike Klaassen is the author of *Scenes and Sequels: How to Write Page-Turning Fiction*, which is available for order at traditional and online bookstores. You may "Look Inside" the eBook edition at Amazon.com.

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