

Write Your Novel - Week 2

Seven Characteristics of a Sympathetic Character

1. **Takes action.** Show your protagonist being proactive. Show them making a hard choice when faced with a dilemma and taking action to get what they want.
2. **Treated unjustly.** Show your character being bullied, persecuted, treated unfairly, or the victim of injustice.
3. **Shows competence.** Readers are interested in people who are really good at things. Don't hide your protagonist's light under a bushel. Let it shine!
4. **Has friends.** We're attracted to people who show that they already have other people who like them. Show your protagonist is likeable by surrounding them with other interesting characters from the beginning.
5. **Does a good deed.** By helping someone in need, your protagonist establishes themselves as "the good guy" despite any other negative qualities.
6. **Has a quirk.** Quirks are memorable things that let us create an instant visualization of someone, like Harry Potter's scar on his forehead. Quirks are especially important for side characters, but a simple quirk helps us quickly get to know a protagonist.
7. **Secret vulnerability.** Everyone has a secret, whether it's a phobia like Bruce Wayne's fear of bats, or Superman's kryptonite, or Inspector Gamache's terror of heights. By letting the reader in on your protagonist's secret vulnerability, you create a bond that can last the entire story.

Source: thewritepractice.com