

# Creating Memorable

# Characters

Presented by

Megan Chance



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## Megan Chance Booklist and Contacts:

### Historical Fiction:

*A Splendid Ruin*, Lake Union Publishing, January 2021, 978-1542022392

*A Drop of Ink*, Lake Union Publishing, January 2017, 978-1503940994

*The Visitant*, Lake Union Publishing, September 2015, 978-1503945173

*Inamorata*, Lake Union Publishing, July 2014, 978-1477823033

*Bone River*, Amazon Publishing, December 2012, 978-1-612-18484-5

*City of Ash*, Crown Books/Broadway Paperbacks, June 2011, 978-0-307-46103-2

*Prima Donna*, Crown Books/Three Rivers Press, December 2009, 978-0-307-46101-8

*The Spiritualist*, Crown Books/Three Rivers Press, June 2008, 978-0-307-40611-8

*An Inconvenient Wife*, Warner, April 2004, 0-446-52956-7

*Susannah Morrow*, Warner, October 2002, 0-446-52953-2

### Young Adult Fiction:

*The Veil (Book 3 of the Fianna Trilogy)*, Skyscape, August 2015, 978-1503945715

*The Web (Book 2 of the Fianna Trilogy)*, Skyscape, January 2015, 978-1477827093

*The Shadows (Book 1 of the Fianna Trilogy)*, Skyscape, June 2014. 978-1477847183

### Short Stories:

*Suffragette City (Anthology)*, Henry Holt, Coming August/September 2020

*The Elopement*, July 2014, Amazon Storyfront,

### Historical Romance:

*A Season in Eden*, HarperChoice, November 1999, 0-06-108705-X

*The Gentleman Caller*, HarperChoice, December 1998, 0-06-108704-1

*The Way Home*, HarperPaperbacks, 1997, 0-06-108491-3

*Fall from Grace*, HarperMonogram, 1997, ISBN 0-06-108489-1

*A Heart Divided*, Dell, 1996, ISBN 0-440-22081-5

*The Portrait*, Dell, 1995, ISBN 0-440-22080-7

*After the Frost*, Dell, 1994, ISBN 0-440-21488-2

*A Candle in the Dark*, Dell, 1993, ISBN 0-440-21487-4

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**Instagram:** chanceauthor

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**Bookbub :** @meganchance

## Booklist

*Techniques of the Selling Writer*, Dwight Swain, University of OK Press, 978-0806111919  
*Elements of Writing Fiction: Scene and Structure*, Jack Bickham, Writers Digest Books,  
978-0898799064

*Writing Novels that Sell*, Jack Bickham, Simon and Schuster, 978-0671683931

*The Writer's Journey*, Christopher Vogler, Michael Wiese Productions, 978-1932907360

*Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell, New World Library, 978-1577315933

*Screenplay*, Syd Field, Delta, 978-0385339032

*Story*, Robert McKee, HarperEntertainment, 978-0060391683

*Starting From Scratch*, Rita Mae Brown, Bantam, 978-0553346305

*Creating Characters*, Dwight Swain, University of OK Press, 978-0806139180

*Save the Cat!*, Blake Snyder, Michael Wiese Productions, 978-1932907001

*On Writing*, Stephen King, Pocket, 978-0743455961

*Writing the Blockbuster Novel*, Albert Zuckerman, Writers Digest Books, 978-0898795981

*Writing the Breakout Novel*, Donald Maas, Writers Digest Books, 978-1582971827\

*Characters, Emotion and Viewpoint*, Nancy Kress, Writers Digest Books, 978-1582973166

## Creating Character Biographies

When creating characters, remember that, although they have complex motives and conflicting desires, they should always be fathomable. Preparing a character biography will force you to think about and explain your character in detail.

NAME (Nicknames)

DATE OF BIRTH (astrological sign or numerology number, if you like):

AGE:

PLACE OF BIRTH:

### **Physiological:**

- Height
- Weight
- Race
- Health (the quality of it)
- Scars/Deformities
- Allergies
- Posture/Bearing
- Voice quality
- Nervous ticks and gestures
- Physical habits

### **Sociological: (you must be able to trace the source of a character's traits to his roots)**

- Social class
- Neighborhood grew up in
- Schooling/Education level (what studied? Why? How did he feel about it?)
- Politics
- Religion
- Parents:
  - Their history
  - Their attitudes about: Sex/Money/Ambition/Family/Religion
- Family: Any siblings? What is character's attitude toward them? Them towards him?
- Discipline
- Friends (How many? What kind?)
- First sexual experience/Attitudes toward the opposite sex/Romantic/sexual relationships

## Creating Memorable Characters handout/Megan Chance

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### **Psychological: (This is the product of both physiological and sociological influences)**

Phobias/Manias/Complexes  
Fears  
Inhibitions  
Patterns of guilt and longing/Hopes  
Fantasies  
IQ/Aptitudes/Special abilities/Soundness of reasoning  
Irritability  
Sensibility  
Talents  
Dislikes  
Goals  
Beliefs/Superstitions  
Morality  
Prejudices

### **Questions to ask of your character (adapted From Rita Mae Brown, *Starting from Scratch*):**

1. What person(s) had the greatest influence on your life. Why?
2. What events outside your personal life stand out in your mind?
3. Where have you lived in your life? What place did you like best? Why?
4. If you could tell people something and have them remember it, what would you tell them?
5. How would you best describe yourself? (Self concept)
6. What is your greatest fear?
8. What would you hide from your analyst? From yourself?

REMEMBER THAT A CHARACTER'S GREATEST STRENGTH CAN AND SHOULD WORK AGAINST HIM, THEREFORE BECOMING HIS GREATEST WEAKNESS (EX: a man who is always merciful would endanger himself by releasing his worst enemy; someone who is always courageous may go into a foolhardy battle; a man who relies on his intelligence will not think to rely on instinct when instinct would alert him to danger. This is what the Greeks called *Hamartia*—the fatal flaw)