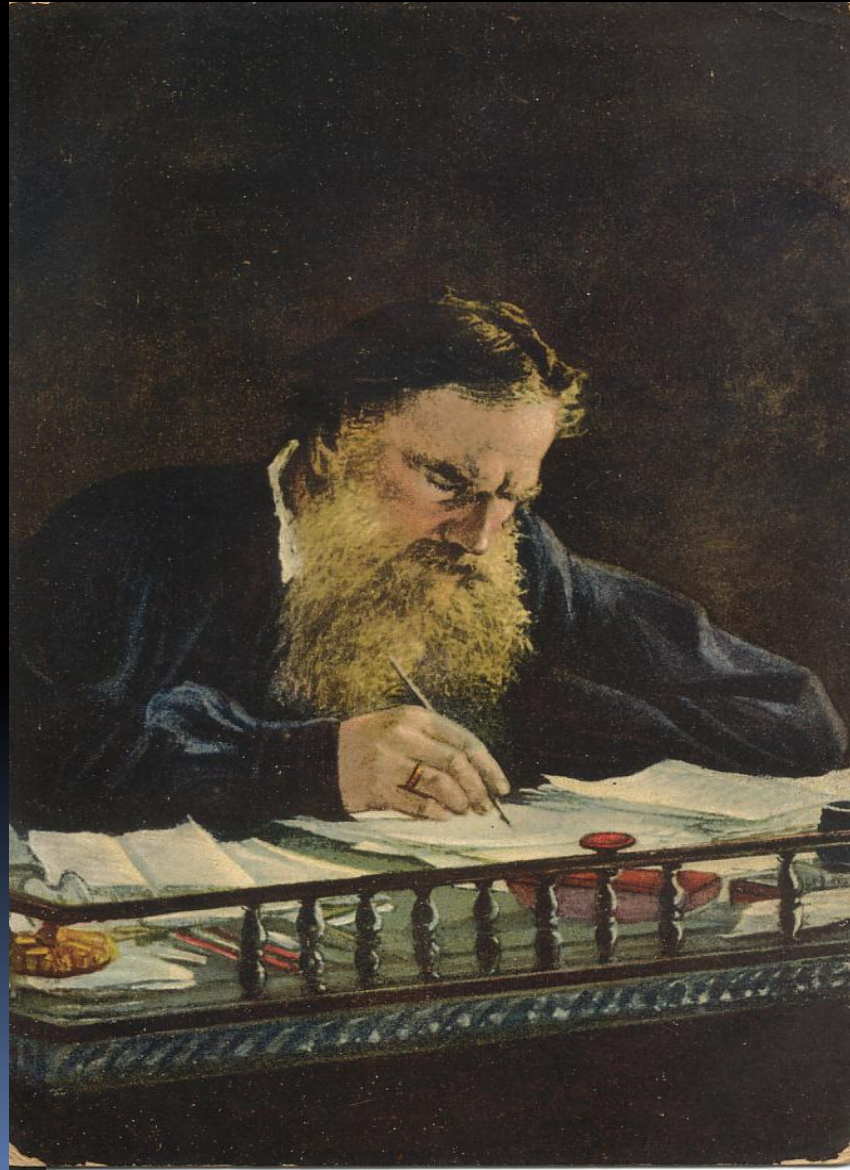


The Short Story

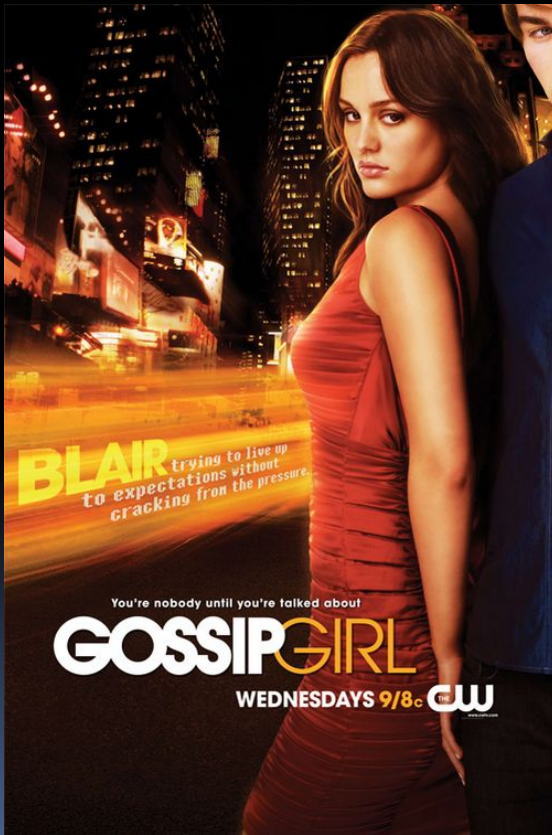


Characters Welcome



Characters Reveal Themselves In Three Ways:

1. What they SAY



2. What they DO



3. What others say ABOUT them



Creating Characters



Models

James Bond



Indiana Jones



Jones' "look"

Lucas based Indy's
costuming...



...on Ronald Reagan's in Hong Kong
(1952).



(Ironically, Connery was chosen as Indy's father).



Friends and others you know
can also serve as
inspiration.



Just don't get crazy.



Archetypes

Evil Stepmother



Crazy Uncle



Characters can be revealed through points of view.



First-Person Point of View

"TRUE! Nervous, very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why WILL you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses, not destroyed, not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How then am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily, how calmly, I can tell you the whole story." -- Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"



Second-Person Point Of View

You are alone in the hall. You walk slowly toward the office. You don't have a pass.

Suddenly, you see the principal! He's heading your way! You know that one more referral means no Senior Prom for you. You must get away!

To duck into the bathroom, turn to page 12.

To try to outrun the principal, turn to page 15.

Third Person P.O.V. (limited)

When Dave finally decided to ask Trudy out, he did it in style. He washed and polished the diaper truck, trimmed his beard to three-day length, and picked out his cleanest army surplus field jacket. Sure, Trudy had been distant for a while now, but they still were close, right? He was sure he could see it in her eyes....

Dave parked the truck right outside of Trudy's trailer. To his surprise, she was waiting for him at the door. What was that look on her face? Shaking off his fear, he reached into the truck for the bottle of Boone's Farm he'd bought her and headed up the walk.

Third-Person P.O.V. (omniscient)

When Dave finally decided to ask Trudy out, he did it in style. He washed and polished the diaper truck, trimmed his beard to three-day length, and picked out his cleanest army surplus field jacket. Sure, Trudy had been distant for a while now, but they still were close, right? He was sure he could see it in her eyes....

Trudy hated washing dishes, but it was Saturday, and it had to be done. She couldn't wait for Wayne, her ex, to show up and get these bratty kids out of the place. She had a hot date with Abe that night, and she was nervous and excited.

Dave parked the truck right outside of Trudy's trailer. *Oh no, she thought, not Dave! Can't he understand "no"?*

To Dave's surprise, she was waiting for him at the door. What was that look on her face? Shaking off his fear, he reached into the truck for the bottle of Boone's Farm he'd bought her and headed up the walk.

Conflict



Two Basic Types

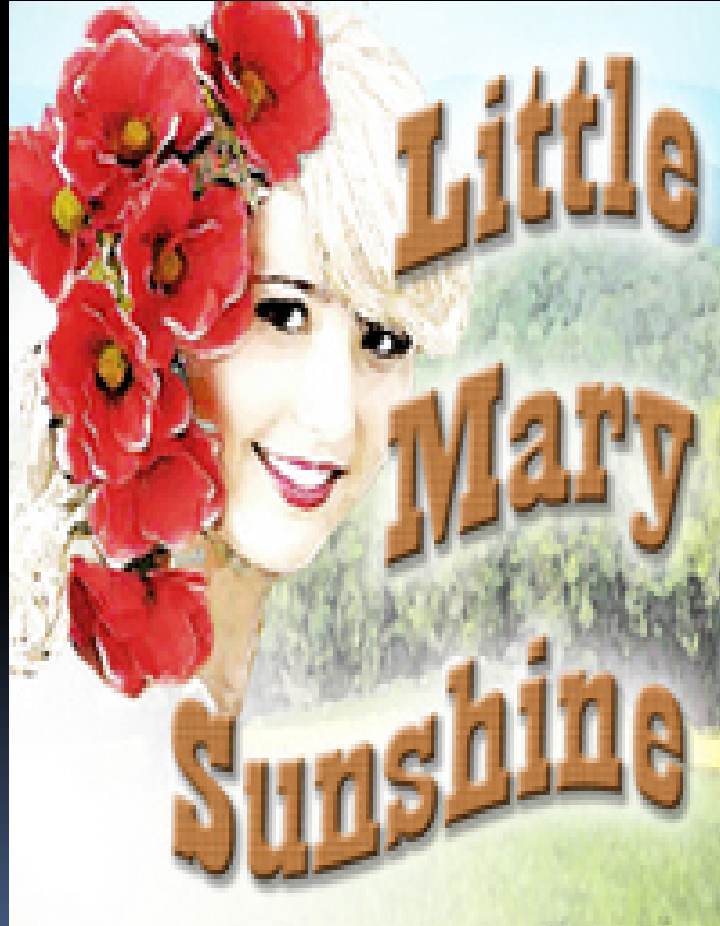
EXTERNAL



INTERNAL



“Little Mary Sunshine”: A Sample



Little Mary Sunshine

Little Mary Sunshine awoke on a perfect morning, opening her china-blue eyes just as the sun was rising. She petted her beautiful Siamese cat Mister Whiskers before having a perfect breakfast of imported tea and tasty jelly tarts.

In the afternoon, she wrote her fiance Miles who was off in the city working hard so that he and Little Mary could one day marry. In the afternoon, Mary napped in her glorious rose garden. Before drifting off into dreams of her wedding day, Little Mary waved to Mr. Glock, her neighbor who was walking Emery, his dog.

Little Mary Sunshine

The rain leaking through the roof spattered Little Mary Sunshine on the face, bringing her out of her stupor. She opened her blood-shot eyes and cursed the morning. As she stumbled out of bed, she kicked Mr. Whiskers (the annoying stray alley cat) in the face.

“That’ll teach you, you rancid fuzz ball,” she croaked while the cat limped away, one eye swollen shut.

Little Mary had a stale roll and a shot of cheap gin for breakfast. She spent the morning composing a letter to her ex-husband Miles, threatening to take him back to court unless he paid up the alimony.

In the afternoon, Little Mary checked her garden only to discover someone had stolen all her weed. Cursing up a storm, she kicked at her lounge chair and fell on her face. Mr. Glock, Mary’s neighbor (who’d just been paroled) laughed at her. Mary got up and gave him the finger.

Enraged, Glock gave his Doberman Emery the order to attack! The last thing Mary saw before lapsing into unconsciousness were the flashing yellow teeth of the killer canine.

The Climax: The high point where the conflicts are settled.





A Climax can also give you a place to start...

The first blue belly around the corner caught a spray of machine gun fire. He staggered back in a cloud of blood. His partner was next; Skunk pulled the trigger. and the bullets cut the man's head in half.

Skunk dropped the clip to reload, but the next guy was on him too fast. Grabbing his filet knife, Skunk stuck the bastard and twisted. The man's gurgling cry told him all he had to know. By Skunk's count, there were six more between him and freedom, but that was fine with him. Death was a game, and Skunk Klesson was its best player.

It wasn't always that way. Back before the accident, back before Skunk was Skunk, things had been quiet...1950's cliché quiet. If only the accident hadn't happened. But it had, and there was nothing to do about it.

Your job: create a character
and conflict

