



## Characterisation

I feel that none of the characters are developed enough to build even the smallest empathy with the reader. We are given snippets of their thoughts and interior monologue, for instance, how George feels about his empty home, but not enough for us to identify at least partially with any of them and care about them. Their personality and physical differences are not prominent enough (with James' exception, the long hair detail makes him stand out) to make us remember them.

Also try to avoid block-descriptions such as “[quote]” (p. 198), as the reader is likely to forget instantly the details of your descriptions. Instead, consider adding one description detail at a time, as you go, and deepen your characters organically.

The same about Maria's character on page 200. Sometimes characters can be overdeveloped with distracting effects. Giving a minor character an *over-described* past or an *irrelevant* past would be a good example. Sometimes we just don't need the amount of characterisation we are given to understand or empathise with a character. “[Quote]” We really don't need to know all this about Maria, she is a minor character who rarely appears in the story.

If you want to make us understand why she is in a hurry when she has this conversation – because her being in a hurry is necessary to later development in the plot – consider introducing her earlier, showing her meeting up with the lawyer from the Agency and resolving to go on a second date on the day of the conversation as part of the backstory, or at least show her mentioning this to someone. When you then show her in a hurry, we remember why and your writing delivers an already improved reading experience.

Vic's characterisation is well developed in the first half of the book, but it gets very confusing in the later part, especially after his encounter with the Devil. Has he been cursed? Has he changed after the birds' attack? His survival in the



context of such a vicious attack from the birds is also unconvincing. His faith or lack of it is not clear either. Early on in the story, we suspect he doesn't believe in God because he sees the Devil as a metaphor for social injustice (p. 19) and he says it openly to George – his ambivalence can be a rich resource to make Vic a very interesting character – although later on he is shown praying and practising exorcising.

Marcus' surname, De Ville, is a confusing choice too, as readers will anticipate it to be a clue related to a darker side of Marcus, an anticipation that never delivers.

Loreley is the most under-developed character in the book. Her characterisation starts well by introducing her to show us what she was like before she was possessed by the Devil, in the face-to-face she had with Vic Mortimer. However, the scene is short, written in report-writing style, it lacks atmosphere and it doesn't really portray Loreley three-dimensionally. You have a great opportunity here to build an atmosphere-charged, hair-raising scene ending with Loreley's words, "[quote]". This makes a great cliffhanger, but it would make an even more effective cliffhanger if you used it in dialogue straight from Loreley and cutting the chapter mid-scene.

James Buchanan's character needs further development too. His menace doesn't come across as convincing enough at times. Example: "[quote]". However, we are led to dislike James Buchanan in a profound way; this naturally builds anticipation about his ending, which seems somehow to be neglected and feels like a loose end in the book. Part of a satisfying ending is building strong villains that will receive their comeuppance at the end of a story in which they create a great deal of menace.