

THE CORE OF CHARACTER

What does your protagonist want?

What they want—their goal or objective—is the core of who they are and what will fuel your story.

1

Protagonist = Main Character

This is who your story is about; the character your reader follows from beginning to end.

What does it look like?

How will your reader know that your protagonist has achieved their goal/attained the object of their desire? What does the reader see? This is the external "shape" of your story.

2

External/Objective

Think: Object of Desire

Their want or goal is an externally measurable object (even if it's something intangible, such as a relationship).

What does it mean?

Your protagonist's reasons for what they want will determine their decisions (think of our prompt, "flipping the switch"), which will determine their actions. This is the internal "compass" of your story.

3

Internal/Subjective

The goal or object is what they want; we also must know why they want it.

Remember, different people can share the same goal but for very different reasons.

Either "what does it look like?" or "what does it mean?" will usually be answered automatically, once you've identified your protagonist's main goal. The other question might take some thought. Finally...

**IF your protagonist were to achieve their goal,
THEN would your story be over?**

NO:

Keep exploring their object/goal.

YES:

You've found your character's core.

