

Make Your Child a Hero

Fiction/Fantasy: Part 1

Most fantasies begin in the everyday reality or in a fantasy “reality.” Whichever it is, the reader must buy into that reality as the journey begins. *Alice in Wonderland* starts with what could be an everyday setting: a bored young girl is on a boring outing in the boring countryside with her boring older sister. That’s as real life in a fictional setting. But then she falls down a rabbit hole into a different reality, and the adventure begins.

On the other hand, the Superman story literally starts with a bang based on a fantasy premise. Superman’s scientist father rockets the infant Kal-El to Earth moments before the planet Krypton is destroyed. Kal-El grows up to become Superman. While you are reading or watching a Superman adventure, you have bought into the fantasy that this man comes from another world and has superhuman qualities. While we are experiencing the story, we are transported to that magical world.

You can write a magical fantasy story that will transport your child into an adventure where he or she is the hero. First though, don’t over-think it.

In this exercise, compare yourself to a track and field star. You are a sprinter. Unlike a distance runner who strategizes and measured out energy usage in order to have something left in the tank for the “kick” at the end, you, the sprinter, will start fast and stay fast for a race that can be won or lost in less time than it takes to blink an eye.

The historical approach to story writing, which we’ve already discussed, starts at a leisurely pace. You mull over actual events in your child’s life. You ponder, pick through pictures and think of possible strategies for finding your story in the same way that a distance runner develops a strategy, plans the race, knows when to overtake, when to hang back. With fantasy, you, the sprinter, will approach possible story lines in bursts through writing “sprints.”

You will jot down, as quickly as possible everything you know about your child including personality traits, likes and dislikes, dreams and aspirations, strengths and weaknesses. Don’t try to ponder the ideas or worry about any of the things you can fix later. To keep yourself moving quickly, use a timer. To start, set your timer for **one minute**. Write down at least ten observations about your child. in your first 60-second writing “sprint.”

Your first list might look something like this:

Amelia:

Is funny

Thinks pet fish are boring

Likes bugs and worms (or hates bugs and worms)

Likes carrots (hates broccoli)

Likes video games (hates video games)

Wants a horse (a cat, a dog, a hamster, a)

Likes coloring books

Likes sports (likes baseball, football, soccer, ...)

Likes everything red

Likes bicycling (or playing on the swings in the neighborhood park or swimming or ...)

Likes trains (or big rig trucks or earth-moving construction equipment or)

Ding! Time's up.

Go through three more 60-second writing sprints. Don't ponder; just write. After you have completed the additional sprints, look through them. If you have worked with opposites or have combined ideas, as in the sample list above, you will have more than ten observations per sprint. Among these observations about your child's personality or interests you might find at least one of these ideas that gets your creative juices bubbling.