

CHARACTERISATION

**CC MELANIE WHIPMAN
WWW.MELANIEWHIPMAN.COM**

“The power to create and develop character is at the heart of all fiction”

Malcolm Bradbury.

characterisation

‘Give characters names that tell you something about them. Is your hero an alpha hero and a warrior? Then give him a name that alerts readers to his personality. Is your heroine an artist? Find a name that projects a creative personality. In my romantic suspense novel, I had a great time finding names that suited the characters. EG Sebastian Gregoire, a passionate artist; Constance Wynter, cold, wealthy woman; and Laurel Walker, the down-to-earth heroine.’

THE NAME GAME

- NAME
- PROFESSION
- HOBBY

IGNORE SLIDE 3!

VERY POOR ADVICE!

**LISTEN TO
ARISTOTLE...**

ARISTOTLE'S 'CONSISTENT INCONSISTENCIES'

- avoid generalities and cliches
- avoid stereotypes
- be particular and specific
- credible characters are usually inconsistent and have personality traits that conflict.

REMEMBER...

- JUST LIKE CLICHÉS,
STEREOTYPES BREAK
OUR BELIEF IN THE
STORY.

CHARACTERISATION

‘Characters pre-exist. They are found. They reveal themselves slowly – as might fellow travellers seated opposite one in a very dimly lit railway carriage.’ (Elizabeth Bowen 1948)

CHARACTER CHECK LIST

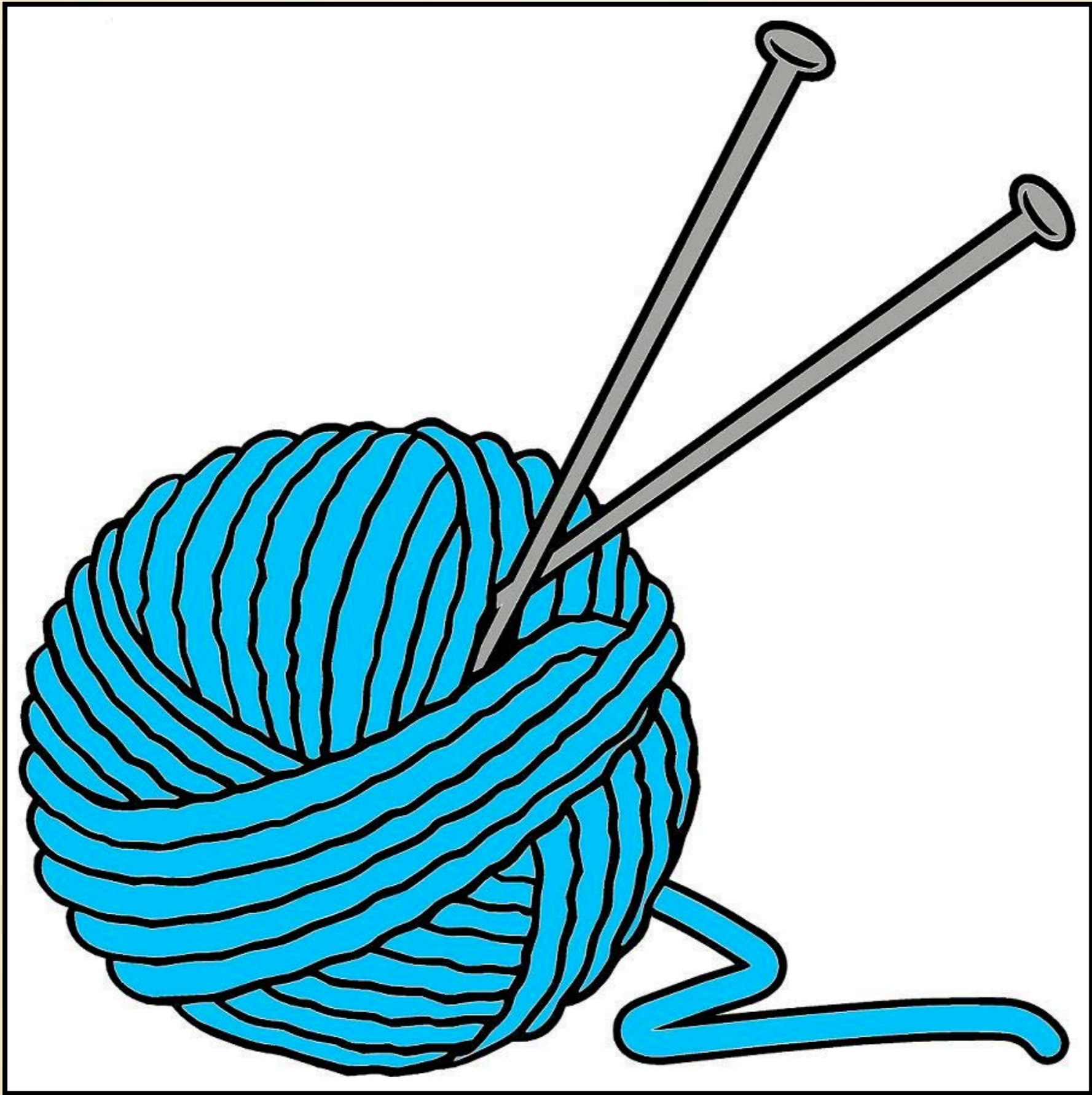
- Physical/biological – age, height, size, state of health, assets, flaws, sexuality, voice, gait.
- Psychological – intelligence, temperament, happiness/unhappiness, attitudes, self-knowledge.
- Interpersonal/Cultural – family, friends, colleagues, birthplace, education, profession, hobbies, beliefs, values, lifestyle.
- Personal History – major events in life, including best and most traumatic moments



- I WANT
- I FEAR
- MY FAVOURITE POSSESSION IS...

‘One of the most effective ways of revealing character is through details of the spaces they inhabit and the possessions they have chosen. A character’s belongings can act as an index to his or her character. Possessions in themselves can hint at character but it is when we understand what they mean to their owner that we get the richest insights.’ (Linda Anderson)





MADAME

WOOH'S



CHAP

WAX



- *True character can only be expressed through choice in dilemma. How the person chooses to act under pressure is who he is – the greater the pressure, the truer and deeper the insight into the character's essential nature.'* (McKee)

LOST OBJECT

‘Show’ your character searching for it. Reveal their physicality and their emotions as they search

Character + Conflict

=

Plot



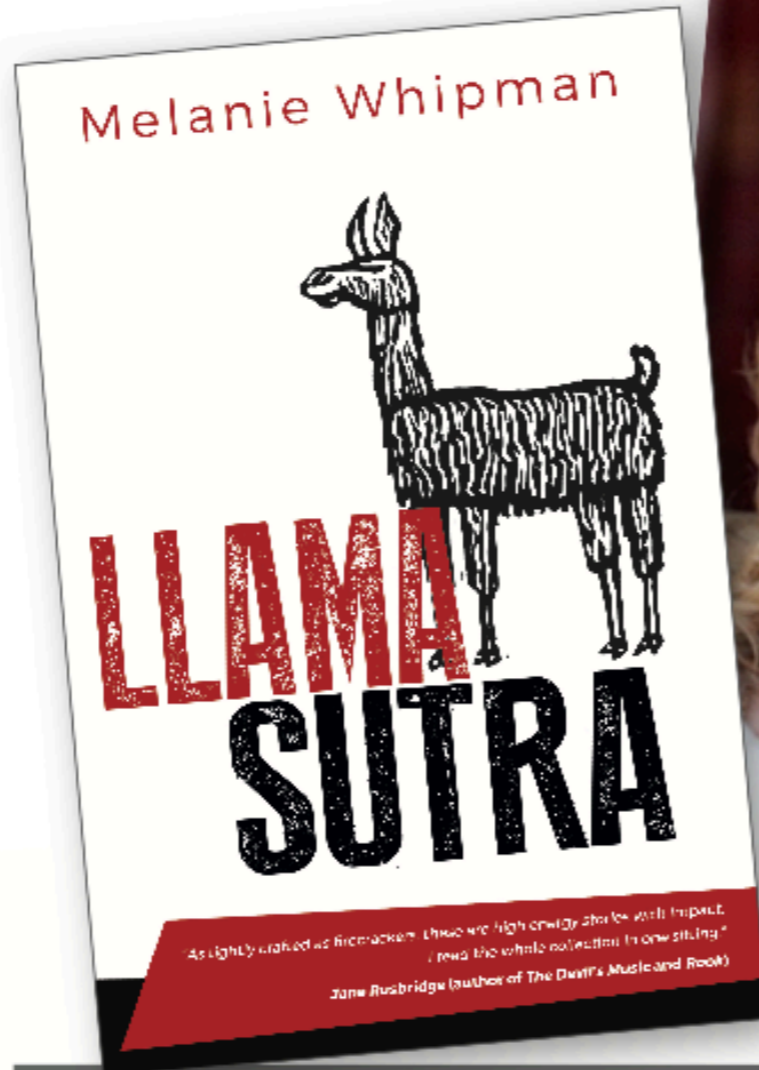
MELANIE WHIPMAN

BOOK SIGNING

LLAMA SUTRA

'Bold, passionate, suspenseful.'

Alex Wheatle (MBE, Author of award winning Brixton Rock, East of Acre Lane, The Dirty South, Crongton Knights)



'Beautifully controlled language, a writer to watch'

Sussanah Rickards (Author of award winning Hot Kitchen Snow)

www.melaniewhipman.com



Next Workshop Rewriting The Self Sat Aug 12th

Have you ever considered writing a blog or a memoir? Or perhaps you'd simply like to pull on some of your personal experiences and turn them into fiction. In this one day course we'll be experimenting with using real life events and personal history as inspiration for writing. You'll learn how to collate, edit and transform your memories into engaging prose.

Details: www.melaniewhipman.com