

CREATING CHARACTERS

**(ones you want to cheer [and boo] for)
By Stephanie Campisi**

WHAT IS A CHARACTER?

- Someone (anyone!) in a book, movie, play or game



IN A LITTLE MORE DETAIL...

- Characters WANT something, and that WANT drives the story!
 - To win a prize
 - To make a friend
 - To eat an entire chocolate cake all at once



- Characters aren't like NORMAL people. They do what it takes to get what they want.

WHY DO CHARACTERS NEED TO WANT SOMETHING?

- When you want something, you have a GOAL!

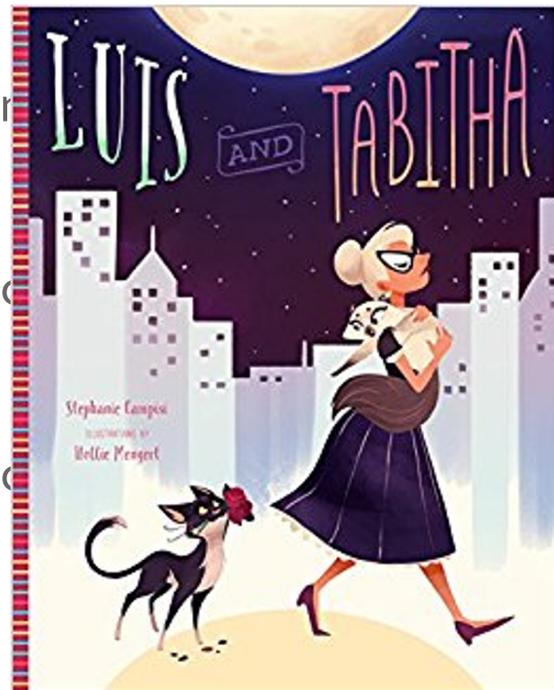
AND... someone can STOP you from trying to achieve that goal!

And when that happens, you have CONFLICT!

Conflict is BAD in real life, but
it's GOOD in a story!



LET'S LOOK AT AN EXAMPLE



(Surprise, it's my

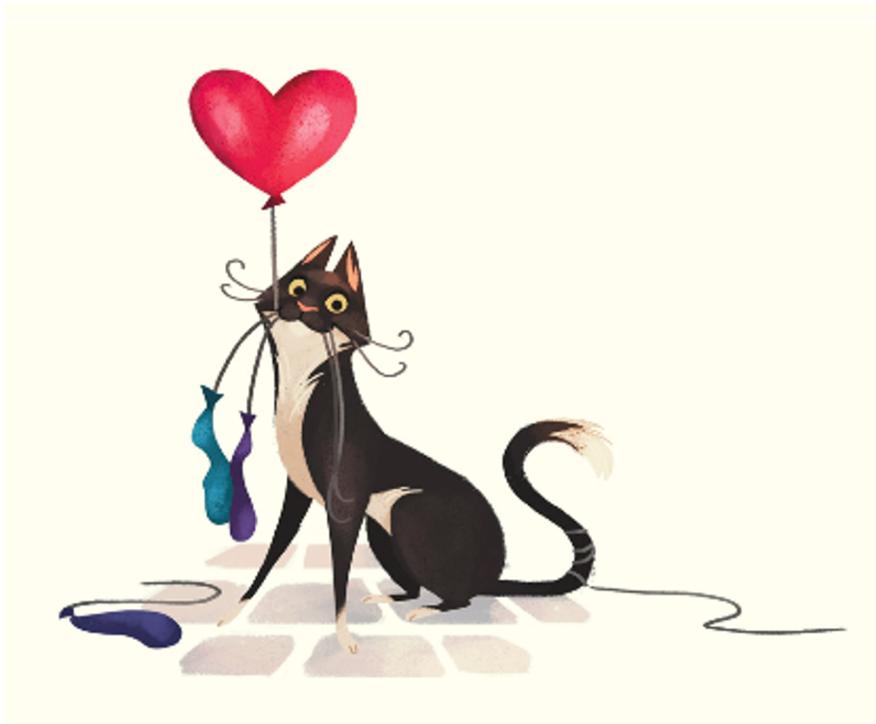
Luis is an outside

Tabitha is an inside

They're in **love!**

But **Tabitha's owner** wants to keep them apart.

THIS IS LUIS!

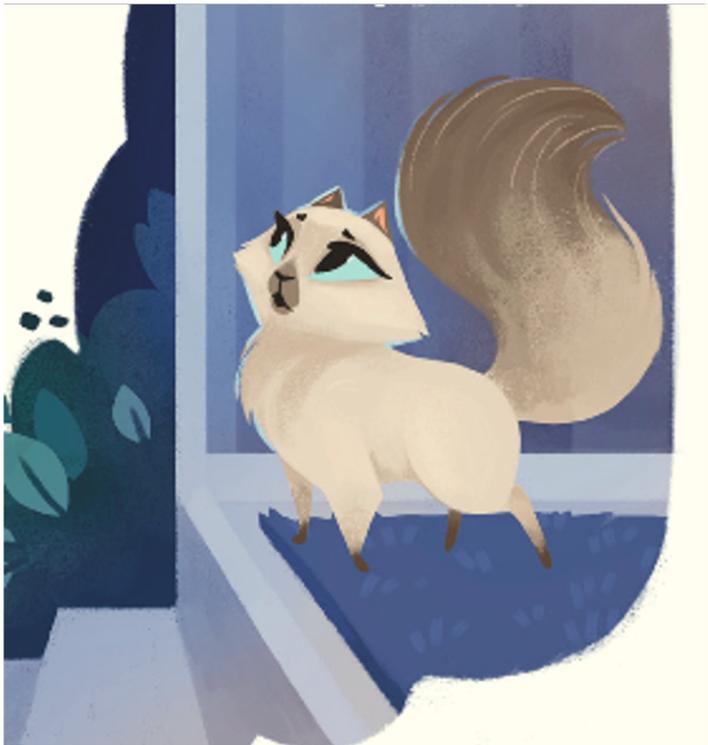


- Luis is an alley cat
- He lives at the fire station
 - He's friendly and popular

...just not with the people who matter (Tabitha's owner)

Can you think of some problems Luis might face?

THIS IS TABITHA!



- Tabitha is an indoor cat
- She wins all the cat shows!
 - She's sweet and loving
 - She loves her owner

But...she's also in love with Luis

Can you think of some problems
Tabitha might face?

SO HOW DO WE GET LUIS AND TABITHA



WE HAVE TO HELP LUIS WIN OVER TABITHA'S OWNER!

- Can you think of some ways?
 - What can Luis do to make himself more like Tabitha?
(does he even need to?)
 - How can Luis show that he's a good kitty?
 - What do you think Tabitha's owner needs to learn about Luis?



SOME TIPS FOR CREATING GREAT CHARACTERS

- Contrast!

- Match a *posh* character with a *rough-and-tumble* character.
- Match a *greedy* character with a *generous* character.
- Match a *lazy* character with an *active* character.

Contrast = conflict, and conflict = unputdownable!

- Desire!

- Make your characters **WANT** something and try to **STOP** them from getting it!



- Hobbies and passions!

- People care about things, so characters should, too!
- PLUS these give you opportunities for conflict!

- Physical traits

- Frizzy hair! A MASSIVE nose! Clown shoes!
ONE EYE! Freckles!

- Cool and surprising names!

- A pirate called Fred
- A dinosaur called Petunia
- A kid called Fido (or Spot)

- Personality traits!

- Shy as a mouse! LOUD as an elephant! QUIET as a librarian. GRUMPY as a bull.



A QUICK WORD ON GOODIES VS BADDIES

- Everyone thinks that they're RIGHT! (even if they're not)
- To the baddies, the goodies are the *real* baddies!

So don't think GOOD vs BAD.

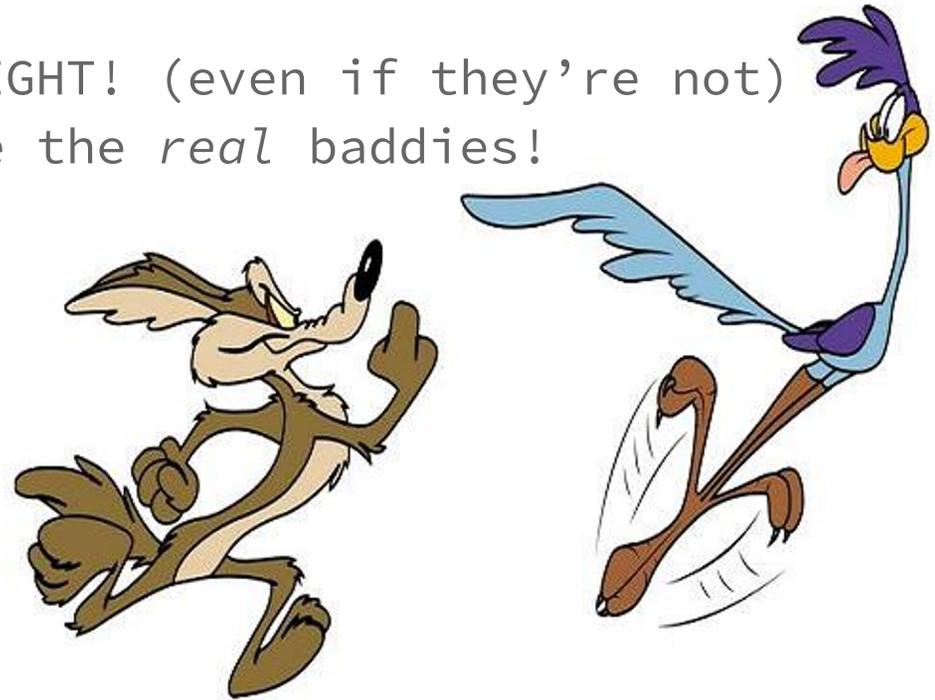
Just two people (or animals :))

Who want the

SAME THING

for DIFFERENT REASONS...

or OPPOSITE THINGS for the SAME REASONS.



LET'S GIVE IT A TRY!



Meet Luis's friends!

- What are their names?
 - What do they want?
- What are their interests?
- What are their physical Traits?
 - What are their personalities?

CAN YOU WRITE THEIR STORY?