

Shaping Characters Initially

How do the characters take shape? How do they come to life? I don't always know ahead of time. For me, it is mostly a matter of visualizing them. I place them somewhere and they interact, exposing who they are. Right now, I have three guys in a strip club in Las Vegas, all friends and two are brothers. The younger brother seems much more naïve than his older brother. I can picture the younger one and I describe him as a fresh-faced, boyish looking, and acting much less worldly than his older brother. The two of them begin to take shape for me, just by contrasting them with each other. They speak differently and act differently, as older and younger brothers often do.

Their appearance, speech and behavior all confirm the contrast of innocence and worldliness. In this way, they take shape, almost organically. They become clearer, more defined, as I write about what they do in a given setting.

I still have no idea where this story is going, what will occur when. One or two of these guys will undoubtedly make some bad decisions and suffer the consequences as time goes on. After all, where better to make bad decisions than Las Vegas?