

Cloak and Sword Woman: Creating the Fantasy Heroine

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Strong character development is a must, and beyond that, fantasy readers want (and need) multi-level female fantasy heroines. Want to write a fantasy book that sells? Then you need a strong female lead character, as she can make or break your story.

She's beautiful, intelligent, and not afraid to get her hands dirty. She's the cloak and sword woman, even if she doesn't own a cloak or know how to swing a sword.

Creating the Fantasy Heroine

Your heroine must be a balanced character to make her believable. Determine her strengths and weaknesses. What does she love? What are her fears? What are her hopes and dreams? Her secrets? What does she dread?

So, what other characteristics belong to your cloak and sword woman? Here's a list to help you get started.

- She knows how to get things done; she's resourceful. She has fears, but strong will, circumstances, or something else propels her forward. In moving forward, she sometimes creates problems.
- Your cloak and sword woman doesn't wait for things to happen to her; she goes forth and actively seeks her destiny. She is proactive. This can be good or bad, as she might misjudge the consequences of her actions.
- The fantasy heroine is strong of will and soul. She uses her inner resources to the best of her abilities, fighting through her fears. On the other side, she needs to recognize when and how to ask for help.
- She loves, but tends to fear giving or receiving love. Maybe she holds back because of a fear of being hurt or betrayed, but the love is there, and in the course of the story, the love matures.
- She's passionate. Bottom line: She grows into a woman who knows what she wants and gets what she goes after, whether she's facing an evil monster or dealing with a loved one. This aspect of your heroine can also lead her down paths where she will either dig herself out or need to ask or find help in doing so.
- Your heroine is fallible. Who isn't? If your cloak and sword woman didn't make an occasional mistake, who would want to read her story? She makes errors and misjudgments, and learns to admit when she is wrong. Many times her errors result from her passions, but she never blames others, learning that she's the one who creates her destiny.
- She can be physically or emotionally wounded, but limit this as too much makes her appear weak. When she is wounded, the heroine will push or fight through her pain, seeing options and taking a course of action. She doesn't sit by and wait for others to act. In the bleakest moments, there is opportunity for her to learn and grow.

Self-Actualized Fantasy Heroine

The cloak and sword woman takes charge of her destiny. From the beginning, the reader is aware that she is headed in this direction on a subconscious level. By the end of the novel the fantasy heroine is self-actualized.

The fantasy heroine has immediate and long range needs and goals, driven by her passions. The conflicts come at her from within and without. She battles demons on all levels, and in the process, she grows.

Allow your readers to experience her feelings and thoughts, her dreams and fears. Re-read fantasy novels in which you admire the heroine. What has the author done in the story to make you care about the heroine? Strive to develop the same qualities in your own character.

Give life to your cloak and sword female fantasy character. Bestow upon her a life that suits her destiny and dreams. In doing this, you will give your readers exactly what they want. A character they care about, relate to and grow with.

Author Bio: P. June Diehl is the author of **The Magic & the Mundane: A Guide to the Writer's Journey**. June works as a writing coach and teacher. She facilitates workshops on various topics related to the craft of writing and publishing. The author is the Editorial Director and Senior Editor at Virtual Tales (www.virtualtales.com) and Senior SF Editor at ePress-Online (ePress-Online.com) June can be reached at: <http://www.iwriteforyou.org> and pjune@yahoo.com .