

Your character needs new shoes

Scenario

Your character needs to buy new shoes.

Questions

Write the answer to these questions. You don't have to use complete sentences. If possible, write the answers as part of a scene that may be in your finished story. As you write these snippets, always consider why your character makes these choices. What compels her to make this choice, as opposed to another? What is going on in her life or her past history that drives her to make these choices or take these actions? What colors her interpretation of the events?

Why does she need new shoes?

What happened to her old ones?

What kind of shoes were they?

Were they:

- Practical
- Sensible
- Pretty
- Functional
- Totally unsuitable (at least for work)
- High heels
- Flats
- Comfortable
- Bloody uncomfortable
- Hell on her toes
- Pinched
- Walking in them felt like floating
- Every step was torture
- Ugly and beat up

Does she go to the store with several hours to spare so she can take her time?

- Why?
- Does she like buying shoes?
- It a quick hit-and-run so she can get on with other things because shoe shopping is a chore?
- Why?

Does she wear an odd size or have hard to fit feet?

- If so, what did that mean to her when she was growing up?

Are her feet extra wide so that it's hard to find nice or pretty shoes?

- How does she feel about that?

Are her feet extra large so she feels self-conscious?

- If so, how does that impact her life?

Does she hate having someone at her feet during the fitting process? Why?

Does she love having the salesman kneel at her feet during the fitting process? Why?

Does she think the male shoe salesmen are trying to look up her dress when they're slipping the shoes on her feet?

- If so, does she wear pants to avoid that feeling?
- What if she's not comfortable wearing anything but dresses or skirts?
- Why?
- Did she always feel that way? If not, where did that come from?

Does she always let the salesmen persuade her into shoes she doesn't really want or that don't really fit the way she likes because she doesn't know how to be firm?

- If so, why?
- How did she get to be that way?

Is she clear about what she wants and she never buys any shoes unless they're exactly what she wants?

Does she love the whole shoe buying experience?

- Why?
- What appeals to her?

Does she try on all the shoes in the store even though she already knows which ones she wants just because she loves trying on shoes?

Or does it take her forever to make up her mind because she's always seeing another pair she likes just a tad bit better?

Does she always buy sensible, practical shoes even though she'd much rather have pretty red strappy sandals with two inch heels?

Which shoe store does she go to?

- A stand alone local merchant?
- A chain?
- A department store?
- Why?

As she approaches the shoe store or department, what does she see?

- How does it make her feel?
- What memory does it bring up?

What does the salesman look like?

- How is he dressed?
- What is his manner like?

Does the salesman secretly loathe selling shoes?

- Does he hate selling shoes to women or is it everyone?
- Why does he feel that way?
- How is this expressed in the way he behaves, his manner and speech?
- Why?
- Why doesn't he change jobs?

Does the salesman adore selling shoes?

- Does he love everything about it?
- Especially when selling to women (or men)?
- How is this expressed in the way he interacts with customers - manner, behavior and speech?
- Why does he love it?

How does the salesman make your character feel?

Which shoes does she select to try on first?

- Why?
- Are they the ones she intends to buy or is she picking the ones she'd really like first before trying on the ones she knows she thinks she has to buy?

Does the salesman know your character from previous buying trips?

- If so, does he enjoy your character?
- Actively dislike her?
- Despise waiting on her? If so, why?
- How does this come out in his manner and speech?
- Does he love waiting on your character? If so, why?
- How does this come out in his behavior?

How does your character feel about this salesman?

Does she think he's too familiar and cringes when she sees who's going to wait on her?

Does she go thru with the shopping after all not wanting to hurt his feelings by walking away and coming back some other time?

Does she walk away and decide to come back another time?

Maybe she goes to another store instead because she hates that salesman so much.

Does she cringe every time he touches her ankle?

Do his fingers linger just a little too long?

Is he too rough?

How does she feel about the experience?

How many pairs of shoes does your character try on?

- Does she have a good time?
- Does she get the shoes she needs?
- Does she get the shoes she wants?
- Why or why not?

Finally

What does this experience bring up for your character? What specific memory or emotion? Does it change anything for your character?

Choices

Your character always has choices. What choices does she make at each junction and why?

Think of your current story

How can you use this in your story?

Next

Do this exercise for the each of your characters. Each one should have a different perception of the salesperson and the experience.