

Character Design - Lumi

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This is another thing I did for my English Writing class. We were supposed to base it around a "character" and use that "character" rather than a plot or scene to draw interest from the reader.

Provided by Fanart Central.

<http://www.fanart-central.net/stories/user/Shi-an/59489/Character-Design---Lumi>

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I was curious about Lumi from the moment I first read about her, although I suppose that is quite acceptable when you are given the sheet listing the students you will be teaching for the year, and just before dismissing you the principal points silently to a single name and hands you an extra sheet of paper. Lumi was a case who required extra attention from each of her teachers (who I later learned had all received the same sheet as me), as she was being kept back a year, and hence remaining at this school. I was quite distressed at the thought of having a student who could not even graduate middle school in fewer than two attempts in my class, and for a moment I fell into a daydream envisioning all the ostentatious and disruptive things she would do to hinder the learning of the other students. However, as I read on I learned that she was in fact the top of her class in terms of grades last year, and at that time had actually been a year younger than her peers. To this revelation I was quite astounded, and could not perceive a possible reason for her to be confined to repeating the year. The alleged "reason" I discovered further down the page, was that the parents had stated they were afraid for their little girl, who was but a young and fragile flower, and had not yet enough experience to be plunged into the cold, dark world of high school. 'Codswallop!' is a sugar-coated rendition of what I thought directly after reading such nonsense, 'she topped her class while still a year their junior, there is no possible way she is not ready for the next stratum of education!' I had half a mind to march straight back up to the principal and complain, however I was not very proficient in arguing with half a mind, and did not wish to play two-up with my job the day before I started, so left the matter for tomorrow.

To say that meeting Lumi was not my uttermost anticipation when I woke up the next day would be a lie so big that if I were Pinocchio, my nose would grow so large that when I lay down God would split my speech into several different languages for attempting to build a tower to heaven. Anxiously I sat at my teacher's desk in front of the blackboard and tapped my fingers, sometimes glancing at the door in search of Lumi and sometimes glancing at the students already inside, as it was not as if every child who came in was required to shout out 'HELLO, I AM NAME' in ringing tones, so she may have already snuck in and was speaking to her friends that very instant.

The seconds passed by and the classroom became more lively, but still I was unsure who the legendary Lumi was. It was quite distressing, and for a moment I actually bethought myself, wondering why on Earth I was so desperate to see this girl, but I soon remembered the indignation I felt and the truth that she was much too clever to be kept back a grade, which instilled me with a tinge of curiosity.

It was a few minutes before class was scheduled to start, and when only about three or four students were still absent, that she came in. I can not for the life of me explain how I knew it was her; perhaps it was the "aura" that she emitted, perhaps it was my acute intuition, (although I do not at all believe in either of those) but somehow as soon as she walked in I knew it was her.

She was a girl slightly small for her age, with short toffee-brown hair made almost into a bowl haircut, but saved from such a Beatles-like atrocity through variations in length around her neck and ears, and a fringe hanging loosely over her forehead. Her blue uniform was neat, tidy and crease-free, and although it was hard to discern at such a distance I swore that her ribbon was tied exactly according to school regulations, which required that the tight bow of a size no larger than both wearer's fists accumulated

was centred directly over the middle of the clavicle. In her right hand she held two books and three pencils, and with a gait so precise and consistent it seemed almost mechanical she passed by every other student and took a seat by the window in the centre row of the room.

Until class started Lumi remained in her seat with both hands held in two firms first upon her table, staring like a statue straight ahead and showing no desire to talk or even look at anyone. She continued like this throughout the homeroom session, gazing blankly ahead as if she had seen a Gorgon, while I read out all the information which was required to be relayed to the students, desperately fighting the urge to look up and check if she had shown any degree of human emotion.

I was almost sweating by the point that home room had ended and it was time for me to begin teaching my subject (which is History, as I have always had a taste for things that one can no longer do anything about), and my head was spinning partially due to the stress of a new job, and partially because the situation with Lumi was getting awfully confounding. However, when I get into my field of study I become quite passionate, and I soon found myself completely occupied in teaching Roman history and was leagues away from any considerations of Lumi and the peculiarities she possessed.

Of course I would have liked to have remained in that boon for all eternity, however life is not so kind and I was soon broken out of it by a question from one of my students.

'Excuse me Mr.Noland,' called a young boy with black hair, 'what does the writing in the picture at the top of the page say?'

With a curious eye I looked upon the large image placed upon the left page of the textbook I was holding in my hands (which every student was required to buy as part of the syllabus) and began examining it. It was a messy cartoon of two people with noses which resembled eggplants, looking confoundedly at a large stone panel somewhat like a gravestone on which the words "Si hoc legere scis nimium eruditionis habes" were inscribed.

Now, as a history teacher I had of course dabbled during my uni life in the language that the proto-Italians used to speak, however such a complicated phrase was beyond my knowledge, and I could but umm and ahh as I desperately tried to discern even its pronunciation.

'Si hoc legere scis nimium eruditionis habes,' said a frigid, slightly bashful voice. At first I looked up expecting to see the ghost of a Roman, who had come to aid me in my darkest hour and save me the humiliation of looking obtuse in front of the students on my first day. It took several seconds of gazing ludicrously at the ceiling, before I realised there was no ghost, and dropped my head in despair, only to see that all the children were facing the window-side of the classroom, in about the middle row, where a small girl with toffee-brown hair was seated.

'Si hoc legere scis nimium eruditionis habes,' she repeated again in a voice still void of any intonation, 'which means "if you can read this, you are much too well educated."'

There was a short spell of silence, during which one would be able to hear an acus drop, before every student suddenly burst out laughing and created a din loud enough to wake the dead. I too would have joined in but I was too astounded by the fact that I was outsmarted by a middle schooler, and further more that she had had used Classical Latin pronunciation, rather than Ecclesiastical Latin pronunciation,

when articulating a phrase that two years of Latin study at a university level had not helped me decipher.

I was about to raise my voice and quieten down the class, when I noticed something peculiar: Lumi, who had up until then remained with a completely stoic countenance, was now glancing about the room with a look of bizarre wonder on her face. It was as if she had been thrown into a room full of baboons and been forced to watch actions she could by no stretch of mind comprehend. She looked around the room, staring at the guffawing faces with a look of confusion. Indeed, through the whole affair she had not once shown any indication that she was amused, or even slightly entertained, and instead stared blankly at the other students when they had burst out laughing.

That was when I realised; Lumi did not understand “funny”. That look of confusion was a result of her inability to comprehend the humour of knowing how to read such a phrase, which consisted of several relatively rare words from a dead language, and which meant something that actually ridiculed anyone who could read it. She just did not understand how amusing it was that she COULD read it, and probably could not understand many other things that most other kids could. Suddenly the reason for her apathetic demeanour and indifference towards almost everything became apparent. Lumi was intelligent, but in exchange for all the time she had spent honing her knowledge and learning all kinds of bizarre languages and sciences, she had sacrificed the vital activity of interacting with other people, and with that the ability to understand how others look at the world.

It was then that I realised; perhaps her parents were right for keeping her back a year.

FINITO (not Latin)