

Steve Foy

THE230 – Character Development

Main Character Profile

Final Capstone

Sharon Bolman

April 28, 2008

Contents

I. Name and Significance.....	2
II. Physical Description.....	3
III. Setting.....	4
IV. Diachronic Story.....	5
V. Psychology.....	7
VI. Example Situation.....	8
VII. Audience.....	9

I. Name and Significance

Rosie Papilion is a butterfly who is trying to kick the habit of smoking. The origin of her name is “rose,” and roses are beautiful just as Rosie was before she began smoking. Since then, however, the world has beaten her down making her life take continuous turns only for the worse. She is no longer a beautiful, happy butterfly and her dissatisfaction with herself often comes out through her actions toward others. Rosie’s change in personality due to smoking reflects the fact that roses can also have thorns. Deep down, however, she still has the soul of a rose.

“Papilion” is the last name that Rosie’s family shares, which is both a reflection of their Italian heritage and the fact that the name literally means “butterfly.” Her full name can essentially be translated to “Rosie the Butterfly.” However, the characters very rarely refer to each other by last name, so first names hold larger significance.

When I first began to picture my character, the name “Rosie” was instantly the first choice. Because of the name, I picture someone with a rough exterior but a very soft interior. A similar name such as “Rose” does not sound as tough as “Rosie.” In addition, The Bronx is also generally considered to be a tough place, which seems to fit the name Rosie. It is the intent to convey all of these attributes of Rosie instantly just through her first name.

II. Physical Description

Rosie is also not at all satisfied with her appearance but looking at her does tell a lot about her past. She is overweight, looks older than she really is, and her once beautiful wings have turned to a very dirty yellow because of all the smoke. In addition, also due to smoking, she has acquired a lower register masculine-like voice. Her gritty voice and gritty appearance are meant to reinforce each other.

Her overweight appearance is a result of her very inactive lifestyle. Her job just requires her to stand still all day making clothes. And as a result of being so overworked and her smoking habit, she has physically aged faster than others and thus appears much older than she really is. Also an indication of her smoking habit, her lower register voice affects the way her mouth moves when she speaks. Her mouth movements resemble more of a growl or mumble rather than the typical phonemes visible in regular speech. Also, her presently dirty yellow wings are designed to be a visual indication of her progress throughout her journey to quit smoking. As she smokes less and less, color in her wings begins to be restored.

In addition, she happens to be quite strong. She is not muscular, but knows how to adjust her body weight in such a way that gives her a significant advantage over others. This quality is a result of the psychological trait that forces her to never give up despite extreme hardship. She has

grown stronger both physically and mentally throughout the years. Essentially, she is a living realization of the phrase, “Whatever does not kill you makes you stronger.”

III. Setting

The setting is two-fold and parallels are established between them that ultimately results in the two coming together as one in the end to solve a much larger problem. She and her family live in a swamp on the outskirts of mid-1970’s New York, Bronx, however her little corner of the Bronx is experiencing problems itself.

The Bronx

The city is a densely settled, working-class, urban culture. It is far from a place of prosperity for Rosie. Being the 1970’s, raising a family in this place of violence, decay, and urban ruin is not easy. One of the reasons for this low and difficult quality of life is because in the mid-1970’s, arson became a common crime as attorneys, real estate operators, and public insurance adjusters were accused of contracting with landlords, financially troubled shopkeepers, warehouse owners and others to burn down their buildings for the insurance. In this time period there were over 95 suspicious fires under investigation, several deaths, and millions of dollars in property damage.

The Bronx population is full of people living in fear as a result of the despair this arson wave instilled in residents. As a result, half of the population has actually fled and half of the buildings have been abandoned.

The Swamp

Rosie, along with her husband and two children still in caterpillar form, live in a swamp on the outskirts of the city. Rosie does not like where she lives. In the swamp it is noisy, loud,

and polluted from the nearby city. There is even a lot of theft going on, as other butterfly families live within the area and they are getting robbed quite frequently. Much like the people of the Bronx are experiencing waves of theft and arson, it seems to have spread majestically to Rosie's much smaller home as well.

Their home has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and is home to many birds that threaten the lives of her young caterpillar children. The infestation and contamination of the swamp has actually gotten so bad to the point that residents have forced town authorities to appropriate the necessary money and soon plan to drain the swamps both to end the mosquito nuisance and to reclaim valuable land. After all, at this same time Bronx authorities are doing everything they can to clean up their city, clearing the swamps being one of many goals. The mosquitoes make the swamp a noisy and unpleasant place to live, and since they only breed in water, the swamp's continuous standing water only makes the situation worse.

Their home use to not be a swamp, but rather a lovely forest of maples and oaks with all the food in the world to eat, and friendly neighbors around every corner. All of this was taken away in a flash by a ten-day downpour and a massive flood. Rosie wants to renew her home to its previous state, allowing all of her old friendly neighbors to move back. The swamp's many new cockroach residents surely are not a friendly replacement.

IV. Diachronic Story

Most of Rosie's history has been about work. Whether it is going to her job everyday to get money or taking care of her family, everything is some form of work. For years she has worked at the same sewing sweatshop for ten hours a day under very poor working conditions. Part of the reason for this is the recent shift in management. The factory has not been doing too

well lately so they have begun to cut costs at the expense of their worker's comfort. Her childhood friend Beth works alongside her at the factory and keeps her entertained during the grueling hours of work. They spend a lot of the time talking about their families or reminiscing about the days when they were just caterpillars.

Rosie's parents, her father still alive but mother deceased, treated her in a rather horrid manner. It was clear that her parents were never meant to be together, as all they did was fight in her presence, and in some cases her father was physically abusive to her mother. The only thing that actually brought her parents together—temporarily—was when she ran away from home just after she had finished pupating into a butterfly. Her parents had the entire insect kingdom on watch for her and it was not until a day later that a pack of honeybees caught her. After that, though, her parents grew further and further apart until they inevitably divorced. Now an adult, Rosie's parents figured she could handle herself by now and the family went their separate ways. It was at this point that she felt lost in the world and took comfort in smoking, marking the beginning of her addiction.

Unlike her parents, Rosie was able to find her soul mate. In Rosie's neighborhood, there have been numerous death reports relating the cause to smoking, however since it has never been someone close to Rosie she just passes it off saying that the same will not happen to her. Rosie's biggest reason to come home everyday after work is to spend time with family. But then tragedy strikes close to home. It takes the death of her husband, also a smoker, for her to decide that it is time to quit. Her husband's death, coupled by the sideline support of her children, is what motivates her to quit. She is a single mother of two, and wants her children to at least have a mother—after all, her mother either ignored her or was abused by her father, and they never got close.

V. Psychology

A key thing to note about Rosie's psychology is that, even though she is at the lowest point of her life, she keeps trying to thrive. She takes her children to school, goes to work all day at an unrewarding sewing sweatshop, picks her children up, and goes home to cook dinner for the family. All of this and she never, ever complains. Sometimes she sounds irritated like she is trying to suck the joy out of everything, however this is often a misinterpretation of her just because her smoking habit has given her a lower register, more masculine voice that sounds irritated all the time.

Another important psychological factor is that she is committed to not burdening her two caterpillar children with her own troubles. She does everything to hide the fact that she has an uncontrollable habit even despite the fact that her children already know it is a problem. More so, Rosie is resistant to admitting to herself that she has a problem. She has nothing to be happy about and never is, but has learned to hide her complete dissatisfaction with herself.

The psychological trait of Rosie's that got her started on the journey to quit smoking is that there are only two things that keep her willing to live day to day: her family, and smoking. When with family, she feels comfortable, safe, and happy even while some troubles may still exist. Smoking, however, is what makes all those troubles fade away. Rosie begins her story at a point where she can not live without either of these, but conflict strikes when family and smoking are suddenly taken away when her loving husband dies from smoking and she decides that it is time to quit or else she, too, would die leaving her two children alone with no mother.

The final and most important psychological trait is how she always falls back to smoking whenever daily troubles and stresses bring her down enough. This is important, because in order to quit smoking Rosie discovers that she must put an end to those daily stresses, most of which

originate from her diachronic story. As such, she spends a lot of time digging into her past to resolve those conflicts.

While Rosie starts her journey in an “Emotional Past” state, she advances to an optimistic view where she believes that the “Future is All.” After quitting smoking and helping to heal both the city of Bronx and her small home community of all their troubles, she feels like she can do anything. She still accepts the fact that she is not invulnerable, taking a lesson from her own husband’s death, so she practices careful optimism—but optimism nonetheless!

VI. Example Situation

Rosie has been working at the same sweatshop sewing factory for over eleven years. Monday through Friday for every day of those years she has worked ten hour days, forced to meet strict daily quotas in order to not be fired. However, one redeeming quality of the situation is that she works alongside her long-time childhood friend Beth who had originally gotten her the job there.

Rosie and Beth happen to have the best history of meeting their quotas in the entire factory. As a result, their boss Marshall has grown to be good friends with them, allowing them certain quirks such as being promised permanent stations next to each other and being allowed to talk provided that they still get their work done.

So, a common decision that Rosie makes in attempt to pass the time is to talk with Beth about family. Since Rosie holds her family very dear and its one of two things (the second being smoking) that keep her going every day, this gives her something happy to think about even though she is in such a place of dread.

Ever since the death of Rosie's husband, however, even the slightest mention of him brings Rosie to tears. Since his death is very recent, Beth still has a bad habit of bringing it up by mistake, as in the past they were very comfortable talking to each other about their husbands and family.

One day suddenly, all of this changed when they discovered that their boss Marshall is being fired because the factory has not been doing well lately and the higher-ups feel like giving another man, Mr. Gates, a chance. Rosie and Beth quickly discover that he is no nice guy, and instantly separates the two from each other and forbids any talking while working.

Rosie, feeling as if Mr. Gates had just taken her family away, approaches him directly. Rosie has experienced so many difficulties in her life that she is committed to not letting this one destroy her ego even more, so she makes the sudden decision to tackle Mr. Gates to the ground in front of all the other workers.

Rosie is fired as a result but is satisfied with the way she tackled her problem. Her friend Beth also quit showing her support, and their friendship is only strengthened because of the experience.

VII. Audience

This character is intended to be used for a 3D animation short. As such, much of the audience will be people around my age of 22 or older. It is expected that they will be able to both identify with the troubles plaguing the characters, and appreciate the humor of the situations within. While the story has cute little butterflies, it is not written with children exclusively in mind. Though, a potential result is that children may identify with the cuteness and lovability of the characters, while at the same time people my age identify with the more adult forms of

humor, i.e. all adults probably know what it is like to have a boss haggle them at work but children do not.