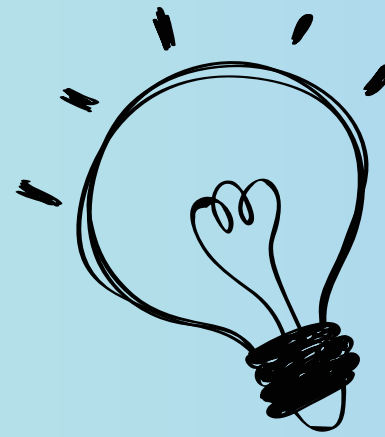


# MAIN CHARACTER SYNDROME

By Scarlett Adams



## excerpt

For Context- Story is told from the perspective of a 1980's Rolex, and serves to comment on familial relationships, especially as the youngest generation of the family enters adulthood.

Even though the majority of the time I just sat around, I will never forget a distinct time when I was brought out. The girl whose room I resided in clumsily walked in, grabbing me as I made my descent into the living room, where music was blasting, and an overwhelming amount of people crowded in. She put me on, letting me slide all along her wrist and she began showing me off. This is what I wanted. I wanted to be worn and be seen.

But I also won't forget when the slightly older boy slid me off of her wrist and onto his. Him and another guy were standing there, inspecting my every inch, and the word escaped their lips that any inanimate object of such high prestige would recognize: "Fake." They called me a fake. The girl listened to what they had to say about my fakeness, which I couldn't believe, and she simply shrugged and put her hand out to take me back.

However, the boy held on a little tighter to me. He put me on his wrist. It was a tight fit. If he were to wear me daily, he would have to add some links. I suddenly found myself wanting to be back on the bedside table, even back in the jewelry box. I didn't like this wrist. I know my worth, and I don't want to be on the wrist of some phony who thinks I'm a phony.

To my dismay, I somehow ended up leaving on the too-big wrist. I liked the previous home I was in, as the one I was taken to was far away. While I did spend most of my time in a jewelry box, I did, however, get to go out on a few occasions. I had links added. I had a value appraisal. I knew I was real, but it took someone else to convince this guy that I was real. After that, I was worn maybe once or twice, then sold for a quick buck.

## intro to the project

I originally got the idea for this project as I concluded my first year at UCSB as a community college transfer student from a community college in Orange, California. In a time of personal reflection, an opportunity on campus suggested by a professor in the writing program allowed me to extend this period of personal reflection into a multifaceted challenge to conclude my undergraduate studies. The challenge being, how can I retell my personal experiences, but abstain from my own perspective? This writing experiment has been a holistic journey into forgiveness, and how writing in itself is a healing process. Being able to tell my own stories-from a different perspective-has been a personal catalyst into exploring the concept of what truth is, and how truth, much like forgiveness, is a subjective matter. This project highlights how writing can be an active form of empowerment through writing, being able to find self-forgiveness in situations where otherwise closure may have never naturally manifested.

## the research

My research question for this project is both an academic and a personal one, of how writing can be used as a form of expression and a route of self-forgiveness and awareness. Through this experimental form of writing, the reader is exposed to the general question of truth, perhaps inciting a question of what constitutes the truth. It probes audiences to examine their relationship to truth and face the way it rules their lives, providing inspiration to face any struggles they have encountered with this concept in exchange for forgiveness and freedom. I wanted to see how individual ownership and agency over personal stories can help us detach and reflect. This pursuit of detachment via storytelling from an alternate perspective promotes empathy, and this feeling evokes a sense of both external and internal forgiveness.

In the context of writing studies, shifting perspectives, and abstaining from writing in a personal narrative voice, raises the question of how voice and perspective manipulates a story. This provokes the notion that truth is a subjective matter, and that in order to fully understand a situation, we must acknowledge that our recollection is inherently biased.

Through blending autoethnography with fiction, *Main Character Syndrome* aims to address this directly. The goal of sharing these personal stories with others in this style is to use writing to promote empowerment and find personal forgiveness through detachment. Although these stories may not hold significance to the audience, I hope their significance to me comes through. My intention for this project from the start is turning writing into an active form of self-acceptance and forgiveness.

## methods

Following an untraditional method for an untraditional "form" of research, I challenged myself to write a collection of stories throughout my life. I started researching by reading texts such as *The History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* by Julian Barnes and listening to the podcast "Everything is Alive." Drawing inspiration from the episodes of "Dennis, Pillow," and "Ana, Elevator," I was inspired to start experimenting with my own tales through the perspective of inanimate objects. Although the work began as strictly writing a personal experience from the point of view of another human being, it expanded to include inanimate objects and also places. The product so far is a 14 essay collection, ranging from childhood experiences to the present.



## reflection

This project's objective is to redefine storytelling as an act and, further deepen its meaning as a performative form of taking action over one's life. It is a work that shows the interplay of the power of writing and the power of how much we believe and obsess over our own truth. Instead, it seeks to examine the truths of others to gain a clearer understanding of the bigger picture. Through consideration of others perspectives, we can begin to understand others, detach ourselves from our own perspective, and look upon the situation with empathy. The writing I have completed for this fellowship thus far has impacted my relationship with myself, helping me to look outside myself, finding forgiveness and empathy. Seeing past traditional perspectives, and refusing to write my own perspective has made me realize the subjectivity of truth. Ultimately, this research project has led me to alter my view of writing as a passive act, rather, I now see its potential as an act of self-affirmation and acceptance, which serves as commentary on how writing is a vehicle for healing.