

SEVEN TIPS TO MAKE FANTASY TRAVEL MORE INTERESTING

by Kellie Doherty, science fiction & fantasy author

#1. FOCUS ON WORLDBUILDING

Having your characters travel from point A to point B is the perfect opportunity to incorporate the unique aspects of your world.

- sprinkle in some interesting and unique landmarks
- incorporate the history of the region your characters are traveling through
- take the opportunity to really show off your setting

#2. BUILD UP YOUR CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

Expanding on your characters and building (or breaking) the relationships between them makes them more relatable.

- have the characters talk about their past
- share the reasons why they're on this adventure
- show off their awkwardness, their personalities

#3. HAVE A SURPRISE AMBUSH/FIGHT

This works only if your characters are traveling on well-worn roads because it means an ambush would be expected and realistic.

- thieves or mercenaries attacks the main character's group
- another group gets attacked and your characters can help them
- adds a sense of urgency...maybe the road isn't as safe as the characters thought it would be

#4. ADD A DRAGON

And no, this doesn't have to be an actual dragon, it can be any kind of fantastical beast that you have in your world.

- forces your characters to defend themselves
- shows your readers if your characters are brave or scared, how they fight, and shows off the magical properties your characters can control
- gives you the opportunity to show off your unique fantasy creatures

#5. MAKE SOME SMALL NOT-IDEAL THING HAPPEN

This is a way to show the characters reactions to small things that just happen and, if they're traveling with a group, the interactions between them. Does one character stay calm throughout the whole ordeal while another gets really annoyed? Does a leader emerge? These smaller mostly annoying moments would add a sense of realism, too.

- a minor injury or a wagon wheel breaks
- bad weather
- the inn they wanted to stay at happens to be shuttered for the night

#6. MAKE THE WAY OF TRAVELING UNIQUE TO YOUR WORLD

You don't need have your characters travel by horseback, sail on a boat, or even walk everywhere. Now this would be hyper specific to the kind of world you're building but try to think about unique ways your characters could journey through the land.

- fast-travel by magic
- non-horse mounts
- air ships

#7. THE FLASH-FORWARD

If nothing important happens during travel, you can do the flash forward—where you end one chapter or scene with them starting their trip and then begin the next chapter or scene with them arriving at their destination, adding in a line or two about the journey. Give the sense of passing time and advance the character relationships—or show cracks that weren't there before. The readers didn't see the few days or weeks of travel, but the characters lived it—had conversations, conflicts, maybe met some new people on the way—so be sure to reflect that in their attitudes.

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