Reeling in Readers with Deep Point-of-View

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Ready to give readers an immersive experience? Avoid POV snags and instead, empower characters to own the story through senses and emotion? Let’s jump in and tackle Deep POV (DPOV) together!

* **Point-of-View**
	+ In fictional writing, the narrator's position in relation to a story being told … how the writer controls the story.

“The way the reader travels through the story.”

author and editor, Ann Laurel Kopchek

* + Whichever you choose (most commonly1ST or 3RD), stay in it! Remain in the realm of the Point-of-View Character’s (POVC) head. Nothing can be presented that is outside the character’s awareness.
* **What is Deep POV?**
	+ Narrative distance eliminated … instead the writer becomes the POVC character in the full sense – thoughts, action, wishes, action. The character owns the story and the author is nonexistent.
		- Example from my novel *RUSH,* written in 1st person POV:

Trapped. The realization spun through my mind, and for one brief moment I was drowning. First a whirl of blue, green and white—gasping for air—then everything went black.

* + - Example from Hearts That Survive – A Novel of the Titanic by Yvonne Lehman.

Caroline sat for a moment, listening to the silence. She could get undressed. However, she walked barefoot to the window and looked out, but saw nothing. And for lack of anything else to do, she slipped her feet into her shoes.

* + Story experienced from the inside rather than from the outside looking in, allowing the reader to live vicariously through the actions and emotions of the character
	+ Action and character’s thoughts are immediate and personal
	+ Powerful tool to avoid telling vs. showing
		- The noise was as though hell itself had let loose. Yells and hollers raged with snorts and screeching as the reverberating boom launched the line forward—an uncontrollable, unstoppable wave of humanity. (*RUSH*)
	+ Strengthens characterization and voice – you have to know your character deeply.
* Who are you?
* What do you want more than anything?
* How far would you go to get it?
* Why is what you want so important?
* How do you feel about the people in your life? This could be story time people or past people. Both will reveal a great deal about the ‘who’ of the character.
* How do you feel about the people in your life?
* How do you feel about yourself?
* How do you carry yourself? How do you make others feel about you?
* **What isn’t Deep POV?**
	+ A rambling of narrative or internal monologue
	+ Italicized sections
	+ Used through an entire story
* **Avoid these DPOV Snags**
	+ Filter words – she thought, he saw, they wondered, he knew
		- **Shallow**: He knew he’d seen her before and wondered if she would recognize him.
		- **Deep**: Her hairstyle might be different, but the dark brown eyes were unforgettable. Had the years away from home changed him too much?
	+ Limit dialogue tags - he said, she replied, they asked
		- Shallow: “I don’t want to eat my dinner,” he said.
		- Deep: “I don’t want to eat my dinner.” Focused on his plate, he swirled his fork in the mashed potatoes, bits of roast, and brown rice until the mound resembled the gift left by the puppy on the rug earlier in the day.

**Now, here’s a few exercises to cast into deep waters!**

**Shallow**: Mother knew he never kept his word, but changing her life now seemed overwhelming.

**Deep:**

**Shallow:** They thought about pitching the tent before the sun set. Now they knew it would be another cold night on the mountain.

**Deep:**

**Shallow:** “You’ve got to be kidding. I don’t do that kind of work,” Emily replied.

**Deep:**

**And try this one! Briefly write a brief, meaningful memory. Then, change it to a she/he memory.**

Great Resource to dig deeper in DPOV – *Rivet Your Readers with Deep Point of View* – a concise book by Jill Elizabeth Nelson