

COMMON ARCHETYPES

COMMON ARCHETYPAL CHARACTERS:

Hero:

Willing Hero, Unwilling Hero, Loner Hero (Indiana Jones, Xena: Warrior Princess)

Anti-Hero:

Jim Stark from *Rebel Without a Cause*, Thelma from *Thelma and Louise*

Chief / Boss / King / Queen / Matriarch:

Don Vito Corleone from *The Godfather*; The White Witch in *The Chronicles of Narnia*

Crone, Elder, Wiseman:

Gola from *Brigitta of the White Forest*; Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars* (original trilogy)

Virgin, Maiden, Innocent:

Princess Buttercup from *Princess Bride*, Prim in *Hunger Games*

Buddy, Best Friend, Spunky Kid:

Charles (Hugh Grant) from *Four Weddings & a Funeral*; Hermione from *Harry Potter*

Gigolo, Charmer, Seductress:

Jack Dawson from *Titanic*; Catherine Tramell (Sharon Stone) from *Basic Instinct*

Lost Soul:

Martin Riggs from *Lethal Weapon*, Hamlet

Master, Mentor, Teacher:

Dumbledore in *Harry Potter*, Glinda from *The Wizard of Oz*

Swashbuckler, Adventurer:

Indiana Jones in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Warrior:

Maximus (Russell Crowe) in *Gladiator*, Bella Kanto from *The Beasts of Tabat*

Crusader:

Buffy from *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*

Trickster:

Bart Simpson in *The Simpsons*

Threshold Guardian:

Protects the Special World and its secrets from the Hero and tests a Hero's worth

Others: Sage / Priest / Priestess; Mother / Father; Martyr; Angel / Devil; Traitor; Outcast; Evil Genius; Lunatic / Fool; Black Widow; Shapeshifter

“Any archetype can do anything – the question will always be why.”

(i.e. two characters get an abortion... *the motivation behind the abortion* will tell you about her archetype.)

You do not have four different archetypes because your character does four things that are what those four archetypes do. Always look for the WHY to determine an archetype.

For example, Captain Kirk of *Star Trek* is a CHIEF (KING). He gives his orders, never doubting his loyal crew will jump to follow him. His work -- his ship -- is his mistress, his one and only true love. He does, indeed,

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boldly go forth into the universe, and presents the very picture of a leader. But Henry Higgins, of *My Fair Lady* is also a CHIEF (KING). He, too, blithely announces his will, knowing his commands will be obeyed. He has no doubt that his opinion is correct, and anything he wishes to be done, is, in fact, the correct thing to do. But *Star Trek* would have been a very different program had Henry Higgins sat in the Enterprise's captain's chair. Eliza Doolittle would not have brought Captain Kirk his slippers.

Archetypes are not stereotypes; they are not cookie cutters. They can be considered a framework, or even better, a lump of clay of a particular color and consistency. Use the archetype as raw material to create a full bodied character. Or, use archetypes to inspire the stories themselves.

with references from The Complete Writer's Guide to Heroes and Heroines by Tami Cowden.

You can use archetypal characters and core stories to inspire the work. For instance: This story is a Rags to Riches story that takes place on the moon. Or, my protagonist is a “lost soul” on a dragon hunting crew.