

Character Archetypes

The Fundamentals



Characterization

The process by which a writer develops a character.





Major and Minor Characters

Major characters may appear frequently in a story and are involved in important actions. Minor characters enter a story for a particular reason and may not be seen again. Major characters tend to be more round than

minor ones, as well.



Direct Characterization

Through description, a writer explains to the reader what a character is like.



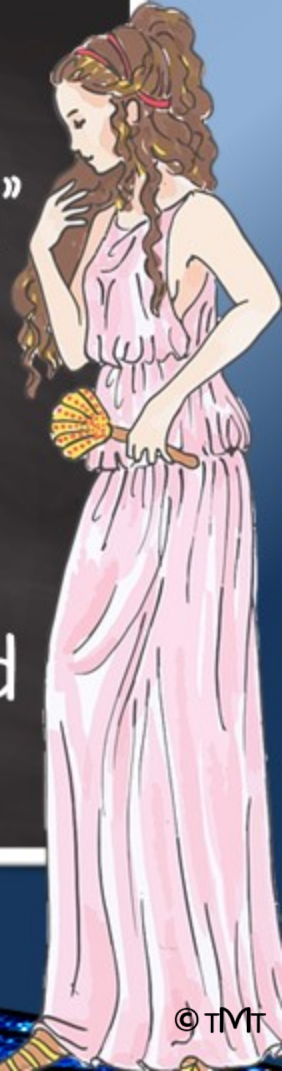


Indirect Characterization

Rather than reading a description of a character, here an audience finds out about a character through the character's thoughts, statements, or actions.

Archetype

The term "archetype" originated in ancient Greece. The root word "archein" means "original or old," and "typos" means "pattern or type". Thus, an archetype is the original pattern from which all other similar things are copied or modeled; a prototype.



Character Archetypes

Original model or type of character from which all other characters are copied. When an audience meets a character archetype, certain traits are immediately recognizable. Sometimes uncorrupted, sometimes corrupted.

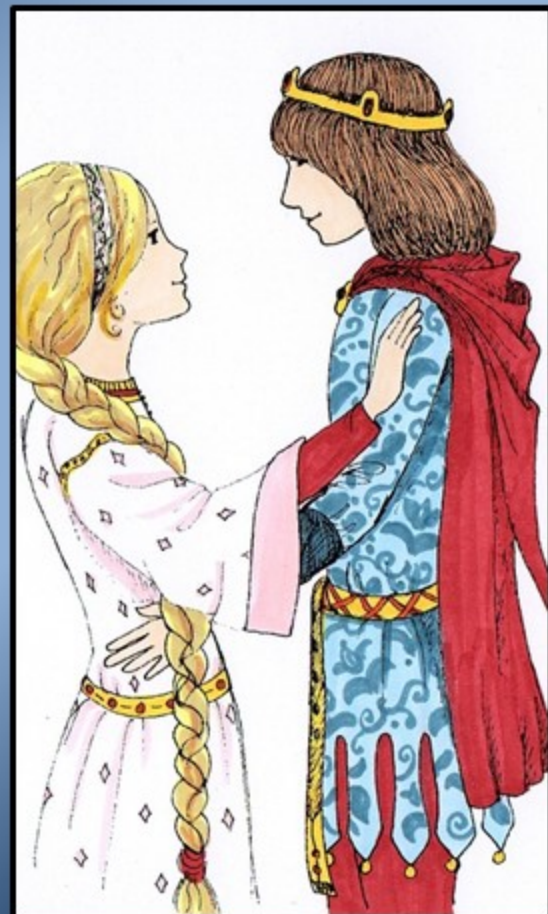
Following are some examples.



The Love Interest

A character who exists simply for another character to have a romantic pursuit.

A love interest for the protagonist usually serves to help motivate and develop the protagonist.



The Trickster

A character who plays tricks on those in control or simply disobeys social rules of conformity. The Trickster will openly question and satirize authority, encourage whimsy, ruin expectations, and promote disorder and confusion.

Tricksters are funny and usually more intelligent than those in authority. Though they enjoy causing trouble, but aren't evil or intend to be hurtful.



EARTH MOTHER



A maternal figure who provides spiritual and emotional nourishment to those she meets; typically shown in earth colors. All loving and good.



The Princess

(Damsel in distress) – a character who needs saving but cannot help her/himself. Historically, this was a female character, but nowadays is either male or female.



An illustration of two women laughing joyfully. The woman on the left has long black hair and is wearing a black top. The woman on the right has long black hair and is wearing a pink top. They are positioned in front of a blue background with a white-bordered sign. Above and below them are blue sequined valances. The sign contains the title 'The Sidekick' and a definition.

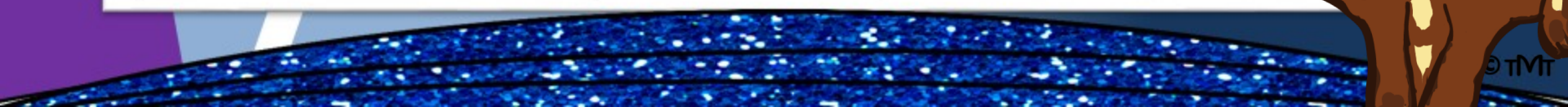
The Sidekick

A faithful friend
and supporter to
the protagonist.



The Confidante

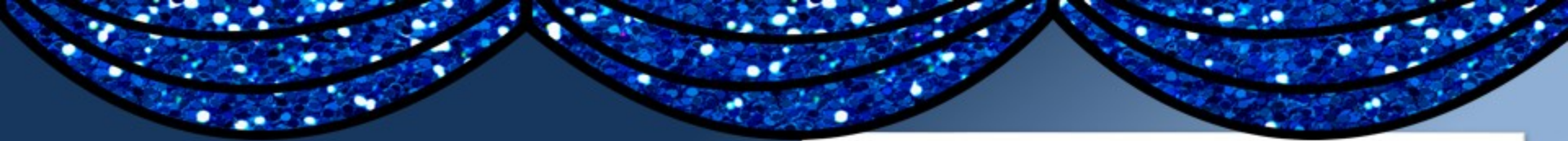
Someone in whom the central character confides, thus revealing the main character's personality, thoughts, and intentions. The confidante does not need to be a person.



The Guardian

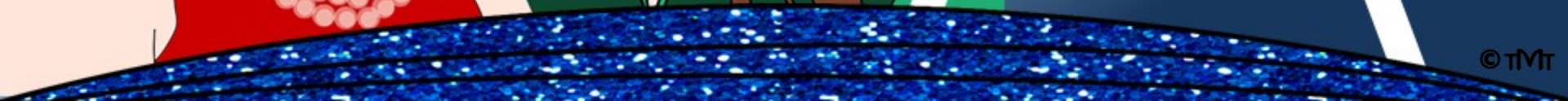
A helpful mentor who exists to guide and teach the protagonist along his/her journey. Often represented by a wise older person.





The Skeptic

Disbelieving and creates a conflict between optimism and pessimism. S/he is often cynical or sarcastic.



More Character Archetypes

Some examples include: the fashionista, the fallen mentor, the bully, the gossip, the hipster, the depressed teen, the detective, the Don Juan, the shapeshifter, the convict, the clown, the minister, the poet, the rebel, the soldier, the politician, the scholar, the hermit, the herald, the supermodel. The list goes on

