104 Archetypes Defined

Absent-Minded Professor—An absent-minded scientific genius (Example: Doc Brown from *Back to the Future*)

All-Loving Hero—A character who loves everyone and will suffer for the sins of his or her loved ones.

Anti-Hero—A hero driven by the pursuit for power, sex, money, control, or particular vices and—because of this—often selfish, anti-social, power-hungry, and materialistic. But these types sometimes showcase some heart in the end (Example: Scarlett O'Hara from *Gone with the Wind*)

Anthropomorphic Personification—The living embodiment of a fundamental abstraction. They may be god-like in power but have a much narrower focus and struggle with limits based on what they represent (Example: Joy, Sadness, Fear, Anger, and Disgust from *Inside Out*)

Audience Surrogate—Characters who the audience sympathize with by actively seeing themselves as them. Usually victims of social challenges (Example: Bella Swan from *Twilight*)

Bad Boy—A macho loner that doesn't care that he's bad. He's actually proud of it, and that often attracts others (Example: Dallas from *The Outsiders*)

Big Fun—The big, fun, lovable guy or girl (Example: Hurley from *Lost*)

Black Knight—An evil fighter or antagonist (Example: Darth Vader from *Star Wars*)

Blind Seer—Characters with a sacrifice of sight that has greater cosmic knowledge (Example: Chirrut from *Rogue One*)

Boss—The boss of everyone. They are usually controlling, competitive, stubborn, aggressive, and always call the shots

Boy Next Door—The average nice guy that does everything in the right. Clean, wholesome, patriotic, and loves mom, apple pie, and baseball.

Career Criminal—This character devotes his life to committing high stakes crime and is often smart and highly skilled (Example: Al Capone from *The Untouchables*, most career politicians in *Real Life*)

Champion—The character who is devoted to the cause/life/honor of one character and everything that they entail (Example: Sam from *The Lord of the Rings*)

Child—First suggested by psychologist Carl Jung, in more recent years, author Caroline Myss has suggested that the child, out of the four survival archetypes (victim, prostitute, and saboteur), is present in all humans. This character is young in age or spirit and loves adventure. (Example: Linus van Pelt from *Peanuts, Tommy Pickles* from *Rugrats*, and Peter from *Peter Pan*)

Chosen One—They have been chosen by someone or some force and are the only ones capable of resolving the plot (Example: Neo from *The Matrix*)

Chooser of the Chosen One—This is the character who finds and chooses The Chosen One (Example: Morpheus from *The Matrix*)

Conscience—A classic character type whose sole purpose is to act as the hero's conscience and moral compass (Example: Jiminy Cricket from *Pinocchio*, Clarence from *It's a Wonderful Life*)

Contender—A competitive underdog (Example: Rocky from *Rocky*, Daniel from *The Karate Kid*)

Corrupter (aka the Sabatuer)—Their primary role in the story is to bring out the worst in everyone (Example: Rumpelstiltskin in *Once Upon a Time*)

Damsel in Distress—A noble and innocent woman in need of rescue (Example: Kim in *Taken*, Lois Lane in *Superman*)

Dark Lord—The near-immortal personification of evil (Example: Sauron from *The Lord of the Rings*)

Dumb Muscle—This character lacks intelligence or fails to showcase it and is tasked with doing the heavy lifting of the villain or any antagonist

Elderly Master—A wise, powerful man or woman teaching their powerful craft to a young student (Example: Mr. Miyagi from *The Karate Kid*)

Egomaniac (aka Narcissist)—They like to be the center of attention and usually are often very insecure, overcompensating for a deep need to be loved and/or revered.

Fall Guy (aka Scapegoat)—The innocent to whom the powerful or empowered assign blame

Father Figure—The man who showcases authority, yet has a pure heart and will do all he can to protect those he loves and watches over, either physically or emotionally (Example: Atticus from *To Kill a Mockingbird*)

Femme Fatale—A beautiful but mischievous and traitorous woman (Example: Selina Kyle aka Catwoman in *Batman*)

Ferryman—A character that acts as a guide or aid, allowing characters to travel over near-impossible obstacles to reach specific destinations (Example: Heimdall from *Thor*)

Final girl—The "last girl standing" in a horror movie (Example: Laurie from *Halloween*)

Gentle Giant—Big, strong, and intimidating, but they've got a heart of gold. (Example: Fezzik from *The Princess Bride*)

Gentleman Thief—A very charming, sophisticated, and well-mannered thief (Example: Thomas Crown from *The Thomas Crown Affair*, Neal Caffrey from *White Collar*)

Girl Next Door—An average but attractive girl with a wholesome quality to her. She is nurturing and forgiving and loves mom, apple pie, and baseball players.

God or Goddess—All-powerful but often showcase human qualities in the end (Example: Zeus from *The Little Mermaid*)

Good King (aka the King)—He is honorable, virtuous, wise, and understanding. He cares about his subjects no matter how seemingly unimportant they are and puts their well-being above his own (Example: King Arthur from *Excalibur*)

Grande Dame—A very flamboyant woman, often used as a stereotype for an elderly high society socialite (Example: Melanie [Olivia de Havilland] in *Gone with the Wind*)

Grotesque—An often tragic character that induces both fear and pity because bodily deformities overshadow a perfectly normal and likable personality (Example: August Pullman from *Wonder*, the unnamed Hunchback from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*)

Harlequin (aka the Idiot)—A clown or professional fool (Lt. Frank Drebin [Leslie Nielsen] from *The Naked Gun*)

Herald—This character sets the Hero/Protagonist on the path of adventure (Example: Obi-Wan Kenobi from *Star Wars*)

Hero—The character that faces the most direct danger and conflict as a basis for the central aspect of the story

Hotshot—This character is often skilled, but reckless, known for taking risks (Example: Maverick from *Top Gun*)

Hunter of Monsters—A character whose sole mission is to eliminate whatever monster(s) in question (Example: Quinn from *Jaws*, *Beowulf*)

Ingenue—A young woman who is endearingly innocent and wholesome (Example: Ali Mills [Elisabeth Shue] in *The Karate Kid*)

Imposter/Pretender—They are intelligent and take advantage of situations and characters

Jester—They are always lighthearted and joking but always pure of heart and truly caring for others (Example: Will Ferrell in *Elf*)

Jock—A male athlete who is often muscular but not very smart

Kirk—The Kirk is a captain or a similar leader who needs to be practical rather than emotional or distant, often having to make decisions in the middle of The Spock or The McCoy (Example: "Jim" James Tiberius Kirk from *Star Trek*)

Knight-errant—A noble Knight on a Quest

Loner—The Loner isolates him or herself and often struggles to connect with others. They feel alien to others around them (Example: Jim from *Rebel Without a Cause*)

Loser—They don't catch any breaks and always seem to get the short end of the stick. They are also either usually unmotivated and don't care about how they are perceived, or they do and try to make the change, only to fail time and time again (Example: Charlie Brown from *Peanuts*)

Lovable Rogue—They break the law and don't always seem to care about anyone else, but they often show enough heart in the end for audiences to like them (Example: Han Solo from *Star Wars*)

Lovers—Star-crossed lovers who fall romantically in love, despite the constant conflict of other characters. They're often from different sides of the tracks (Example: *Romeo and Juliet*, AND Tony and Maria from *West Side Story*, Danny and Sandy from *Grease*, Johnny and Baby from *Dirty Dancing*)

Loyalist (see also Sidekick)—They have the strong ability to support others and always remain loyal in doing so despite their own lack of abilities and feeling of self-worth (Example: Dr. Watson from *Sherlock Holmes*, R2D2 from *Star Wars*)

Mad Scientist—Usually insane or highly eccentric. They often play the role of the villain or antagonist and always feel that the science they are exploring is above and beyond any human rights issues or ethics (Example: Dr. Moreau from *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, Doctor Frankenstein from *Frankenstein's Monster*)

Magician (aka Shaman)—A man with special insight or mystical powers coming to the aid of the protagonist (Example: Dick Halloran from *The Shining*)

Maiden—Usually the innocent and pure female that is often in need of rescue. She can be naive, sometimes overly self-confident, and can be attractive but also child-like (Example: Princess Fiona from *Shrek*)

Manic Pixie Dream Girl—Characters that have eccentric personality quirks, are very girlish, and usually dreamingly cute and attractive (Example: Jessica Day from The New Girl, Princess Ann [Audrey Hepburn] from *Roman Holiday*)

McCoy—The McCoy cares for others deeply and always seeks to do the right thing, no matter what the situation (Doctor Leonard H. "Bones" McCoy from *Star Trek*)

Mentally or Socially Disabled—Dependent and sometimes draining on others around them at times. Often autistic. (Example: Raymond from *Rain Man*)

Mentor—The mentor is the adviser, the expert, and is usually intelligent and wise in whatever field of expertise or philosophy for which they are known. They care for the hero and want to be in the hero's life, which usually starts with conflict at first.

Monster—They are either half-human or not human at all and usually provoke fear and panic.

Mother Figure—The mother figure is always the source of nurturing and comfort, offering guidance while also sometimes coming off as over-controlling and worrisome, but always acts from the heart (Example: Martha Kent from *Superman*, Aunt May from *Spider-man*)

Mother's Boy—A man who is excessively attached to his mother. This is played for all types of emotions and genres, including comedy, drama (Example: Owen from *Throw Mamma From the Train*), and tragedy (Example: Norman Bates from *Psycho*)

Nemesis/Challenger—They usually exist to hate the hero for any number of reasons. The nemesis or challenger is often similar to the hero in many ways and thus is always trying to overshadow due to jealousy or outright hate (Example: Loki from *Thor*)

Nerd—Usually a socially-impaired, obsessive, or overly-intellectual person. They often have a good heart and always mean well (Example: Dana Skully from *The X-Files*)

Noble Savage—A wild outsider with noble characteristics that has little to no experience with society's ways (Example: *Tarzan*)

Observer—They often witness all that goes on but remain quiet and calm throughout. They are usually philosophical, and every time they speak or act, it's important (Example: Rafiki from *The Lion King*)

Outlaw—Similar to the "Rebel," they are romanticized, charismatic, and can often be the social bandit of the story

Peacemaker—They try to force the peace between characters and situations—usually the voice of reason between all.

Pessimist—For them, the glass is always half empty. They won't take risks and often complain about everything every chance they get (Example: Hudson from *Aliens*)

Prostitute (aka the Mercenary)—engages in the sale or negotiation of their own integrity or spirit due to fears of physical survival or financial gain. Prostitutes/mercenaries sell (or sell out) their skills, talents, ideas, their bodies, and any other expression of "self," but always at some personal cost. (Miss Kitty from Gunsmoke, Peachy Carnehan [Michael Caine] in *The Man Who Would Be King*)

Psychopath—Sociopathic and violent, this character solves problems by inflicting violence upon others, usually with fatal results (Example: Hannibal Lecter from *The Silence of the Lambs*)

Rebel—Although many believe James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* is the quintessential rebel (Example: he's actually better defined as the loner), the truth is that the rebel takes the loner attributes to the next level as they push up against anyone and everyone, walking strictly to a beat of their own drum without caring what others think (Example: John Bender from *The Breakfast Club*)

Redshirt—The expendable character that is never given much backstory and usually dies soon after being introduced. Taken from the original *Star Trek* series, where characters with red shirts were often those expendable characters going out on missions with the main characters. (anyone wearing a Red Shirt in any original *Star Trek* episode)

Reluctant Monster—The Reluctant Monster usually has no idea that they're a monster at all. They are often a member of a species that traditionally does nasty things to people, but that is not in their own personal nature (Example: *Frankenstein's Monster*)

Rightful King—A lost or forgotten just ruler whose return or triumph restores peace (Example: Aragorn of Arathorn from *The Lord of the Rings, Richard the Lionheart from The Adventures of Robin Hood*)

Seeker (aka the Sage)—They are always on a quest for the truth, uncovering mysteries, lies, and deception despite all dangers, both big and small, they face on a personal and professional level (Example: *Erin Brockovich*)

Shrew—A bad-tempered or aggressively assertive woman

Side Kick—The friends and helpers of the main hero. They are much like the Loyalist but play a more active part in the Hero's adventures (Example: Robin from *Batman Forever*, Short Round from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*)

Sociopath—A person with a personality disorder better described as anti-social personality disorder, or ASPD, often manifesting itself in anti-social attitudes and behavior and a near-total lack of conscience. They are intelligent, cunning, and dangerous (Example: Kapitan Amon Goeth [Ralph Fiennes] from *Schindler's List*)

Southern Belle—A young woman that often represents the American Old South's upper-class daughter or young and pretty woman (Example: Scarlett O'Hara or any of her sisters from *Gone With the Wind*)

Spock—The Spock is an archetype that focuses on logic, rules, and reason while fighting for the greater good (Example: Spock from *Star Trek*)

Straight Man—Exists alongside a funny character. Their serious and no-nonsense attitude makes his partner look all the more crazy and funny (Example: Abbott from *Abbott and Costello*)

Storyteller—A character that is noted for his or her ability to tell tales, or those that choose to do so, even to the dismay of the other characters (Example: Wally from *"Crocodile" Dundee*)

Superhero—A hero with special powers that vows to protect the world around them (Example: all DC Cinematic Universe characters, most Marvel Cinematic Universe characters)

Super Soldier—A soldier who operates beyond human limits or abilities (Example: Captain America from the Marvel Cinematic Universe)

Supervillain—Antithesis to the Superhero

Swashbuckler—A joyful, noisy, and boastful renaissance era swordsman or pirate (Example: Jack Sparrow from *Pirates of the Caribbean*)

Tomboy—A girl usually interested in sports, activities, and displaying attributes that often fall under the umbrella of boys and men in society (Example: Scout from *To Kill a Mockingbird*)

Tortured Artist—They often display constant torment due to frustrations with art and society

Town Drunk—Usually a male in a small town who is known to be drunk in public fashion (Example: Otis Campbell in *The Andy Griffith Show*, Louie Pheeters "Festus" in *Gunsmoke*)

Tragic Hero—A hero with a major flaw that leads to his or her eventual death and downfall (Example: Anakin Skywalker from the *Star Wars* prequels)

Trickster—They are often the trouble makers, liars, and the self-absorbed. They can be like jesters, but they often make more of an impact on the main characters in some way, shape, or form by the end of the story (Example: Buddy Love in *The Nutty Professor*)

Troubled Teen—They hate rules and defy authority, usually because of depression, hormones, or social differences. Despite the hard attitude they portray, they are often the most vulnerable (Example: Landon Carter [Shane West] from *A Walk to Remember*)

Turncoat—The character who switches sides at some point to help out the other side (Example: Cypher from *The Matrix*)

Victim— The victim archetype's root is a fear that he or she cannot survive or will not survive. It is not just physical survival but the survival of identity, hopes, dreams, or sense of self.

Village Idiot—A character usually locally known for ignorance or stupidity, but often shown to have a good heart and can contribute to either the downfall or the uprising of the hero (Example: The Fool from *King Lear*)

Villain—An evil character in a story

Warrior (aka Veteran aka Soldier/Sailor/Marine/Airman etc.)—a military type through and through, he is misunderstood by anyone who is not a Warrior, which frustrates him. His adopted "family" consists of his fellow Warriors, sometimes even if they represent an opposing faction. Unlike the Psychopath, Warriors typically do not seek to kill. Rather, the Warrior seeks to use exactly enough force necessary to forward his faction's diplomatic aims. The Warrior understands honor and nobility, is unquestionably loyal, and silently copes with remorse.

Whiskey Priest—A priest or ordained minister who teaches at a high standard but also showcases moral weakness through drinking alcohol or engaging in some other or vices (Example: Friar Tuck from *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, any time Stephen King portrays a holy person ever, Anglican vicar Sidney Chambers from BBC's *Grantchester*)

Wildly Insane (aka Crazy)—this character is completely out of touch with reality and locked into patterns of behavior that are consistently harmful to himself or others

Wise Fool—A "fool" or somewhat socially hindered character with an attribute of wisdom (Example: Dori from *Finding Nemo*)

Wise Old Man—An elderly character who provides wisdom to the protagonist (Example: Gandalf from *The Lord of the Rings*)

Yokel—A term referring to the stereotype of unsophisticated backcountry characters (Example: Carl Spackler from *Caddyshack*)