ARCHETYPES
Reoccurring Character Types from Myth, Legend, and Literature
Why do we need stories?

- To help us understand the world around us
- To try to answer the toughest questions of life
- To help us escape reality by entering a world where the good always wins, the forces of evil are defeated, and love conquers all
- To help define the roles of good and evil, so that we might recognize them in others and ourselves
- To make us better people
What Is an “Archetype”?  

- Recurring character types that show up in stories from around the world  
- Carl Jung was a psychologist who was very interested in dreams  
- Noted that some of the same images appeared in many people’s dreams  
- Suggested that humans share a COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS  
- Our dreams have recurring symbols, and our stories do, too.
CHARACTER ARCHETYPES
THE HERO

- Unusual birth
- Missing parent(s)
- Raised by foster parents
- Royal or special heritage
- Given a quest
- Require training
THE SHADOW

- Antagonist of the story
- Dark reflection of the hero that represents the dark path that the hero could take
MENTOR

- Teacher or counselor to the hero
- Father or mother figure
THE HERALD

- Characters who signal that change is coming into the hero’s world
- Invites the hero to answer the call to adventure
- Motivates the hero into action
ALLY OR ALLIES

- Loyal companion(s) willing to face any adventure or danger with the hero
THRESHOLD GUARDIANS

- Test the hero to determine if he or she is worthy of passing the threshold
SHAPESHIFTERS

- Shifty character with unknown alliances
- Creates suspense
- Can be a love interest
TRICKSTER

- Uses tricks to test the hero
- Provides comic relief
- Cuts the hero’s ego down to size
LOYAL RETAINERS

- Servants to the hero who are heroic themselves
- Protect the hero and reflect the honor and nobility of the hero
FRIENDLY BEASTS

- Creatures who aid or serve the hero
- Symbolize how nature is on the side of the hero
DEVIL FIGURE

- The incarnation of evil
- Offers worldly goods, fame, or knowledge to the hero in exchange for possession of the soul
CREATURE OF NIGHTMARE

- Disfigured or mutated creatures
- Monsters who are the antagonists in the story
- Reflect the beast-like side of human nature
EVIL FIGURE WITH GOOD HEART

- Redeemable evil figure saved by the nobility or love of the hero
OUTCAST

- Character with a questionable past
- Banished from the social group
- Sometimes falsely accused of a crime
TEMPTRESS

- Sensuous beauty
- Tries to bring about the hero’s downfall through physical attraction
THE PLATONIC IDEAL

- Female figure who provides inspiration (but not attraction) for the hero
- The ideal woman
DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

- Vulnerable woman who must be rescued by the hero. (This *can* be a trap.)
STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

- Two lovers forbidden to be together because of the rules of society or their families
- Their stories often end tragically.