

by Tami Cowden

CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

FEMALE ENERGY HERO/ ALLY

The BOSS: a real go-getter, she climbs the ladder of success. This is a “take charge” female, who accepts nothing but respect. Reaching her goal post the most important thing in life to her, and she isn’t bothered by a few ruffled feathers along the way. Think Annette Bening in *American Beauty*, Candice Bergen in *Murphy Brown*, Cate Blanchett in *Elizabeth*.

The Seductress: an enchantress, she gets her way. This is a lady who is long accustomed to sizing up everyone in a room the minute she enters. Mysterious and manipulative, she hides a streak of distrust a mile wide and ten miles deep. Cynicism guides her every action, and her tough sense of survival gives her the means to do whatever is necessary to come out ahead. Think Liz Taylor in *Cleopatra*, Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct*, Vivian Leigh in *Gone With the Wind*, Madonna in *Evita*.

The SPUNKY KID: gutsy and true, she is loyal to the end. She is a favourite of many writers, and for good reason. You can’t help but root for her. She’s the girl with moxie. She’s not looking to be at the top of the heap; she just wants to be in her own little niche. She’s the team player, the one who is always ready to lend a hand. Think Meg Ryan in *Sleepless in Seattle*, Melanie Griffith in *Working Girl*, Mary Tyler Moore in *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, Whoopi Goldberg in *Sister Act*, Fiona in *Shrek*.

The FREE SPIRIT: eternal optimist, she dances to unheard tunes. Playful and fun-loving, she travels through life with a hop, skip and a jump, always stopping to smell the flowers and admire the pretty colours. She acts on a whim and follows her heart, not her head. Think Jenna Elfman in *Dharma & Greg*, Lucille Ball in *I Love Lucy*, Alicia Silverstone in *Clueless*.

The WAIF: a distressed damsel, she bends with the wind. She’s the original damsel in distress. Her child-like innocence evokes a protective urge in the beastliest of heroes. But don’t be fooled, because the WAIF has tremendous strength of will. She won’t fight back; she’ll endure. Think Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz*, Marilyn Monroe in *The Misfits*, Peta Wilson in *La Femme Nikita*, Demi Moore in *Ghost*, Halle Barry in *Monster’s Ball*.

The LIBRARIAN: controlled and clever, she holds back. She’s prim and proper, but underneath that tight bun lurks a passionate woman. Dressed to repress, she might be the know-it-all whose hand is always up in class, or maybe she is the shy mouse hiding in the library. Think Kathleen Turner in *Romancing the Stone*, Ellen Barkin in *The Big Easy*, Shelley Long in *Cheers*, Gillian Anderson in *The X-Files*.

The CRUSADER: a dedicated fighter, she meets her commitments. No shrinking violet, no distressed damsel, here. This lady is on a mission, and she marches right over anyone in her way. Tenacious and headstrong, she brushes off any opposition to her goal. Think Diana Rigg in *The Avengers*, Sigourney Weaver in *Alien*, Sarah Michelle Gellar in *Buffy*, the *Vampire Slayer*, Lucy Lawless in *Xena, Warrior Princess*.

The NURTURER: serene and capable, she nourishes the spirit. Not always Suzy Homemaker, this lady takes care of everyone. She is a wonderful listener, and a joy to have around, this heroine takes care of everyone. She’s serene, capable and optimistic. Think Michelle Pfeiffer in *Ladyhawke*, Alicia Nash in *A Beautiful Mind*, Julie Andrews in *Mary Poppins*.

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MALE ENERGY HERO/ ALLY

The CHIEF: a dynamic leader, he has time for nothing but work. He might have been born to lead, or perhaps he conquered his way to the top, but either way, he's tough, decisive, goal-oriented. That means he is also a bit overbearing and inflexible. Think William Shatner in *Star Trek*; Harrison Ford in *Sabrina*, or Marlon Brando in *The Godfather*.

The BAD BOY: dangerous to know, he walks on the wild side. This is the rebel, or the boy from the wrong side of the tracks. He's bitter and volatile, a crushed idealist, but he's also charismatic and street smart. Think James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause*, Matt Damon in *Good Will Hunting*, Patrick Swayze in *Dirty Dancing*.

The BEST FRIEND: sweet and safe, he never lets anyone down. He's kind, responsible, decent, a regular Mr. Nice Guy. This man doesn't enjoy confrontation and can sometimes be unassertive because he doesn't want to hurt anyone's feelings. But he'll always be there. Think Jimmy Stewart in *It's a Wonderful Life*, Adam Sandler in *The Wedding Singer*, Hugh Grant in *Four Weddings & a Funeral*, Kevin Spacey in *American Beauty*.

The CHARMER: more than a gigolo, he creates fantasies. He's fun, irresistible, a smooth operator, yet not too responsible or dependable. He might be a playboy or a rogue, but he's doesn't commit to a woman easily. Think Leonardo DiCaprio in *Titanic*, James Garner/Mel Gibson in *Maverick*, Don Johnson in *Nash Bridges*, Dustin Hoffman in *Midnight Cowboy*.

The LOST SOUL: a sensitive being, he understands. Tortured, secretive, brooding, and unforgiving. That's this man. But he's also vulnerable. He might be a wanderer or an outcast. In work he's creative, but probably also a loner. Think Mel Gibson in *Lethal Weapon*, David Duchovny in *The X-Files*, Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, Shrek.

The PROFESSOR: coolly analytical, he knows every answer. He's logical, introverted, and inflexible, but genuine about his feelings. At work, he likes cold, hard facts, thank you very much, but he's also honest and faithful, and won't let you down. Think Leonard Nimoy in *Star Trek*, Robin Williams in *Flubber*, Kelsey Grammer in *Frasier*, Russell Crowe in *A Beautiful Mind*.

The SWASHBUCKLER: Mr. Excitement, he's an adventure. This guy is action, action, and more action. He's physical and daring. Fearless, he's a daredevil, or an explorer. He needs thrills and chills to keep him happy. Think Antonio Banderas in *The Mask of Zorro*, Michael Douglas in *Romancing the Stone*, Harrison Ford in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

The WARRIOR: a noble champion, he acts with honor. This man is the reluctant rescuer or the knight in shining armor. He's noble, tenacious, relentless, and he always sticks up for the underdog. If you need a protector, he's your guy. He doesn't buckle under to rules, or and he doesn't go along just to get along. Think Clint Eastwood in *Dirty Harry*, Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*, Mel Gibson in *Braveheart*.

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CHARACTER ARCHETYPES

VILLAINS

The TYRANT: the bullying despot, he wants power at any price. He ruthlessly conquers all he surveys, crushing his enemies beneath his feet. People are but pawns to him, and he holds all the power pieces. Hesitate before getting in this man's way – he'll think nothing of destroying you.

The BASTARD: the dispossessed son, he burns with resentment. He can't have what he wants, so he lashes out to hurt those around him. His deeds are often for effect – he wants to provoke action in others. He proudly announces his rebellious dealings. Don't be fooled by his boyish demeanor – he's a bundle of hate.

The DEVIL: the charming fiend, he gives people what he thinks they deserve. Charisma allows him to lure his victims to their own destruction. His ability to discover the moral weaknesses in others serves him well. Close your ears to his cajolery – he'll tempt you to disaster.

The TRAITOR: the double agent, he betrays those who trust him most. No one suspects the evil that lurks in his heart. Despite supportive smiles and sympathetic ears, he plots the destruction of his friends. Never turn your back on him -- he means you harm.

The OUTCAST: the lonely outsider, he wants desperately to belong. Tortured and unforgiving, he has been set off from others, and usually for good cause. He craves redemption, but is willing to gain it by sacrificing others. Waste no sympathy on him - he'll have none for you.

The EVIL GENIUS: the malevolent mastermind, he loves to show off his superior intelligence. Intellectual inferiors are contemptible to him and that includes just about everyone. Elaborate puzzles and experiments are his trademark. Don't let him pull your strings – the game is always rigged in his favor.

The SADIST: the savage predator, he enjoys cruelty for its own sake. Violence and psychological brutality are games to this man; and he plays those games with daring and skill. Run, don't walk, away from this man – he'll tear out your heart, and laugh while doing it.

The TERRORIST: the dark knight, he serves a warped code of honor. Self-righteous, he believes in his own virtue, and judges all around him by a strict set of laws. The end will always justify his nefarious means, and no conventional morality will give him pause. Don't try to appeal to his sense of justice – his does not resemble yours.

The BITCH: the abusive autocrat, she lies, cheats, and steals her way to the top. Her climb to success has left many a heel mark on the backs of others. She doesn't care about the peons around her – only the achievement of her dreams matters. Forget expecting a helping hand from her – she doesn't help anyone but herself.

The BLACK WIDOW: the beguiling siren, she lures victims into her web. She goes after anyone who has something she wants, and she wants a lot. But she does her best to make the victim want to be deceived. An expert at seduction of every variety, she uses her charms to get her way. Don't be fooled by her claims of love – it's all a lie.

The BACKSTABBER: the two-faced friend, she delights in duping the unsuspecting. Her sympathetic smiles enable her to learn her victims' secrets, which she then uses to feather her nest. Her seemingly helpful advice is just the thing to hinder. Put no faith in her – she'll betray you every time.

The LUNATIC: the unbalanced madwoman, she draws others into her crazy environment. The drum to which she marches misses many a beat, but to her, it is the rest of the world that is out of step. Don't even try to understand her logic – she is unfathomable.

The PARASITE: the poisonous vine, she collaborates for her own comfort. She goes along with any atrocity, so long as her own security is assured. She sees herself as a victim who had no choice, and blames others for her crimes. Expect no mercy from her – she won't lift a finger to save anyone but herself.

The SCHEMER: the lethal plotter, she devises the ruin of others. Like a cat with a mouse, she plays with lives. Elaborate plans, intricate schemes; nothing pleases her more than to trap the unwary. Watch out for her complex designs – she means you no good.

The FANATIC: the uncompromising extremist, she does wrong in the name of good. She justifies her action by her intent, and merely shrugs her shoulders at collateral damage. Anyone not an ally is an enemy, and therefore, fair game. Give up any hope of showing her the error of her ways – she firmly believes you are wrong, wrong, wrong.

The MATRIARCH: the motherly oppressor, she smothers her loved ones. She knows what's best and will do all in her power to control the lives of those who surround her – all for their own good. A classic enabler, she sees no fault with her darlings, unless they don't follow her dictates. Don't be lured into her family nest – you'll never get out alive.