

Some Common Fantasy Characters

Creative Writing II



An Introduction

- There are several “types” of characters that tend to appear in fantasy stories. The next few slides will introduce you some of them.
- You are not required to place all (or even any) of these characters in your stories, but remember they are there if you need them



Corruptible family, friends and allies

- Think of these characters as betrayers hiding in plain sight
- These are the characters that betray the main characters, quite often for their own gain.
- Maybe they are characters that sell out a hero for a reward or food. Or it could be that curious companion who borrows a magical item and unknowingly causes mischief.
- Tend to be the characters you would not expect (the little brother that turns on you on the promise of a kiss from the princess).

Rivals and Foils

- Rivals

- Protagonists often compete with rivals, thus creating secondary conflicts (for treasure, love, etc.)
- Rivals supply added narrative tension and suspense (who will get to the goal first?)
- The rival could create extra obstacles for the protagonist or even work with adversaries.

- Foils

- A foil is a character who throws aspects of other characters into stark contrast (example: the serious roommate vs. the goofy roommate—Bert and Ernie).
- Think of foils that would work in your world...a character that lives in the seas paired with a character who lives in the clouds...a gruff dwarf matched up with a sensitive elf...etc.

Mentors, guides and guardians

- A mentor is often described as one who instills a heroic mentality, the courage to go on.
- A guide is just that, someone that helps the characters move forward during their journey. This could be a character that helps lead you from point A to point B. Or, it could be a character that guides you through boobytraps.
- Guardians guard. That's their job. Do they guard something or someone? Do they stay in one place, or are they on the move?

Heroic Figures: from zero to hero

- Many fantasy stories include protagonists who start off as relative “nobodies” who are called on to achieve world-changing tasks (a farmer, a tailor, the king’s fifth son that everyone has forgotten).
- Typically, this heroic figure goes through trials in order to gain courage, understanding or powers.
- At the story’s end, these heroic figures either die, live the good life of a hero, or return to their humble roots.



Mortal and Immortal Antagonists

- **Mortal Antagonists:** that simple these are the characters that live and die like we all do. These tend to be the antagonists that are in the largest supply.
- **Immortal Antagonists:** Gods or supernatural entities. There tend to be fewer of these, but it is harder to prevail over them—as they are “more” than mere mortals.



Sidekicks, Companions, and Familiars

- Sidekicks are those side characters that help major characters accomplish their goals (for good or bad). This could be the knight's page. It could be a troll that helps a witch. It could even be Robin.
- Companions are just characters you're associated with and may be traveling with you on an adventure.
- Familiars tend to be animals that are connected to a character. A witch's cat. A wolf that follows a character (and helps him) on his journey.

