

Character types

A Russian theorist called Vladimir Propp looked at a range of stories and came up with 8 kinds of characters. Look down the list below and match the character type with the description by drawing lines between the matching type and description. Then try to think of an example for each (either from a book, tv or film)

Character type	Description	Example
The villain	Agrees to the reward	
The hero	Helps the hero	
The donor	Might actually be a villain	
The helper	Might be heroic, or might just be someone who seeks something	
The sought-for person	Provides the hero with an object that has magic properties	
Her father	Sends the hero on his journey	
The dispatcher	Traditionally a princess. Is a reward for the hero	
The false hero	Will be punished at the end of the story	

Now look at this description of a character:

It was a picture of a man, and one of the ugliest men I had ever seen. Just looking at him, holding him in my hand, sent a shiver all the way up my arm and round the back of my neck. The man had a yellow face. There was something terribly wrong with his skin which seemed to be crumpled up around his neck and chin, like an old paper bag. He had blue eyes, but they had sunk back, hiding in the dark shadows of his eye sockets. His hair was grey and string-like, hanging lifelessly over his forehead. The skin here was damaged too, as if someone had drawn a map on it and then rubbed it out, leaving just faint traces. The man was leaning back against the black curtain and maybe he was smiling. His lips were certainly stretched in something like a smile but there was no humour there at all. He was staring at me, staring up from the palm of my hand. And I would have said his face was filled with raw horror.

The Man with the Yellow Face by Anthony Horowitz

Think about what you know about characters in stories. Which of the character types do you think he will be? Explain why.