



# CAPTIVATING CHARACTERS

**JOHN CLAUDE BEMIS**

Award-winning Educator & Author

**MAKE A STRONG  
FIRST IMPRESSION**

The best way to emotionally  
hook readers is with:

**SYMPATHY + ENVY**

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#1 New York Times Bestseller

**ANGIE THOMAS**



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GIVE



"Absolutely riveting!"  
JASON REYNOLDS

"Stunning."  
JOHN GREEN

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# WHAT BUILDS . . .

## SYMPATHY?

Unloved  
Unappreciated  
Lonely  
Abused  
Orphaned  
Impoverished

## ENVY?

Talents  
Cleverness  
Humor  
Wealth  
Power  
Interesting home

# WHO IS THE PROTAGONIST?

- The main character
- Who the reader is most emotionally invested in
- **Who struggles and changes the most!**

# PASSIVE PROTAGONISTS

- Lack agency or ability to take action
- Mostly observe others doing interesting things
- Get easy solutions



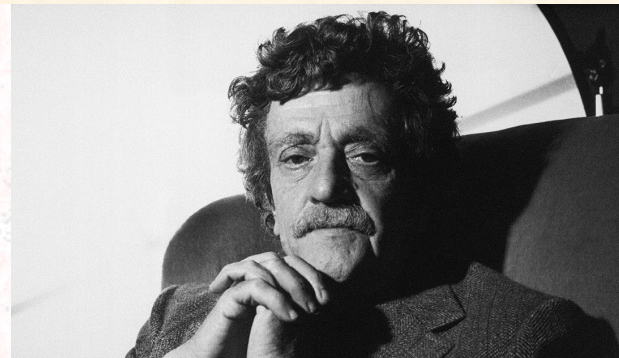
# ACTIVE PROTAGONISTS

- Drive the plot forward
- Take action
- Make hard choices
- Struggle for any advancement

The best way to make a protagonist active:  
**GIVE THEM A GOAL IN EVERY SCENE!**

“Every character should want something,  
even if it’s only a glass of water.”

~ Kurt Vonnegut



# CHECKLIST OF KEY TRAITS:

- Cleverness
- Courage
- Strong Emotions
- Specialness



**PRO TIP!**

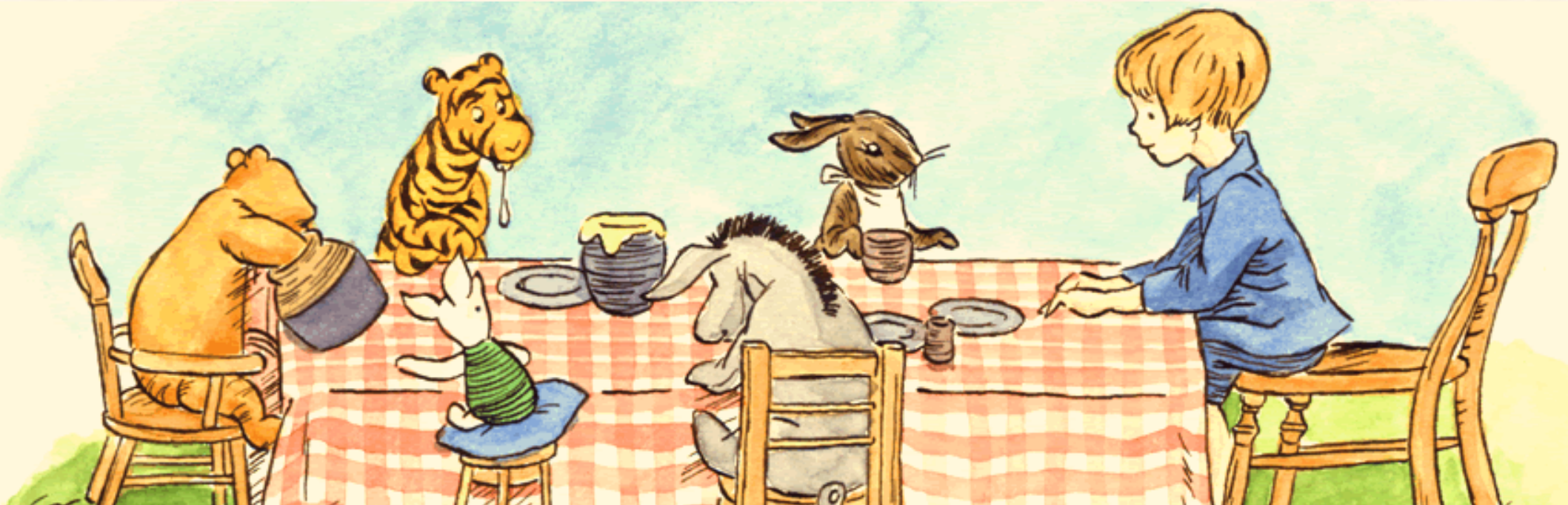
When solving a problem,  
have your protagonist use extraordinary:

**COURAGE, CLEVERNESS,**

or

**KINDNESS**

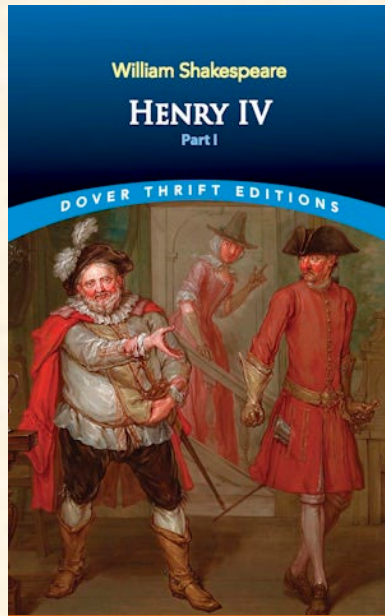
# IDENTIFY YOUR CHARACTERS' ARCHETYPAL ROLES



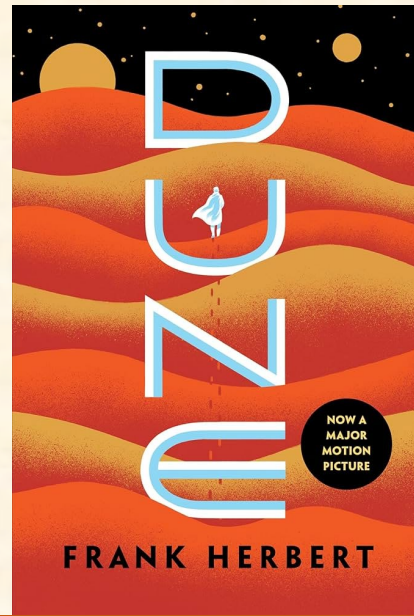
# AN ARCHETYPE IS:

A distinguishing role a character plays

- Underdog
- Detective
- Mentor
- Secret royalty
- Superhero
- Addict
- Con artist
- Outlaw
- Ruler
- Savior
- Coward
- Fish out of water
- Victim
- Clown
- Brain
- Bully
- Lone wolf
- Caregiver
- etc.



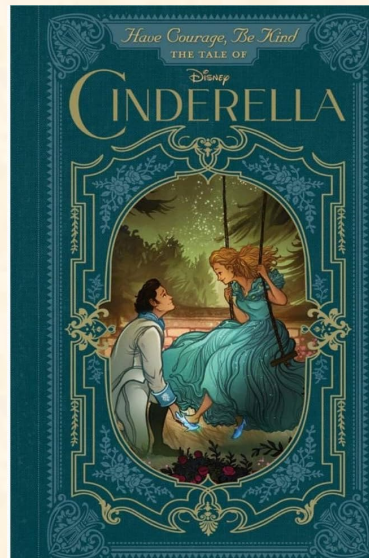
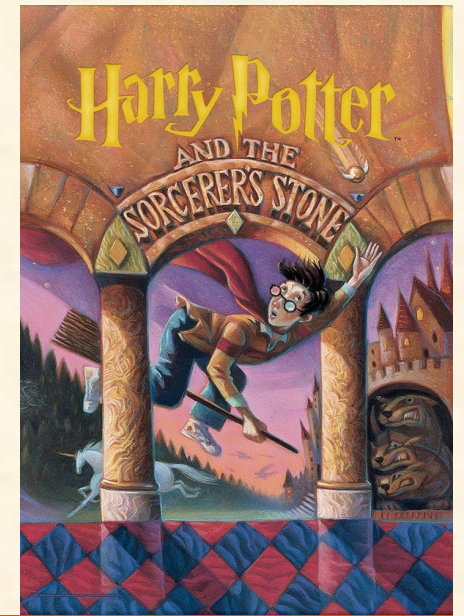
SECRET ROYALTY



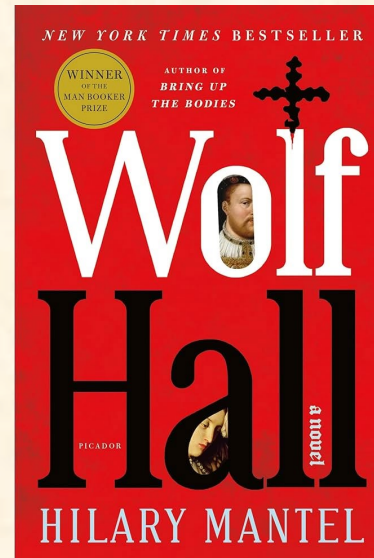
FRANK HERBERT



DETECTIVE



UNDERDOG



HILARY MANTEL

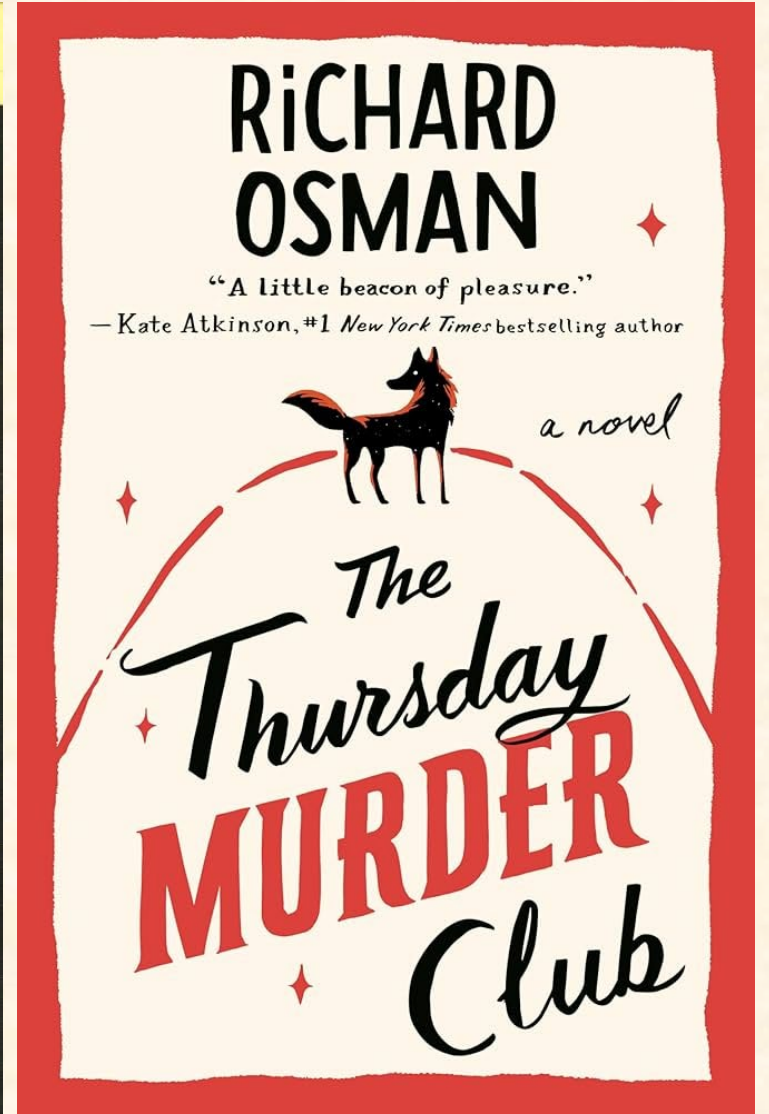
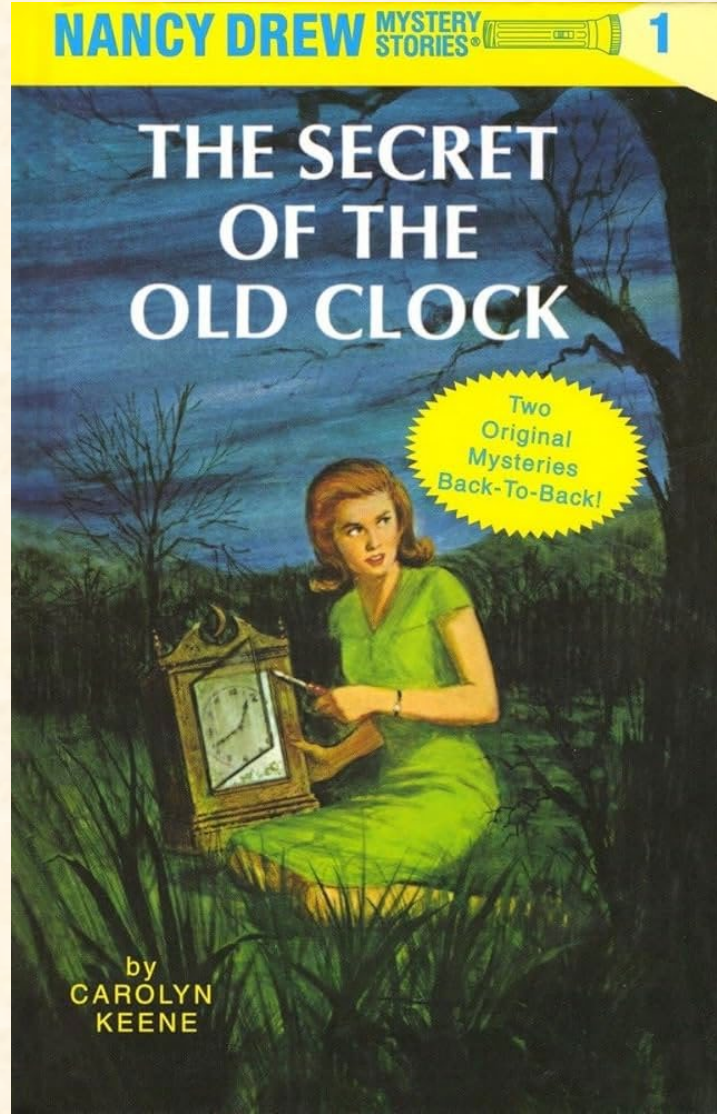
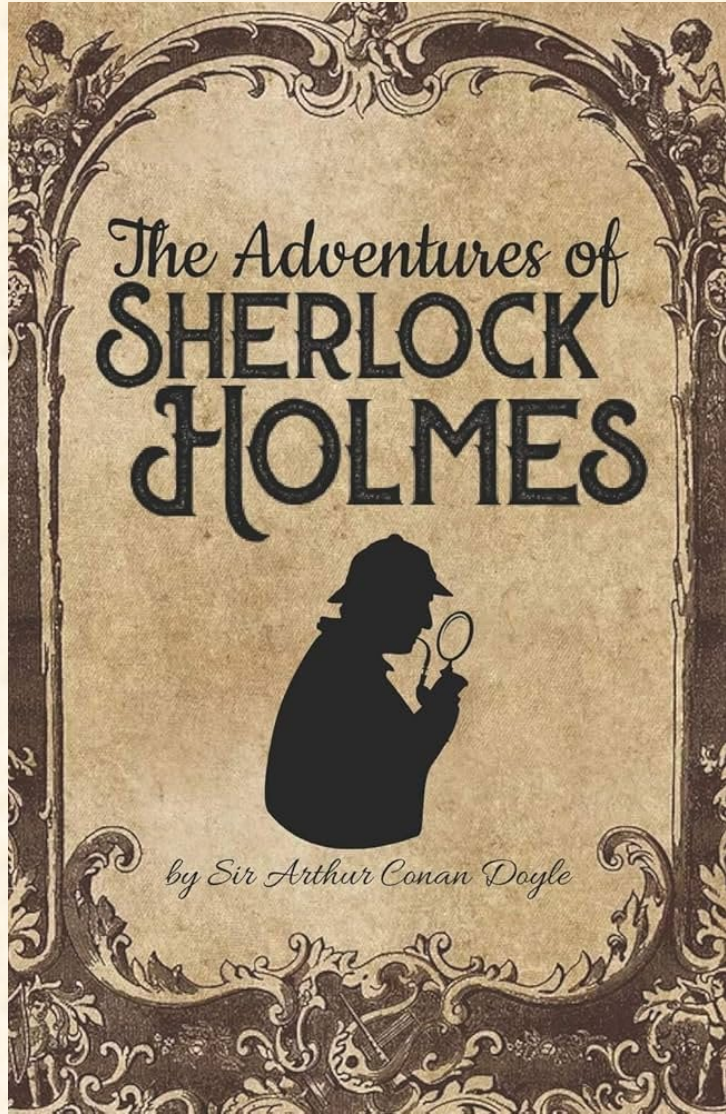


**WHAT'S THE SECRET  
TO CREATING  
A UNIQUE  
CHARACTER?**



TO CREATE SOMETHING NEW,  
**PUT TWO THINGS TOGETHER**  
YOU HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE.





**Let's stay in touch...**

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