Character Secret Archetype Cards

Each card defines a hidden aspect of a character that shapes their behavior, decisions, and story arc in ways that may not be immediately apparent. These secrets can be combined with character archetypes, backgrounds, and motivations to create complex, layered characters.

## **Workshop Usage Guidelines**

* Consider how secret affects daily decisions
* Think about who else knows secret
* Plan how secret might be revealed
* Consider consequences of revelation
* Mix with other character elements
* Use as story catalyst
* Think about how secret evolved over time

## **1. The False Identity**

* Living under an assumed name or identity
* Must constantly maintain the deception
* Original identity holds dangerous implications
* Network of carefully crafted lies
* Fear of discovery drives decisions
* Expert at maintaining cover stories
* Key tension: Authentic connections vs. security

## **2. The Hidden Heir**

* Unknown claim to power or wealth
* Knowledge could destabilize current order
* Conflicted about claiming birthright
* Protected by select few who know truth
* Struggles with responsibility vs. freedom
* Carries burden of potential succession
* Key tension: Personal happiness vs. duty

## **3. The Sleeper Agent**

* Embedded in opposing organization
* May not be fully aware of true role
* Programmed responses to triggers
* Deep cover psychological training
* Conflicts between genuine bonds and mission
* Questions true loyalty
* Key tension: Mission vs. developed relationships

## **4. The Curse Bearer**

* Carries hidden supernatural burden
* Regular sacrifices to maintain control
* Knowledge threatens those close to them
* Seeks cure while hiding symptoms
* Time limit or progressing condition
* Expert at explaining away strange events
* Key tension: Protection of others vs. self-preservation

## **5. The Memory Keeper**

* Holds knowledge that could destroy others
* Witnessed pivotal historical event
* Burden of unshared truth
* Protects others through silence
* Questions morality of keeping secret
* Expert at deflecting questions
* Key tension: Truth vs. protective lies

## **6. The Debt Bound**

* Owes life-changing favor to dangerous entity
* Payment could come due at any time
* Cannot reveal nature of obligation
* Seeks way out while maintaining cover
* Lives with constant anxiety
* Expert at hiding financial/personal strain
* Key tension: Honor vs. survival

## **7. The Lost Parent**

* Abandoned or gave up own child
* Child may be in picture unknowingly
* Carries deep guilt and regret
* Cannot acknowledge relationship
* Protective from shadows
* Expert at maintaining distance
* Key tension: Parental love vs. necessary separation

## **8. The Prophecy Holder**

* Knows future event that must/must not happen
* Cannot directly influence outcome
* Burden of foreknowledge
* Subtle manipulation of events
* Questions validity of prophecy
* Expert at guiding without revealing
* Key tension: Fate vs. free will

## **9. The Double Agent**

* Playing both sides of conflict
* True loyalty unclear even to self
* Complex web of information control
* Maintains multiple personas
* Constant danger of exposure
* Expert at information management
* Key tension: True beliefs vs. assigned role

## **10. The Innocent Criminal**

* Wrongly convicted but escaped justice
* Cannot clear name without endangering others
* Maintains cover of normal life
* Network of hidden helpers
* Seeks true perpetrator
* Expert at avoiding authority
* Key tension: Justice vs. protecting others

## **11. The Immortal Wanderer**

* Cannot age or die naturally
* Must regularly fake death and restart
* Centuries of accumulated knowledge
* Careful to hide abilities
* Fears close investigation
* Expert at disappearing
* Key tension: Connection vs. maintaining secret

## **12. The Revenge Seeker**

* Hidden agenda of vengeance
* Carefully crafted pleasant exterior
* Years of patient planning
* Close to intended target
* Questions cost of revenge
* Expert at gaining trust
* Key tension: Justice vs. redemption

## **13. The Power Suppressor**

* Hiding extraordinary abilities
* Regular struggle for control
* Fear of power being discovered
* Careful balance of use vs. hiding
* Seeks others like them
* Expert at appearing ordinary
* Key tension: Using gifts vs. staying hidden

## **14. The Time Displaced**

* From another era (past or future)
* Must hide anachronistic knowledge
* Adapting to current time period
* Cannot reveal true origin
* Fears changing timeline
* Expert at cultural adaptation
* Key tension: Fixing timeline vs. personal happiness

## **15. The Soul Bargainer**

* Made supernatural deal with consequences
* Payment coming due in vital ways
* Cannot reveal terms of agreement
* Seeks loophole or escape
* Affects all relationships
* Expert at hiding supernatural effects
* Key tension: Fulfilling deal vs. finding escape

## **16. The Identity Thief**

* Living someone else's life
* Original person may return
* Genuine care for stolen life's relationships
* Constant fear of discovery
* Better at role than original
* Expert at maintaining stolen identity
* Key tension: Earned life vs. stolen life

## **17. The Disease Carrier**

* Asymptomatic carrier of dangerous condition
* Must prevent spread while hiding condition
* Regular medical maintenance in secret
* Cannot risk intimate relationships
* Seeks cure or treatment
* Expert at maintaining health facade
* Key tension: Personal happiness vs. public safety

## **18. The Reality Shifter**

* Knows world isn't what it seems
* Can see/affect hidden layer of reality
* Must maintain others' worldview
* Questions own sanity sometimes
* Protects others from truth
* Expert at explaining away inconsistencies
* Key tension: Truth vs. comfortable illusion

## **19. The Blood Debt Inheritor**

* Carrying ancestor's unfinished business
* Obligation passed down generations
* Cannot escape family responsibility
* Seeks way to end cycle
* Affects all major life choices
* Expert at hiding family burden
* Key tension: Personal life vs. inherited duty

## **20. The Apocalypse Prophet**

* Knows of coming catastrophic event
* Cannot prevent it, only prepare
* Subtle positioning of resources/people
* Appears eccentric but calculated
* Questions burden of knowledge
* Expert at subtle preparation
* Key tension: Warning others vs. preventing panic