

# A HERO'S QUEST

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## ORDINARY WORLD

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- Honor is vital
- Mulan does not fit into traditional female values
- She is quite clumsy
- Embarrasses herself in front of the matchmaker

- King Odysseus is at home in Ithaca
- With his wife, Penelope
- And newborn son, Telemachus.
- Generally well-liked and respected

## COMPARISON

- Odysseus
  - Full of pride and honor
  - Respected by his people
- Mulan
  - Clumsy
  - Not respected by her family

## CALL TO ADVENTURE

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- Witnesses her father being conscripted
- Knows he will die in war
- Decides to disguise herself as male to save her father

- Odysseus sets out for the war in Troy.



- Odysseus
  - Motivation is to save his people
- Mulan
  - Motivation for adventure is saving her father

## REFUSAL OF THE CALL

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- Doubts her disguising abilities and almost gives up in front of the training camp
- Mushu convinces her to go anyway

- He does not want to leave his family and sail to Troy
- Knows it will be a long trip

## COMPARISON

- Mulan
  - Fears for **herself**
- Odysseus
  - Fears for **others**
- Shows that Odysseus **believes** in himself, while Mulan **does not**

## MEETING WITH THE MENTOR

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- Mulan meets with the captain
- Is **inspired** by his ridiculing to be a **better** soldier

- Athena, the Goddess of wisdom, crafts, and battle is Odysseus' guide
- Wants to help Odysseus, though she has been instructed not to
- Takes pity on him while other gods forsake Odysseus
- Constantly saves him from death
- Gives him guidance



## COMPARISON

- Mulan
  - Does **not** have a person that constantly guards her
- Odyssey
  - Odysseus **does**
- May indicate that Odysseus' struggles will be so much **more difficult** that he needs others to guard him

## CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

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- Mulan comes to be respected by the others in the army for her skill

- After the war, the gods become angry with the Greeks for their prideful ways
- A great storm emerges and throws them off course

- Odyssey
  - Does not have a real threshold to cross
- Mulan
  - Mulan does
- Implying that Odysseus' journey will be longer and more drawn out

## TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES

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- Mulan improves her skills and becomes even better at being male

- Odysseus is thwarted with many tests as he travels back to Ithaca:
  - Polyphemus
  - Circones
  - Lotus Eaters
  - Lastrygonians
  - Sirens
  - Scylla & Charybdis
  - Cattle of the Sun God



## COMPARISON

- Mulan
  - Implied that Mulan's journey will be **soft** and **easy**
  - Only **vague** “montage-y” tests, allies, enemies in the form of **training**
- Odyssey
  - Journey has **real** life-or-death scenarios, and is more **serious** than Mulan

## APPROACH TO THE INNERMOST CAVE

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- Army goes to a village the Huns decimated after being tricked by Mushu into going to war

- Odysseus nearly makes it home
- His crew opens a bag that had been given to Odysseus by Aeolus, god of the winds
- When the bag is opened, it releases a wind that blows them far away from Ithaca

- Mulan
  - The Approach is much more **subdued** in Mulan, and feels “set” and “official”
- Odyssey
  - Approach in the Odyssey more **spontaneous**, integrating surprise
  - It is more **dangerous**, setting the tone for the Supreme Ordeal

## SUPREME ORDEAL

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- Army is **ambushed** by the Huns who are hiding behind the summit of the mountain
- All hope is lost
- Mulan **saves** everyone by firing a **rocket** into an overhang of snow, causing an avalanche
- She **kills** almost **everyone**, but some of the army survive
- The rest of the army **realises** that Mulan is **female** after undressing her to tend to a wound she had sustained

- Odysseus is sent to the underworld seeking information to guide him home
- This quest brings him to the verge of death



- Mulan
  - Sustains **little** damage
- Odyssey
  - Sustains comparatively **huge** personal damage
- In general much more **extreme** storyline in the Odyssey

**REWARD**

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- Instead of the **reward** going to the hero, it goes to the **others** in the army after they realise Mulan is female
- The reward consists of **beating** the Huns and **not perishing**
- Mulan is **left to die** in the snow with Mushu, the cricket and her horse

- The King of Phaeacia gives Odysseus passage home.

- Mulan
  - Reward is vague
  - Cannot really be classified as reward
- Odyssey
  - Powerful kings of faraway lands lead the classic hero home
  - I like it!
  - More epic in general

## THE ROAD BACK

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- Mulan realises most of the Huns did **not die** in the avalanche after all, and decides to make her way towards the Imperial Palace
- She decides that she is obligated to **save** China, instead of just going home
- Mulan arrives at the Imperial palace and attempts to **convince** the others that the Huns are in fact **not dead**, and that they are there, trying to **murder** the Emperor

- Unlike other heroes, Odysseus was **not** in search of **treasure**
- Instead, he was desperately trying to **reach** his **home**
- Once he returns, he finds out that his **house** has been **overrun** with suitors trying to steal his wife and palace



## COMPARISON

- Mulan
  - In this case, Mulan's story is much more **dramatic** and **heroic**
  - Trying to save China!
- Odyssey
  - Much more **noble**
  - **Not** as dramatic
  - **Lower** stakes

# RESURRECTION

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- No one believes her, because they believe that Mulan **cannot be trusted** as she had already **lied** to them before
- The Huns reveal themselves, and the remaining members of the army, directed by the captain, attempt to **ram** the Imperial Palace's doors open, **to no avail**
- Mulan eventually **convinces** all members of the army to **join her** in her plan to disguise themselves as women
- Mulan's plan **succeeds**, and she is **rewarded** by the Emperor by being offered a seat on the Imperial Council, which she declines

- Instead of rushing in and killing the suitors, Odysseus is patient
- He wishes to learn if his wife has been faithful
- With the help of his son and a loyal swineherd, he devises a plan
- Athena disguises him as an old beggar so that he can enter his house undetected
- Telemachus steals all the suitors' weapons, and a final test is proposed
- Penelope will marry the man who strings Odysseus' bow and shoots an arrow through a line of small circles; a seemingly impossible task

## COMPARISON

- Mulan
  - Much more dramatic
  - Not very patient or mature
- Odysseus
  - Very mature way to handle situation
  - Cunning
- Implies that Odysseus is mature and clever, while Mulan's plan is just brute force with a bit of disguising

**RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR**

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- Instead, the Emperor hands Mulan a sword and a necklace
- Mulan returns home with the captain in tow to the delight of her family
- Mulan's family is also impressed with the gifts Mulan received

- Odysseus, still dressed as a beggar, completes the task and is **restored** to his original state
- He and his son **expel** the suitors from their home by **force**
- Penelope, seeing how Odysseus has changed, **tests** him to make sure it is **actually him**
- She tells him she moved their bed
- He replies, correctly, that this would have been impossible, and all is **returned to normal**



## COMPARISON

- Both noble and dramatic
- Odyssey slightly more dramatic IMHO
- Mulan scenario very unrealistic
- Assuming all mystical creatures are real, Odyssey scenario quite realistic

## ARCHETYPES

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- Odyssey has Poseidon
- The Shadow in Mulan is Shang Yu

## SIMILARITIES

- Both of the characters, in each movie and book are villains
- In the Odyssey, Poseidon isn't the main threat to Odysseus
- The main problem is the war—but causes trouble throughout the journey
- Poseidon is more cunning and mischievous in comparison to a big, more traditional villain like Shang Yu

## THE HERO(INE)

- The hero in Odyssey is Odysseus
- The hero in Mulan is Mulan

## SIMILARITIES

- Mulan is introduced as a free-spirited outcast, clumsy, and unable to follow rules, regulations, or traditions
- Nevertheless, she has a warm heart and wants nothing more than to uphold her family honor, while keeping true to herself
- Odysseus has two major flaws, his arrogance and his pride
- In comparison, Mulan is very selfless and puts others before her

- The helper in Odyssey is Goddess Athena
- The helper in Mulan is Mushu

## SIMILARITIES

- The characters in each movie and book **help** the **protagonist**.
- In the movie Mulan, Mushu **helps** her by **cheering** her **spirit** and gives her **confidence**
- In comparison, Athena in the movie Odyssey, sends him **divine aid** and **help**



## THE DREAM PERSON

- The dream person in Odyssey is Penelope
- The dream person in Mulan is the Captain

## SIMILARITIES

- In comparison, Odysseus is married to Penelope whereas Mulan and the Captain aren't

## THE THRESHOLD GUARDIAN

- The threshold guardian in Odyssey are the Lotus Eaters
- The threshold guardian in Mulan are the ancestors

## SIMILARITIES

- In Mulan, the threshold guardians want to bring her back to not fight for the war
- In comparison, the lotus eaters are native to their land and help the Odyssey crew with the 'lotus' fruits

## THE TRICKERS

- The tricker in Odyssey is Poseidon
- The trickers in Mulan is Mushu

## SIMILARITIES

- In Mulan, Mushu **tricks** the consul to **go to war**
- Mushu **doesn't harm** Mulan in any way
- In comparison, Poseidon **tricks** Odysseus many times getting him into frustrating situations

- The herald in Odyssey is the starting of the war in Troy
- The herald in Mulan is Mushu and the Consul of the Emperor

## SIMILARITIES

- In Mulan, Mushu **lied** about going to war; the news was **fake**
- In Odyssey, the starting of the war **warned** everyone to stay **alert**