

# The Hero's Journey

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# References

- ▶ *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell
- ▶ *The Writer's Journey*, 2nd ed., Christopher Vogler
- ▶ *Save the Cat!*, Blake Snyder
- ▶ *Level Up!*, Scott Rogers

# Symbolic Meaning

*The truths contained in religious doctrines are after all so distorted and systematically disguised that the mass of humanity cannot recognize them as truth. The case is similar to what happens when we tell a child that new-born babies are brought by the stork. Here, too, we are telling the truth in symbolic clothing, for we know what the large bird signifies.*

—Sigmund Freud

# Stock Characters

- ▶ Whore with a heart of gold
- ▶ Arrogant West Point Lieutenant (Westerns)
- ▶ Good Cop/Bad Cop (*Lethal Weapon*, *Beverly Hills Cop*)
- ▶ Tough but Fair Sergeant (War Movies)
- ▶ Young man on the rise
- ▶ Good girl tempted
- ▶ Clever and resourceful child
- ▶ The sex goddess
- ▶ The hunk

# Stock Actors

- ▶ Isn't Russell Crowe Errol Flynn?
- ▶ Isn't Jim Carrey Jerry Lewis?
- ▶ Isn't Tom Hanks Jimmy Stewart?
- ▶ Isn't Sandra Bullock Rosalind Russell?

# The Archetypes, *Carl Jung*

- ▶ Hero
- ▶ Mentor
- ▶ Threshold Guardian
- ▶ Herald
- ▶ Shapeshifter
- ▶ Shadow
- ▶ Trickster

# Function of the Archetypes

- ▶ The hero encounters all aspects of his or her own personality through the course of the story.
- ▶ We consider life from all possible points of view.

# Heroes

- ▶ Normal heroes: Shrek, Luke Skywalker, James Bond
- ▶ Cynical heroes: Rick in *Casablanca*
- ▶ Tragic heroes: Macbeth, Scarface.
- ▶ Catalyst heroes: Axel Foley in *Beverly Hills Cop*



# Mentors

- ▶ Mentor from the *Odyssey*
- ▶ Merlin
- ▶ Gandalf
- ▶ Obi Wan Kenobi
- ▶ Morpheus
- ▶ M and Q
- ▶ Jiminy Cricket
- ▶ Donkey in *Shrek*
- ▶ Professor X
- ▶ The “best friend”
- ▶ Internalized, film noir voice

# Threshold Guardians

- ▶ The dragon
- ▶ The troll under the bridge
- ▶ The sphinx
- ▶ The poppies in *Wizard of Oz*
- ▶ The flying monkeys, “Oh-ee-oh, oh-EE-oh!”

# Herald

- ▶ Hamlet's father's ghost
- ▶ Macbeth's witches
- ▶ "If you build it, they will come."
- ▶ Hermes
- ▶ A treasure map
- ▶ A phone call

# Shapeshifter

- ▶ The wicked queen in *Snow White*
- ▶ Iago
- ▶ Macbeth's witches
- ▶ Han Solo
- ▶ Love interests are usually shapeshifters.
- ▶ The femme fatale

# Shadow

- ▶ Hannibal in *Silence of the Lambs*
- ▶ Darth Vader
- ▶ Captain Hook
- ▶ Dracula
- ▶ SPECTRE
- ▶ Satan

# Trickster

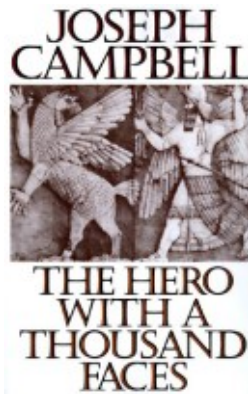
- ▶ Loki
- ▶ Anansi
- ▶ Raven
- ▶ Coyote
- ▶ B'rer Rabbit
- ▶ Bugs Bunny
- ▶ Captain Jack Sparrow

# Changing Archetypes

- ▶ Gunga Din starts as Trickster, becomes Hero.
- ▶ Obi Wan Kenobi starts as Mentor, becomes Hero.
- ▶ Hero becomes shapeshifter in *Sister Act*
- ▶ Hero becomes trickster in *Beverly Hills Cop*
- ▶ Hero becomes shadow in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

# The Hero's Journey

1. Ordinary World
2. Call to Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Meeting with the Mentor
5. Crossing the First Threshold
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
7. Approach to the Inmost Cave
8. Ordeal
9. Reward
10. The Road Back
11. Resurrection
12. Return with the Elixir





# Ordinary World



OWEN: You must understand I need you here, Luke.

LUKE: But it's a whole 'nother year.

OWEN: Look, it's only one more season.

LUKE: Yeah, that's what you said last year when Biggs and Tank left.

AUNT BERU: Where are you going?

LUKE: It looks like I'm going nowhere. I have to finish cleaning those droids.

# Call to Adventure



LEIA: Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope. Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope.

THREEPIO: Oh, he says it's nothing, sir. Merely a malfunction. Old data. Pay it no mind.

LUKE: Who is she? She's beautiful.

## Meeting with the Mentor



LUKE: What happened?

BEN: Rest easy, son, you've had a busy day. You're fortunate you're still in one piece.

LUKE: Ben? Ben Kenobi! Boy, am I glad to see you!

BEN: The Jundland wastes are not to be traveled lightly. Tell me young Luke, what brings you out this far?

# Refusal of the Call



LUKE: I can't get involved! I've got work to do! It's not that I like the Empire. I hate it! But there's nothing I can do about it right now. It's such a long way from here.

BEN: That's your uncle talking.

# Crossing the First Threshold



TROOPER: Let me see your identification.

BEN: You don't need to see his identification.

TROOPER: We don't need to see his identification.

BEN: These are not the droids your looking for.

TROOPER: These are not the droids we're looking for.

BEN: He can go about his business.

TROOPER: You can go about your business.

BEN: (to Luke) Move along.

TROOPER: Move along. Move along.

# Tests, Allies, Enemies



BEN: This is Chewbacca. He's first-mate on a ship that might suit our needs.

...

HAN: It's the ship that made the Kessel run in less than twelve parsecs!

...

LEIA: Governor Tarkin, I should have expected to find you holding Vader's leash. I recognized your foul stench when I was brought on board.

## Approach to the Inmost Cave



LUKE: Look at him. He's headed for that small moon.

HAN: I think I can get him before he gets there...he's almost in range.

BEN: That's no moon! It's a space station.

HAN: It's too big to be a space station.

LUKE: I have a very bad feeling about this.

# Ordeal



HAN: (sarcastically) Oh! The garbage chute was a really wonderful idea.  
What an incredible smell you've discovered! ...

LUKE: There's something alive in here!

HAN: That's your imagination.

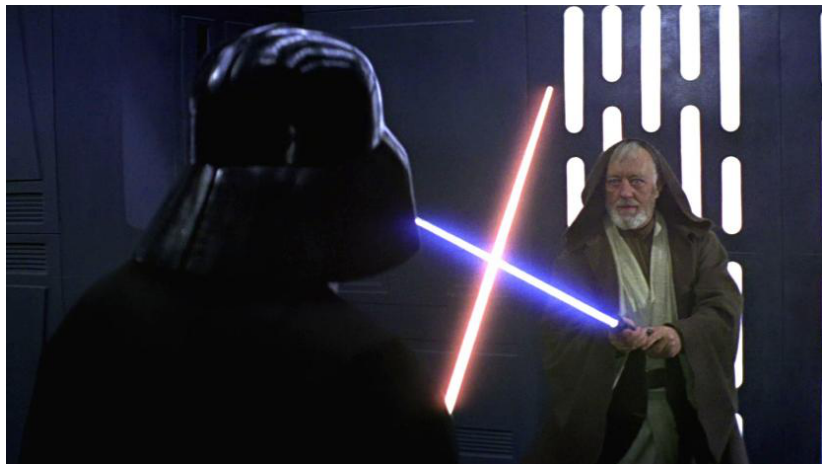
LUKE: Something just moved past my leg! Look! Did you see that?

HAN: What?

LUKE: Help!



## Reward



BEN'S VOICE: Run, Luke! Run!

# The Road Back



DODONNA: Only a precise hit will set up a chain reaction. The shaft is ray-shielded, so you'll have to use proton torpedoes.

WEDGE: That's impossible, even for a computer.

LUKE: It's not impossible. I used to bull's-eye womp rats in my T-sixteen back home. They're not much bigger than two meters.

# Resurrection



BEN'S VOICE: Use the Force, Luke. ...

INTERIOR: DARTH VADER'S COCKPIT.

VADER: I have you now.

He pushes the fire buttons.

VADER: What?

INTERIOR: MILLENNIUM FALCON – COCKPIT.

HAN: (yelling) Yahoo!

## Return with the Elixir

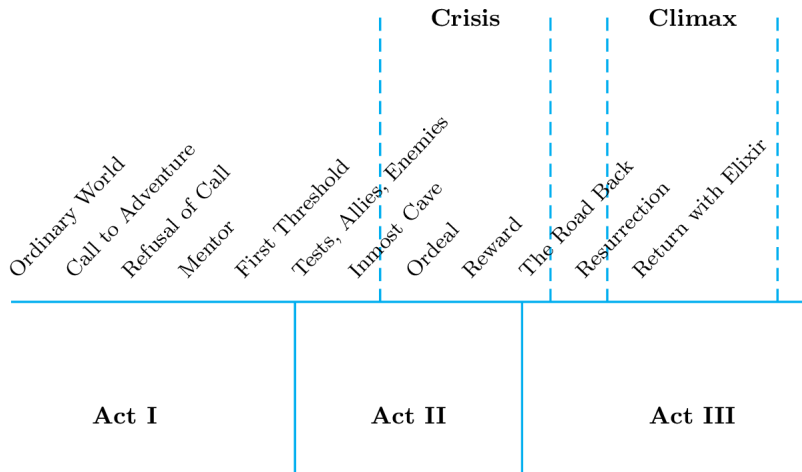


INTERIOR: MASSASSI OUTPOST – MAIN HANGAR.

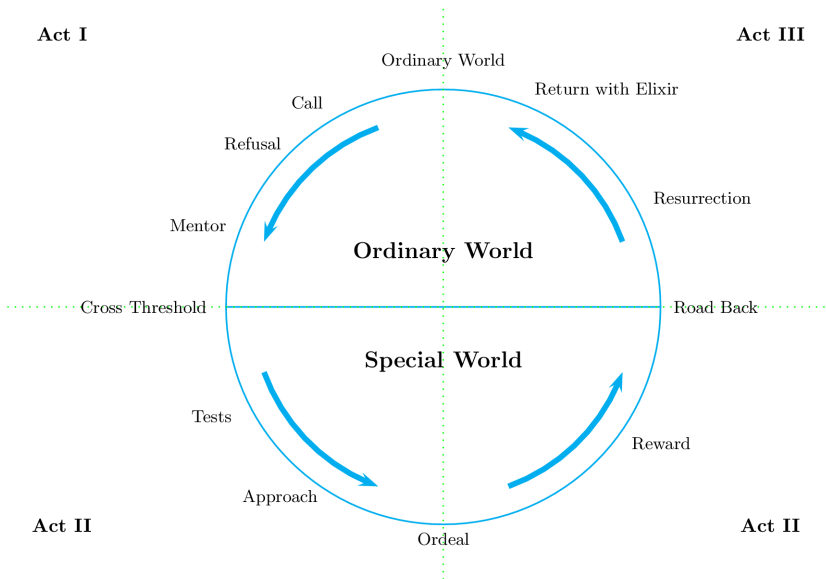
Luke climbs out of his starship fighter and is cheered by a throng of ground crew and pilots. Luke climbs down the ladder as they all welcome him with laughter, cheers, and shouting. Princess Leia rushes toward him.

LEIA: Luke! Luke! Luke!

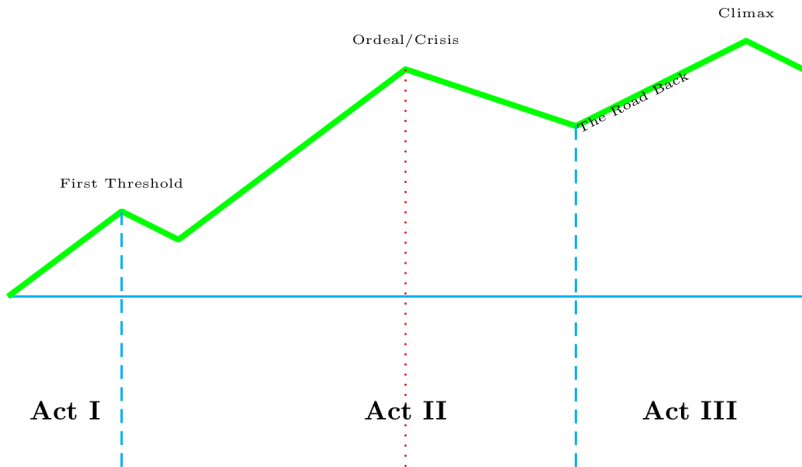
# The Hero's Journey



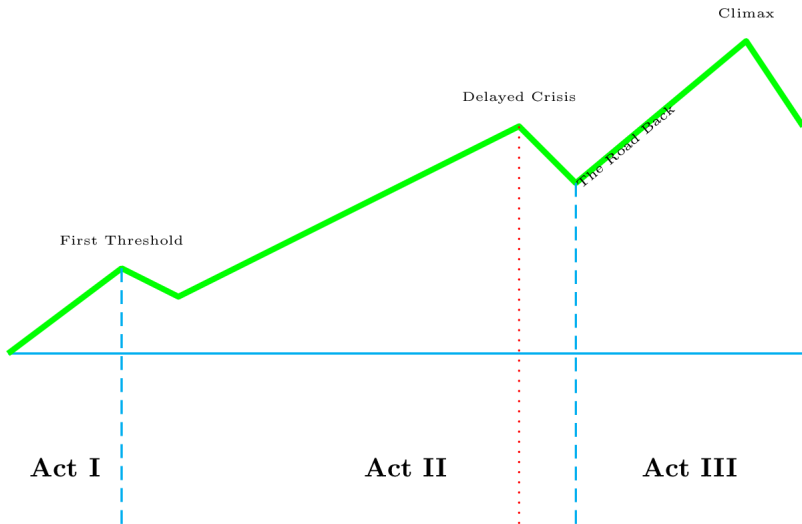
# The Hero's Journey



# Central Crisis



# Delayed Crisis





# THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

1. Opening Image (1)
2. Theme Stated (5)
3. Set-Up (1-10)
4. Catalyst (12)
5. Debate (12-25)
6. Break into Two (25-30)
7. B Story (30)
8. The Promise of the Premise (30-55)
9. Midpoint (55)
10. Bad Guys Close In (55-75)
11. All Is Lost (75)
12. Dark Night of the Soul (75-85)
13. Break into Three (85)
14. Finale (85-110)
15. Final Image (110)

# THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

- ▶ **Opening Image** (1) A visual that represents the struggle & tone of the story. A snapshot of the main characters problem, before the adventure begins.
- ▶ **Theme Stated** (5) What your story is about; the message, the truth. Usually, it is spoken to the main character or in their presence, but they don't understand the truth not until they have some personal experience and context to support it.
- ▶ **Set-Up** (1-10) Expand on the “before” snapshot. Present the main characters world as it is, and what is missing in their life.
- ▶ **Catalyst** (12) The moment where life as it is changes. It is the telegram, the act of catching your loved-one cheating, allowing a monster onboard the ship, meeting the true love of your life, etc. The before world is no more, change is underway.

# THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

- ▶ **Debate** (12-25) But change is scary and for a moment, or a brief number of moments, the main character doubts the journey they must take. Can I face this challenge? Do I have what it takes? Should I go at all? It is the last chance for the hero to chicken out.
- ▶ **Break into Two** (25-30) The main character makes a choice and the journey begins. We leave the “Thesis” world and enter the upside-down, opposite world of Act Two.
- ▶ **B Story** (30) This is when theres a discussion about the Theme the nugget of truth. Usually, this discussion is between the main character and the love interest. So, the B Story is usually called the “love story”.

# THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

- ▶ **The Promise of the Premise** (30-55) This is the fun part of the story. This is when Craig Thompson's relationship with Raina blooms, when Indiana Jones tries to beat the Nazis to the Lost Ark, when the detective finds the most clues and dodges the most bullets. This is when the main character explores the new world and the audience is entertained by the premise they have been promised.
- ▶ **Midpoint** (55) Dependent upon the story, this moment is when everything is great or everything is awful. The main character either gets everything they think they want (great) or doesn't get what they think they want at all (awful). But not everything we think we want is what we actually need in the end.

# THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

- ▶ **Bad Guys Close In** (55-75) Doubt, jealousy, fear, foes both physical and emotional regroup to defeat the main characters goal, and the main characters great/awful situation disintegrates.
- ▶ **All Is Lost** (75) The opposite moment from the Midpoint: awful/great. The moment that the main character realizes they've lost everything they gained, or everything they now have has no meaning. The initial goal now looks even more impossible than before. And here, something or someone dies. It can be physical or emotional, but the death of something old makes way for something new to be born.

# THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

- ▶ **Dark Night of the Soul** (75-85) The main character hits bottom, and wallows in hopelessness. The Why hast thou forsaken me, Lord? moment. Mourning the loss of what has died the dream, the goal, the mentor character, the love of your life, etc. But, you must fall completely before you can pick yourself back up and try again.

# THE BLAKE SNYDER BEAT SHEET

- ▶ **Break into Three** (85) Thanks to a fresh idea, new inspiration, or last-minute Thematic advice from the B Story (usually the love interest), the main character chooses to try again.
- ▶ **Finale** (85-110) This time around, the main character incorporates the Theme—the nugget of truth that now makes sense to them—into their fight for the goal because they have experience from the A Story and context from the B Story. Act Three is about Synthesis!
- ▶ **Final Image** (110) opposite of Opening Image, proving, visually, that a change has occurred within the character.

# 10 Plots

- ▶ Monster in the House
- ▶ Golden Fleece
- ▶ Out of the Bottle
- ▶ Dude with a Problem
- ▶ Rites of Passage
- ▶ Buddy Love
- ▶ Whydunit
- ▶ The Fool Triumphant
- ▶ Institutionalized
- ▶ Superhero



# Monster in the House

- ▶ *Jaws*
- ▶ *The Exorcist*
- ▶ *Alien*
- ▶ *Scream*
- ▶ *Tremors*
- ▶ *Jurassic Park*

## Rules:

- ▶ A confined space
- ▶ A sin (usually greed) committed
- ▶ Leads to creation of supernatural monster
- ▶ Run and hide

# Golden Fleece

- ▶ *Wizard of Oz*
- ▶ *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*
- ▶ *Road Trip*
- ▶ *Back to the Future*
- ▶ *Ocean's Eleven*

Rules:

- ▶ The hero must learn from all the incidents.

# Out of the Bottle

- ▶ *Bruce Almighty*
- ▶ *The Mask*
- ▶ *Liar, Liar*
- ▶ *Flubber*

## Rules:

- ▶ If wish fulfillment:  
hero is underdog who learns magic isn't everything.
- ▶ If comeuppance:  
hero is arrogant SOB who learns magic is curse.

# Dude with a Problem

- ▶ *Die Hard*
- ▶ *Schindler's List*
- ▶ *The Terminator*
- ▶ *Titanic*

Rules:

- ▶ Hero is ordinary guy who finds himself in extraordinary circumstances.

# Rites of Passage

- ▶ 10
- ▶ *Days of Wine and Roses*
- ▶ 28 Days

## Rules:

- ▶ Monster sneaks up on hero
- ▶ Hero's slow take realizing
- ▶ Victory won by giving in to forces stronger than ourselves
- ▶ Ultimate lesson: *That's life!*

# Buddy Love

- ▶ *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*
- ▶ *Wayne's World*
- ▶ *Rain Man*
- ▶ *Lethal Weapon*
- ▶ *Bringing Up Baby*
- ▶ *E.T.*

## Rules:

- ▶ They hate each other
- ▶ They realize they are better with each other than without
- ▶ They have to surrender their egos to win

# Whydunit

- ▶ *Chinatown*
- ▶ *All the President's Men*
- ▶ *Mystic River*

## Rules:

- ▶ The hero does not change
- ▶ The hero and the audience discover something about human nature they had not thought possible.

# The Fool Triumphant

- ▶ Chaplin, Keaton, Lloyd
- ▶ *Being There*
- ▶ *Amadeus*
- ▶ *Forrest Gump*

## Rules:

- ▶ The underdog starts chains of events that destroy a larger foe.
- ▶ Often there is an “insider” who can’t believe the Fool gets away with it, but suffers the brunt of the abuse: Salieri, Lieutenant Dan, Herbert Lom in *The Pink Panther*



# Institutionalized

- ▶ *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- ▶ *M\*A\*S\*H*
- ▶ *American Beauty*
- ▶ *The Godfather*

Rules:

- ▶ A breakout character exposes the group as a fraud.
- ▶ Who is crazier, me or them?

# Superhero

- ▶ *Batman*
- ▶ *Gladiator*
- ▶ *A Beautiful Mind*

## Rules:

- ▶ Hero is an extraordinary guy who finds himself in ordinary circumstances.
- ▶ Must establish sympathy for the superhero.
- ▶ The plight of being misunderstood.