

# 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
- Not on purpose

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

- 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
- Decides to disguise herself

- 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
- 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
- Is worried that something bad could occur during his absence

- Mulan
  - Fears for **herself**
- Odyssey
  - 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 of the soldiers to **improve** her battle skills

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



- 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
  - Definition of threshold consists of point of **no return**
- Mulan
  - Definition of threshold consists of **when** the adventure **commences**
- Interesting how definition is **different** for every story
- Does not really **imply** anything about the story's content

## TESTS, ALLIES, ENEMIES

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

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



- 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
- Mushu tricked them into going to war with the Huns

- 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
  - More **subdued** in Mulan
  - Feels “set” and “official” due to the government involvement in the whole situation
- Odyssey
  - Approach in the Odyssey more **spontaneous**
  - Integrates surprise
  - More **dangerous**
  - Sets the tone for Supreme Ordeal

## SUPREME ORDEAL

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- Army is ambushed by the Huns
- They are hiding behind summit of mountain
- Mulan saves everyone by firing a rocket into overhang of snow
- Causes an avalanche
- She kills almost everyone
- 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**
- He is seeking **information** to **guide** him home
- This quest brings him to the **verge** of **death**



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

**REWARD**

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- **Reward** does not go to the hero
- Goes instead 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
- Decides to make her way **towards** the **Imperial Palace**
- Decides that she is obligated to **save** China
- Does not manage to **convince** the others in the army that the Huns are in fact **not dead** and are 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



- 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
- They believe that Mulan **cannot be trusted**
  - She had already **lied** to them before
- The Huns reveal themselves
- Remaining members of the army attempt to **ram** the Imperial Palace's doors open
- **To no avail**
- Mulan eventually **convinces** all members of the army to **join her**
- Her plan is to disguise themselves as women
- Mulan's plan **succeeds**
- Is **rewarded** by Emperor

- Instead of rushing in and killing the suitors, Odysseus is **patient**
- He wishes to learn if his **wife** has been **faithful**
- 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
- **Final test** is proposed
- Penelope will marry the man who strings Odysseus' bow and shoots an arrow through a line of small circles

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

RETURN WITH THE ELIXIR

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- Mulan **returns** home with the captain in tow
- Her family is **delighted**

- Odysseus completes the task
- Is **restored** to his original state
- He and his son **expel** suitors
- Penelope **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
- All is **returned to normal**



- 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 the characters are villains
- Poseidon isn't the main threat
  - Main problem is war
  - Poseidon still causes trouble throughout journey
- Poseidon is more cunning and mischievous in comparison to a big, more traditional villain like Shang Yu

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

## SIMILARITIES

- Mulan is introduced as
  - free-spirited outcast
  - Clumsy
  - Unable to follow rules, regulations, or traditions
- Has warm heart
- Wants nothing more than to:
  - Uphold her family honor
  - Keep true to self
- Mulan is an Unwilling Hero
  - Can be seen when she is hesitant to go on the journey in front of the training camp
  - She is motivated to begin her journey by her father's conscription—an outside force
  - Becomes committed to the adventure in the end
- Odysseus has two major flaws:

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

## SIMILARITIES

- Help the protagonist.
- Mushu helps her by cheering her spirit
  - Gives her confidence
- In comparison, Athena in the Odyssey, sends him divine aid and help



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

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

# THE THRESHOLD GUARDIAN(S)

- The threshold guardians in Odyssey are the Lotus Eaters
  - They test Odysseus' strength and ability to problem solve by making his men forget about home.
- The threshold guardians 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
- Help the Odyssey crew with the 'lotus' fruits

- The tricker in Odyssey is Poseidon
- The tricker 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 by getting him into frustrating situations

- The herald in the 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**