# Introduction

I will be talking about Season 1 of the Shannara chronicles which is an adaptation of the Sword of Shannara trilogy novels and how it does and does not follow Campbell’s analysis of a hero’s journey.

Season 1 of the Shannara chronicles follows Will, Amberle and Eretria as they go on a quest to protect the Ellcrys from dying, which is a tree that holds back banished demons from entering into the four lands.

Will is half human half elf who is last of his bloodline. He posses 3 Elfstones and is destined to save the Four lands. Amberle is an Elven Princess and is one of the Chosen, which is a group of elves responsible for caring and protecting the Ellcrys. Eretia is a human Rover, which is band of thieves and mercenaries that travel around the four lands.

# Hero’s Journey

Part 1 of Campbell’s Hero’s journey involves the call to adventure, refusal of the call, supernatural aid, crossing a threshold and being in the belly of a whale.

Wills call to adventure starts out when his mother gives him the Elfstones and the Druid Allanon seeks him out hoping that the magic he got from his grandfather would help in fighting against the demons. His refusal is his reluctance to join and help the Druid with the demons.

Amberle’s call starts when she is given a vision by the Ellcrys of the human population being killed by demons that have broken free. Amberle’s refusal is when she dismisses this vision as being due to lack of sleep.

The ellcrys is Amberle’s supernatural aid as it gives her visions to help her progress in her journey and the elfstones are Wills because they help him use magic. Allanon also serves as both of their aids as he helps guide them and provide them with Druid knowledge.

The crossing of a threshold for both of them would be when the demon Dagda Mor breaks free along with the Changeling and they start to attempt to kill the group to prevent them from helping the Ellcrys.

The belly of the whale moment could be said to be when the last leaf falls from the Ellcrys and everyone prepares for war as the Dagda Mor’s demons prepare to march.

Now we’ve reached part 2 of campbell’s hero’s journey. This part involves the road of trials, meeting with a goddess, a woman as a temptress, father attonement, Apotheosis or illumination, and ultimate boon.

The road of trials is the demons and other enemies such at the Rovers, that prevent the group from gaining the information needed to save the tree and reach the tree in general. For Amberle, the Ellycrys is her meeting with the goddess especially towards the end when a vision self of Amberle from the tree tells her that she’ll have to sacrifice herself because she is the seed. Eretria while being in the group is the temptress for both Will and Amberle. On multiple occasions she betrays them and tries to seduce the both of them. Amberle achieves illumination through the tree and in understanding that her part to play was to sacrifice herself to become part of the tree. You could also say Will’s illumination was realizing that his job in the end was to get Amberle to the tree. The ultimate boon is that the Ellcrys is alive again and now demons won’t kill everyone.

Part 3 of campbell’s hero’s journey is essentially the return to society. Which seems to briefly happen sometime between season 1 and 2 because at the end of season 1 Will is off to go get Eretria back who was captured by elves. We start Season 2 off with Will in Storlock, where he has been training and learning to become a healer which helps him get better at using his magic and the elfstones.

# Where Hero’s Journey Fails, Succeeds, Insignificant

Overall, between Will and Amberle they both cover a good bit of the hero’s journey as campbell describes. Part 1 of the journey seems to work the best in relation to season 1 of the show since you can apply every part to both protagonists.

It is in part 2 of campbell’s analysis that it starts fail because not every part can be applied to the both of them. This is interesting because while the hero’s journey is usually seen with a male protagonist it is actually Will’s journey that doesn’t seem to match all the events campbell describes. Campbells two main events that he says should happen are father atonement and women as a temptress. Father attonement ends up not being applicable to Will because of the fact that his father figures are already dead. Will does have Eretria as the temptress but instead of rejecting her as Campbell suggests might happen he ends up with her in the end and while she does inhibit his ability to perform for his quest, she also helps it along. Will also doesn’t seem to really reach an illumination to the same scale as Amberle, at least in the first season.

As mentioned, Will’s father figures are already dead and we learn nothing about Amberle’s family. For this reason father atonement seems to be the most insignificant part of the hero’s journey in relation to the show.

# Humans

Now I will talk about humans place in the cosmos . The show doesn’t really tell you much about humans except the Rovers. Because of this I had to get some information from the books in order to give a better overview of why the show doesn’t focus on them that much and what it could mean.

At one point there were tons of humans and they had advanced science so much that no one died except from old age, which was also soon to not be a problem. However, disputes led to the Great Wars in the early 22nd century. They were basically all but wiped out. The Great War caused genetic mutation because of the radiation it produced. Because of this humans were the point at which other races evolved from those being Dwarves, Gnomes and trolls. Humans also occupied the Southland and because of this most were saved from the radiation and Southland is the most populated region of the Four lands. . Later on humans worked to eradicate magic in the four lands and ended up in war between the other races because of the Federation. The Federation is the governing body of the Southland after they dominated the race of men. However, the Federation were not able to dominate the Rovers.

Because of all this, it makes sense why you see very little mention of humans in the show because they are all holed up in the Southland away from everyone except the Rovers who were nomadic and generally nice to the druids. The rovers themselves were usually thieves and mercenaries which gives the assumption that the humans represented the wrong. You get the feeling that humans don’t really have a significant role in the world and they are just another race. They are very much not special as they can’t do magic and the assumption that they are a lesser race seems to be given.