



Cersei, Don & Walter

**Creating Complex Characters
with the Hero's Journey
by
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What is the Hero's Journey?

- ❖ All stories consist of and share common structural patterns and elements.
- ❖ These are the collectively know as THE HERO'S JOURNEY.
- ❖ The struggle of characters in universal life experiences.
- ❖ The secret code of story.



Campbell & Vogler

- ❖ Joseph Campbell “Hero Has a Thousand Faces” 1949
- ❖ Christopher Vogler “The Writers Journey Mythic Structure for Writers” 1998

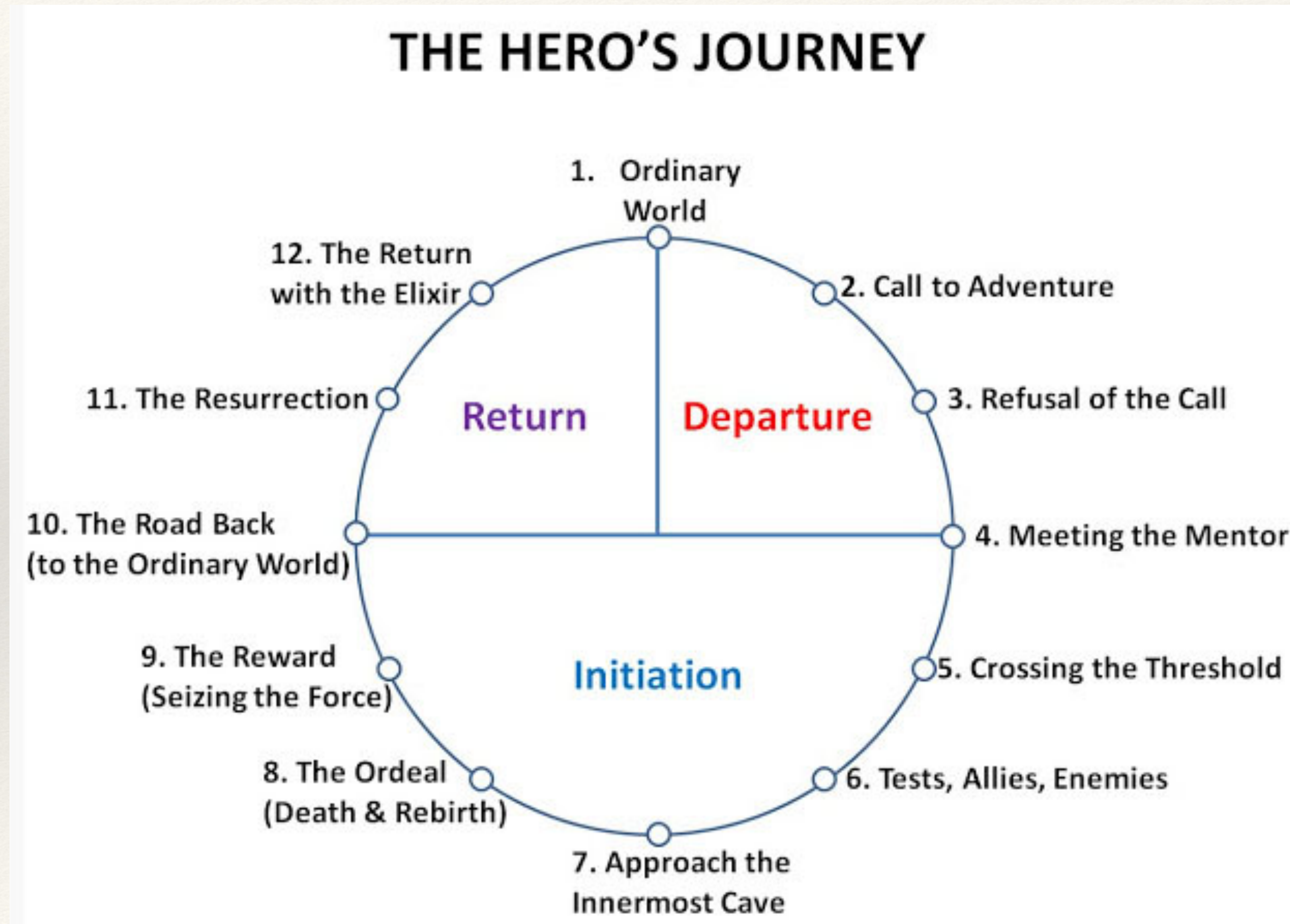


A HERO IS A PERSON OF ANY GENDER



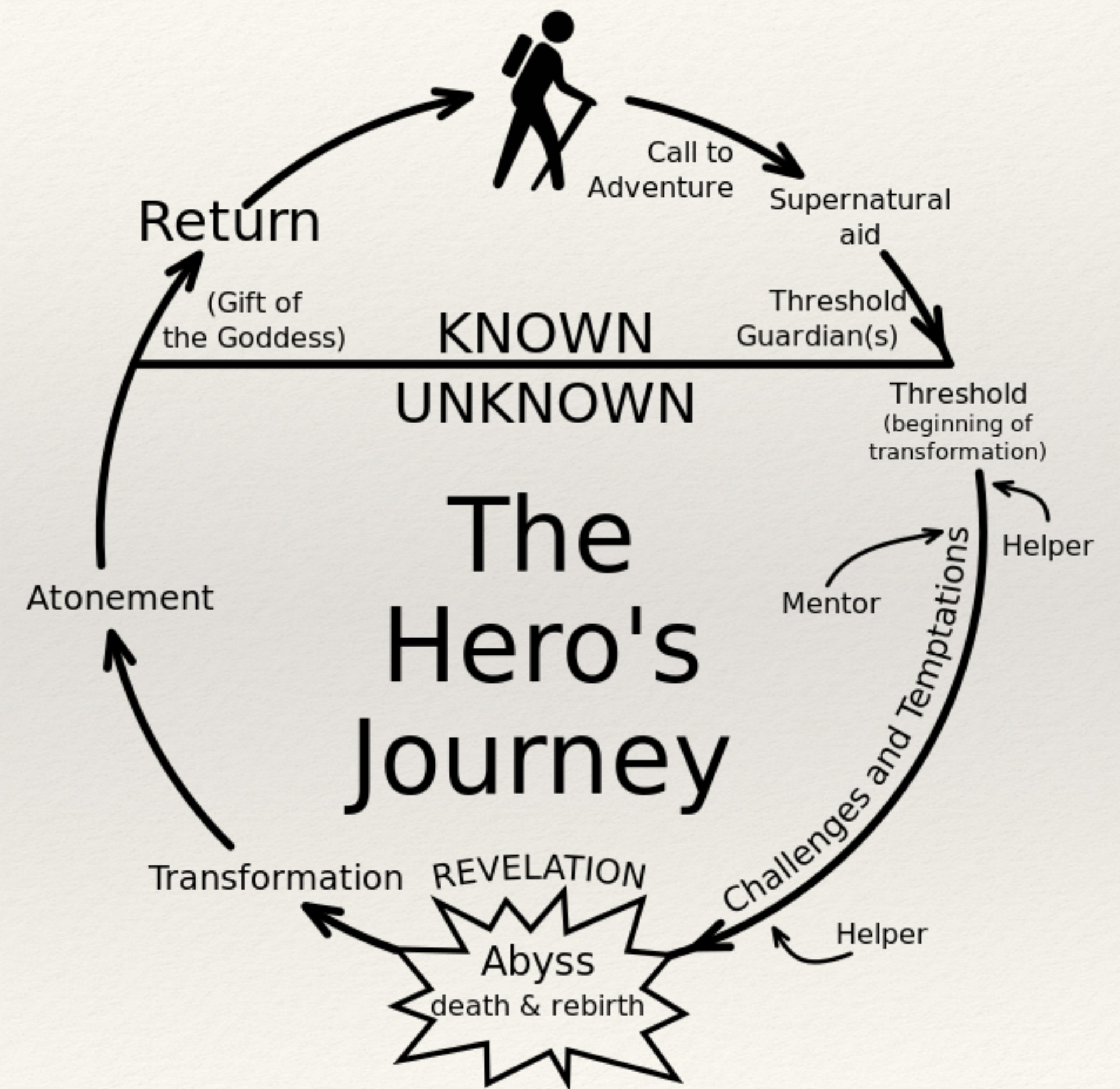
The 3-Act Structure

- ❖ Departure. The hero leaves the Ordinary World behind. (Decision to Act)
- ❖ Initiation. The hero ventures into the unknown to overcome obstacles & challenges. (The Action)
- ❖ Return. The hero returns to the familiar world - in triumph, disgrace or death. (Consequences of the Action)



Why teach the Hero's Journey? (Craft)

- ❖ Tools for the craft of storytelling
- ❖ Help construct their stories
- ❖ Bring psychological truth
- ❖ Create/identify theme
- ❖ Diagnose problems of plot & character
- ❖ Provide a solutions for corrections/ revisions
- ❖ TV / Film / Novel / Non-Fiction / Graphic Novel
- ❖ In TV: Hero's Journey for an episode / a season / a series



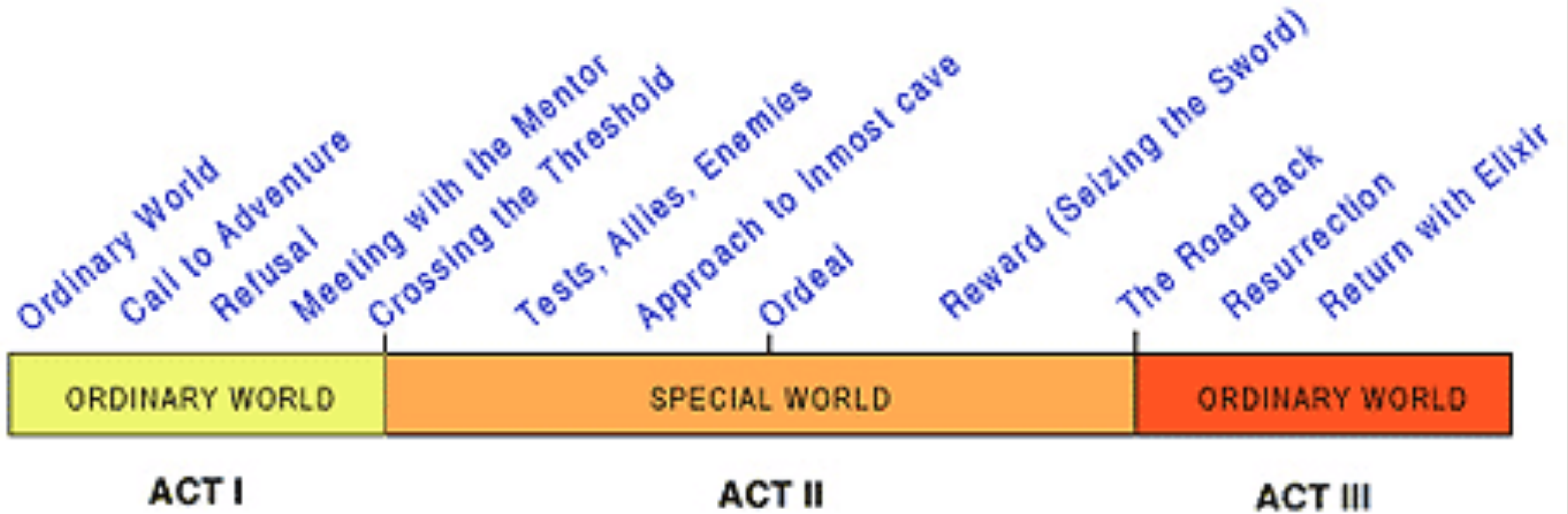
Why teach The Hero's Journey? (Inspiration)

- ❖ Create modern heroes (in their own image)
- ❖ Changing sex, age, race, the identity of archetypes - Inclusivity and diversity
- ❖ Tell stories that contribute to our collective humanity and improve the world.
- ❖ Reminds students of their inspired mission and gives them the respect as creators!
- ❖ Morale & Courage - students become heroes of their own writing journey



Character Arc – Everyday Actions “The Story”
Hero’s Journey – Theme(s) “The Journey”

Hero's Journey



Walter White - Mr. Chips to Scarface

Ordinary World – Walter White Teaching

Call to Adventure – Seeing the Meth Lab Takedown on Television, Getting Cancer

Refusal to Call – Not telling his wife about his cancer

Meeting the Mentor – Meeting Jesse Pinkman

Seeking to provide for his death, the hero comes to finally live.

Theme - the dual nature of good and evil.

Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, Crime and Punishment



Don Draper - False Identity to True Self

Challenges and Temptations: Each episode produces a daily challenge in Don's work or personal life. We see Don's transformation from a cheating husband with Betty to a loyal man. Hero's tend to fail challenges and fall into temptations along their journey but hopefully they learn from their mistakes over time.

Abyss: In Season 4, Don's life takes a turn for the worst and he goes to a very dark place. He begins to drink too early and often in the day. His falls to temptation finally catch up with him and ruins his marriage and forced him into a divorce. He sleeps with his secretary and jeopardizes her job. He slides deeper and deeper into his abyss until he hits rock bottom.

Rebirth: Don's rebirth happens when he writes the letter to himself that begins "They say as soon as you have to cut back on your drinking, you have a drinking problem."

Transformation/Atonement: He begins to acknowledge how his excessive living has affected him, and he takes steps to make it better. He tells Megan to stop him at 3 drinks so he doesn't over do it. Moreover, he goes through the same situations he used to go through with a new perspective.

Don has taken another man's identity, so his entire life is a lie. His Hero's Journey takes him through professional success and personal failure, until he gets the courage to face the strongest enemy — himself.



*Cersei Lannister - Woman who has Everything to
Childless & Defeated*

*"What good is power if you cannot
protect the ones you love?"*

Road Back- Pregnant, she sits as Queen on the Iron Throne, refuses brother Tyrion's plea to surrender.

Resurrection- Her plan backfires, her army and kingdom slaughtered. She must flee alone.

Return with the Elixir- Deep in the bottom of the castle, her love/brother Jamie finds her. She begs him not to let their baby die like this. They embrace and are crushed to death.



CLASS ASSIGNMENT:

For your main character, describe one scene for each basic stage of the Hero's Journey.

1. Departure (Act 1)

2. Initiation (Act 2)

3. Return (Act 3)

STUDENT A EXAMPLE (using the 3 stages - internal & external overview)

1. Departure

External: Shari departs her normal life when she has a vision of her own death.

Internal: Shari's monotonous and depressing existence is thrown for a loop—she's almost glad to have something new to focus on.

2. Initiation (1)

External: Shari is captured and interrogated by the government.

Internal: Shari's a good girl, things like this don't happen to her—there has to be a rational explanation.

STUDENT B EXAMPLE: (used all the stages of The Hero's Journey)

Refusal of the call

Quinn and Maxine are getting drinks. But then Quinn reverts to her old behavior, getting drunk and acting out in anger. Refusing to let herself get too close to Maxine.

The mentor

Quinn's life is saved by the alien, who tells her that her dog was killed by Bigfoot.

Crossing the threshold

Quinn learns about all of the extraterrestrial civilizations that are visiting her town. She agrees to help the alien capture Bigfoot.

The ordeal

Quinn fights Bigfoot. Succeeds in capturing it, with the alien's aid.

STUDENT C EXAMPLE: (3 stages in a descriptive paragraph)

Departure (Act 1)

Rhea is deeply ambivalent about her job and lacks empathy for her patients. She meets with her mentor in the orthopedic surgery department to discuss her concerns. They brainstorm ideas and she suggests that Rhea may be a better fit for rehab medicine given her passion for fitness and desire for a less demanding lifestyle than surgery. Together they visit the inpatient rehabilitation unit at the hospital. Rhea develops a panic attack witnessing the struggles of a new injured spinal cord patient and pushes back against her mentor's advice.

Initiation (Act 2)

Rhea has one too many drinks at the cycling benefit party. She tries to forget her marital problems and career woes with vodka sodas. Much to the dismay of Natalie she insists that she is fit to drive home. Rhea drives off in her sports car while Natalie decides to take an Uber. Rhea loses control of the vehicle on a remote road and crashes into a tree. Her car is totaled and she is not discovered for several hours.

STUDENT D EXAMPLE: (3 stages - Internal & External overview)

Main Character: SALMA

1. Departure

External: Salma leaves Julia alone in the apartment even when Julia doesn't want to be alone.

Internal: Salma wants a moment away from Julia and wants to keep out of trouble from her job. She regrets it later.

2. Initiation

External: Salma finds the creature buried in the ruins of her apartment.

Internal: She has to save something and take something from the ruins.

3. Return

External: Salma attacks and pushes the creature when she sees it resting on the rocking chair.

Internal: Salma is not ready to move on from Julia's death and can't stand something or someone else using that chair that is so personal.

“There are only two or three human stories, and they go on repeating themselves as fiercely as if they had never happened before.”

—*Willa Cather*



The Hero's Journey gives
writers tools for their craft

and inspiration for
their own journey.
