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5.02: 12 Stages of a Hero's Journey Reference Sheet



Stages	Definition
The status quo	We meet the hero in their "normal" everyday life. They are safe and comfortable. This human connection makes them seem real to the audience.
The call to adventure	The hero receives a call to leave their ordinary world and embark on a journey to a special, new, or unknown world.
Refusal of the call	The hero initially resists the call, often because they are afraid or uncertain.
Meeting the mentor	The hero meets a wise figure (or figures) who guides and helps them on their journey.
Crossing the threshold	The hero crosses a threshold and enters a special, new, or unknown world, where they will face challenges and obstacles.
Tests, allies, and enemies	The hero encounters various tests and challenges, as well as allies and enemies, in the special world.

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The approach to the inmost cave	The hero approaches a serious challenge, often represented by a metaphorical "inmost cave." There are setbacks, and the hero may need to reorganize his helpers or boost morale with mentor's rally cry. The stakes are heightened.
The ordeal	The hero faces the final challenge and undergoes a transformation. This is a life or death crisis. The hero faces their greatest fear. Only through "death" can the hero be "reborn" and gain the strength they need to complete the journey.
The reward	The hero emerges victorious and receives a reward, often in the form of a treasure or a new understanding of themselves.
The road back	The hero begins the journey back to their ordinary world.
Resurrection	At the climax, the hero is severely tested once more just before they reach home. They are purified by a last sacrifice, another moment of death and rebirth, but on a higher and more complete level. By the hero's action, whatever conflict that existed is resolved once and for all.
The return with the elixir	The hero returns home as a changed person, often with a new understanding or a new sense of purpose. They have brought with them something that will help themselves and others heal.

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