



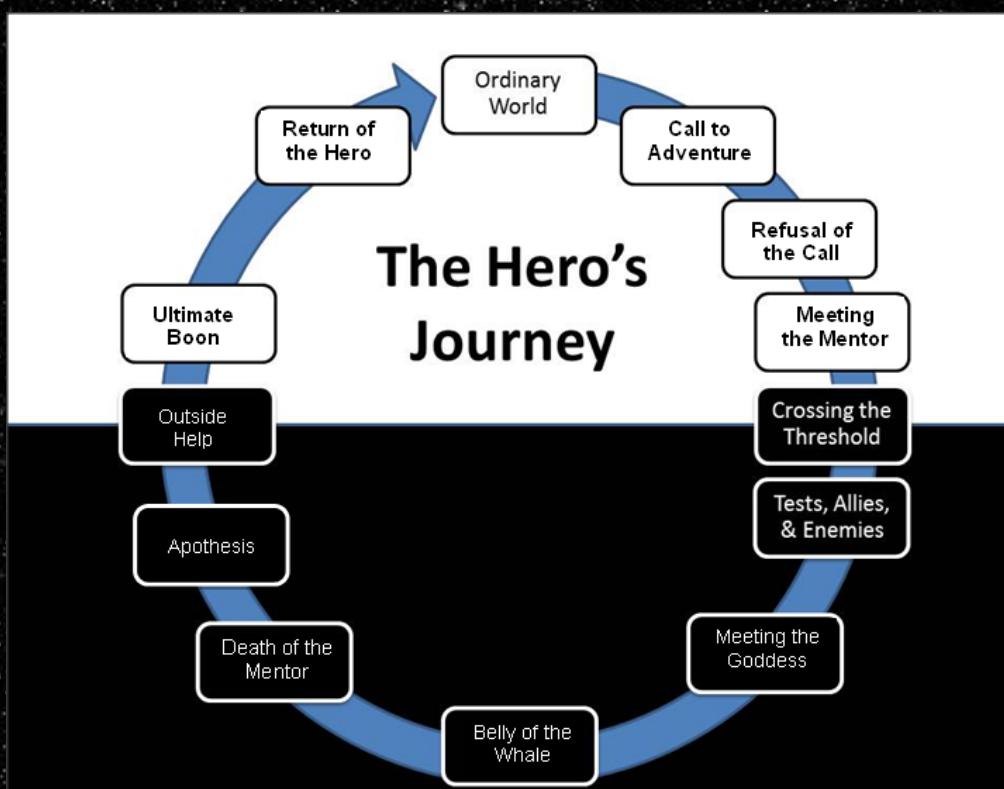
A long time ago in a galaxy far,  
far away....



THE HERO'S JOURNEY

# STAR WARS

## STAGES OF THE HERO'S JOURNEY



Created by Craig Dickinson. Shared with permission on StarWarsintheClassroom.com



# STAR WARS

## THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

***The hero starts off in their normal world, but is then presented with some information that acts as a call to head off into the unknown.***

In the film *Avatar*, RDA recruits Jake to take his murdered brother's place on Pandora and become an Avatar.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo is given the One Ring by Gandalf in order to keep it safe.

In *Harry Potter*, it comes literally as a written invitation to "Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."

In *Star Wars*, Luke receives the call as a plea recorded in a hologram.



## REFUSAL OF THE CALL

***The hero refuses the challenge or journey--usually because he feels a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, or a sense of inadequacy.***

**In *Avatar*, Jake's is torn between his allegiance to RDA and his growing connection to the Na'vi.**

**In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo tries to give the Ring back to Gandalf.**

**In *Harry Potter*, the call is actually refused by his Uncle Vernon who won't let Harry read the letter from Hogwarts.**

**In *Star Wars*, Luke tells Obi-Wan that he can't go to Alderaan because of family responsibilities.**



## MENTOR FIGURE/SUPERNATURAL AID

*Once the hero has committed to the quest, his or her guide and magical helper appears or becomes known. More often than not, this supernatural mentor will present the hero with one or more talismans or artifacts that will aid them later in their quest.*

In *Avatar*, both Grace and Neytiri mentor Jake. While Grace gives him the technology of the Avatar program, Neytiri teaches Jake the ways of the Na'vi.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, the wizard Gandalf mentors Frodo, just as he had earlier mentored his uncle, Bilbo.

In *Harry Potter*, Harry's first mentor is Hagrid—who introduces him to the wizarding world and helps him acquire a wand. He is later mentored by several of his teachers-- especially Professor Dumbledore.

In *Star Wars*, Obi-Wan begins to instruct Luke in the ways of the Force and gives him his father's lightsaber.

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## CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

***This is the point where the hero actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaves the known limits of his or her world and ventures into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are not known.***

In *Avatar*, Jake crosses the threshold the first time he enters the Avatar body and experiences the mobility, power and spirituality of the Na'vi body.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo leaves Bag End and begins his journey, passing through the Old Forest and visits the “Prancing Pony.”

In *Harry Potter*, Harry enters both Diagon Alley and the train platform 9-3/4 by magical means.

In *Star Wars*, Luke follows Obi-Wan into the cantina in Mos Eisley (a wretched hive of scum and villainy) in search of a pilot to take them to Alderaan.



## TESTS, ALLIES, AND ENEMIES

***The hero faces tests, meets allies, confronts enemies & learns the rules of the Special World.***

In *Avatar*, Jake aligns himself first with Grace and her team and later with Neytiri and the Omaticaya. He passes several Na'vi rites of passage to become one of the people. As he resists the temptation to “get his real legs back” by betraying the Na’vi, he finds himself at odds with Quaritch, Selfridge and the RDA mercenaries.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo meets the Fellowship, encounters the Nazgul and takes on the quest to take the Ring into Mordor.

In *Harry Potter*, Harry befriends Ron and Hermione, begins school at Hogwarts, meets his teachers, and begins to learn about Voldemort.

In *Star Wars*, Luke meets Han Solo and Chewbacca in the Mos Eisley cantina, after meeting C-3PO and R2-D2 when they are purchased from the Jawas. He learns from Obi-Wan Kenobi that Darth Vader murdered his father, and he begins training with the lightsaber.

# STAR WARS

## MEETING WITH THE GODDESS

***The hero meets a female figure of power and significance, often supernatural and a representation of unconditional love.***

In *Avatar*, Jake meets Neytiri as she saves him from the Viper Wolves. He falls in love with her and by extension, the Omaticaya clan, the Na'vi people and Pandora itself.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, this is the elf queen Galadriel who inspires the Fellowship and gives them each a magical gift.

In *Harry Potter*, Sybil Trelawney fulfills this role as she prophesies about how Harry's destiny is intertwined with Voldemort's.

In *Star Wars*, Princess Leia inadvertently sends Luke on his quest to become a Jedi and ultimately becomes the family he never knew he had.



## THE BELLY OF THE WHALE

***The belly of the whale represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. By entering this stage, he shows willingness to undergo a metamorphosis.***

In *Avatar*, this occurs when Jake joins Grace's team at Site 26. He spends nearly all of his time in the link as an Avatar and his human body begins to deteriorate.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo enters Mount Doom to cast the One Ring into the fire.

In *Harry Potter*, Harry walks willingly into Voldemort's camp (*Deathly Hallows*).

In *Star Wars*, Luke enters the Death Star as the *Millennium Falcon* is captured by a tractor beam. What happens here will change him forever.



## DEATH OF THE MENTOR

***The hero must confront his own mortality and face the world on his own.***

In *Avatar*, Grace's death at the hands of Quaritch and the subsequent failed transfer into her Avatar body puts Jake's struggle in clear life-and-death terms.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf's death in Moria leaves the Fellowship without their guide and greatest ally.

In *Harry Potter*, Dumbledore is killed by seeming treachery and Harry is forced to take up the Horcrux quest on his own.

In *Star Wars*, Obi-Wan sacrifices himself to save Luke and his friends, and Luke must prove he is ready to use the Force on his own.

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## APOTHEYSIS (DEATH AND REBIRTH)

***The hero dies a physical death, or dies to the self to live in spirit. He or she enters a state of divine knowledge, love, compassion and bliss.***

In *Avatar*, Jake becomes “Toruk Macto” and leads the native Pandorans in battle against Quaritch and RDA.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo recovers from near-death experiences (the Nazgul sword and Mt. Doom in Mordor) in Rivendell. Later he is chosen to go with the elves to the Gray Havens.

In *Harry Potter*, Harry accepts his fate in regards to Voldemort, visits a limbo between life and death and then returns to fulfill his destiny.

In *Star Wars*, during the trench run attack on the Death Star, Luke lets go of his conscious self and uses the Force to hit the exhaust port with the proton torpedo.

# STAR WARS

## OUTSIDE HELP OR RESCUE

***Just as the hero may need guides and assistants at the start of the quest, they often need rescuers to bring them back to everyday life-- especially if the person has been wounded or weakened by the experience.***

**In *Avatar*, Neytiri kills Quaritch and rescues Jake from a near-death experience in the link. She then cradles his paralyzed, helpless human body in her arms and they “see” each other’s true selves for the first time.**

**In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo would have failed in his quest at several points without the help of Sam. While in Mt. Doom, Frodo is saved from The Ring’s temptation by Gollum’s interference.**

**In *Harry Potter*, Harry has one final enlightening conversation with Dumbledore before his ultimate confrontation with Voldemort.**

**In *Star Wars*, Luke is able to get a clear shot at the Death Star’s exhaust port only after Han Solo destroys the TIE fighters following him through the trench.**



## THE ULTIMATE BOON

***The achievement of the goal or fulfillment of the quest. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the hero for this step.***

In *Avatar*, Jake is truly reborn as a Na'vi after completing his journey to be able “to see.”

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo completes his journey to Mount Doom and the Ring is destroyed.

In *Harry Potter*, Harry has a final confrontation with Voldemort and emerges victorious.

In *Star Wars*, Luke destroys the Death Star and saves the Rebel base from certain destruction.



## RETURN OF THE HERO

***The hero returns from the journey with the “elixir” or wisdom gained from the quest. He must then find a way to share this gift to help everyone in the Ordinary World.***

In *Avatar*, Jake becomes the new leader of the Omaticaya and must use his unique perspective to lead his people.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo returns to Bag End after his quest, but finds he has been changed forever by his adventure and no longer belongs there.

In *Harry Potter*, Harry uses his experiences fighting Voldemort to become a great Auror (dark wizard catcher).

In *Star Wars*, Luke returns to the Rebel base as a hero and receives a reward and recognition.

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## CONCLUSION

***There are several versions of the “Hero’s Journey” and many stories include only a few of the stages.***

***Can you think of other stories (movies or books) that use some or all of the stages we’ve discussed?***

***The Maze Runner***

***Percy Jackson and the Olympians***

***The Hunger Games***

***Kung Fu Panda***

***Men in Black***

***Divergent***

***The Wizard of Oz***

***Superheroes (Batman, Spider-man, Green Lantern, etc.)***

**?**

