

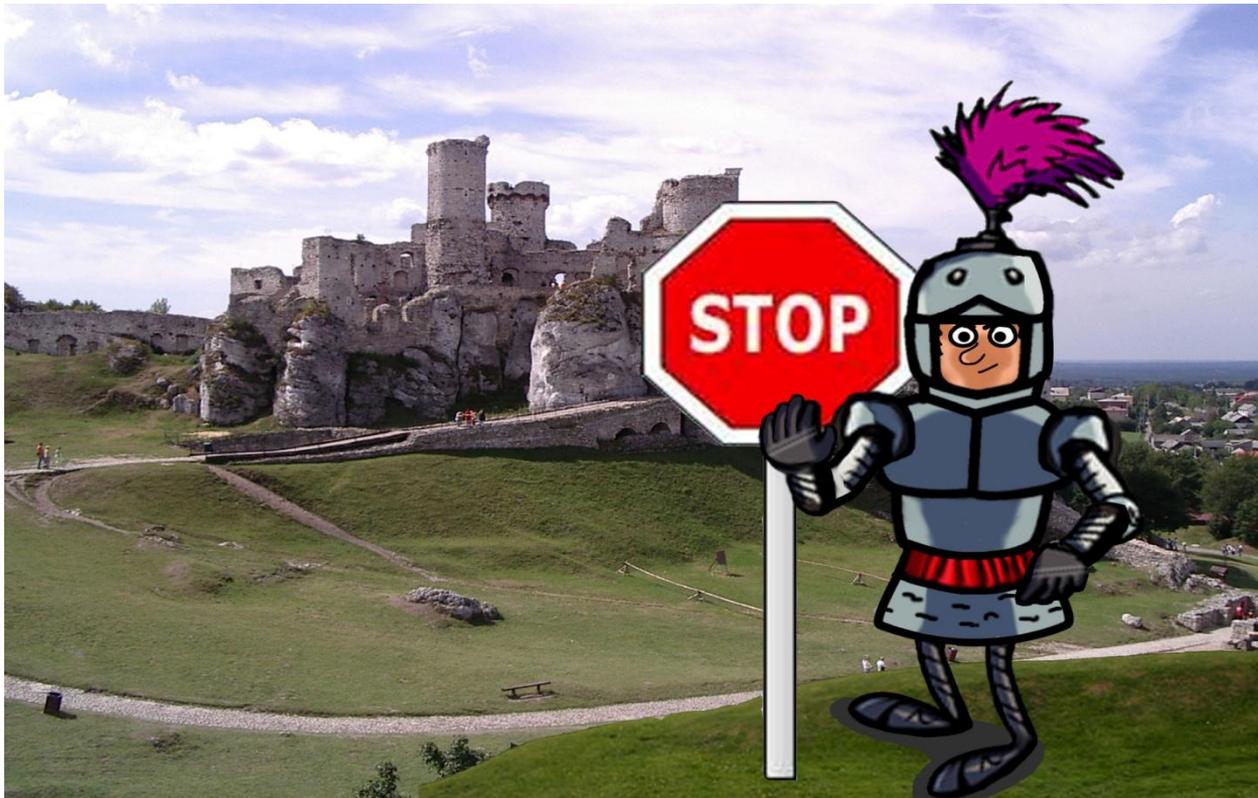
The 17 steps of the hero's journey



The Departure

The Call to Adventure

The hero starts off in an everyday situation of normality from which some information is received that acts as a call to head off into the unknown.



Refusal of the Call

Often when the call is given, the future hero first refuses to accept it. This may be from a sense of duty or obligation, fear, insecurity, a sense of inadequacy, or any of a range of reasons that work to hold the person in his or her current circumstances.



Supernatural Aid

Once the hero has committed to the quest, consciously or unconsciously, his or her guide and magical helper appears, or becomes known. Often, this supernatural mentor will present the hero with one or more talismans or artifacts that will aid them later in their quest.



The Crossing of the First Threshold

This is the point where the person actually crosses into the field of adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world and risking into an unknown and dangerous place where the rules and limits are not known.



Belly of The Whale

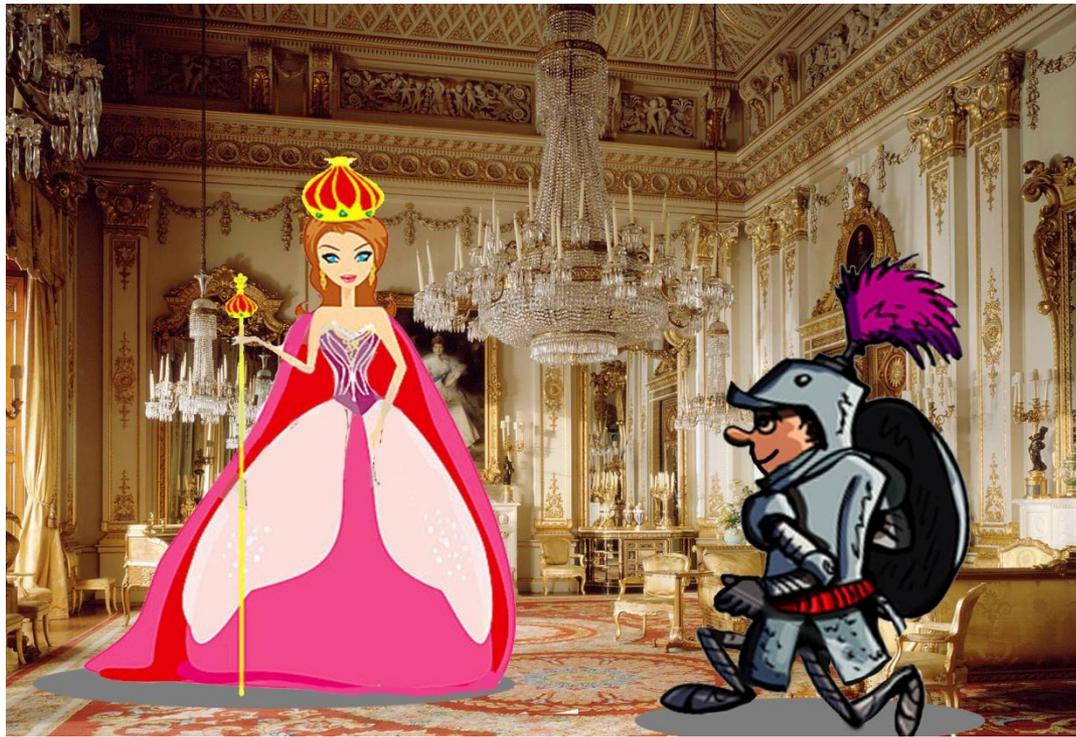
The belly of the whale represents the final separation from the hero's known world and self. By entering this stage, the person shows willingness to undergo a metamorphosis.



The Initiation

The Road of Trials

The road of trials is a series of tests, tasks, or sufferings that the person must undergo to begin the transformation. Often the person fails one or more of these tests, which often occur in threes.



The Meeting With the Goddess

This is the point when the person experiences a love that has the power and significance of the all-powerful, total surrender, unconditional love that a fortunate infant may experience with his or her mother. This is a very important step in the process and is often represented by the person finding the other person that he or she loves most completely.



Woman as a seduction

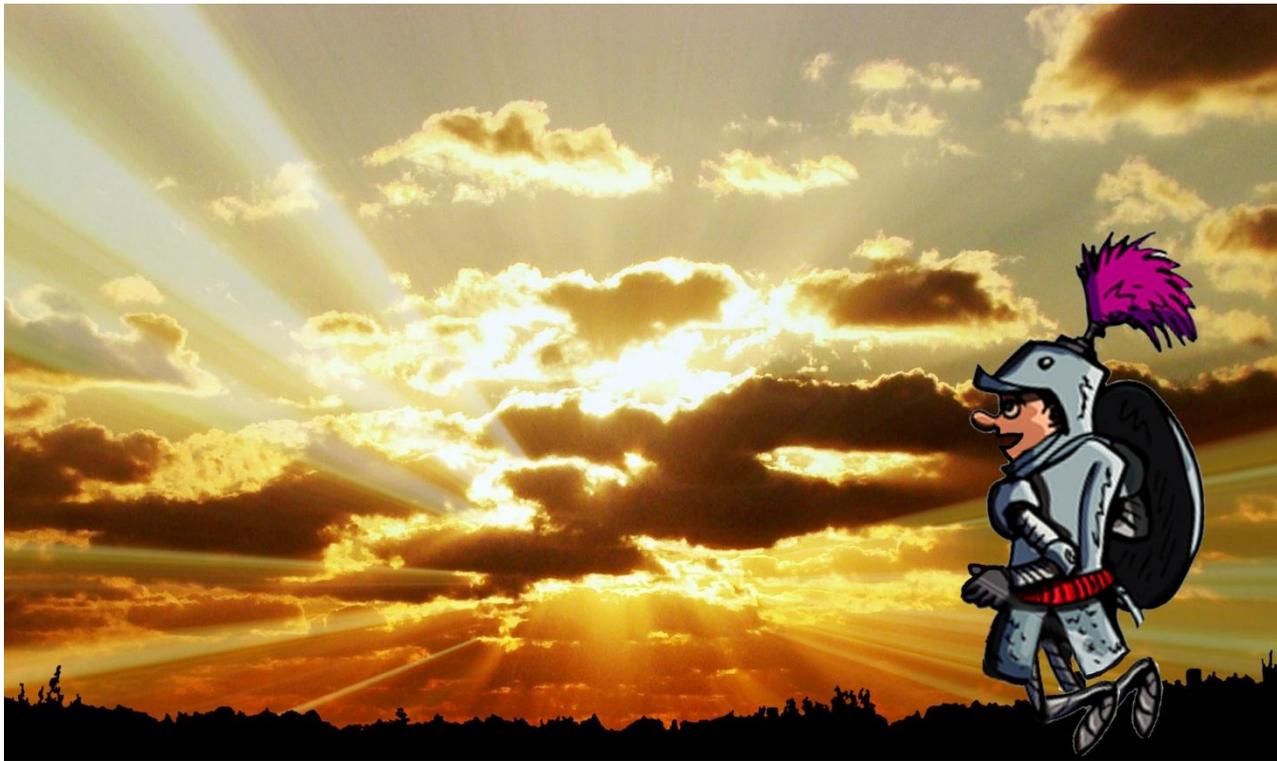
In this step, the hero faces those temptations that may lead him or her to abandon or lose his or her quest, which does not necessarily have to be represented by a woman. Woman is a metaphor for the physical or material temptations of life, since the hero-knight was often caught by lust by his spiritual journey.



Regret assisted by the Father

In this step the person must confront and be forgiven by whatever holds the ultimate power in his or her life. In many myths and stories this is the father, or a father figure who has life and death power. This is the center point of the journey. All the previous steps have been moving in to this place, all that follow will move out from it.

Although this step is most frequently symbolized by an encounter with a male entity, it does not have to be a male; just someone or thing with incredible power.



Apotheosis (Total Nirvana)

When someone dies a physical death, or lives in spirit, he or she moves beyond the pairs of opposites to a state of divine knowledge, love, compassion and bliss. A more simple way of looking at this step is that it is a period of rest, peace and fulfillment before the hero begins the return.



The Ultimate Blessing

The ultimate blessing is the achievement of the goal of the quest. It is what the person went on the journey to get. All the previous steps serve to prepare and purify the person for this step, since in many myths the blessing is something transcendent like the drug for eternal life, or a plant that supplies immortality, or the holy grail.



The Return

Refusal of the Return

Having found bliss and enlightenment in the other world, the hero may not want to return to the ordinary world to share his or her success to others



The Magic Flight

Sometimes the hero must escape with his achievements , if it is something that the gods have been jealously guarding (meaning has valuable importance to local consumers). It can be just as adventurous and dangerous returning from the journey as it was to go on it.



Rescue from Without

Just as the hero may need guides and assistants to set out on the quest, oftentimes he or she must have powerful guides and rescuers to bring them back to everyday life, especially if the person has been wounded or weakened by the experience.



The Crossing of the Return Threshold

The trick in returning is to retain the wisdom gained on the quest, to integrate that wisdom into a human life, and then maybe figure out how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world.



Master of Two Worlds

This step is usually represented by a transcendental hero like Jesus or Buddha. For a human hero, it may mean achieving a balance between the material and spiritual. The person has become comfortable and competent in both the inner and outer worlds.



Freedom to Live

Mastery leads to freedom from the fear of death, which in turn is the freedom to live. This is sometimes referred to as living in the moment, neither anticipating the future nor regretting the past.