

## **The Heroine's Journey**

Make your story resonate with readers on a deeper level by utilizing the elements of the Heroine's Journey structure.

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I was asked to describe my Heroine's Journey many times and I even taught several workshops on it at writer's conferences, and so I decided to write a more detailed worksheet on the subject. I read about the Heroine's Journey from several books and compiled what I learned here in one place. This is the same worksheet I myself use for my own novels.

### **Why the Heroine's Journey?**

Because sometimes the story arc of a female character will differ from the traditional Hero's Journey because of the affects of culture and time period upon the character because of her gender. This will create specific psychological differences in how a male and female character will respond to conflict in a story.

Joseph Campbell's original book is based on the writings of psychoanalysts and the world myths. [\*The Hero With a Thousand Faces\*](#) is a psychological analysis of the classical myth formula that breaks down the myths into a basic structure, showing the psychological power of the hero archetype and the Hero's Journey.

Maureen Murdock took Campbell's work, her own psychology experience, and other psychoanalytical writings and world myths to develop the Heroine's Journey for women. This makes it a perfect template for heroines, whether in romances or women's fiction, because often a heroine's story arc is more about internal awakening as opposed to the "quest" style of the hero's journey.

### **The purpose of this worksheet:**

This worksheet is based off of one I designed for myself to help me deepen my heroine's character. I will use this worksheet for every heroine I write about, even if it's a romance where there's also a hero taking up 50% of the book (I'll usually do a Hero's Journey worksheet for him in addition to the Heroine's Journey worksheet for the heroine).

Doing this worksheet enables me to double-check that the events in the story match up with how events should unfold in the Heroine's Journey, which helps me with story pacing. The worksheet also helps me to structure the heroine's internal arc so that it's as deeply emotional as it can be and also psychologically resonant with readers.

This worksheet is a tool I use to help revise my synopsis or my completed manuscript. It's not meant to replace a synopsis because it doesn't focus as strongly on the external events and conflicts in the story--it's more focused on the internal events and internal conflicts of my heroine.

(In contrast, a Hero's Journey worksheet will usually include all the external events of a synopsis because the Hero's Journey is often more of a quest, which lends itself to structuring of the external events.)

### **Notes on the Heroine's Journey worksheet:**

The steps in this worksheet were taken from the heroine's journey as detailed primarily in these books:

[\*The Heroine's Journey\* by Maureen Murdock](#)

[\*40 Master Characters\* by Victoria Lynn Schmidt](#) (this book has an excellent chapter on the heroine's journey with lots of examples and includes a short worksheet)

[\*Psychology for Screenwriters\* by William Indink](#)

Events in your manuscript don't have to go exactly in this order of stages--there is some leeway in terms of chronology in your story. I have personally found this to be true for stage 4--sometimes issues started in stage 4 can be resolved in any of the later stages rather than resolved in stage 4.

You don't have to do all of these stages nor do you need to have your heroine face all 7 issues in stage 4, but doing most of them is good because it ensures a tighter plot.

For each stage, I will be giving questions for you to answer about your heroine. However, you don't need to force yourself to answer everything on the list--it may not apply to your character.

Each stage is known by different names from different sources, so I've listed them all because certain names may resonate with you while others may not. I refer to stages by numbers rather than names for simplicity's sake.

I'll be taking examples from the movie *Legally Blonde* and also my novel, [\*Protection for Hire\*](#). So if you haven't read *Protection for Hire* and don't want to have the book spoiled for you, be sure to read the book before reading this worksheet. :)

## **Act I:**

### **1. Home, Everyday Life, Innocence, Childhood, Old World, The Illusion of a Perfect World**

Here is where you show the heroine's current world as well as her internal flaws or needs. It's a

good idea to show how an even Perfect World is not truly perfect. You can show her everyday life to give readers an understanding of who she is and where she comes from, but also show how she might be dissatisfied with the status quo. Many times a heroine deals with stresses (internal or external or both) in an unhealthy way. The different ways she copes with stresses will usually be determined by her dominant personality--the coping mechanisms described in *45 Master Characters* are simply natural responses of the different feminine archetypes.

Questions:

What is your heroine's current world/home like?

What is your heroine's internal flaw (even if she's not entirely aware of it)?

What does your heroine actually need, which she may not realize?

How does your heroine deal with stress/what is her coping mechanism?

What is your heroine's dominant archetype?

What is your heroine's connection to "traditional" feminism?

*Legally Blonde*: Elle is belle of her sorority with two bimbo friends, but she herself proves to be quite intelligent despite her ditzy manner and ditzy companions. (naïve strategy, positive outlook)

*Protection for Hire*: Tessa's out of jail and a new creation in Christ, but she still has to face her old antagonism with her sister, her mother's criticism, and her mafia uncle's expectations, which she's not about to fulfill anymore. She can't find a job because of her old mafia connections and her prison record, but she definitely doesn't want to make money again by working for her uncle.

## **2. Separation from the Feminine, Call to Adventure, The Betrayal or Realization**

This is often where the Inciting Incident occurs, or the one incident that is the "trigger" or start of the story. Everything is taken away and the heroine is forced to a crossroads and a choice—go or stay in her old world. The heroine is often betrayed by someone close to her, which adds to the motivation to change her old world. She is usually disillusioned with her current world and sees that things cannot remain as they are--*she* cannot remain here in the status quo. Sometimes she will find she will need to reject traditional feminine roles in order to accomplish what she desires.

This stage is sometimes referred to as "The Call to Adventure," which is the same as in the Hero's journey, but here in the Heroine's journey this stage may not be necessarily a quest or adventure. Sometimes it's a need to find peace, to find her place in the world, to step outside her comfort zone in order to find something better, or something along these lines. The heroine's "adventure" is not necessarily the same sort of goal as a hero.

Also, at this point, the villain for the story is set up or mentioned.

Questions:

What is the heroine's Inciting Incident or trigger?  
How does the heroine lose everything she cares about?  
Who betrays her or how is she disillusioned?  
How does the heroine respond to this turn of events?  
What is the heroine's options for what to do now? What is her "call to adventure"?  
How is the heroine required to reject her traditional feminine role?  
What has the villain done to prod the heroine toward her journey?

*Legally Blonde:* Elle's boyfriend Warren dumps her instead of proposing. He needs to marry a Jacqueline Kennedy, not a Marilyn Monroe, for his career ambitions.

*Protection for Hire:* Tessa is offered the job as a personal bodyguard for a Southern belle running from her abusive ex-husband. What makes Tessa's life worse is that her sister has to move back in with Tessa and her mother, making for a very full and very tense household. Tessa only wants peace after her years in prison and the constant criticism of her family makes it hard for her to hold onto her new faith.

### **3. The Awakening, Preparing for the Journey, Identification with the Masculine, Threshold, Belly of the Whale/Point of No Return**

After the Inciting Incident and her realization, she needs to make a decision about what to do. She might balk at change and want to stay where she is. In the Hero's Journey, this is referred to as "Refusal of the Call," and it's essentially the same thing here in the Heroine's journey. She considers not doing anything or turning away from the Inciting Incident and trying to fix her old world to return to the way it was. However, she finds some compelling reason *not* to refuse this new opportunity in her life.

Easy Out: Sometimes an ally or enemy might offer the heroine an easy out, a temptation to not go on her journey. It could be an elaborate scene or it could be as passing as a line of dialogue, it's entirely up to you how much temptation you want to offer your heroine to decide not to continue on her journey. This easy out can happen before she makes a decision to go on her journey, or it could even happen after she's made the decision--and she considers it, but ultimately has to decide to continue.

When the heroine decides to start her journey, several things happen to her.

Emotional preparation: The heroine may realize that some things about her need to change. Maybe she needs to abandon old ways of dealing with things or old habits. She might need to challenge herself. She might need to abandon her old coping mechanisms or embrace a more traditionally masculine role--or adopt some traditionally masculine traits--in order to deal with what's ahead of her.

Allies/Enemies: Some friends may try to dissuade her, other friends may support her or push her

forward. There may be a man in her life who doesn't understand her and may stop supporting her. Here is where she might find a mentor to guide her or simply offer good advice. Sometimes the mentor is someone she knows well, but sometimes it's someone completely new to her. Be creative with your mentor characters--sometimes the most unlikely secondary character can serve this role in the story, which can make it interesting. You don't absolutely need to, but it might be a good idea to introduce all the secondary characters of your story at this point. If a secondary character has a pivotal role later in the story, it can create greater emotional resonance with your reader to introduce that character here, earlier in the story.

Gathering weapons: She gathers weapons she'll need for the journey—her own armor in a spiritual or emotional sense, or sometimes in a physical sense. Sometimes you can introduce a device often used in the Hero's Journey--a *Leitmotif*, or a special object of personal significance to the character. This is like William Wallace's wife's handkerchief in *Braveheart*, or the clay figurines of Maximus's family in *Gladiator*.

Point of No Return: This is sometimes included in the Heroine's Journey, but sometimes not, so it's up to you if you want to include this incident in your story. This is an incident of conflict that forces the heroine onto her journey, no turning back. It's sometimes called a Threshold or The Belly of the Whale. It's often the first obstacle (usually a smaller one) that the heroine faces after making her decision to go on her journey. This obstacle ups the stakes for the heroine and makes it impossible for her to go back to her normal life.

Upping the ante: However, regardless of if you use the Point of No Return, you should at the very least establish why the heroine cannot return to her normal life. The stakes must be high enough that she can't simply quit and go back to the way things were. In the movies *Braveheart* and *Gladiator*, the hero's family was killed so he has nothing to return to and is left only with a desire for vengeance or justice. Sometimes the heroine is forced into a new leadership role or given greater responsibilities. Sometimes the rules of her world are changed and she can't go back, or the tables are turned on her unexpectedly.

Questions:

How does the heroine initially refuse "the call"?

What is the compelling reason the heroine cannot refuse "the call"?

How does the heroine abandon her old ways of thinking or coping in order to face what's ahead?

Does she adopt more masculine traits? Does she need to challenge herself?

Who are the heroine's allies and enemies/dissuaders?

Who gives the heroine wise advice in a mentor capacity?

How does the heroine prepare for her journey? What physical/emotional/spiritual weapons does she prepare for herself?

Do you have a Point of No Return/Threshold obstacle that the heroine must face? What happens to "up the ante" and compel the heroine to start the journey? How are the stakes raised so that she must go forward? What changes in her world to compel her to continue on her journey?

*Legally Blonde:* Elle is depressed for a week or so. Then an article about her boyfriend's brother's fiancée in a magazine makes her realize Warren wants a law student for a wife. So she determines to get into Harvard Law.

*Protection for Hire:* Tessa's uncle is kind and wants to offer her her old job back, but Tessa has to tell him no and try to make him understand that she's a new person. Her family, however, is cynical about her new religion and expects her to return to her illegal doings soon. Tessa makes the sudden realization that she can never please the women in her life (her mother and sister, this is her Betrayal/Realization). She's been rejected by them even though she has become a Christian and changed her life. Tessa has an opportunity for get a dead-end job as a janitor working for a sleazy boss (Easy Out), but Elizabeth's offer to be a bodyguard is more in line with Tessa's skill set, and Elizabeth really is in desperate need of Tessa's help (Upping the Ante). There is no one else who can help Elizabeth, and Tessa feels she needs to help her. When Tessa's sister moves into Tessa's mom's home, she's so strongly antagonistic (Belly of the Whale) that Tessa takes the job with Elizabeth (Point of No Return) because she'll get enough money with this one job to move out and away from the tension. Tessa loses the support of her uncle, sister, and mother (not that she had her family's support anyway), but she gains new allies in Elizabeth, Charles (Elizabeth's lawyer), and Charles's mother, Vivian, who acts as an unexpected mentor for her.

## **Act II:**

### **4. The Descent—Passing the Gates of Judgment, Road of Trials, Tests and Ordeals, Journey through the Underworld, Confrontation and Defeat, Discovery of Mother, Search for Father, Discovery of Female Tradition/Community**

This is a key part of the heroine's journey that often helps writers solidify a strong spiritual or internal arc. It is described in part in each of the Heroine's Journeys I've read about in various sources, but I thought it was best described in *45 Master Characters*: In the myth, *The Descent of Inanna*, Inanna passes through seven gates, losing one of her weapons or queenly adornments at each one.

What this means is that the heroine faces trials and obstacles in the story that force her to face each of her seven issues listed below. Each time she faces these trials and her issue she fails to succeed and loses a "weapon," usually some type of belief or coping mechanism or secret that she uses to protect herself. You can choose anything you like for your heroine's weapons. Typically it's something she's carried with her from her old world that she thinks is strong but ultimately is shown to be inadequate to face the trials and obstacles in her path.

Below are the seven internal issues your heroine can face. Writers don't need to have your heroine face all seven issues in this part of the Heroine's Journey, but if you can do at least some of them, it will help you create a very deep, three dimensional character for your heroine.

Each issue has several questions you can ask yourself about your character. The ultimate key words are *fear, guilt, shame, grief, lies, illusion, attachment*. Your heroine's issues can be anything related to those seven key words, not necessarily relating to the questions I've written for each issue. This part is more flexible than other stages, and definitely more flexible than in the Hero's Journey because a woman's internal journey is often a little more emotional and sometimes more nebulous and multi-dimensional.

Also be aware that these seven issues are not necessarily chronological. You don't have to address each issue in the order listed. Also, some points of conflict in your story will relate to more than one of these issues--taking out two birds with one stone, so to speak. Some of these issues can be resolved in Act 3 rather than all being resolved in Act 2, however, the issues should be introduced or at least brought fully to the character's attention in Act 2. When you see my examples in *Protection for Hire*, and if you read my book, you'll see that I take great liberties with the chronology of each of these issues. For example, my heroine will face one issue in one chapter but not resolve it, and perhaps resolve it in a different chapter later in the book. Or perhaps one incident of conflict actually deals with three different issues, and each issue is fully resolved in three different chapters later in the book.

The point of this stage is to help you establish distinct internal issues for your heroine to face and resolve by the end of the book. It allows you to establish some structure for your heroine's emotional journey. A Hero's Journey chart doesn't necessarily allow for your heroine facing these types of emotional issues and resolving them, which is why I like having this stage in the Heroine's Journey, to help me figure out my heroine's internal journey and how to structure it in the book.

#### *Issue of facing fear*

What does she fear or what fear is she avoiding?  
Are there issues of survival she has to face?  
How does she find her safety and security?  
What weapon does she give up?

#### *Issue of facing guilt*

What does she feel guilty about?  
Does she feel guilt at being independent and going against the flow?  
Does she feel guilty for actions which cause her to alienate others?  
Does she feel guilt at being able to express her sexuality and emotions, or does she need to overcome her guilt so that she can express herself?  
Is she made to feel guilty for knowing her desires, or does she need to overcome guilt in order to know her own desires?  
What weapon does she give up?

#### *Issue of facing shame*

Why does your heroine feel shame?

Do others shame her?

Does she need to overcome her shame at the fact that she is able to clearly define her power and will, or does she need to overcome her shame so that she can define her power, her gifts, and her will to live/survive/thrive?

Does she need to overcome shame at the fact that she has achieved her own solid identity, or does she need to overcome her shame so that she can gain her identity, discovering who she is and who she wants to be?

What weapon does she give up?

### *Issue of facing grief*

What is she grieving over?

What has she lost?

Does she need to overcome grief in order to give or receive love?

Does she need to face grief in order to fit in?

Does her grief relate to her relationship issues?

Does she need to overcome her grief in order to deal with her interpersonal or romantic relationships?

What weapon does she give up?

### *Issue of facing lies*

What (verbal) lies has she told herself?

What (verbal) lies have others told her?

What lies must she overcome in order to communicate and express herself?

What lies prevent her from communicating and expressing herself?

What weapon does she give up?

### *Issue of facing illusions*

What illusions has your heroine bought into?

What illusions are present in your heroine's life?

What illusions has your heroine erected to fool others?

What illusions does she need to overcome, or what illusions does she need to tear down?

What illusions does she need to overcome in order to honor her intuition and imagination?

What spiritual lies does she believe?

What weapon does she give up?

### *Issue of facing attachment*

What sorts of attachments does your heroine need to evaluate?

Are there things she's clung to that she needs to give up because they're hindering her?

Does she need to overcome certain attachments in order to be more self-aware of her motives and flaws?

Do certain attachments keep her from learning from her mistakes?

Are there attachments she can give up that will enable her to be open-minded instead of stubborn?

What weapon does she give up?

Mini climax/obstacle: In addition to these seven issues, you can have a mini-climax or obstacle for the heroine to face near the end of Act 2 where she faces the villain and is tempted to go back. This turning point isn't always necessary to include in your story, it just depends on how you feel your story is flowing.

*Legally Blonde:* Elle gets in to Harvard, but is out of place and ridiculed. Warren is engaged to Vivian, who plays a cruel joke on Elle and invites her to a "costume" party when it's nothing of the sort. Elle shows up as a Playboy bunny when every else is dressed normally. Elle talks to Warren, who is condescending to her about her intelligence and abilities. She realizes, "I will never be good enough for you." Elle knuckles down and gets serious. She starts to do very well in class and forms a new friend, Paulette, and meets handsome Emmett, a teacher's assistant. She manages to use her new knowledge to help Paulette get her dog back from her evil ex boyfriend. Elle is also picked with both Warren and Vivian to help a professor/lawyer, Callahan, on his case. Elle is the only one who believes the client is innocent of murder. She discovers the client does indeed have an alibi, but the truth would ruin the client's reputation and Elle is asked not to tell her boss, Callahan. Elle keeps her silence and sacrifices a summer internship by keeping the confidentiality wishes of the client.

(In each of these trials, Elle has to confront her different fears and abandon her normal coping mechanisms and ways of dealing with stress. She has to abandon her "weapons" and discover new things about herself and her world.)

*Protection for Hire:*

I did a detailed list of each of these issues for this book, so I'm going to simply copy and paste my notes on these 7 issues for my heroine.

*Facing Fear*

Tessa fears being alone. She has always had her uncle and the yakuza as her family. Despite her new life in Christ, she still desires to please her uncle in different ways, and it hurts her to have to refuse his offer of a job, because she knows he offers because he loves her.

What weapon does she give up? Her yakuza family. Instead she fully embraces God as her new family

*Facing Guilt*

Tessa feels guilt over how she has impacted her mother's life (her mom lost her job because of Tessa's arrest years ago) and her sister's life (her sister has spent time and effort to get away from her mafia roots and live a "normal" life with a "normal" husband).

What weapon does she give up? Tessa gives up her independence--she chooses to live at home to improve relations with her family

(Note from Camy: this resolution actually occurs at the very end of the book, not in Act 2.)

*Facing Shame*

Tessa feels shame at who she used to be, and she's not sure who she is now. She's no longer that person, but she's not sure she knows how to be different. She needs to discover a new way to be her uncle's niece without being yakuza, while being a Christian.

What weapon does she give up? Separating from the yakuza, she's not yakuza anymore. She needs to learn to walk forward as a new creation in Christ.

(Note from Camy: this resolution happens in Act 3)

### *Facing Grief*

Tessa had had a romantic attraction with one of her uncle's officers--nothing formal, not going out. He visited her often in jail, but then she found Christ, he stopped coming as often, or his visits were more to convey her uncle's messages to her in prison. She feels she has lost a chance at a lasting relationship. She might have lost any chance at a relationship period because who's going to want to date an ex-yakuza? Who would she be able to trust isn't after information on her uncle? She has hardened her heart, developed self-sufficiency, convinced that no man will love her, no one will be able to take care of her. She tries to find satisfaction in God and suppress her romantic urges.

What weapon does she give up? Her protection around her heart as she opens up to Charles—but Charles ends up betraying her.

### *Facing Lies*

She discovers Charles's lie of omission about influencing the judge to extend her sentence. She slowly uncovers the lie her family told to her that she's not pretty or feminine. She has to face the pain that her mom likes pretty Elizabeth and gets along better with her than with Tessa. However, Elisabeth dispels that myth about her beauty for Tessa.

What weapon does she give up? Her tomboyishness as her armor. She allows Vivian to teach her to knit, and she opens up about her family. She also dresses up for the party and discovers her outside beauty.

### *Facing Illusions*

Tessa has always been able to control a situation—to fix it or to make it go the way she wants it to. She has a feeling of self-sufficiency and proficiency at whatever she does. But the things that happen to her and the choices she makes put her in a place where if she makes the noble choice, she can't rely on herself, it's entirely out of her control. Does she make the right choice and lose control, or does she make the safe choice and retain control?

What weapon does she give up?

Control and self-sufficiency. She must put her trust entirely in God. She has no control over the situation. She has to do the right thing and trust God to take care of her and the people she loves.

(Note from Camy: This happens right after the black moment)

### *Facing Attachment*

She's used to attacking when she's attacked—it comes from attacking back when she was bullied as a child. When her family criticizes or attacks, she attacks back. Alicia is passive aggressive, and Tessa doesn't know how to react to that--she ends up reacting angrily. Tessa neglects her

niece because of how Alicia treats her. Tessa needs to learn to turn the other cheek, to give up her right to defend herself. She needs to learn how to respond to her sister.  
What weapon does she give up? Her right to defend herself.

## **5. The Eye of the Storm, Illusory Boon of Success, Atonement with the Mother**

Here the heroine celebrates some type of success on her journey, some success in her goal, that often gives her a false sense of security. She might relax a bit, maybe taking chances she shouldn't take or making bad decisions.

Sometimes a supporting character may want to take her home and not let her change their world, but then she may meet someone more in need than herself.

She might have some type of atonement with the mother figure in her life with whom she has been fighting or contending against.

Questions:

What's your moment of "breathing space" for the heroine?

What type of success does the heroine have here?

What chance does she take or bad decision does she make here?

Who does she meet more in need than herself who spurs her to continue on her journey?

Does she have some type of atonement with the mother figure in her life?

*Legally Blonde:* Vivian admires Elle's integrity and they become friends. Elle also discovers a prosecutor's witness is lying, which helps Callahan's case.

*Protection for Hire:* Tessa's clients seem to be safely hidden at Charles's house. Tessa starts to heal her relationships with her sister, her mother, and with Charles. She also finds a loving mother figure in Charles's mother, Vivian, who helps her to understand how to walk forward in newness in Christ.

## **6. Death--All is Lost, Spiritual Aridity, Magic Flight, Apotheosis, Supreme Ordeal, Black Moment**

This is the heroine's darkest point in the book. She must face the ultimate, supreme ordeal of her journey. Here, the villain might return with a vengeance and completely defeat the heroine. She may fall into the villain's trap and have no hope of escape. She may attempt a last ditch effort toward her goal and utterly fail. She may be betrayed by an ally. She may need to say no or refuse an authority or father figure, which emotionally devastates her. There may be very dire consequences of bad choices she made in the stage earlier. She reaches of point of emotional, physical, and/or spiritual lowness and all hope is gone. There is no hope of escape or rescue.

Up to this stage, you want to have been boxing your heroine in little by little until she is left with

little or no choices here. Sometimes a character is left with either two bad choices or two good choices to make. You should try to be as creative and possible at this stage--think about the worse you can do your heroine. Then ask yourself, "How can I make it even worse?" Do a little brainstorming to come up with a black moment that really tests your heroine and strips her away to nothing but the core of who she is.

Questions:

What is your heroine's black moment?

What does the villain do to trap the heroine?

Does she need to say no to an authority figure?

What dire consequences is the heroine facing?

How is all hope lost for the heroine?

How can you make things worse for your heroine?

How can you take away everything from the heroine?

How can you take away what the heroine values most?

What is your heroine like with everything stripped away but her core?

*Legally Blonde:* Callahan hits on Elle, which is seen by Vivian. Callahan had given her the job on the case because of her looks, not her abilities. Elle rejects Callahan, who kicks her off the case and which could have serious repercussions. Vivian also rejects Elle because she misunderstood what had happened with Callahan. Elle is devastated—no matter how hard she works, no one takes her seriously and her friend has abandoned her. Elle decides to quit Harvard.

*Protection for Hire:* Tessa and Charles discover that the Chinese Triads have been illegally working with Elizabeth's ex-husband and Elizabeth can identify them to prove it. However, Tessa is recognized by the Triad members, and in defending herself, she inadvertently triggers what might become a gang war between her uncle and the Triad (dire consequences). Her uncle's only option is for Tessa to let the Triad have Elizabeth to avert the war, but Tessa can't do that. She has to say no to her uncle in order to do what's right (say no to authority figure). She is also betrayed by Charles when she finds out that he, judgmental and hypocritical, convinced the judge to add unwarranted years to her sentence, which caused her to not be able to say goodbye to her beloved aunt--Tessa's only mother figure--when she was dying. It was the one events Tessa most regrets, and it was all because of Charles (betrayal).

## **Act III:**

### **7. Support from Others, Reconnect with the Feminine, Descent to the Goddess, Rescue from Without, Ultimate Boon**

This is where the cavalry arrives, the turning of the tide. Sometimes, another character has already set up a way for the help to arrive for the heroine, to give her a way out. She will sometimes draw help from a "spirit" guide. Allies will arrive to lend support, or a betrayer will do something to make amends that helps the heroine in her time of need. Sometimes an enemy

will change sides and help the heroine instead of the villain. This stage is sometimes referred to as the descent to the goddess because the heroine receives help from someone outside herself, who is able and willing to assist her.

Epiphany: Sometimes here, sometimes in the next stage or the one after that, is where the heroine will have her big epiphany, where she finally understands herself or comes to a big realization about something. This is often one of the issues in stage 4, the biggest or most important issue the heroine has been facing, or even the main theme of the book, and it is resolved in her big epiphany scene. Where this epiphany happens is flexible and up to you. Sometimes this is called “reconnect with the feminine” if the heroine has tossed aside traditional feminine roles and now returns to them. Ultimately, this is simply where the heroine’s main internal struggles come to a head. Here is a good place to use your *leitmotif* to help the heroine come to her realization or enhance the emotional resonance of the scene.

Questions:

Who’s your cavalry going to be?

How did you set up the heroine’s rescue from her black moment?

Who arrives to support your heroine?

Who will change sides or make amends to help your heroine?

What is your heroine’s big epiphany?

*Legally Blonde:* A mean female professor who had originally kicked Elle out of her class encourages her not to give up and shows she believes in her. The client fires Callahan and hires Elle, and her fellow students, whom she had helped earlier, also come to her rescue in the courthouse.

*Protection for Hire:* Tessa must put her trust entirely in God. She has no one else and she realizes she can’t solve her problems by herself. (epiphany) When Tessa, her client, and her family are attacked, Tessa finds that the remnants of her old life help to stave off the attackers and enable them to call the police (rescue from without). However, the men are determined and about to break through to find them.

## **8. Rebirth, Magic Flight, Crossing of the Return Threshold, Healing with Mother, Healing the Wounded Masculine**

The heroine moves forward toward her goal with renewed strength and determination. She is transformed into a better person by her ordeal of Death and the support she receives. This is a moment of action and heroism as she defeats her enemy herself--it doesn’t have to be guns and explosions, it can be her own internal enemy or an emotional enemy. Either way, she saves herself and others through her own strength, courage, bravery. Often at this point, she will willingly sacrifice herself somehow, whether physically, socially, emotionally, or spiritually, for the good of others. She is completely surrendered to her goal/purpose and her new self.

If the heroine had her epiphany in the previous stage or at the beginning of this one, here is where she is tested if she has really learned what she says she's learned. Whatever issue she dealt with is now put to the test and the heroine has to act to prove that she really has changed.

Many times, the theme of your story will be strongly present here. This also may be where you can use your *leitmotif* to emotional advantage and enhance the emotional resonance of the climax.

Questions:

How does the heroine save herself and/or defeat her enemy?

What act of bravery or courage does the heroine display?

How does the heroine sacrifice herself for others?

How does the heroine prove she has truly changed and learned what she supposedly learned in her epiphany?

*Legally Blonde*: Elle is initially unsure, but then she catches the client's stepdaughter in a lie on the stand and tricks her into confessing to the murder. Elle wins the case.

*Protection for Hire*: Tessa throws herself in front of a gun to save her sister (sacrifice).

## **9. Full Circle, Return to the Perfect World, Duality, Master of Two Worlds, Freedom to Live, Final Reward, Integration**

The story comes full circle and the heroine returns home a changed person. Not only that, but she shares her experience with others and influences others as a mentor. She has resolution with her romantic interest (if there is one) because she has integrated in herself both the feminine and masculine. She has reconnected with her sensitivity and is now ready and open for emotional intimacy and love. She might reconnect with her mother figure or completely heal that relationship.

Questions:

How has your heroine changed from the beginning of the book?

How does your heroine inspire someone else?

How does your heroine repair and restore lost relationships?

Is there a mother figure for the heroine to reconnect with?

How does your heroine open herself up to emotional intimacy?

How has your heroine integrated her feminine and masculine traits into a healthy whole?

*Legally Blonde*: Warren wants her back, but Elle rejects him. Years later, she is chosen speaker for her graduating class and she encourages her fellow students.

*Protection for Hire*: Tessa is badly injured but after surgery, pulls through. Tessa's mom almost lost her daughter and realizes how much she means to her. Her mom's concern for her touches

her deeply, and she wonders if Christ is answering prayers to bring healing to their relationship. (reconnect with mother) Tessa's relationship with Charles is strained, but not severed, and there is hope for reconciliation (repair lost relationship).

**The end of the journey:**

You're done! You'll have filled out the 9 stages of the Heroine's Journey and hopefully gotten more depth to your character as well as ideas for conflict that forwards your heroine's dealing with her issues.

Your Heroine's Journey worksheet might not include all the information in your synopsis and maybe even some things not necessarily spelled out in your synopsis. This is okay. The Heroine's Journey worksheet is not meant to replace your normal synopsis. This is simply a tool to help develop more complexity in your heroine and plot.

Now hopefully you'll be able to revise your synopsis or your completed manuscript to make it emotionally impactful to your reader.

Good luck!

*Camy*