

The lion king: a hero's journey essay sample



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A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder. Fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won. The hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. —Joseph Campbell,

The Hero With a Thousand Faces

The statement a hero's journey can be self-explanatory. One can think of a physical journey traveled by a person. It can also be interpreted as the trials and tribulations that a person must overcome to grow. Joseph Campbell's theory of "The Hero's Journey" can be either of those things. It is a basic pattern that is found in many narratives from around the world. Campbell describes this as an occurring cycle with three phases: Departure, Initiation and Return. In "The Lion King" Simba embarks on a journey from a lion's cub to a full-grown lion with many trials in between. Departure:

Home Culture: Simba is a prince, first in line to take the throne of the pride land. He is groomed by his father, Mufasa, and schooled about the wonderful life he is to continue to lead once his father has passed the throne to him. He is accustomed to his plentiful, happy, loving life in the pride lands as a young cub. Call to Adventure: Simba has run away with the guilt of his father's death on his heart, which is implanted by his uncle Scar. While on his travels he meets Timon and Pumbaa who show him how to live freely and whom he stays with until he is older. When his childhood friend Nala is out searching for help because Scar has taken over pride rock she runs into Simba. When they discover each other's identity, she tells him he must come back to his home. He needs to take his rightful spot on the throne and reprise himself within his kingdom. Refusal of the Call: Although Nala tries to convince

Simba that pride rock needs him he still refuses to return. He is still embarrassed by his choice to run away years prior and is reluctant to face his old life including his mother and friends. Rafiki the baboon also tries to convince Simba to return with no luck.

Supernatural Aid: Rafiki has Simba take a look in the pond. As Simba only sees his own reflection, Rafiki touches the water and Mufasa appears as Simba's reflection. Rafiki tells Simba that his father's spirit lives within him. Mufasa then appears in the sky to tell Simba he is not living up to his full potential. Simba then decides to stop running from his past and face what happened with his father's death. He then realizes he must return to pride rock and save it from the wrath of Scar's detrimental leadership. **Crossing the First Threshold:** Simba understands his position as king and that he will need to avenge his title by challenging Scar and his goons, the hyenas. This is a difficult decision but Simba realizes it is his responsibility to save his kingdom. **The Belly of the Whale:** Simba's decision to return to pride rock means leaving the home he has known through his adult years. Simba realizes he is leaving his home in paradise and with that he is leaving his childhood behind. **Initiation:**

The Road of Trials: While overlooking his rundown kingdom, Simba comes to terms with having to fight Scar and the hyenas in order to regain his rightful place on the throne. He is reluctant in having to partake in the physical fight but with the help volunteered by Rafiki, Timon, Nala and Pumbaa he is confident going in. **The Meeting with the Goddess:** Ever since Nala has been back in Simba's adult life they have been falling in love. He realizes that she is his queen while standing on the rock looking over his kingdom. He

appreciates that she is by his side. Atonement with the Father: Once Scar makes Simba tell everyone he is responsible for his father's death, he backs Simba up to the edge of a cliff. Then, lightning strikes causing an outburst of fire below the rock and Simba's back paws slip off the back, leaving him hanging onto the edge like his father was just before he fell to his death.

Then Scar maliciously reveals that he killed Mufasa and Simba had no responsibility. Simba now lets go of the person he was, and finds the strength to fight and be the responsible and reliable king he was always meant to be. Apotheosis: Simba regains his power and lifts himself back onto Pride Rock. He then forces Scar to tell the crowd that it was he who actually killed Mufasa in order to become king. After revealing this to the kingdom, Simba begins chasing Scar away from Pride Rock, and they battle against each other. In Scar's last attempt to save himself, he tries to place the blame on the hyenas by telling Simba that they were the enemy. Overhearing this, the hyenas become angry and go after Scar, eventually killing him. By doing this, Scar is defeated and Simba can now take his place as the rightful king. The Ultimate Boon: Once Scar is defeated, Simba is able to take the position of king of Pride Rock, which has been stripped from him for so many years. He hears his father's voice once more through the rain before he takes the throne as the king. Return:

Refusing to Return: Simba does not refuse his return as king of Pride Rock. He did have to get through a tumultuous journey to get to his rightful place but, he did not back down. He took responsibility for his kingdom. The Magic Flight: By receiving the verbal blessing of his father's spirit and the acceptance from his kingdom with a loud roar, Simba takes his place as king.

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Although there was emotional hurt caused by Scar, Simba lets out a huge roar and accepts his kingdom with no regrets. Crossing the Return Threshold: Using the knowledge he has gained from his life away from home, Simba rejuvenates Pride Rock after Scar nearly destroyed it. He now serves his kingdom with pride. Simba is at peace with his decision to return.

By accepting his position, he has taken the liability to protect his kingdom. Master of Two Worlds: Having undergone an overall transformation, Simba has conquered the balance between his inner and outer self. He was emotionally scarred by the actions of his uncle and blamed himself for Mufasa's death. His transformation was supported by his acceptance from Nala and the rest of his family. The encouragement provided by Timon, Pumbaa, and Rafiki helped a great deal. He was able to avenge his father's death and resume his rightful role, becoming well rounded in his personality and comfortable within his skin. Freedom to Live: Simba begins his renewed life with Nala as his life partner. They have a cub of their own. As Simba looks at his wonderful family and friends, he releases the anger brought on by his father's death and anticipates his new life. The movie "The Lion King" follows the hero's journey exactly. The movie played a little less than halfway through before it began to show but it was there nonetheless. In the journeys of movies there is in some way shape or form the presence of Joseph Campbell's hero's journey. I had never noticed it in the lion king, which is one of my favorite movies, until now. I will be on the lookout of the hero's journey in all movies to come.