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| **Hero’s Journey Archetype** |
| **Stage 1: Departure** |
| **Steps** | **Explanation** | **Example** |
| 1. **The Call to Adventure**The future hero is first given notice that his or her life is going to change. | The story’s **exposition**introduces the hero, and soon the hero’s normal life is disrupted. Something changes; the hero faces a problem, obstacle, or challenge. | Hiro Hamada, a 14-year-old robotics genius, spends his time participating in and betting on illegal bot fights. To try to redirect him to use his intelligence for good, Hiro’s brother, Tadashi, takes him to his robotics lab at the San Fransokyo Institute of Technology. After becoming amazed at the technology, Hiro decides to apply to the university. |
| 2. **Refusal of the Call**The future hero often refuses to accept the call to adventure. The refusal may stem from a sense of duty, an obligation, a fear, or insecurity. | At first the hero is reluctant to accept the change. Usually this reluctance presents itself as second thoughts or personal doubt. Hesitation, whether brief or lengthy, humanizes the hero for the reader. | After Tadashi is killed in an explosion at the science fair, Hiro decides not to attend the school despite being accepted. |
| 3. **The Beginning of the Adventure**The hero begins the adventure, leaving the known limits of his or her world to venture into an unknown and dangerous realm where the rules and limits are unknown. | The hero finally accepts the call and begins a physical, spiritual, and/or emotional journey to achieve a boon, something that is helpful or beneficial. | Weeks later Hiro inadvertently activates Baymax. They discover that a masked man has started to mass-produce Hiro’s stolen microbot technology. He decides to train Baymax to be a crime fighter. |
| **Stage 2: Initiation** |
| 4.**The Road of Trials**The hero experiences and is transformed by a series of tests, tasks, or challenges. The hero usually fails one or more of these tests, which often occur in threes. | The story develops **rising action** as the hero faces a series of challenges that become increasingly difficult as the story unfolds. | After training Baymax, Hiro tracks the masked man to the docks. He is unsuccessful at retrieving his microbots and is pursued by the man. |
| 5. **The Experience with Unconditional Love**During the Road of Trials, the hero experiences support (physical and/or mental) from a friend, family member, mentor, etc. | This love often drives the hero to continue on the journey, even when the hero doubts him/herself. | Luckily, Tadashi’s friends show up and help Hiro and Baymax escape. The six new friends agree to form a superhero team. |
| 6. **The Ultimate Boon**The goal of the quest is achieved. The boon can be a physical object or an intangible item such as knowledge, courage, or love. The Road of Trials makes the hero strong enough to achieve this goal. | The story reaches the **climax** as the hero gains what he or she set out to achieve.The Call to Adventure (what the hero is asked to do), the Beginning of the Adventure (what the hero sets out to do), and the Ultimate Boon (what the hero achieves) must connect. | Hiro uses his intelligence to turn Baymax into a super crime fighter. Hiro, Baymax, and friends create a superhero team and set off to bring the masked man to justice. |
| **Stage 3: Return** |
| 7. **Refusal of the Return**When the goal of the adventure is accomplished, the hero may refuse to return with the boon or gift, either because the hero doubts the return will bring change or because the hero prefers to stay in a better place rather than return to a normal life of pain and trouble. | The **falling action**begins as the hero begins to think about the Return. Sometimes the hero does not want to look back after achieving the boon. Sometimes the hero likes the “new world” better.This step is similar to the Refusal of the Call (in both cases, the hero does not take action right away). | When Hiro learns that the masked man is Tadashi’s old professor whom Tadashi died trying to save, he changes Baymax’s program and orders him to kill the professor. |
| 8. **The Magic Flight**The hero experiences adventure and perhaps danger as he or she **returns** to life as it was before the Call to Adventure. | For some heroes, the journey “home” (psychological or physical) can be just as dangerous as the journey out. Forces (sometimes magical or supernatural) may keep the hero from returning.This step is similar to the Road of Trials. | Hiro and the altered Baymax try to take on the professor alone. At the last second before Baymax is able to kill the professor, his friends are able to stop him. Baymax and his friends are able to convince Hiro that vengeance is not what Tadashi would have wanted. |
| 9. **Rescue from Without**Just as the hero may need guides and assistance on the quest, oftentimes he or she must have powerful guides and rescuers to bring him or her back to everyday life. Sometimes the hero does not realize that it is time to return, that he or she can return, or that others are relying on him or her to return. | Just as it looks as if the hero will not make it home with the boon, the hero is “rescued.” The rescuer is sometimes the same person who provided love or support throughout the journey. | The reformed superhero team stops the professor from exacting his own revenge. Baymax sacrifices himself to save Hiro and the professor’s lost daughter. |
| 10. **The Crossing or Return Threshold**At this final point in the adventure, the hero must retain the wisdom gained on the quest, integrate that wisdom into his or her previous life, and perhaps decide how to share the wisdom with the rest of the world. | The final step is the story’s **resolution,**when the hero returns with the boon. The theme is typically revealed at this point.To determine theme, think about the hero’s struggles, transformation, and achievement. The reader is expected to learn a lesson about life though the hero’s experience. | At the end, Hiro finally goes to school. He finds Baymax’s program and recreates him. The superhero team continues helping people. |