Have you ever sat in a cafe watching the people go by and imagining all those lives? Or perhaps found the character of a story so real and moving that they stick in your head and you feel like you know them better than your closest friend. Wanting to enjoy the intricacies of a human being is something that we all have needed. A powerful, deep person is something that holds interest, if they happen to be… say a demigod or an escaped demon. It's all just icing on the cake. I grew up in the company of books, slipping into other people's skins and worlds, and so I write my own stories and my own people because this world has never been enough, and this existence too stifling. The day by day life never quite holding my attention.

So what is it, exactly, that makes me different from all those characters I create, they are born in my own mind, and controlled by it, so they are just me, are they not? Yet each of acts so differently, despite shared tragedy and this shared mind, no two act alike. Why? I have been creating characters, writing stories for them for a long time now. I know each of my characters, better than I know myself. My characters have become an integral part of me, the direction of my interests, the insistent voices in my head to lead me to choices, though despite my best efforts to create good people they give stunningly bad advice. I do not create perfect beings. The people I create may be kind or strong or smart, but they are broken and strange people, a product only of this strange, cruel, and beautiful world.

*"The depth and strength of a human character are defined by its moral reserves. People reveal themselves completely only when they are thrown out of the customary conditions of their life, for only then do they have to fall back on their reserves." -**Leonardo Da Vinci***

As Da Vinci says so eloquently, the extent of a person can never be known until they are put in a situation that forces them to fall back on their foundations. Human beings differ in many ways, but our depth comes from the sincerity of our beings, and the similarities of our struggles.

We are nothing without the world we live in, and in the same way characters are nothing without their stories, so it is important to make the stories damn good. The quality of a story is often in its telling, but even the most eloquent of words fail in tales that lack structure. No amount of good writing and powerful characterization can make up for a wanting plot or an ending that makes you want to throw your book across the room and never look at it again. The most often used structure of a plot is the Infamous *Hero's Journey,* Which focuses heavily on the actions of the main character, to the mild exclusion of the world around them. The hero's journey can include many intricacies, however, it can also be boiled down to become a simple set of directions one must follow to create a story.

The first step in the creation of *"The Hero's Journey"* deals with topic that might be one of my favorite parts of writing, world building. The introduction to the world your character inhabits and their place in it is very important to the reader. Because everything from home life to social standing to general culture can be very important in understanding a character's actions or point of view. Take Rumiko Takahashi's *Inuyasha* For example, the character's actions often reflect heavily on their backgrounds, the most obvious example being Inuyasha himself. Early on in the manga[1] it is made clear that Inuyasha is hated for his hanyo[2] heritage, and so his mannerisms in life were gruff, to phrase it generously. Inuyasha had a childhood of being tossed

---

[1] Japanese style comic.

[2] Hanyo meaning the child of a human and a yokai, or japanese demon, looked down on by both races.

out and treated like nothing, so he learned not to trust easily, and to always be prepared to defend himself, and all of it is easily attributed to the world around him, thanks to the wonderful world building.
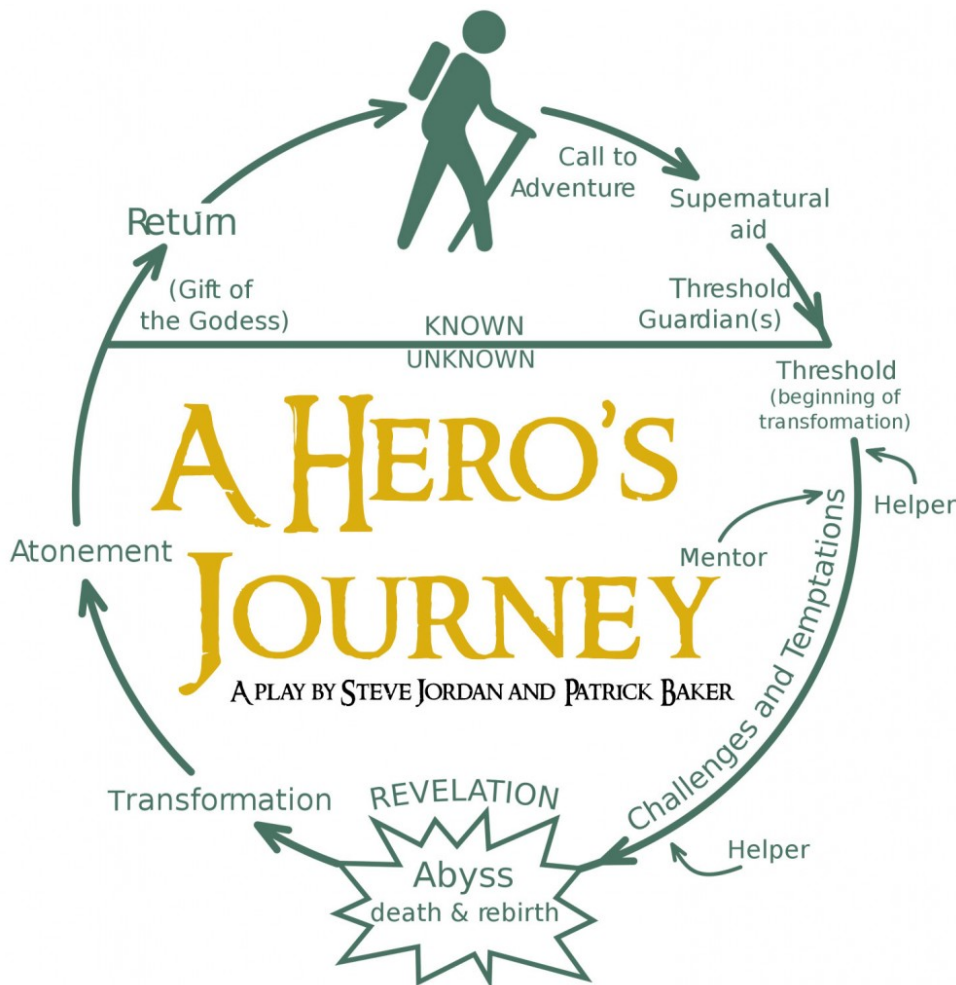
The next step in *The Hero's Journey* Is the call to adventure, the wizard at Bilbo Baggins's door or Harry's first letter from Hogwarts. This is the event, however small and strange it may seem, that starts off the entire adventure, it is the wavering differentness, the introduction to a problem or an opportunity or event that draws us away from character and world introductions and into the thick of the story. This stage is followed by some sort of resistance to the adventure, which can span from flat out refusal, to understandable hesitation. After the resistance has been passed, either by an event that puts it out of the character's control or a change of heart, the story can move on in a smooth arch. The next step in any tale is the introduction of a mentor, who is not always actually a mentor, or even a person. The purpose of this point in the tale is for the hero to find reason to better themselves, and this is often where a character finds the strengths that will carry them through, and in many stories they look back on the mentor point in the story for courage and strength.

Though the mentor is important in the tale, the time is often short, moving on to the next portion of the story quickly, that being the threshold. The point in time where the character coincides to giving up their normal world and stepping into whatever the new one has to offer, be it magic, mystery, romance, or countless other adventures one could embark upon. And as he, she, or anything else the person might identify as, steps through the threshold they are bombarded by the other important characters in the story, the hectic point when the characters fan out, and you meet friends, allies and enemies alike. As the period for meeting and categorizing the characters of the story ends the time for preparation must begin, the time for

planning for the take down of the "big boss" They gear up to face whatever big challenge stands in their way. This leads up to the ordeal, the middle of the story where the hero faces whatever they have been building up to, though perhaps it is not the big boss, they may conquer a fear or a lesser challenger. This is important because it leads to the reward, usually assuming, at least in part, a boost of confidence and hope for the road ahead, and probably some artifact of importance to our story. After this there is a return, where the limits of the Ordinary world our character came from and the adventure world blend into each other. This generally takes place as some kind of dangerous and urgent scene where the hero tries to maintain the reward they claimed. And thus, we reach the climax, where the hero is tested on the threshold of relative safety, giving all they have to the cause of defeating whatever opponent they face, and returning to relative normalcy with the intention to change the world. When we turn our attention to short stories, as mine are going to be, it becomes a bit different, there is not space to involve all this plot while still maintaining all the other things that make a good story, such as good writing and character development. A short story is different depending on its focus, but as my focus is character the plotline will follow another very simple form: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

While we're on the topic of the crafting of stories, it seems silly not to delve into the realm of characters, as that is the focus of my project after all. The building of characters, for some of us it is the simplest most natural thing in the world, and for others it is incredibly difficult. However you go about sculpting your characters, it is not an easy task, whatever background they come from, their interests, the people close to them. Unfortunately it all requires extensive research, patience, and an understanding of people, to the best of a writer, or any artist's abilities that is. We talk about the depth of human beings all the time, but it is a concept that is hard to grasp when you have not delved so deeply into it as to try and make a convincing one. People, human or otherwise, are a web, ever growing and changing, but every little piece is connected, and leads to another. The scope of things that make us individual is vast, from our outward appearance, to the mannerisms of our speech to our most base beliefs.

One of the points I chose to focus on in the individuality of a person was the differences in handwriting, and what those differences mean, So of course my studies directed me to the vague realm of Graphology, or handwriting analysis. Many people scoff at graphologists because of the t.v. show stereotype where a professional can tell if someone is a killer based on the way they write the letter "H" or something like that, but the actual practice is more common sense than anything. For example, wide spaces between words or letters suggests the writer was hesitating, and probably distracted, which in some cases means dishonesty. Generally handwriting slants right, but when it slants strongly right it is likely a sign of extreme stress or repressed emotions, and when writing slants in different directions it is almost always suggestive of prominent mental imbalance. The size and legibility of the signature suggests weather or not someone wants to be noticed by the general public, or not. The amount of space between the signature and the rest of the writing can display how passionate the author is about the topic.

The idea of creating a character is all well and good, but trusting my self, acclaimed expertise without proof would be a bit silly, so let me introduce you to a few of my own.

My first well put together and thought out character was Samvarga Lupes, a winged wolf Yokai[3], though to those less acquainted with the Japanese culture from whence her kind came she simply introduces herself as a demoness, to the confusion and ire of christians everywhere.

---

[3] A japanese demon or monster, types are varied throughout Japan.

She is among the last of her kind, and one of the most powerful among them, even at her tender age of three hundred and twenty eight, hardly out of her teens in the eyes of yokai. She is gifted with pure white fur, the tail and ears that poke from her otherwise human-looking body always as soft as silk. But her favorite asset by far are her wings. With a span of more than eighteen feet and glistening dark red feathers they are her joy, and her freedom in a very literal sense. Despite a cruel and twisted past, Samvarga retains kindness and courage for the sake of others, and is always willing to give, if she is only asked.

Ignis Tuorum Gemmam is another character of mine whose name means "a turquoise flame." She is a dragoness with a troubled past, a celtic style fire drake from the dragon isles, cast out for her status as a runt, though she is one of the strongest flyers on the isle. She is shy, constantly fearful, but like all of my other characters she is fiercely loyal, and protective about those she cares about.

Patronus Nox

Another strange Latin name, this one meaning Protector Night, though weather the night protects her or she protects the night is never quite clear. Her left eye, usually covered by a curly mane of hair, is midnight blue, and holds a crescent moon instead of a pupil, her iris dotted with shining stars. She is powerful in druidic magic, and she had forged her soul into a physical weapon, a scythe, the back baring another crescent moon, this one marked with the some of same runes that litter her body, tattoos to aid her magic. She is partial to violin and poetry, and has a love for flowers which she rarely shows

Though all of my characters are important to me, and individual in their own rights, they show many parallels, and discrepancies that set them apart from being seen as real people. There is a lot I need to work on, but I know that as I grow, they will too.

Aesh	Bravash	Cavul	Diras	Evrom	Feresh	Gralm	Hirmok	Irremais

Jotra	Kyrop	Lann	Mawring	Naeve	Ophis	Pallas	Queros	Rhyv

Sular	Tykonus	Ull	Verys	Wyr	Xun	Yoorn	Zorech