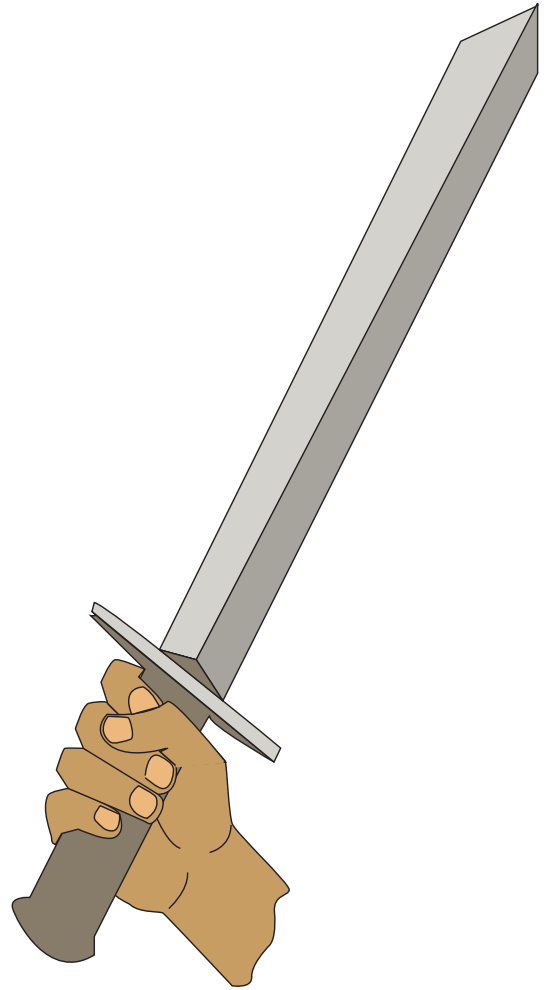


The Hero's Journey



Literary Analysis Tool,
Images & Metaphors

From *Rooted in Language*



Rooted in Language

Laying a Path for Readers & Writers

The Hero's Journey

Literary Analysis Tool, Images & Metaphors

The Hero's Journey fosters critical thinking while students learn to understand story structure. The Hero's Journey is an ancient story-telling pattern that many stories throughout history have followed. Use our model to help students dig deeper into any story, whether it is told through literature, comics, film, oral recitation, or any other vehicle. Add a multisensory element through the addition of the images provided, or use them to inspire your own drawings. Add your own ideas to ours, and join our ongoing discussions in our Facebook group, the Rooted Community!

For more ideas, visit us at [RootedinLanguage.com](https://www.rootedinlanguage.com)

or on



Produced by Rooted in Language

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The Hero's Journey

Many stories, today and throughout history, follow an ancient story arc known as the hero's journey. To understand this classic story-telling pattern, click to watch our video, [Responding to Our World: The Hero's Journey](#), or scan the QR code.



The Hero's Journey is one of the oldest story telling styles in the world. Its roots grow from Ancient Greek tales of heroes, gods, mortals, and monsters. Many stories throughout history fit the Hero's Journey.

There are variations and differences unique to every story. Understanding the framework of the Hero's Journey allows you to analyze any story — book, film, music, poem, etc. — for its key elements. It also gives you the opportunity to decide if that particular story fits the Hero's Journey or if and how it moves in a different direction. Some modern storytelling techniques deviate from the path of the traditional Hero's Journey.

On the pages that follow, you will find an outline of the Hero's Journey circle along with images that can be used to depict it. This is our version; there are many other versions available, some of which include more elements. This version is flexible and elements can be added or removed, depending on the complexity of text and skill level of the student.

Deep Learning

At Rooted in Language, we encourage deep learning wherever possible. In literature, this can be achieved through deeper analysis and exploration of the stories we read, watch, or listen to.

The *plot arc* is a great place to start literary analysis. Rich understanding of a story is greatly enhanced by mapping the plot as it unfolds. Since the Hero's Journey is such a common plot structure, students can easily engage in this type of analysis. For a deeper explanation of the plot arc, see our product, [Annotating Literary Elements](#).

We also recommend a multisensory approach to encourage deep learning. The addition of images, whether pre-made or self-created, adds a visual element and can deepen understanding as well as student involvement in plot analysis.

The images in this packet are available to augment a Hero's Journey analysis. Use them as is, or use them to inspire students as they create their own images.

We are indebted to Sarah Smith, a high school student artist, for gifting us with these Hero's Journey images. Many thanks, Sarah!

The Hero's Journey is a circle.

Traditionally, the story begins with the hero at home...

Home

Call to Adventure

Something happens that brings a change or danger that the hero must face.

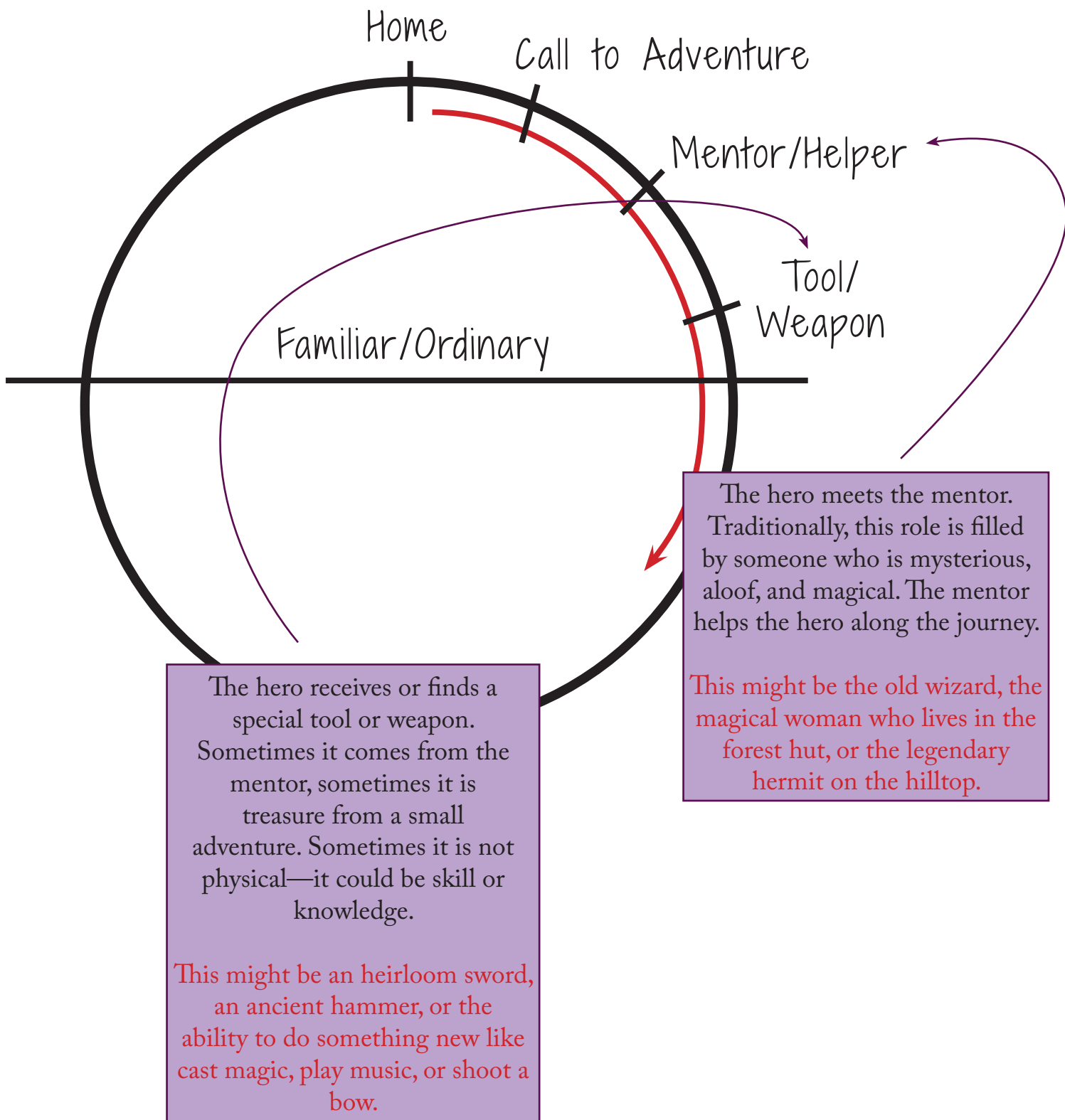
This is the Spark Event—it ignites the story!

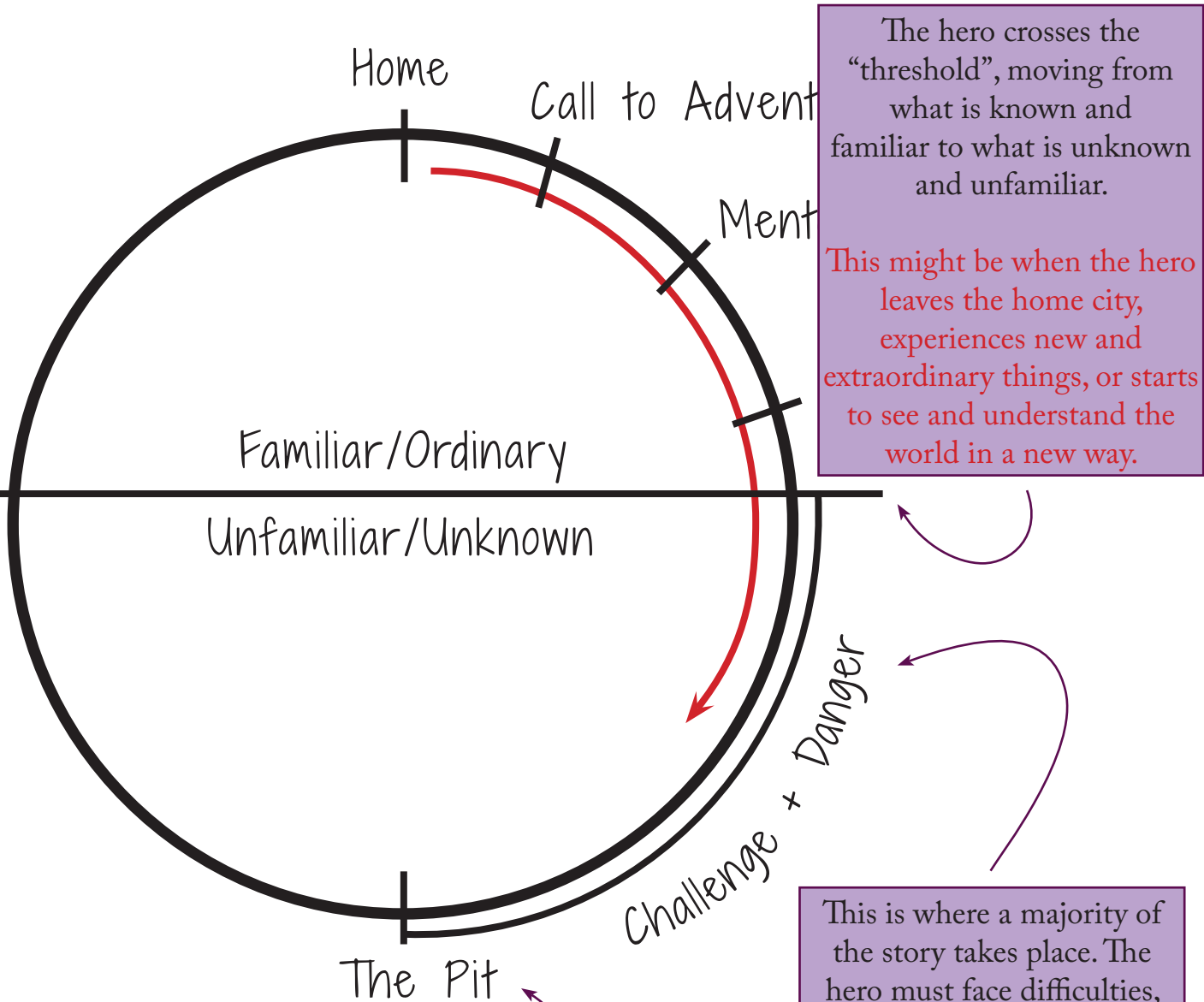
This might be when the dragon attacks the town, the hero is suddenly alone, or the hero's plans are disrupted.

Familiar/Ordinary

So far, everything that happens to the hero takes place in a setting that is familiar.

The hero has not crossed the "threshold" yet.





The hero crosses the “threshold”, moving from what is known and familiar to what is unknown and unfamiliar.

This might be when the hero leaves the home city, experiences new and extraordinary things, or starts to see and understand the world in a new way.

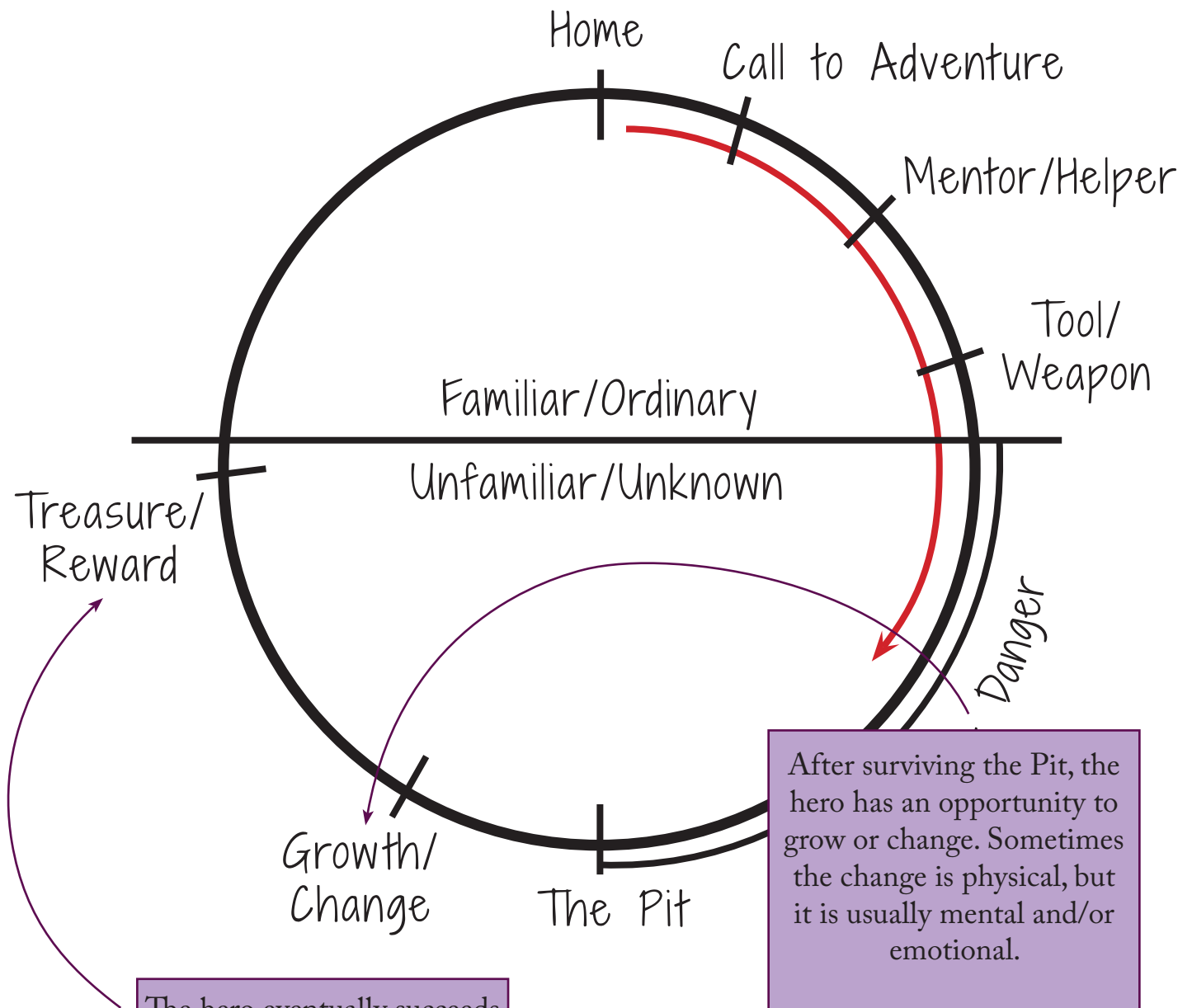
This is where a majority of the story takes place. The hero must face difficulties, including meeting the enemy. The hero is constantly facing danger and hardship.

This might be when the hero battles enemy forces, duels evil, or must complete a series of challenges.

The hero faces the worst experience or event in the story.

This is the Crisis. The hero must endure the darkest or most dangerous trial. It is sometimes a physical challenge and sometimes an emotional ordeal.

This might be when the hero loses to the enemy, the mentor is killed, or the hero is abandoned.



The hero eventually succeeds and is rewarded.

The treasure is sometimes wealth and riches, sometimes something less tangible like glory, pride, or peace.

This might be a medal or award, the hidden treasure chest, a glorious gift from the king, or new-found peace in the land.

After surviving the Pit, the hero has an opportunity to grow or change. Sometimes the change is physical, but it is usually mental and/or emotional.

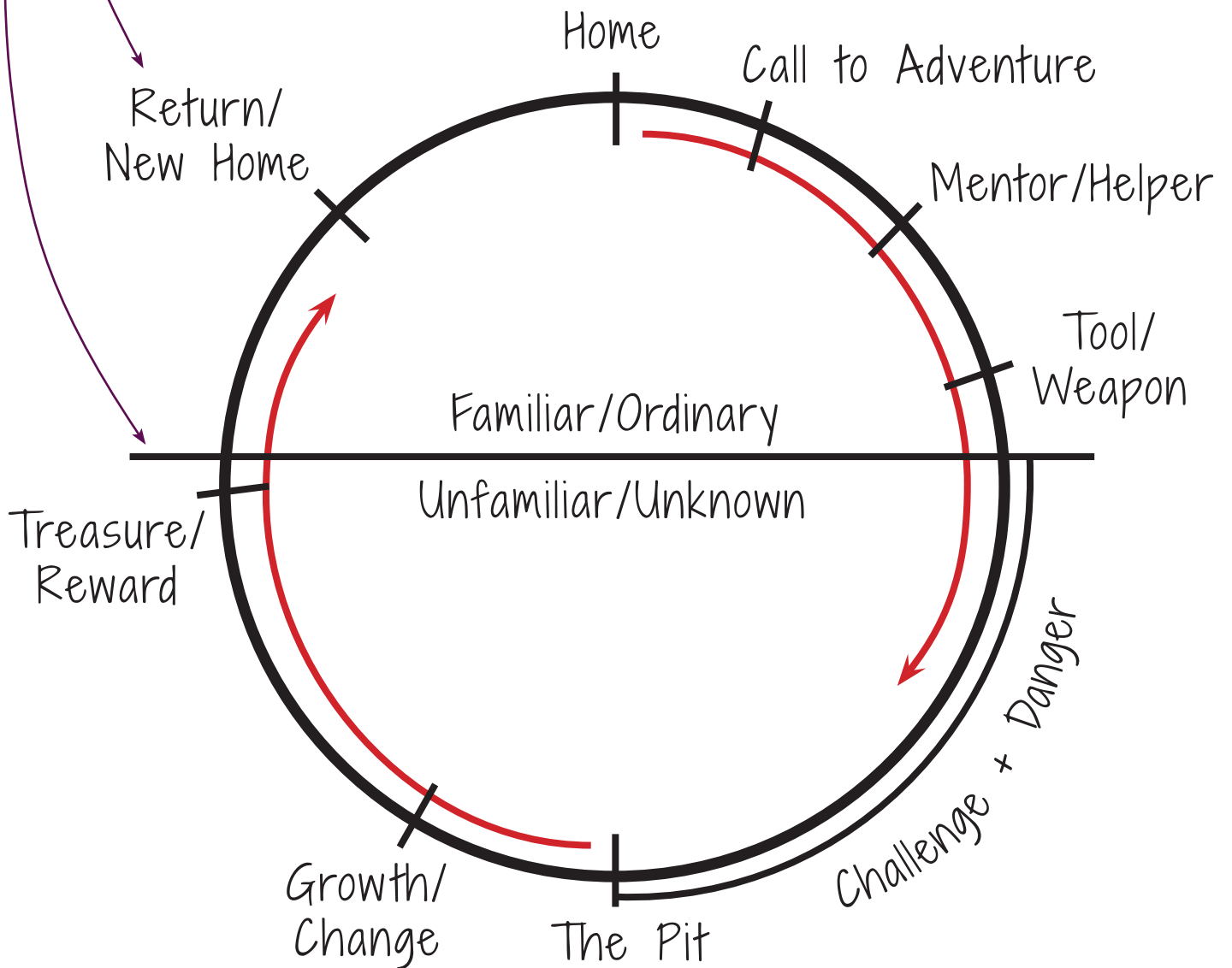
The hero has gained new knowledge, understanding, perspective, or insight.

This might be when the hero understands a key lesson, is redeemed, or realizes how to become a better person.

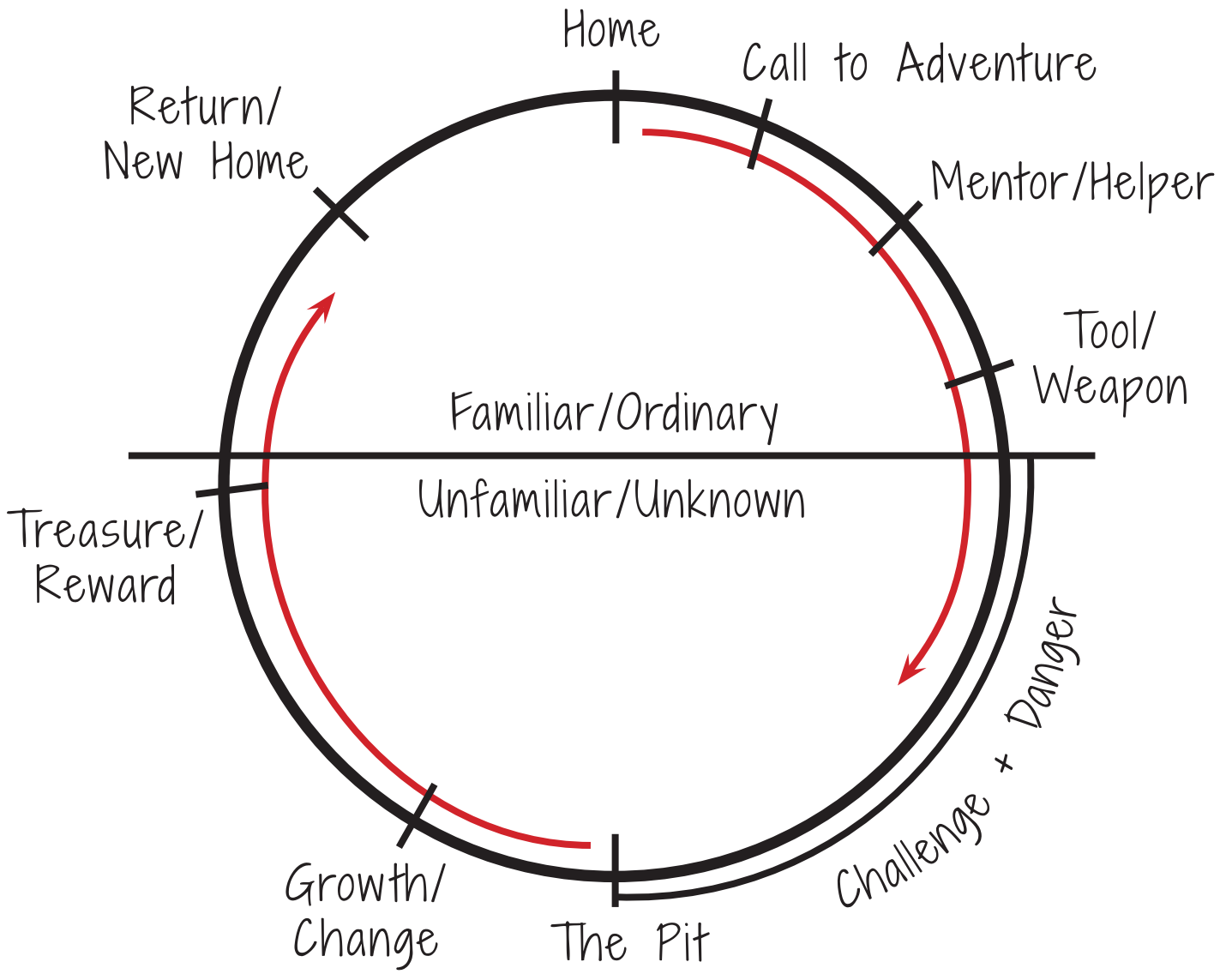
The hero crosses the “threshold” again, back into the familiar and ordinary.

Sometimes this is because the hero returns home. Sometimes the hero finds a new way or place to live that becomes home.

This might be when the hero returns to the home city, forges a new life, or begins another adventure.

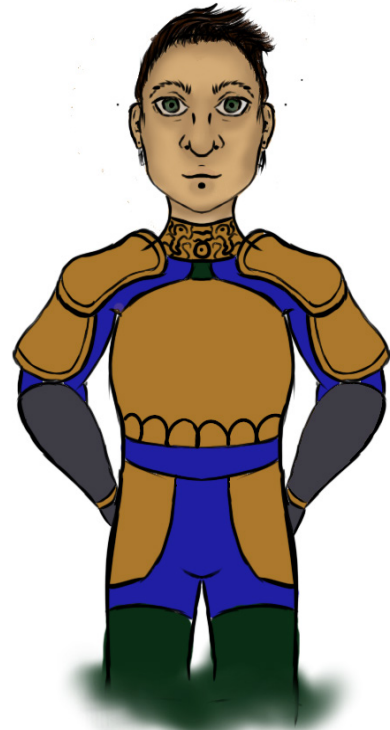
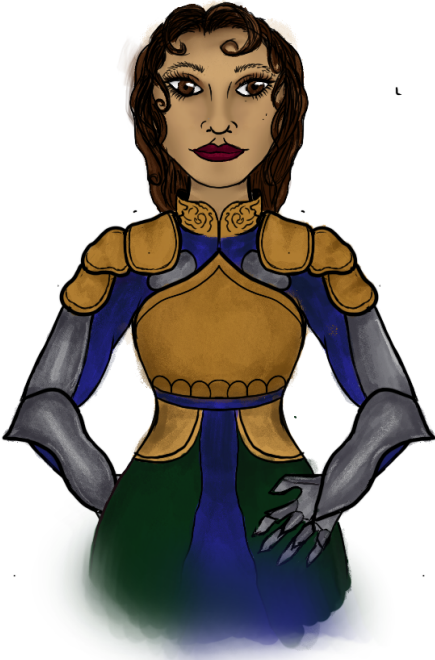


The complete Hero's Journey



The Hero

The protagonist or main character.

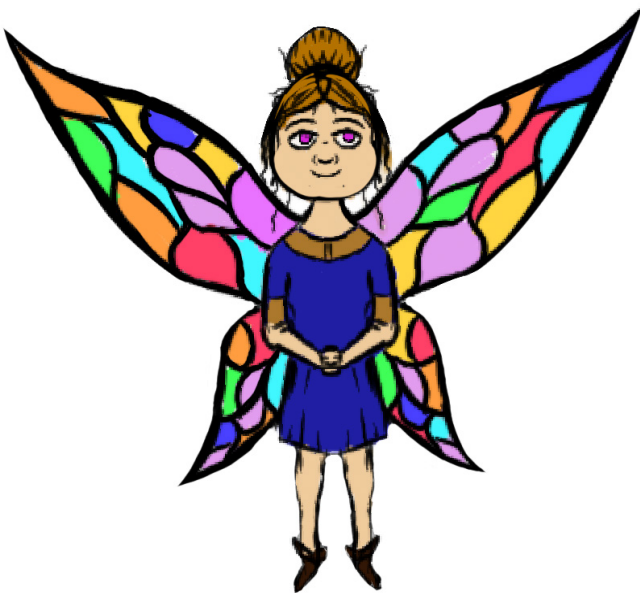




The Doorway or Threshold

The hero makes a choice to cross the threshold into the unknown.

Note: The hero may cross more than one threshold during their adventure.



The Helper

The hero finds friends or acquaintances who help with the quest or journey.

The Mentor

The hero meets a mentor or guide who provides needed advice and wisdom on the journey.

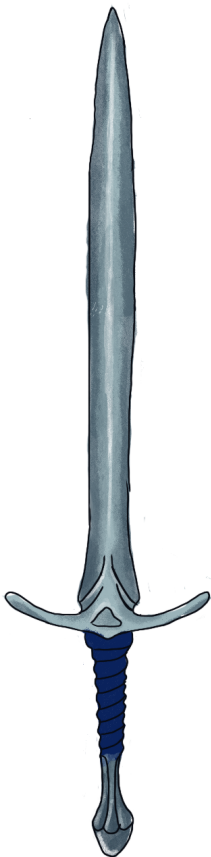
Note: Traditionally, the mentor has magical powers, but more modern stories may deviate.



The Weapon

The hero finds or receives a unique weapon, often with unknown power or significant emotional value.

Note: Sometimes the weapon is actually a tool or new skill.



The Enemy

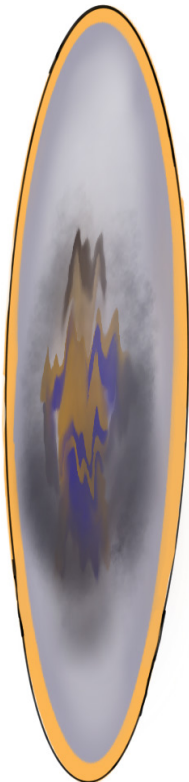
The hero is opposed by an enemy or evil force.



The Mirror or Reflection

The hero must face themselves — conquering their inner fears or weakness and embracing the change they need to make.

Note: This moment often comes at the low point (the pit) or crisis of the story.



The Battle

The hero must eventually battle a difficult or seemingly impossible task or enemy to complete the journey.



The Treasure or Reward

The hero receives a reward for a successful journey. This reward can be actual treasure or something more metaphorical.

Note: Sometimes the treasure is the actual accomplishment of the journey itself.

