

**THE HERO'S JOURNEY OF MAIN CHARACTER IN AXIE OH'S *THE  
GIRL WHO FELL BENEATH THE SEA***

**THESIS**

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**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

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*THE GIRL WHO FELL BENEATH THE SEA***

**THESIS**

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MALANG**

**2025**

## STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled *The Hero's Journey of Main Character in Axie Oh's The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

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## APPROVAL SHEET

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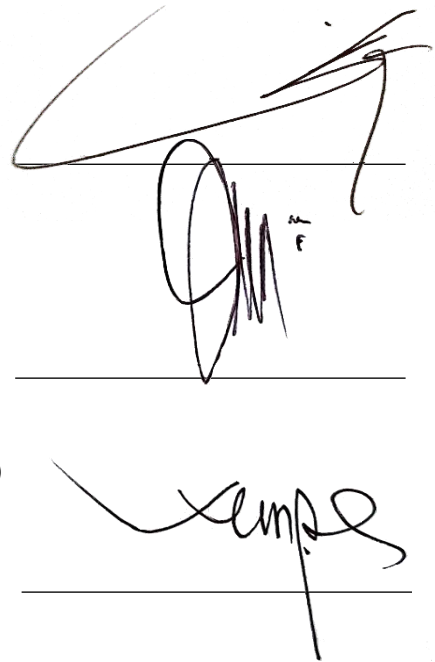
This is to certify that Syah Rafi Ahmad Al Kahfi's thesis entitled *The Hero's Journey of Main Character in Axie Oh's The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of Sarjana Sasta (S.S) in Department of English Literature.

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### **Motto**

“Don't fly too high and don't lower too low.”

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved father and mother, Rudi Mulyanto and Suwartiningsih, who always supported and encouraged me at every step of my journey during college. For all your sacrifices, both of you, may Allah reward you abundantly.

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The researcher is aware that this thesis still needs improvement and has weaknesses in several aspects. Therefore, criticism and suggestion for improving this work are welcomed. Hopefully, this thesis will benefit both the researcher and the reader in general.

Malang, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

The researcher



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## ABSTRACT

**Al Kahfi, Syah Rafi Ahmad** (2025). The Hero's Journey of Main Character in Axie Oh's *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.  
Advisor: Asni Furaida, M.A.

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This study aims to analyze the narrative structure of Axie Oh's novel, *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*, based on Joseph Campbell's theory of The Hero's Journey (Monomyth). This study is motivated by the view that hero myths have universal patterns that can be found in various forms of cross-cultural narratives. By depicting the stages of the main character's journey, this study attempts to show how the classic monomyth pattern is applied and adapted in the context of modern stories that influence Korean culture. The research method used was literary criticism. Data were obtained from the novel text in the form of direct quotations and dialogue relevant to the seventeen stages of the Hero's Journey. The analysis was conducted by classifying narrative sections according to the stages of the monomyth, then interpreting them based on their narrative function and emerging symbolism. The study results show that the main character, Mina, almost goes through all seventeen stages of The Hero's Journey, from The Call to Adventure to Freedom to Live. However, the adaptations that emerged show that Mina's heroic journey emphasizes emotional and spiritual transformation and relationships between characters rather than physical confrontation. This novel successfully combines the universal pattern of the monomyth with elements of Korean mythology and culture, resulting in a narrative that is both unique and thematically relevant.

## ABSTRAK

**Al Kahfi, Syah Rafi Ahmad** (2025). The Hero's Journey of Main Character in Axie Oh's *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.  
Pembimbing: Asni Furaida, M.A.

Kata kunci: *Pahlawan, Perjalanan Pahlawan, Monomyth*

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis struktur naratif novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* karya Axie Oh berdasarkan teori *The Hero's Journey* (Monomyth) oleh Joseph Campbell. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pandangan bahwa mitos kepahlawanan memiliki pola universal yang dapat ditemukan pada berbagai bentuk narasi lintas budaya. Dengan mengidentifikasi tahapan perjalanan tokoh utama, penelitian ini berusaha menunjukkan bagaimana pola klasik monomyth diterapkan dan diadaptasi dalam konteks cerita modern yang dipengaruhi budaya Korea. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kritik sastra. Data penelitian diperoleh dari teks novel berupa kutipan langsung dan dialog yang relevan dengan tujuh belas tahap *Hero's Journey*. Analisis dilakukan dengan cara mengklasifikasikan bagian-bagian naratif sesuai dengan tahap-tahap monomyth, kemudian diinterpretasikan berdasarkan fungsi naratif dan simbolisme yang muncul. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh utama, Mina, hampir melewati keseluruhan tujuh belas tahap *The Hero's Journey* mulai dari *The Call to Adventure* hingga *Freedom to Live*. Namun, adaptasi yang muncul memperlihatkan bahwa perjalanan kepahlawanan Mina lebih menekankan pada transformasi emosional, spiritual, dan relasi antar tokoh dibandingkan konfrontasi fisik. Novel ini berhasil menggabungkan pola universal monomyth dengan elemen mitologi dan budaya Korea, sehingga menghasilkan narasi yang unik sekaligus relevan secara tematik.

## خلاصة

ي. أوه الكهفي، سياح رفيع أحمد (٢٠٢٥). رحلة البطل مينا في رواية "الفتاة التي سقطت تحت البحر لأكس

قسم

:الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف  
أسني فريدا، ماجستير

الكلمات المفتاحية: البطل، رحلة البطل، الأسطورة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل البنية السردية لرواية أكسي أوه "الفتاة التي سقطت تحت البحر" استنادًا إلى نظرية جوزيف كامبل في رحلة البطل (الأسطورة الأحادية). تتبع هذه الدراسة من الرأي القائل بأن أسطورة البطولة لها نمط عالمي يمكن العثور عليه في أشكال مختلفة من السرد عبر الثقافات. من خلال تحديد مراحل رحلة الشخصية الرئيسية، تحاول هذه الدراسة إظهار كيفية تطبيق نمط الأسطورة الأحادية الكلاسيكي وتكييفه في سياق القصص الحديثة المتأثرة بالثقافة الكورية. منهج البحث المستخدم هو النقد الأدبي. تم الحصول على بيانات البحث من نص الرواية في شكل اقتباسات مباشرة وحوارات ذات صلة بالمرحلة السبع عشرة لرحلة البطل. تم إجراء التحليل من خلال تصنيف أجزاء السرد وفقًا لمرحلة الأسطورة الأحادية، ثم تم تفسيرها بناءً على وظيفة السرد والرمزية التي ظهرت. تُظهر نتائج الدراسة أن الشخصية الرئيسية، مينا، تمر تقريبًا بجميع المراحل السبع عشرة لرحلة البطل من نداء المغامرة إلى حرية الحياة. ومع ذلك، تُظهر التعديلات التي نتجت أن رحلة مينا البطولية تُركز على التحول العاطفي والروحي والعلاقات بين الشخصيات أكثر من المواجهة الجسدية. تجمع هذه الرواية بنجاح بين النمط العالمي للأسطورة الأحادية وعناصر الأساطير والثقافة الكورية، مما يُنتج سردًا فريدًا وذا صلة موضوعية

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains several key points as the starting framework of the study, including the background, previous studies, research gap, problems, scope, and limitations. The background outlines a concise review of the research object and prior studies that applied the same theory, while also highlighting the distinctions between this study and earlier works.

#### **A. Background of the Study**

Stories about heroes have long captivated readers and served as a central theme in literary works across cultures. From classic epics such as Homer's *The Odyssey* and Cervantes's *Don Quixote* to modern fantasy like Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, the journey of a hero remains a timeless narrative pattern that continues to inspire. Within these narratives, the hero often undergoes a transformative journey, facing challenges, sacrifices, and opposition—whether in the form of human antagonists or other destructive forces. This universal storytelling structure is reflected in Axie Oh's *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* (2022), a young adult fantasy novel inspired by Korean folklore. The novel presents Mina, a heroine who sacrifices herself to save her village, embarking on a journey that mirrors the stages of Joseph Campbell's theory of the hero's journey. This study, therefore, situates Mina's story within the framework of

Campbell's theory to explore how her character redefines the concept of a hero, particularly from a female perspective.

So many people like novels that tell stories about hero, like *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, *The Odyssey* by Homer, and *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien. Nearly all literary works, such as novels and dramas, deal with the journey of the main character as a hero and his confrontation with the villain throughout the plot of the story (Fatihatullaily, F., 2017). If there is a hero as a savior of someone or society, surely there is a villain. A villain is an entity that so many people do not like because a villain has characteristics like evil, rude, and not like peace. Villains are typically portrayed as evil, influential figures who inspire fear and hatred (Jasper et al., 2020). Therefore, there is a novel that does not have a villain as a character, but rather a creature that everyone dislikes because it threatens to bring disaster to the village.

The novel entitled *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* tells a story about Mina, who is the main character towards Shim Cheong as her brother's girlfriend and village. This novel was written by Axie Oh and published in 2022 in Fantasy and Fiction. Axie Oh, the author, is a Korean-American of the second generation, born in New York City and raised in New Jersey. She studied creative writing and Korean history at the University of California, San Diego, and later earned her M.F.A. Her favorite things are milk tea, anime, and K-pop. Currently, she lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, with her dog, Toro. This novel is a young adult novel inspired by Korean folklore, featuring a heroine who sacrifices herself to the Sea God to save her village (Hartley-Kroeger, 2022). This novel tells the story of the main character, Mina, who is an amazing girl.



She quickly makes the decision to sacrifice everything she has to save her brother's girlfriend. As the story unfolds, she becomes fully committed to breaking the Sea God's curse and rescuing the remaining survivors—regardless of what she must give up along the way. So, with the amazing novel, the novel is the focus of the researcher's interest, especially in The Hero's Journey aspect.

This study uses hero's journey theory by Joseph Campbell, which helps analyze the hero's journey aspects in the novel. Joseph Campbell introduced the concept of The Hero's Journey to explain universal patterns in myths, legends, fairy tales, films, and literary works across cultures. According to Campbell (2008), many hero stories from around the world have a similar narrative structure: a character (hero) is called to leave ordinary life, faces challenges in a world of adventure, and then returns with knowledge, power, or gifts that benefit society. Campbell emphasizes that this pattern is not simply an adventure story, but reflects the psychological and spiritual journey of humanity toward self-transformation. Therefore, The Hero's Journey can be understood as a universal narrative framework. Myths resonate with local needs but respected by every people in this world, “appear in everywhere in new combination, but still, like kaleidoscope elements, only several and always the same” (Campbell, 2007, p. 15 in Sonnenburg, S., & Runco, M., 2017).

Previous studies relevant to this research can be categorized into two groups: those examining the same object and those employing the same theoretical framework. Research by Buansari, Zuriyati, and Saifurrohman (2022) analyzed *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* but concentrated on illocutionary and perlocutionary acts rather than

its narrative structure. On the other hand, studies applying Campbell's the hero's journey theory have been conducted on a wide range of texts and media, including Faulkner's screenplays (Boukemmouche & Al-Khawaldeh, 2022), Joko Anwar's *Gundala* (Hidayat & Putri, 2022), Miyazaki's *Spirited Away* (Wu & Wang, 2022), Pixar's *Brave* (Domínguez Morante, 2018), *Captain America: The First Avenger* (Wardana, 2023), Collins's *The Hunger Games* (Fakhruddin & Retnaningdyah, 2019), Golden's *Assassin's Creed: Renaissance* (Noor, 2020), the anime *Naruto and Naruto: Shippuden* (Ayon, 2023), as well as Mull's *Beyonders: A World Without Heroes* (Amalia, 2020). Collectively, these studies demonstrate the versatility of Campbell's the hero's journey framework in analyzing diverse narratives while also identifying variations in the application of its stages. However, none of these works investigate the heroic journey within Axie Oh's *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*, which highlights the research gap this study seeks to address.

After reading the previous studies above, the researcher uses theory of the hero's journey by Joseph Campbell to fill the gap between previous studies to add more knowledges, concepts and examples about the Campbell's theory. The researcher interested in making a new perspective of female hero because in the theory is more about male hero. The important thing is that it discusses the hero's journey in a different context in general. In general, a hero is like a superhero in most existing movies, either protecting someone or society with superpowers or supernatural powers; in this novel, Mina does not have any super or supernatural powers. This object is also very suitable

for using hero's journey theory because there are aspects of mythology in it that are of particular interest to analyze in this novel.

### **B. Problems of the Study**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher decided to use two problems of the study, such as:

1. What are the stages of Campbell's the Hero's Journey theory portrayed by Axie Oh as the author in the novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*?
2. How much does the narrative of the novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* follow Campbell's the Hero's Journey theory?

### **C. Significance of the Study**

This research hopefully can make a significant contribution in the world of literary studies, especially in analyzing the fiction novel. By focusing in the Axie Oh's novel. In the context The Hero's Journey that are still rarely researched can help further research with the same object and provide a better understanding of the topic. Additionally, it offers a new perspective on novels with a fantasy fiction genre that sheds light on heroes. This study is also expected to improve readers' interest to the novel that discuss about a hero without superpower.

### **D. Scope and Limitation**

This research focuses on the hero's journey of character Mina in the novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. It uses theory of Joseph Campbell named the hero's journey to analyze this object. It examines the Mina's process until she becomes a hero

without superpower. This research just uses the hero's journey theory as the method and does not use the other method to analyze the incomprehensible data, researcher just analyze character Mina and not any other character.

### **E. Definition of Key Terms**

To give the same understanding, the researcher provides several definitions of terms that are frequently used in this study:

1. Hero: A hero is the main character in myths, legends, or literary works who undergoes a transformative journey through a pattern called a monomyth or the hero's journey (Campbell, 2008).
2. The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell's hero's journey, is a universal narrative pattern found in myths, stories, and films with cultures. The hero's journey typically involves several stages, including initiation, departure, and return, which can be observed in various narratives (Campbell & Cousineau, 1990).

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the theory applied in this study. The theoretical framework discussed is closely connected to the analysis conducted on the chosen object. It aims to help readers understand how the theory is implemented throughout this study.

#### **A. Archetypal Approach**

The archetypal approach is a literary perspective that examines the patterns, symbols, and character types that recur across myths, folklore, religious texts, and literary works from diverse cultures. The meaning of the word “*archetype*” as a noun becomes fairly clear when viewed in relation to myth, esoteric teachings, and fairy tales (C. G. Jung, 1969). This approach is grounded in the belief that human beings share universal psychological structures that produce similar narratives and symbolic expressions. As a result, literature is viewed not only as a product of an author's creativity but also as a reflection of collective human experiences that transcend time and geography. Archetypes are therefore understood as timeless and recurring narrative elements that shape how stories are constructed and interpreted.

The foundation of the archetypal approach lies in Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the collective unconscious. According to Jung (1969), beneath the personal

unconscious lies a deeper layer of the mind shared by all humans, containing inherited memories and primordial images. These images—such as the hero, the mother, the shadow, and the wise old man—manifest repeatedly in different forms across cultures. Jung argued that the persistence of these symbols demonstrates the shared psychological blueprint of humanity, which influences how individuals perceive and create stories. This theory significantly shaped the modern understanding of literary archetypes.

In literary studies, archetypes are used to identify universal themes and motifs that appear throughout the world's literary traditions. Critics employing this approach analyze narrative elements such as character roles, plot structures, mythic cycles, symbolic objects, and transformative events. Common archetypes include the hero's quest, the descent into the underworld, the rebirth motif, and the struggle between good and evil. Another common archetypal storyline is the quest, which typically includes the hero's trials and initiation, symbolizing the transition from innocence to maturity or deeper understanding (Barnet, S., Burto, W., & Cain, W. E., 2008). These patterns help scholars understand how literature mirrors the psychological and cultural experiences of societies, and how stories serve to communicate shared human truths.

The archetypal approach was further developed by literary scholars and mythologists who observed that many stories follow deeply rooted structures. One of the most influential contributions comes from Joseph Campbell, whose concept of *The Hero's Journey* outlines a universal narrative pattern found in heroic tales worldwide. Campbell (2008) analyzed various myths and heroic tales from multiple cultures and

discovered that they share a similar narrative structure. Although Campbell's monomyth is only one possible archetypal structure, it demonstrates how myths convey fundamental human experiences through a shared narrative formula. Campbell's work expanded the archetypal lens by showing how narrative stages themselves can function as symbolic representations of internal psychological transformation.

Beyond character and plot archetypes, this approach also examines symbolic imagery found across literary works. Symbols such as light and darkness, water, forests, journeys, and seasons often carry similar meanings in many cultural contexts. These symbols, positioned slightly apart from the archetype's core, are specific forms that communicate and represent the archetype's meaning through symbolic expression (Mayes, C., 2020). For example, water frequently symbolizes purification or transformation, while forests may represent mystery or the unknown. By analyzing these symbolic patterns, the archetypal approach uncovers layers of meaning that connect literature to broader mythological and cultural traditions. This symbolic dimension helps explain why certain narratives remain compelling across generations. Just as dreams reveal a person's hidden wishes and worries, myths serve as symbolic expressions of a society's collective hopes, values, fears, and ambitions (Guerin, W. L., Labor, E., Morgan, L., Reesman, J. C., & Willingham, J. R., 1966).

The archetypal approach offers a holistic way of understanding literature by connecting individual texts to universal patterns embedded within human culture and psychology. Similar motifs or themes often appear across various mythologies, and certain recurring images found in the myths of cultures separated by vast distances and

different eras usually share a common significance—or more precisely—evoke similar psychological reactions and fulfill comparable cultural roles (Guerin, W. L., Labor, E., Morgan, L., Reesman, J. C., & Willingham, J. R., 1966). It enables readers to see beyond the surface of a story and recognize the shared narrative structures that shape human expression. By employing this approach, literary analysis becomes not only an exploration of a specific text but also an investigation into the recurring symbols and mythic elements that define storytelling itself. Through its focus on universality, the archetypal approach highlights the deep connections among world literatures and demonstrates how stories continue to reflect humanity's collective imagination.

In this study, the archetypal approach is applied to analyze Axie Oh's *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. The novel, which reimagines the Korean legend of Shim Cheong, presents a story rich with mythological symbols and archetypal themes. By using the archetypal approach, this study aims to identify how the main character, Mina, embodies the traits of the archetypal hero and how her journey reflects the stages of The Hero's Journey as proposed by Joseph Campbell. Through this approach, the study uncovers the universal meaning behind Mina's transformation and the symbolic elements that align her journey with the timeless pattern of the hero found in myths and literature around the world.

## **B. The Hero's Journey by Joseph Campbell**

This chapter also discusses about the theory used in this study. The theoretical framework described is closely connected to the analysis that conducted on the selected



object. This review of related literature contains an explanation about the theory of Joseph Campbell.

This study uses a theory that many researchers used for analyzing a literary work with hero context. This theory was developed by Joseph Campbell in 1949 in his book entitled *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949). Joseph Campbell did research about various myths and legends from many places to search the ways of those stories how the structure and what the same thing in the line of stories. Finally, Campbell gave the name of the theory is “*Monomyth*” or “*The Hero’s Journey*” in his book. The book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* is a Campbell’s work used comparative mythology. Since he published the book, this theory has been applied by various modern arts and writers in the world. Even Star Wars film by George Lucas also influenced by the theory. The researcher uses this book as the reference to this study.

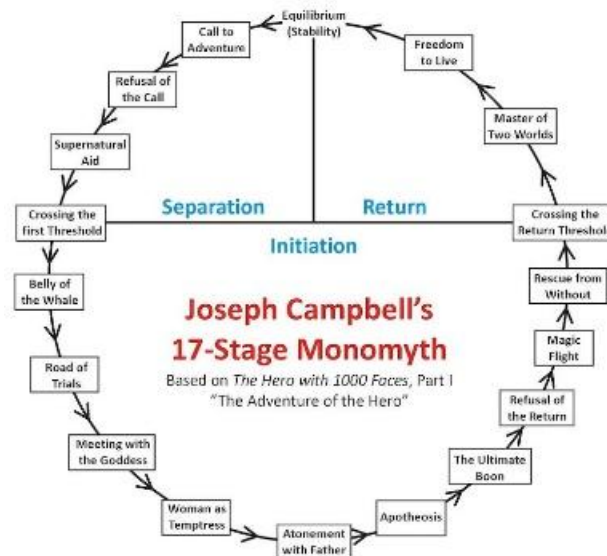
Campbell stated that figures like Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud influenced to his book which related to human psychology. According to Campbell (2008), The revolutionary contributions of psychoanalysts are invaluable to the study of mythology. Although their interpretations of particular problems and cases may at times differ or even contradict each other, Freud, Jung, and their successors have conclusively shown that the logic, archetypes, and narrative actions found in myths continue to resonate in contemporary times.

The researcher uses The Hero’s Journey to analyze the data of the novel. The hero’s journey refers to a universal narrative structure that appears across myths, legends, and stories from diverse cultures around the world. Campbell called this

pattern as “*The Hero’s Journey*”, that is narrative structure where a protagonist figure does adventure with transformative stages. This is followed by a period of varying length in seclusion, during which rituals are performed to help the adventurer adjust to their new identity and role. These rites are intended to foster a sense of belonging and transformation, so that when the time comes to return to the ordinary world, the hero emerges as if reborn (Campbell, 2008). The hero’s journey often used in the literary works to analyze narrative structure of fiction works like the novel that analyze in this study.

According to the book *The Hero with A Thousand faces* (2008), Campbell stated to become a hero, an individual must undergo 17 stages, which are grouped into three primary stages: Departure, Initiation, and Return. Those stages are first stages for a hero starts her journey into return from the journey to her ordinary world.

The stages of this theory, named "The Hero's Journey", are the sequence or steps of a hero who undertake a hero's journey. It means that a person will feel the steps before going on a journey. First, she was in the ordinary world before entering the world where he struggled in a special world. Where she lives her everyday life as usual, in general, without any major problems. The hero meets 17 stages of the hero's journey that contains so many challenges, who was initially weak like normal people in general until he became a hero of her society. Sure, the hero has many motivations. She wants to protect people like her closest person and her society. There are three main stages of a hero's journey: Departure, Initiation, and Return.



Picture 1: The Stages of The Hero's Journey

## 1. Equilibrium

Equilibrium is a typical situation or early routine where the problem has not occurred in the hero's life. Campbell's hero's journey is not completed without integration of transformation into daily life, suggesting a nine-step integration procedure to finish the hero's journey (Ross, 2019). In this stage, there is no big conflict or significant changes. The life of the hero is stable. Even though probably there are unknown dissatisfaction, tension, and threats. Generally, Equilibrium is described in the early story and connected to the stage of The Ordinary World. This is a first starting point before Call to Adventure appears in the ordinary world. This situation happens when the hero accepts Call to Adventure.

## **2. Departure**

The first of main stage is Departure or Separation that will be shown in five subsections: 1. Call to Adventure, or the indications of the hero's calling; 2. Refusal of the Call, or the foolishness of running away from God; 3. Supernatural Aid, or the unexpected help that comes to someone who has taken their right adventure; 4. The Crossing of the first Threshold; and 5. The Belly of the Whale, or The transition into the night world (Campbell, 2008).

### **a. The Call of Adventure**

This is the first stage of Departure in the theory of Campbell's hero's journey. At this stage, the hero officially transitions from the ordinary world into a special realm, characterized by both significant opportunities and potential dangers. This stage gives first pressure that leads the hero to the adventure. Regardless of its scale or the stage of life, the call to adventure always echoes behind the mystery of transformation—a pivotal moment in the spiritual journey that symbolizes either a death or a rebirth (Campbell, 2008).

### **b. Refusal of The Call**

This is the second stage of Departure in the theory of Campbell's the hero's journey. The hero probably refuses the Call of Adventure because of scared, uncertainty, or attachment of the ordinary world. This refusal is very natural because of the basic nature of a human being which shows weakness and inability to face a problem. And also, describing of the inner struggle of a hero to accept a big change in

their life. Often in the real life, not rarely in the myths and folklores, we meet a dull case where the call is not answered; it's because there is possible to turn the attention to another thing and the refusal of the call changes the adventure into negative (Campbell, 2008).

### **c. Supernatural Aid**

This is the third stage of Departure in the theory of Campbell's the hero's journey. In this subsection, the hero receives a help from amazing source, that often in magic, mystic, or have powers that over the capacity of human as usual. This helps the hero prepare themselves to the challenges or obstacles that will they face it in the special world. Usually, supernatural aid comes after the hero accepts The Call to Adventure, and the figure of the aid giver can be a mythical creature, God, soul, or even a magic object. For heroes who accept the call, their first encounter is typically with a protective figure who provides them with amulets or tools to aid them in facing the challenges ahead (Campbell, 2008).

### **d. The Crossing of the First Threshold**

This is the fourth stage of Departure in the theory of Campbell's the hero's journey. This a moment when the hero truly leaves their ordinary world and enter the special word with full of dangerous. Pass the border usually sign the hero commit against their adventure. It shows the point with no return, where the hero begins for experiencing the truly challenges in their life. There are many very dangerous challenges waiting for the hero ahead that she does not even know what. With the

guidance and assistance of destiny personified through various figures, the hero advances through the adventure until encountering the 'threshold guardian,' who stands at the entrance to a domain of intensified power (Campbell, 2008).

#### **e. The Belly of the Whale**

This is the last stage of Departure in the theory of Campbell's the hero's journey. The hero experiences a big transition, where they truly unconnected from the ordinary world and begins transform to their new role. In this subsection, they often involve moments of darkness, afraid, or doubt before they fully accept their adventure. It describes a death, symbolism of the old identity of the hero and birth of their new identity as a hero. Instead of overcoming or reconciling with the force at the threshold, the hero is consumed by the unknown, seemingly disappearing in death (Campbell, 2008).

### **3. Initiation**

After crossing the threshold, the hero enters a surreal realm filled with shifting, uncertain forms, where they must endure a series of trials to survive.

#### **a. The Road of Trials**

The hero faces sequence of tests, obstacles, or challenges that aims to train their skills, test their courage, and prepare they're to the central conflict. This test often contains external and internal conflicts. To build the hero skills and show the first transformation that they experienced. This is a favorite phase of myth adventure. This stage has inspired global literary works that depict various tests and magical ordeals.

The hero receives quiet assistance through charms, guidance, and hidden allies sent by the supernatural helper encountered prior to entering this realm (Campbell, 2008).

#### **b. The Meeting with the Goddess**

The hero meets with the feminine figure who represents of kindness, love, and deep desires. This figure can become an inspiration or guidance that will help the hero understand their purpose—and also providing motivation, a sense of peace, or knowledge for making a deep spiritual adventure. Once the hero has conquered all challenges and monsters, the wondrous journey often culminates in a symbolic union between the victorious hero's soul and the divine Queen of the World (Campbell, 2008).

#### **c. Woman as the Temptress**

In this subsection, the hero faces big temptation, that often with form in a romantic relationship or worldly desires. This stage is not always involving a woman literally, but as a symbol of distraction or doubt that divert the hero attention of their mission to save the world. When expressed in the most extreme terms, the issue may seem entirely removed from ordinary human concerns. Therefore, every failure in facing a life situation must be laid with restriction of consciousness (Campbell, 2008).

#### **d. Atonement with the Father**

The hero faces an authority figure or big power, that often is the figure of father or symbol of power. This stage involves understanding, struggling, or reconciliation that complete the conflict between the hero with the figure. It also provides the hero their truly deep knowledge, or power. It is through the presence of the father figure that

the hero comes to understand the profound significance and vastness of existence (Campbell, 2008).

#### **e. Apotheosis**

The hero reaches the peak of understanding or spiritual awareness. In this stage, they over their limit of human and become too near with God status or the highest power in the world. The function is marking full transformation from the hero, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritual. Much like the Buddha, this divine figure represents the godlike state attained by the hero—a human who has transcended the final veil of ignorance (Campbell, 2008).

#### **f. The Ultimate Boon**

The hero succeeds in reaching their primary purposes, whether they are magic stuff, knowledge, or a big win. This present often becomes a key to saving the world or bringing significant change. The function of this stage is to provide a completion in the hero's quest and prepare them for the stage of Return. This is helpful because the mind feels comfortable with the stuff, and it seems to remember something already known (Campbell, 2008).

### **4. Return**

Return is the last main stage of Campbell's the hero's journey, where they are return to the ordinary world after finishing their adventure. But, the journey of return is not always easy, because the hero often faces a new challenge, including how integrate the experience, knowledge, or present that they collect into their life before.



### **a. Refusal of the Return**

After finishing their adventure, the hero may feel reluctant to return to the ordinary world. The special world that they experience offers them powers, comfort, or something that they cannot find in the ordinary world. It shows an inner conflict of the hero between leaving the special world and returning to normal life. Even after the hero completes the quest—whether by reaching the ultimate source or receiving aid from a male or female, human or animal guide—they must still journey back, carrying the transformative prize they've gained (Campbell, 2008).

### **b. The Magic Flight**

The hero may have to run away or return quickly from the special world, this often brings a present or knowledge that they collected. This return to the home can be full with danger and pursuit by the enemies. "If the hero, in their victory, receives the blessing of the goddess or god and is given the task of returning to the world with an elixir to heal or restore society, then the final stage of their journey is aided by the full force of supernatural powers (Campbell, 2008).

### **c. Rescue from Without**

The hero may need external aid to return to the ordinary world, especially if they are too weak, confused of themselves. This aid also often comes from friends, teachers, or magic powers. It shows that the hero is not fully independent and that collaboration or aid is still important. The hero may have to be brought back from their

supernatural adventure with aid from outside. In other words, the world may have to come and invite him back (Campbell, 2008).

#### **d. The Crossing of the Return Threshold**

The hero returns to the ordinary world and faces a challenge to integrate their experience or knowledge from the special world into everyday life. This often need a hero to connect the both different worlds. It shows full transformation of the hero and how they bring a change to their world. The divine and human worlds are often portrayed as fundamentally different, representing opposites as stark as life versus death, or light versus darkness. The hero departs from the familiar world into the unknown darkness; there, they may complete their journey, become lost to us—trapped or endangered—and their return is often portrayed as a reemergence from a distant, mysterious realm (Campbell, 2008).

#### **e. Master of Two Worlds**

The hero achieves a balance between the special world and ordinary world. They have developed into figure who understanding both worlds and can live in between of the worlds. The ability to cross freely between the divided realms—moving from the illusions of time to the timeless source and back—without confusing their truths, yet using one to understand the other, is the gift of the true master (Campbell, 2008).

**f. Freedom to Live**

The hero achieves freedom and peace after their adventure. They are no longer haunted by fear of the future or feel failure for the past, and they are possible to live fully until right now. It shows a completion of emotional and spiritual to the hero and the people. The battlefield is a symbol of field of life, where everyone creatures' lives on the death of another one. The awareness of life's unavoidable flaws can be so overwhelming—like in the cases of Hamlet or Arjuna—that a person may lose the will to go on (Campbell, 2008).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter describes the research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis in this study. This chapter explains how the data from this novel was analyzed. It aims to the readers to understand of steps from the analysis.

#### **A. Research Design**

This study uses literary criticism as a method. Literary Criticism is a method that used to analyze literary works. Literary Criticism is a suitable method to analyze a literary works like novel (Trianton & Yulisetiani, 2017). This method aims to understand the text deeply by considering some aspects, like theme, structure, culture, etc. The theory used in this study is The Hero's Journey that developed by Joseph Campbell in his book named *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* that published in 1949. This study focuses on analyzing novel fiction named *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* by Axie Oh using the theory of The Hero's journey. The research object of this study is in the main character named Mina, a girl who is willing to sacrifice herself to protect her village and her brother's girlfriend. This novel is telling about mythology of Korean that is suitable with the theory because the theory of The Hero's journey itself explains myths, legends and even folk tales from a country.

## **B. Data Source**

The primary data source used in this study is taken from novel named Axie Oh's *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. The novel is written by Axie Oh in 2022 with 336 pages inside. The novel was published by Fewel & Friends in Hachette, UK. The novel also achieved the one of best-selling novels in New York, US. The data taken to analyze is from the quotes, dialogues, sentences, and phrases in the novel. The novel under study is available in hard file and soft file versions obtained from the official paid website published in 2022.

## **C. Data Collection**

The initial step involves thoroughly reading the novel to gain a deeper understanding of its storyline. The next step is note-taking when collecting the data which relevant to analyze with the hero's journey. The final step is analyzing the collected data with the stages of hero's journey in Mina as the main character of this novel. The data collection of this study is collected from the quotes, dialogues, phrases, and sentences in the Axie Oh's *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. To get the data, the researcher does some steps.

## **D. Data Analysis**

The data analysis in this study was conducted by selecting the collected data and aligning it with the stages of the Hero's Journey, as proposed by Joseph Campbell, to examine how the main character, Mina, follows this narrative structure in the novel. After that, the researcher analyzed what are the stages of the theory portrayed by the

author in the novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*. Finally, the researcher summarizes the findings and discussion based on the analysis and provides answers to the problems of the study.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the solutions to the problems of the study outlined in Chapter 1. This chapter discusses the main findings and discusses the extent to which the storyline of *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* follows the stages of Campbell's Hero's Journey theory. The findings are presented in the form of dialogue excerpts or sentences relevant to the data required for the analysis, which are then analyzed and discussed based on the theory used.

#### **A. The Stages of Hero's Journey of Main Character in the novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea***

Mina is a main character in the novel, a brave young girl, full of love, and willing to sacrifice. She is from a coastal village in a world that is constantly hit by the storms. In society, storms are believed to be caused by the anger of the Sea God, and every year a girl must be sacrificed as "Bride of Sea" to appease the anger of the Sea God. Mina is not the chosen one to sacrifice herself on the year. But when her older brother that named Joon is very love the chosen one named Shin Cheong. After that, Mina takes a big decision to change Shin Cheong secretly to jump to the sea to save her older brother's love and stop the storm that happen in her village.

Mina's journey in this story analyzes with Joseph Campbell's theory named The Hero's Journey. It aims to find out how clear the story as stated of Campbell in his theory. According to the theory, Mina's journey is going through seventeen stages based on the theory which consists of three main stages, namely the Departure, the Initiation, and the Return. The departure has five sub-stages such as: Call to Adventure, Refusal to the Call, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the Threshold and The Belly of the Whale. Then the Initiation contains six sub-stages such as: The Road of the Trial, The Meeting of the Goddess, Woman as a Temptress, Atonement with a Father, Apotheosis, and The Ultimate Boon. And the last, the Return has six sub-stages such as: Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from without, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds, and Freedom to Live.

### **1. Equilibrium**

This section describes the moment when the hero sets out on their journey, leaving behind the ordinary world and entering an unfamiliar or extraordinary world. Or it can be called zero main stage of the hero's journey. It also introduces the story by setting the stage for the events that are about to unfold. This is called Equilibrium, where the world still appears normal and there's nothing to fear. This is the state where the hero hasn't faced any challenges and is still living like a normal person. Before the hero finally accepts to begin the journey in new reality she will face, this reality retells the world of the origins of the hero's everyday life (Wardana, S. J., 2023). And it's in this state that the hero will eventually return home.



At the beginning of the story, Mina is an ordinary girl living in a fishing village suffering under the curse of storms from the Sea God. Mina lives in the shadow of cruel traditions, witnessing the fear and sacrifices that happen year after year. She is a bystander who feels the burden of this injustice, even though she herself is not destined to be the Sea God's bride. She possesses neither physical strength nor special status, but within her lies a potential for courage and determination that is not yet fully visible to the outside world. Her life, like the rest of others people in the village, is haunted by fear and an ancient tradition where is a girl is sacrificed every year as the bride of the Sea God. Her strongest emotional bond is with her older brother, Joon, and Joon's kind-hearted lover, Shim Cheong.

*Every year the storms begin, and every year a girl is brought to the sea. I can't help wondering if Shim Cheong believes in the myth of the Sea God's bride. If she'll find comfort in it before the end.*

*"My whole life, I've lived surrounded by gods. There are thousands of them..."*

*"Even though it was still early in the day, clouds gathered overhead, thick with rain... Beyond the horizon, a storm brewed." (p.5).*

According to quotations above, it describes early condition of Mina's world. The people live in the shadow of storms and sacrifices, that called as the only one way to save their world from anger of the Sea God. To appease the god, every year there is a young girl is chosen and sacrificed to the sea as a "bride". This ritual has become a tradition passed down through generations and is accepted as a part of destiny.

## **2. Departure**

Departure, is the first main stage of three main stages of the hero's journey which the hero goes through as the initial process in his journey. This stage also

becomes the early journey of the hero, from ordinary life into extraordinary or unknown world. In this stage, it will describe about the background of the hero like her habit, and who she is in the past. The person or event that signals the start of an adventure is often seen by the world as dark, repulsive, or frightening—even evil (Campbell, 2008). But that doesn't apply to all characters in the story.

In this main stage, there are five sub-stages that the hero will pass all of the sub-stages before continue to the next main stage. Sure, there are many obstacles and challenges in this main stage because the hero is an ordinary human who doesn't even have super powers. In this part also describe an introduction of the hero so that the reader can know how the journey will go through. The five sub-stages such as 1. Call to Adventure, 2. Refusal of The Call, 3. Supernatural Aid, 4. Crossing the Threshold, and 5. Belly of The Whale.

#### **a. Call to Adventure**

This is the first stage of the hero's journey. The journey begins here; this is the early way of the character to start her adventure to be a hero. At the beginning of the hero's adventure, it can start with an interesting incident, such as if there are several problems around the hero. Sometimes, the problem is happening from herself or it called "blunders". Blunder refers to a major mistake or wrong decision that made by the hero that has serious consequences for the course of the story or other characters. A small mistake—which at first seems trivial—turns out to open the way to a

completely unimaginable world, dragging the individual into an entanglement with forces he does not yet fully understand (Campbell, 2008).

Call to Adventure can take the form of a tragic event, challenge, or remarkable personal decision. In Axie Oh's novel, *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*, this moment manifests dramatically when the main character, Mina, voluntarily chooses to replace Shim Cheong as the sea bride to save her older brother from suffering. In this stage, Mina disrupts the system with an emotional personal and heroic act. This is the first point at which she upsets the balance of the old world to open the gate of the new world called the spirit world.

*I rush to the prow of the boat and leap onto the edge. "Take me instead!" I whip out my knife and make a deep slash across my palm, raising it up high above my head. "I will be the Sea God's bride. I pledge my life to him!"*

*I am the maker of my own destiny.*

*"I am the Sea God's bride."*

*"I am the maker of my own destiny."*

*"Without looking back. I jump into the sea." (p.9).*

According to quotation above, this illustrates Mina's sudden decision but full of brave. When seeing her older brother, Joon, bravely stand up to protect his lover Shim Cheong from the anger of sea dragon (sea dragon is manifestation of the Sea God), Mina realizes that society's belief in robbing their lived ones is wrong. Rather than accepting the available system, Mina makes her own choice that she offers herself as a sea bride to sacrifice to fall into the sea. Mina scratches her hand and loudly declares her willingness to replace Shim Cheong. This act is not only a sacrifice, but also a rejection of her society's passive system, which has always been subject to myth.

Mina shows personal initiative and an awareness of her own identity as an active subject in the story, not an object of destiny. Campbell stated in his book *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, sometimes heroes are not consciously “called,” but stumble into adventure through a blunder — an impulsive act that has major consequences (Campbell, 2008). In this context, Mina does not know about her consequences — he doesn't know whether he will die, be killed, or become a victim of myth. This moment reflects a classic blunder in the Hero's Journey — where the hero unknowingly embarks on a major journey due to an inner crisis or profound emotional event.

#### **b. Refusal of The Call**

After Call to Adventure, the next stage is Refusal of The Call. This is the stage where the character feels afraid, doubtful, or unprepared to leave their old world and enter a new, uncertain or unknown world. This rejection can be explicit (verbal rejection or an act of retreat) or implicit (doubt, nostalgia, trauma, or inner conflict). Various myths and folk tales throughout the world indicate that rejection of one's essence is a form of resistance to letting go of what is considered to be individual interests (Campbell, 2008). This refusal is very natural because of the basic nature of a human being which shows weakness and inability to face a problem. And also, describing of the inner struggle of a hero to accept a big change in their life.

In *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*, this stage does not appear in the form of “active denial,” but rather as inner doubt and deep sadness as Mina begins to realize that the decision she made was not without loss. Mina doesn't completely reject her

adventure, but she carries doubt and loss as emotional baggage into the spirit world. This deepens her character and gives moral weight to her actions. She's not a completely optimistic hero—she's a human being aware of the cost.

*"I remember the way the sea looked in the early morning. The sun peeked out from over the horizon and lit a golden pathway across the water. The briny air misted over our faces like salty kisses. I would lean closer to my grandmother, basking in her steady warmth." (p.12).*

According to the quotation above, the narrative shifts to Mina's childhood memories with her grandmother. This is not just a flashback, but also a longing for her old world—the world before she made her big decision. These memories hint at a quiet doubt and a sense of loss for a peace she will never regain. The above quote depicts a contrast between the peace of childhood and the impending dangers of the spirit world. Even though he has jumped into the sea, the narrative suggests that his inner self is still tied to his old world, a world filled with warmth, rituals, and stories.

### **c. Supernatural Aid**

After Refusal of The Call, the next stage is Supernatural Aid. When the hero has decided to continue and is ambitious for his adventure, she will encounter various things, one of which is feeling or finding things related to the supernatural and at this stage we will discuss that. At this stage, the hero encounters a previously unknown supernatural figure who offers strength or protection to aid her in the next phase of her journey. Campbell stated in his book that after the hero accepts the call to adventure, they will encounter a mentor or protector. This figure, often depicted as an elderly person, will equip the hero with some kind of amulet or protective gear. This equipment

will be invaluable in facing the dangerous obstacles that lie ahead, such as resistance from dragons (Campbell, 2008).

The Supernatural Aid stage in Mina's story manifests itself through subtle yet powerful magical hints, rather than direct human figures. This reinforces the mystical element of the spirit world and informs the reader that Mina has entered a place where supernatural forces are actively working to shape her destiny. This aid is silent, but it is felt—and this is the essence of supernatural aid in Campbell's Hero's Journey.

*“There’s a soft breath of laughter against my neck. I turn around abruptly, but there’s no one there. Still, I feel as if there are eyes on me, unseen and watchful.”*

*“Everything around me colorless and dull but for the ribbon, achingly bright as it cuts through the fog.”*

*“The ribbon begins to sparkle and hum, as if it can sense my nearness to the end.” (p.15).*

According to quotation above, Mina has entered the spirit world, leaving the human world behind entirely. Here, she begins to feel the presence of an unseen entity observing and guiding her. Quotes about *“laughter against my neck”* and *“eyes unseen and watchful”* indicate that she is not alone—a spirit force accompanies her. This is typical of supernatural assistance: subtle, mysterious, and present before any physical help actually arrives.

Most striking is the presence of a red ribbon guiding her through the fog and silent streets. The red ribbon is not only a romantic symbol or a symbol of destiny, but also serves a narrative function as a guide. When the spirit world is shrouded in mist and silence, the ribbon is the only thing alive, shining, vibrating, and reacting to Mina's presence. The ribbon even *“begins to sparkle and hum, as if it can sense my nearness*

*to the end*” — indicating it is not an inanimate object, but a living aid, almost possessing its own consciousness.

While not yet directly present, this is a sign that more tangible help is on the way. In the next few pages, characters like Shin, Kirin, and Namgi will appear, who will actively assist Mina. But at this stage, the first supernatural assistance comes in the form of a spiritual realm that "whispers" and guides.

#### **d. Crossing the First Threshold**

After Supernatural Aid, the next stage is Crossing the First Threshold. In this stage, the hero truly enters a different world from before, a world he did not recognize before. This stage also marks the moment when the hero consciously leaves his old world and enters a new, unfamiliar territory, full of challenges and wonders. This is the point of “no return” — where the main character enters a world of adventure that test and change him. Guided by his own destiny, the hero continues his journey until he finally meets the "threshold guardian" at the entrance to a powerful area (Campbell, 2008). Therefore, the hero must be able to hold fast to his true original intentions.

*The path ends where the dirt meets the sand. I take off my soggy sandals and fling them over my shoulder. Through the torrent of rain, I catch sight of the boat, tossing and turning upon the waves. It's a small, hollowed-out vessel with a single mast, meant to carry eight or so men—and one Sea God's bride. Already it's a distance from the shore, and moving farther still.*

*Lifting my rain-soaked skirt, I sprint toward the raging sea.*

*I hear a shout from the boat the same moment I crash into the first wave. Immediately I'm pulled under. The freezing water steals my breath. I tumble beneath the water, spinning violently to the left, then the right. I fight to get my mouth above the surface, but the waves pour into and over me (p.6).*

According to quotation above, the main character, Mina, has reached a point where the old world ends both literally and symbolically— *“the path ends where the*

*dirt meets the sand.*” Her decision to remove her sandals and run into the sea during a storm is a conscious act that reflects a transition into a new realm: the world of spirits and destiny. The scene of her being swept away by the waves and pulled into the sea is a powerful symbol of the “*threshold*” that absorbs her into the new world. This narrative form of purification ritual, like many mythological stories in which the hero must pass through the water element to be reborn into a new role.

After Mina establishes the physical and symbolic boundaries between the human and spirit worlds, the story moves into a phase of distance, risk, and identity change. The scene where Mina runs into the sea and is battered by the waves not only demonstrates courage but also demonstrates her connection to a power greater than herself. At this point, she no longer has control over what will happen; her body and destiny are now in the hands of the forces of the sea and the spirit world.

#### **e. Belly of the Whale**

After Crossing the First Threshold, the next stage is Belly of The Whale. This stage is the end of the first main stage of the hero’s journey departure. The hero meets this stage after she enters the gate of the unknown world and leaves her old world. This is the point of transformations like the hero is “swallowed” by a foreign world, experiences the “death” of his old identity, and prepares for rebirth with a new self. In the belly of the whale (or the belly of this new world), the hero is faced with fear, alienation, and often a loss of control over his life—but it is here that the most profound inner transformation occurs. As Campbell (2008) stated in his book that rather than



confronting or negotiating with the guardian of the threshold, the hero is engulfed by the unknown and appears to have perished.

In the novel, this stage is marked by the moment when Mina sinks into the sea, enters the spirit world, loses her grip on the old reality, and begins to face the strangeness and dangers of the spirit world without protection.

*As I sink, the roar of the waves abruptly cuts off, and all is silent. Over and around me, the dragon's long, sinuous body circles, swirling a great whirlpool.*

*Together we fall through the sea.*

*Strange, but the urge to breathe never rises. My descent is almost ... calm. Peaceful. This must be the dragon's doing. It's using its magic to keep me from drowning.*

*My throat tightens, and my heart pounds with relief—all the brides before me, they lived.*

*Down into the darkness we sink, until the sea above me is the sky, and we—the dragon and I—are like falling stars.*

*The dragon circles closer, and through its tightening coils I catch sight of one hooded eye, opened slightly to reveal a glittering pool of midnight. Time slows. The world stops. I reach out my hand. Droplets of blood leave the open wound to trail like gemstones across the distance between us.*

*The dragon blinks, once. A rift opens up below me.*

*I drop through it into darkness (p.11).*

According to quotation above, Mina literally and symbolically sinks into a new world, “swallowed” by a powerful force she cannot control. He loses connection with the human world— *“the roar of the waves abruptly cuts off, and all is silent”*—and enters a strange silence and darkness. In the darkness of the sea, time seems to stop, Mina's old identity “dies”, and she is forced to accept a new fate without knowing what awaits her. The narrative of a rift opening beneath Mina and her “dropping through it into darkness” is a powerful visualization of being “swallowed” or crossing the threshold of rebirth in the mythical world.

*I sit up and gasp in a lungful of air. Last I remember, I was falling through the sea. Yet I'm no longer underwater. It's as if I've woken inside the belly of a cloud. A white fog covers the world, making it difficult to see past my knees. (p. 13).*

The second quotation above shows that a sense of absolute alienation—Mina feels like she's "in the belly of a cloud," completely white and unsure of where to go. This is a liminal space, where the heroine is no longer in the old world, yet not yet ready to face the new. From here, she will continue to face new challenges that she must overcome, even if they involve facing something beyond her own capabilities.

### **3. Initiation**

The second main stage of the hero's journey is Initiation. In the Initiation main stage, the hero undergoes various trials and challenges to prove herself, experiences inner transformation, and gains new insights and knowledge that are crucial for her development. According to Campbell (2008) this phase is the core of the story, where the hero faces the most profound tests, transforms, and becomes a more mature person both spiritually and psychologically. The initiation consists of some stages, such as 1. Road of Trials, 2. The Meeting with the Goddess, 3. Women as Temptress, 4. Atonement with the Father, 5. Apotheosis, and 6. The Ultimate Boon.

#### **a. The Road of Trials**

The next stage after Belly of The Whale is The Road of Trials. This is the sixth stage of the hero's journey theory. This stage is different than before because this stage is the begin of the new main stage named Initiation. This stage involves a series of

challenges, obstacles, or trials that the main character must face and overcome to reach their ultimate goal. These challenges test the character's character, skill, mental, and physical endurance. In classical mythology, this is often represented as various trials that must be overcome before the hero can achieve a major goal or obtain a sought-after prize. After successfully crossing the threshold, the hero enters a dreamlike world filled with obstacles where she must face a series of obscure and constantly changing trials to survive (Campbell, 2008).

Mina must face various forms of trials—losing her voice and soul that turns into a magpie, her fragility as a human being among the gods, and loneliness that forces her to survive with personal strength and inherited knowledge from her grandmother—all of which show how Mina's character is forged by the spirit world which is full of challenges, while also emphasizing that the journey of heroism is not an easy thing, but a transformative process full of inner and physical struggles.

*I've been fortunate to meet Mask, Dai, and Miki, but soon they will leave, and I'll be on my own once more—with only a knife and my grandmother's stories.*

*Shin straightens from where he's been leaning to pick something up off the floor. 'You have my thanks, Kirin. I'll join you shortly.' Kirin bows, followed closely by Namgi. They turn to leave. The magpie shrills a warning. 'Wait!' I shout, but as before, I make no sound. They sprint from the hall, taking with them the magpie, my soul. Soon, they're gone.*

*I am too visible outside the palace where anyone—anything—can see me. However much I might dislike Shin, his words were a warning: Humans are vulnerable in a world of gods (p.48).*

According to quotation above, Mina faces a series of challenges, both emotional and physical. First, Mina loses her voice, symbolically representing the loss of her power of communication and identity. Her voice is transformed into a magpie,

which is then taken by Shin and his allies, leaving Mina to face the additional challenge of rediscovering her lost identity. Furthermore, Mina realizes that as a mere human, she is extremely vulnerable in this spiritual world. This challenge is not only about protecting herself from physical harm, but also understanding the rules and political intrigue that exist among the spirits and gods, as seen by the constant threat of danger. After receiving temporary help from characters like Mask, Dai, and Miki, Mina realizes that this help is only temporary. The real challenge is when she is completely alone, without protection or assistance from others, relying entirely on her courage, determination, and knowledge of her grandmother's stories.

This trial is designed not only to challenge Mina physically, but also to forge her spiritual strength and resilience. By passing through this phase, Mina gradually transforms from an ordinary girl into someone ready to face her greatest challenge yet.

#### **b. The Meeting with the Goddess**

After overcoming numerous earlier trials and challenges, the hero reaches the stage known as the Meeting with the Goddess. In this stage, the hero will effort to find a 'Goddess' in the extraordinary world. The definition of 'Goddess' here can be anything; it could be something that will help and guide him to complete his journey. It could be that this figure will end up being the love interest of the hero herself. The final journey, once all trials and beasts have been conquered, is often portrayed as a sacred union between the triumphant hero's soul and the divine Queen of the World (Campbell, 2004).

Mina in this novel meet some figures that they help and guide Mina in her adventure. The figures are figures who will provide warmth, calm, and even new hope for Mina. The name of the figures are Mask, Dai, and Miki. They are good spirits; they want to help and help Mina willingly and without any conditions.

*“Let’s help her, Mask,” Dai says, wincing as Miki bites down on his shoulder. “I can get her into Lotus House. That’s where Kirin and Namgi will be heading. We’ll just tell whoever’s in charge that she’s looking for a job.” He pats my head gently. “You’re so quiet. They’d be sure to hire you.”*

*Mask holds out her hand, and I take it. She pulls me to my feet, turning me so that she can brush the dirt off the back of my dress. We are of the same height, she and I (Axie Oh, 2022, p.40).*

According to quotation above, the protagonist or named Mina encounters a figure or figures who offer warmth, support, and renewed hope amidst her struggles. In this excerpt, Mina encounters three friendly spirits: Mask, Dai, and Miki. While they are not literal Goddesses, they symbolically act as feminine advocates and benefactors, comforting, assisting, and offering Mina unconditional acceptance in this unfamiliar and dangerous spirit world. Mask, in particular, with her gentle act of straightening Mina's clothes, represents a feminine protector, offering Mina much-needed emotional comfort and solidarity after her previous ordeals. Mask also embodies feminine qualities such as care, empathy, and concern, essential to this stage, according to Campbell, strengthening Mina's position and giving her renewed strength to continue her journey.

### **c. Atonement with the Father**

The next stage is Atonement with The Father. This is the climax stage in the hero’s journey. In this stage, the hero faces an authority figure or big power, that often

is the figure of father or symbol of power. This stage involves understanding, struggling, or reconciliation that complete the conflict between the hero with the figure. It also provides the hero their truly deep knowledge, or power. This stage also the hero faces a profound emotional challenge, in the form of reconciliation or acceptance of a figure who has been considered a threat. Campbell (2008) stated that when the intimidating father figure cannot be trusted, faith must be placed in a nurturing mother figure. This reliance provides the strength to endure a crisis, ultimately revealing that the father and mother are fundamentally reflections of each other.

In this novel, this stage is depicted through Mina's interactions with Shin—a character she previously saw as an opponent and threat to her mission in the spirit world. Here, Mina must make peace and try to build understanding and trust with Shin, an authoritative figure whom she previously misunderstood, for a greater purpose.

*Stepping forward, I draw his gaze back to me.*

*“Let me help you,” I say.*

*I can admit now that I had misjudged him at our first meeting. His actions, while misguided, were in service to the Sea God. If I can somehow convince him that my actions are also in service to the god, he could be an ally to me—a strong one, if the vastness of his house and the loyalty of his people are any indication.*

*His eyes move from my lips to my eyes. “There is nothing you can do that can help me.”*

*I take a breath. “You were right about sensing thieves.” I watch him watch my lips, his frown deepening as he sees what I have to say. “I saw two enter one of the rooms below. One is large, bearlike. The other is short, but ... more dangerous, I think. Perhaps they want to hurt you for something you stole from them. Just like I want to hurt you for what you’ve stolen from me.” I can’t help adding this last bit.*

*“Why should I trust what you have to say?”*

*Outside in the hall, there’s a creak.*

*“Because I want your help in return.”*

*His eyes leave my lips to hold my gaze (p.62).*

According to quotation above, Mina experiences a pivotal moment in her journey: she realizes that a conflict with an authority figure (Shin) cannot be resolved through confrontation or hostility alone. Mina begins to accept that Shin, though she previously considered an enemy, shares her own goals—serving the Sea God. This is a crucial moment in the narrative, as Mina moves from a position of suspicion to one of understanding and reconciliation with a figure she previously considered an enemy. Through this intense conversation, Mina emotionally accepts that sometimes she must open herself to the possibility of cooperation with those she previously viewed as her greatest obstacles. This encounter represents a concrete reconciliation with a figure she considered powerful and authoritative in her life in the spirit world, and it also underscores a significant shift in Mina's character—from hostility to understanding, empathy, and cooperation.

In this stage, Mina faces one of the greatest emotional turning points in her journey, where she must overcome her prejudice and distrust of authority figures perceived as her enemies. Through this encounter, Mina understands that to achieve a greater end, she needs to embrace reconciliation, cooperation, and mutual trust, even with those she initially considered enemies. Her encounter with Shin opens Mina's eyes to the fact that understanding her enemies is the first step to true success and transformation in her heroic journey.

#### **d. Apotheosis**

After Atonement with The Father, the next stage is Apotheosis. From every stage the hero has passed, finally the hero meets with this stage. This stage is crucial, as the hero must summon all the abilities and strength she has acquired thus far. The hero gains a deep understanding of himself or the situation he is facing, often accompanied by a symbolic moment that indicates acceptance, peace, or a radical change in his outlook on life. The hero reaches the peak of understanding or spiritual awareness. In this stage, they over their limit of human and become too near with God status or the highest power in the world. The function is marking full transformation from the hero, whether physically, emotionally, or spiritual. Similar to the Buddha himself, this great being is an example of the divine state achieved by human heroes who have transcended the final fear of ignorance (Campbell, 2020).

In this novel, Mina experiences the Apotheosis stage through the reunion with her soul (the magpie) and the formation of the Red String of Fate, which connects her soul to Shin, a figure she previously considered an enemy. This moment marks a major transformation in Mina's heart, as she begins to realize that her destiny is far more complex than she previously imagined.

*I don't hesitate. I sprint across the room. Everything happens in a moment. I collide with Shin. The bolt from the crossbow whizzes over our heads, splintering the window. Thwarted, the weasel-like thief flees the room. As Shin and I fall together, we knock against the low shelf. The birdcage wobbles at the lip of the edge, then drops.*

*Time seems to stand still as it falls, fracturing upon impact with the floor and releasing the bird. The magpie flaps its red tipped wings, letting out a shrill, piercing sound, before bursting in an explosion of light.*



*I flinch at its radiance. The darkness after the light is blinding, and the silence after the bird's call is deafening.*

*Until I hear it.*

*My breath. Heavy and rasping.*

*Until I see it.*

*Spread between my hand and Shin's is a bright red ribbon.*

*The Red String of Fate (p.63-65).*

According to quotation above, finally Mina reaches a point of profound enlightenment through reconnecting with her soul. She had previously lost herself in symbolic meaning when her voice transformed into a bird (a magpie). When the magpie is freed, this moment becomes a powerful symbol of Mina's recovery of her true identity—one that had been locked or held back by the conflict and confusion of her inner journey. Along with this soul's recovery, the Red String of Fate emerges, unexpectedly connecting her to Shin, an enemy who gradually becomes an ally. This moment symbolizes Mina's coming to terms with her complex destiny, while also realizing that the line between friend and foe is not absolute. This transformation in perspective opens up a new space within her soul, signifying an inner achievement or "Apotheosis."

#### **e. The Ultimate Boon**

This stage is the end of initiation part of hero's journey theory. During this phase, the hero is rewarded as a form of acknowledgment for the dedication and perseverance demonstrated throughout the journey. The hero succeeds in reaching their primary purposes, whether they are magic stuff, knowledge, or a big win. This present

often becomes a key to saving the world or bringing significant change. The function of this stage is to provide a completion in the hero's quest and prepare them for the stage of Return. As Campbell (2008) stated that the hero's effortless completion of the adventure symbolizes her innate superiority as a destined ruler, mirroring fairy tales and myths of divine beings whose chosen heroes overcome challenges without hesitation or error.

*My grandmother once told me the story of when the storms first began.*

*A long time ago, our people were ruled by a benevolent emperor blessed by the gods. Loved by them. By the Sea God, most of all. The world was prosperous then.*

*It was said that the emperor and the Sea God had a brotherly bond that was unbreakable, that one could not exist without the other.*

*Then one day, a conqueror came to our kingdom, and although our brave emperor fought him, he was defeated, his murdered body tossed from the cliffs into the sea.*

*It was the loss of the emperor that threw the Sea God into his vengeful wrath. And the usurper, triumphant after having slain the emperor and his family, learned what it was to rule a land cursed by gods.*

*Only "a love equal to or greater than the love the Sea God bore for the emperor" could appease the god's wrath.*

*She became the Sea God's first bride.*

*And so it continued. Year after year.*

*It became known. It became myth (p.84).*

According to quotation above, Mina rediscovers the traditional tales of the storm's origins and the maidens' sacrifices to the Sea God. Through her grandmother's memories of her story, she learns that the storm that struck her homeland was not simply a natural phenomenon, but the accumulated grief and anger of the Sea God over the loss of someone he loved deeply—the emperor, who was also his true friend.

This moment gives Mina her true "boon": the realization that what is needed to break the cycle of sacrifice is not simply a beautiful or powerful substitute, but a love equal to, or even greater than, the love between God and emperor. This is a crucial narrative revelation and lays the foundation for Mina's next steps. She is no longer blind to her role, but now carries the light of truth that can change destiny.

#### **4. Return**

This is the third main stage of the hero's journey theory and the last part of the theory. The final main stage is the Return, which, as the name suggests, depicts the hero's journey back to the original or ordinary world she left behind when she first accepted the call to adventure. According to Campbell (2008) that the final stage of a story that follows the hero's journey pattern. At this stage, the hero, having completed her adventure, returns to her home world. But on the way back it will not be as easy as imagined, there will be several more obstacles that she must overcome to get to her home or world. This part consists of six stages, such as 1. Refusal of the Return, 2. The Magic Flight, 3. Rescue from Without, 4. The Crossing of the Return Threshold, 5. Freedom to Live, and 6. The Master of the Two World.

##### **a. Refusal of the Return**

The first stage of the Return part is Refusal of The Return. This phase marks the initial step in the hero's return to her familiar or ordinary world. But sometimes when the hero is already comfortable with her life in the spirit world, she considers to refuse to return to her original world. The special world that they experience offers

them powers, comfort, or something that they cannot find in the ordinary world. It shows an inner conflict of the hero between leaving the special world and returning to normal life. As Campbell (2008) stated that after a hero's great triumph, they often hesitate to return to the ordinary world and share their wisdom, as seen with figures like the Buddha, who questioned whether his enlightenment could even be communicated to others.

*Shin is coming.*

*He'll be here soon, to take me back to Lotus House, where I'll have no hope of discovering the truth about the Sea God.*

*I close my eyes. It's quiet. Peaceful. The silence in the Sea God's hall felt empty, but here the silence feels expectant, like a held breath.*

*Out of the stillness comes the peal of a chime.*

*I feel the blood drain from my body. I turn toward the sound. Behind the pavilion is a pond filled with small white objects. It takes me a moment to realize what they are.*

*Paper boats. Hundreds of them, overlapping one another in the water.*

*Slowly, I unfold the boat. My fingers brush against the first character scrawled across the surface, written in black ink. Darkness rises up, consuming me.*

*A flake of white drifts downward, and I lift my palm to catch it. From this close, I can see that it isn't white at all, but gray with flecks of black.*

*Ash.*

*Ash everywhere, falling from the sky.*

*"Please," the girl says, "I beg of you. Save my child."*

*She writes shaking words onto its mottled surface. When she's finished, she folds the sides of the paper, creasing each line carefully until it takes the shape of a boat. Raising it to her lips, she kisses the boat gently with parched lips and places it upon the water (p.96-97).*

According to the quotation above, instead of returning to Lotus House (a safe haven/her original life in the spirit world), Mina refuses to return and pursues a greater

meaning—the truth about the Sea God and human suffering. Even when the red thread leads back to Shin, she chooses to open a secret door, enter a hidden garden, and is ultimately drawn into a kind of spiritual vision that shows the suffering of the women who have been sending prayers and hopes through paper boats. This shows that Mina now understands that her journey is no longer about herself. She refuses to return because she knows it's not her time yet, and she still has burdens and promises to fulfill.

Mina refuses to return to her original world because her heart is still at peace and her mission is unfinished. She sees the suffering of women she may have only heard about in stories, and now she experiences it firsthand. This is the deepest meaning of the Refusal of the Return stage: the hero cannot return until she has brought significant change to the world where she found her gift.

#### **b. The Magic Flight**

After the hero refuses or hesitates to return to her ordinary world, she will meet with The Magic Flight stage. This stage depicts the moment after the hero attains enlightenment, where he attempts to convey or return the "gift." Often, this stage takes the form of an urgent escape or a risky journey. If the hero, in their triumph, receives the blessing of a goddess or God and is clearly tasked with returning to the world bearing an elixir to restore society, then the final phase of their journey is empowered by the full strength of the supernatural (Campbell, 2008).

In the context of *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea*, this scene occurs when Mina and Shin attempt to deliver a paper boat (a prayer boat) to the Moon House,

where the female and child deities reside. This act aims to deliver previously unreachable prayers—a form of spiritual boon that can reconnect the human and spirit worlds that have been severed by the curse.

*I scramble to my feet. "There is something I can do. That we can do. If you'll help me." Hurriedly, I grab the paper boat off the grass, turning to Shin.*

*"I'll go back with you willingly, and I won't leave the grounds of Lotus House for the whole month, not without your permission, but first we must grant her wish."*

*"This boat was meant for the gods, yet it never reached them. We just have to deliver the boat to whomever it was intended for."*

*"We go to Moon House. To the Goddess of Women and Children."*

*Shin... takes mostly back alleys... even once climbing the stairs of a teahouse to jump from the balcony onto a lower roof. As he turns back to help me, I quickly jump down.*

*The Red String of Fate is the only brightness against the dull gray buildings.*

*Even in a city of gods, there are places like this (p 99-101).*

According to the quotation above, Mina has been gifted with spiritual knowledge and an awareness of humanity's unanswered suffering. By returning the paper boat to the Goddess at Moon House, she attempts to reconnect humanity's prayers with the gods— it's a very Campbellian form of boon in the narrative. However, this journey is not without risks. They must move stealthily, through back roads, and through damaged, empty, and even frightening places. Their movements represent a symbolic escape to fulfill an important task, accompanied by a tense atmosphere that symbolizes that conveying spiritual "blessings" is not easy.

In this stage, Mina continues her mission not only for herself, but for other lost souls. She is not running from a physical enemy, but against forgetfulness, spiritual devastation, and the disconnect between the world of men and the gods. In the haste

and silence of their journey, there is a sacred silence that carries great meaning: true boon is not just something to be taken home—but something to be given to those who need it most.

### **c. Rescue from Without**

The next stage of the hero's journey is Rescue from Without. This stage describes the moment when the hero receives help or encouragement from outside herself to return from the extraordinary to the ordinary world. This could be physical rescue, emotional assistance, or spiritual support from an ally or external force. At this stage, the hero lacks the strength to make the journey back to her own world. It shows that the hero is not fully independent and that collaboration or aid still important. The hero might need external help to return from their supernatural journey—in other words, the world itself may need to reach out and call them back (Campbell, 2008).

In the novel, Mina, after experiencing a difficult spiritual experience and mental exhaustion, didn't simply recover. She was healed by Cheong and those closest to her, not only physically, but also through affection, recognition, and acts of spiritual reassurance. They didn't let her sink into despair.

*"Mina. You need to wake up. How can you save the Sea God, yet not save yourself?"*

*There's a light tap on the door. I sit up as it slides open, and Cheong steps into the room. I blink in surprise. "I wanted to come sooner, but I wasn't allowed inside. How are you? Are you all right? that moment when you jumped onto the prow of the boat, I was filled with an emotion I'd never felt before: hope. You make me believe in wonders."*

*"I've never had a sister," she says softly. "I'm so glad that I have you now."*

*"There's to be a festival in the city tonight, to celebrate the ending of the storms."*

*They say the Sea God's storms stopped because of you (p.171-175).*

According to the quotation above, while still weak, Mina was surrounded by people who loved her and now gave her new strength. The conversation with Cheong was full of respect, admiration, and affection—recharging Mina's tired mind. This is a form of salvation without sword or magic, but through confession and deep love. When Cheong said that Mina gave him hope, it indirectly lifted the hero's nearly drowning spirit. He was even given a makeover, symbolically restored, and invited to attend the people's celebration—an acknowledgment that his sacrifice had mattered.

This stage is not just about literal salvation, but rather about how the hero returns from the void with the help of those who believe in her. Cheong, Nari, Namgi, and the Roh community provide Mina not only with a place to return to, but also with a new identity—she is no longer just a sacrificed girl, but a savior.

#### **d. The Crossing of the Return Threshold**

The journey of the hero will almost meet the end of the adventure. In this stage, the hero must integrate the lessons and wisdom of the extraordinary (spiritual) world into the ordinary world. He or she not only returns physically, but is also mentally and emotionally prepared to live a new life as a changed version of themselves. This is the process of integration—bringing change from the spirit world to reality. Campbell (2008) stated that after journeying from the known world into the unknown, a hero either succeeds in their quest or becomes lost, imprisoned, or endangered, with their return being a re-emergence from that mysterious place.



*Was it a coincidence that the storm stopped after I left the palace?... my hand is empty.*

*I've never been on a swing before, but I have played games at festivals, and this one is like all the rest—if you only trust yourself, it can be fun.*

*I close my eyes and feel the wind.*

*"What happens now?" I'm careful to keep my voice steady. "The Red String of Fate is broken. In a week's time, I'll have spent a month in the Spirit Realm." (p.177).*

According to the quotation above, Mina has now returned to the spirit community and is immersed in their lives—attending festivals, riding the swings, talking with Shin, and contemplating the end of her journey. She has undergone a major spiritual transformation and is now in the process of integrating that experience into her soul.

Lines like *"If you only trust yourself, it can be fun"* indicate that Mina is beginning to find a balance between her inner and outer worlds, between fear and trust. Even in simple activities like swinging, there's a symbol of the courage to live again.

The romantic encounter with Shin on the boat was also fraught with meaning. Now, after everything, the two of them began to discuss *"what happens now."* It was no longer about surviving in the spirit world, but about what they would take home from the experience.

#### **e. Master of Two Worlds**

This stage is before the last stage of the hero's journey theory. The Master of Two Worlds stage is the peak of the hero's journey, where he manages to balance spiritual and worldly life. He has not only survived or gone home, but has become a mature version of himself — bringing knowledge, inner peace, and understanding of

his destiny. The hero achieves a balance between the special world and ordinary world. They have developed into figure who understanding both worlds and can live in between of the worlds. Campbell (2008) stated that the ability to move across the world division between the dimensions of the world—from apparent time to causal depths and back again—without confusing the principles of each, but allowing the mind to understand one through the other, is the hallmark of a master.

*“Then I give it to you willingly.”*

*“Then you are a fool. Because though you might have saved the city tonight, you have thrown away your chance to save it forever.”*

*“Mina,” my grandmother cries, “what have you done?”*

*“Were my offerings too little for the goddess? My prayers too weak?”*

*“never lose your faith in her.”*

*“That was not your wish to be the Sea God’s bride!”*

*I never made a wish to be his bride, or even that I should be the one to save him.*

*a true wish is something that if it never came true, it might break your heart.*

*The goddess’s dress billows out. White and red feathers peel off from the fabric to swirl in a storm around her (p.183-185).*

This quotation depicts Mina's total acceptance of who she is, and rejection of the narratives that have been thrust upon her — including the idea that she is the “Sea God's bride” by fate. She willingly surrendered her deepest memories to the Goddess, and in doing so, she shattered the assumption that she wanted to be a savior. She realized that her mission wasn't about being a wife or a legendary hero, but about bringing truth, love, and hope to those around her, especially her own family. Her spiritual and emotional strength is reflected in how she deceives Dewi, and how Dewi

ultimately retreats—not because of physical defeat, but because she is touched by Mina's inner truth.

The Master of Two Worlds stage is not only the peak of Mina's power as a character, but also the point where she is truly free—from societal expectations, from the will of the gods, and from false desires. She becomes herself, and in that moment, she is able to influence the highest spiritual beings with just her emotional truth.

#### **f. Freedom to Live**

This stage is the end of stage in the hero's journey theory named Freedom to Live. When the hero is truly free from fear of death or the future. She is no longer shackled by past regrets or worries about tomorrow. She becomes whole—able to live in the present, with a soul liberated by a transformational experience. It shows a completion of emotional and spiritual to the hero and the people. The hero has completely returned to her ordinary world and embraced the significant transformations brought about by her recent journey. The purpose of myth is to remove the need for such ignorance of life by reconciling individual consciousness with the will of the universe (Campbell, 2008).

*Then the rumors are true. The Sea God woke because of that night, when I held him in my arms as his sorrow rained down upon both worlds.*

*"Will you come with me now?" he asks softly... "Will you be my bride?"*

*"I am the Sea God. And you are my bride. Come with me now, as you said you would. As you promised."*

*"I have to do this. Don't you see? I think ... I think I am the Sea God's bride."*

*"I'm sorry." I turn just as the tears start to fall, rush up the steps of the palace, and take the hand the Sea God holds out to me.*

*"What should I call you? What is your name?"*

*"You may call me Husband."*

*I blanch. "We are not ... married, are we?"*

*"There must be a wedding first."*

*"I do have a name. I just ... I can't remember it. There are so many things I can't remember."*

*"When I sleep," he says softly, "I have the strangest dreams... unbearable pain. But it's not in my bones—it's in my soul." (p.190-193).*

According to the quotation above, at the end of her story, Mina not only saves the Sea God and stops the storm, but also attains a new understanding of herself and of non-possessive love. She can now choose, not because of fate, but because of faith and love. When she says, *"I have to do this,"* it's not a sacrifice, but an active act grounded in spiritual awareness and mature love.

Mina even emphasized her position personally when she said: *"We are not... married, are we?"* She didn't give up, but consciously chose to stay and help the Sea God—not out of mere romantic attachment, but because she saw a wounded soul and chose to be its companion in solitude. This is true freedom—living not for the world, not for expectations, but by a complete decision from within.

This stage is not about the end of a love story, but about rebirth. Mina not only survives and triumphs, but can now live with a free heart. She's no longer afraid to choose, no longer burdened by the roles imposed on her. In a silent world, in an empty palace, she discovers true existence—a life not determined by fate, but by love, choice, and freedom.

## **B. The Extent to Which *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* Follows the Hero's Journey Pattern**

Based on the analysis of Campbell's seventeen stages of the Hero's Journey (Monomyth), it can be concluded that the narrative in Axie Oh's novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* closely follows the hero's journey pattern. Almost all stages can be clearly identified, although some stages appear with cultural adaptations and a more emotional than physical emphasis.

In the Departure stage, the novel presents the initial balance, the call to adventure, and the crossing of the threshold, fully depicting Mina's departure from her village or the human world to the extraordinary or spirit world. Supernatural Aid is presented in symbolic form (red ribbons, supernatural whispers), while Belly of the Whale emphasizes the process of surrender and entrapment in the spirit world.

The Initiation stage is clearly visible throughout the Road of Trials, Meeting with the Goddess, and Apotheosis. Axie Oh emphasizes Mina's inner development through emotional trials, her relationship with Shin Cheong, and her confrontations with the Sea God and the Goddess. The character's transformation is depicted not through physical strength, but through love, sacrifice, and self-acceptance.

In the Return stage, the novel continues to follow Campbell's pattern, although with unique nuances. The Refusal of the Return stage emerges as inner doubt, Rescue from Without comes through the support of Cheong and the ancestors, and finally, Crossing the Return Threshold, which sees Mina return to society with a new soul. Finally, the Master of Two Worlds and Freedom to Live stage is realized when Mina is

able to harmonize herself between the spirit world and the human world, free from fear, and live according to her own choices.

Thus, the novel's narrative can be said to fully adapt Campbell's the hero's journey structure, but with a greater emphasis on spiritual, emotional, and relational aspects between characters. This novel demonstrates that the universal pattern of the Hero's Journey can be flexibly applied to Asian cultural contexts and female characters, without losing the essence of heroic transformation.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This chapter contains about conclusion and suggestion. The conclusion is drawn based on the problems of the study and the analysis of the findings and discussions presented in Chapter IV. This chapter also includes the researcher's suggestions for future studies using the same theory or the literary work *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* by Axie Oh.

#### **A. Conclusion**

After analyzing Axie Oh's novel *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* using Joseph Campbell's The Hero's Journey theory, the researcher concluded that the main character, Mina, almost fully experienced all 17 stages of the classic hero's journey pattern but did not pass one stage, namely Woman as Temptress. Starting from her decision to replace Shim Cheong as the Sea God's bride (Call to Adventure), to her eventual choice to live a life of freedom, no longer shackled by fate or trauma (Freedom to Live), Mina underwent a holistic character transformation—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. Each stage of Campbell's structure was successfully represented through plot and character development. Uniquely, this narrative reflected that a heroine's journey did not always follow a pattern of physical violence or external

domination, but rather placed greater emphasis on inner meaning, family relationships, emotional sacrifice, and self-acceptance.

The narrative of *The Girl Who Fell Beneath the Sea* strongly followed the structure of Campbell's Hero's Journey, with only minor deviations in form or sequence. The novel excelled in portraying emotional transformation over external conquest, framing the heroine's journey as one of healing, agency, and conscious choice. It also redefined heroism not through acts of battle or domination, but through acts of compassion, truth-seeking, and self-liberation. Therefore, Mina's story could be seen as a faithful yet reimagined adaptation of Campbell's Hero's Journey, rendered through a distinctly feminine and culturally nuanced lens that emphasized emotional depth and spiritual evolution over traditional heroic glory.

## **B. Suggestion**

Based on this study, the researcher offers several suggestions for further research. Future studies could expand the Hero's Journey approach by examining the transformation of female characters like Mina compared to male heroes in traditional narratives, focusing on aspects of feminine heroism, inner sacrifice, and agency within a patriarchal cultural structure. Furthermore, since this novel is a reinterpretation of a classic Korean legend (*The Tale of Shim Cheong*), future research could explore how East Asian myths are re-presented in modern fiction and how this process shapes narratives of contemporary cultural identity. Psychological approaches such as Carl Jung's theory or trauma literature could also be used to analyze the characters' inner



journeys, particularly regarding experiences of loss, recovery, and family relationships that reflect the psychological state of young readers. Finally, a comparative study with other heroic narratives such as *The Hunger Games*, *Spirited Away*, or *Moana* could provide insight into how mythological elements are adapted to modern values and contexts that are more inclusive and reflective of current social realities.

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