

# James T. Kirk's Journey: Theory of Monomyth

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Most myths have a common pattern between them. Today, this pattern is often seen in some of our most beloved motion pictures. Joseph Campbell-a respected 20th century American mythologist, lecturer, and writer- observed this and created a theory based off of the similarities he saw. He showed the world that almost every story with a hero follows the three stages in his theory he called “Monomyth” (Campbell). The monomyth, often times called “The Hero’s Journey” or “The hero with a thousand faces”, includes the departure, initiation, and return stages (Campbell). In these stages the hero leaves his normal life behind, fulfills him/herself in some activity, and returns as a hero (Campbell). These stages can be applied to a smash hit released in 2009, a science-fiction film titled [Star Trek. James T. Kirk](#) in [Star Trek](#) closely follows Campbell’s theory as he departs from his childhood home in Iowa, fights a rogue Romulan enemy, and returns to Earth as a Starfleet captain.

The movie starts out with a spectacular space battle that showcases James’ father’s valor as he sacrifices himself to save the crew of his condemned starship. In doing so he saves 800 lives, including those of his wife and newborn son. After the opening scene the movie cuts twenty-five years into the future depicting James as a young troublemaker. “Challenged by a Captain Christopher Pike to realize his potential in Starfleet, he enlists to annoy instructors like young Commander Spock” (Chrisholm). When a distress signal is

received from Vulcan (an allied planet) the newly commissioned USS Enterprise is filled with young cadets who will soon find out that Vulcan is under a surprise attack. Together, James and his fellow cadets must pursue and stop an enemy...

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...bellious, and fatherless young man. After receiving a call to adventure from Pike, and preparing for attack, he finds himself surrounded by new allies as well as enemies. His ordeal is painted as he fights for his life on several different occasions. After being in the belly of the whale (the cave on the icy planet), Kirk passes the return threshold and assumes command of the Enterprise. He and his crew neutralize Captain Nero, escape a black hole, and return to Earth to have great honor bestowed upon them. Especially Kirk, who finds a new role in life as captain of a Starship.

#### Works Cited

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