

Yossarian's Night Journey

We remember studying the archetypal hero and his journey as freshmen. Believe it or not, you only skimmed the surface of the pattern. Each stage has multiple components; the hero's "descent into hell" is also known as the archetypal "night journey." Read the following basic, sequential elements of an archetypal night journey. After each basic element, write the event or situation that reflects how Yossarian's experiences in chapters 39 and 40 parallel these archetypal elements. And let's make this a little more complicated; Heller, while sticking to the general outline, is going to be subverting it by using some elements ironically.

1. The hero suffers from a moral or spiritual crisis.
2. The hero seeks or is told to seek knowledge, insight, or solutions in hell or the underworld.
3. The hero, often accompanied by a wise guide, initiates his journey.
4. The hero recognizes that his environment is, literally or figuratively, hell or the underworld because he is among those who are physically or morally dead.
5. The hero, after observing or speaking to the dead, gains knowledge and understanding about morality, life, and himself.
6. At the bottom of his descent into hell, the hero often finds himself facing a devil, who tempts and confuses him and whom he must somehow battle and defeat before returning home.

Now let's work on those hell-like characteristics. Search for the following throughout chs 39-40. If you need more information on these traits, go to the internet and do some research.

Seven Deadly Sins

Anger
Covetousness
Envy
Gluttony
Lust
Pride
Sloth

Nine Circles of Hell (in descending order)

Limbo
Carnal sinners
Gluttons
Misers and spendthrifts
The wrathful and sullen
Heretics
The violent
The Fraudulent
The Traitors
The Betrayers