

"The Incredibles"

Hero/Quest Archetypal Story

SEPARATION

The separation happens when the Supers are condemned to return to live "normal" lives. Their normal lives were anything but normal, and now their removal from their super lives into what we would think of as normal is a painful separation.

INITIATION

Initiation has been ongoing for fifteen years when this part of the film begins. His insurance job cramps his style. His car is too tiny. Traffic is horrendous. He slips on a skateboard in the driveway. He has to deal with all of these frustrations of normal life without using his super powers. For fifteen years, he has been trying to relive the past, never really giving in to the new "normal" life that has been thrust upon him. In all of this time, he has never completed his initiation phase.

BELLY OF THE BEAST

This story has a couple of what I like to call "false" bellies of the beast. Mr. Incredible thinks his family has died. In this moment, he has nothing to live for, so it seems like his "bottom" moment. Because they are in fact still alive, this is not really the bottom.

Later, the entire family is captured and Mr. Incredible begins "monologuing" in another moment which could be considered a "bottom." In fact, Violet even comments on the irony of the situation as she cuts the moment short and frees them all. Again, NOT a bottom.

Finally, we get to the REAL heart of the issue, the matter that is the crux of Mr. Incredible's problem, the quality of his character which he sees as a flaw but which is actually his strength. When the spaceship/van has landed, and Bob is trying to convince Helen to stay behind with the kids, he admits that he isn't strong enough to lose them again. This is where he reaches bottom. To him, it is ultimate weakness to admit this fear, but because he does admit it, he comes away from this moment transformed, and that is what qualifies it as the belly of the beast moment: Bob's transformation.

DISCOVERY

Bob discovers that he and his family can all do this superhero thing together as a family...and later he discovers that the people of the city really do appreciate the supers and are glad for their return.

RETURN

When they all put on their masks together in the end, it is clear that they have quickly settled into their new roles, that this is much easier for them than the assimilation they were attempting to make into "normal" society. Bob has also reconciled this fear of losing his family, much less scary now that they are all answering their true callings.

OTHER ELEMENTS

extended search

Bob is searching for a way to reconcile his old life to his new life, the fact that he has superpowers and the new rule of not being allowed to use them.

SUPERnatural forces/powers

DUH

decisive victories (usually triumphing over evil)

Bob and Lucious save many people from a burning building.

Bob tosses his tiny boss through many walls as retribution for his pettiness and overbearing attitude.

Mr. Incredible escapes from Syndrome/IncrediBoy and discovers the secret password, "Kronos."

acts of selflessness

"I've still got time." Of course, many will argue that the nature of superhero work is ego-centric at its heart and not selfless at all. To them, I say touché. This debate is still not settled: Is Batman a vigilante or a hero? We may never know for sure.

rescue of the princess (or other helpless person)

Mr. Incredible saves Squeaker from the tall tree.

Bob and Lucious save many people from a burning building.

call to adventure

"as long as we both shall live" ?

wise and helpful guide

Edna

into the unknown

The island is unknown territory.

Moving together into this territory as a family of "Incredibles" is unknown territory in a different sort of way.

