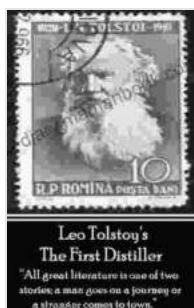


All Great Literature Is One Of Two Stories: Man Goes On Journey Or Stranger Comes To Town

The renowned American author, Mark Twain, once quipped, "There are only two stories in the world: a man goes on a journey, or a stranger comes to town." While this observation may appear simplistic at first glance, a deeper examination reveals a profound truth about the nature of storytelling. Throughout history, countless works of great literature have revolved around these two fundamental plots, exploring the human experience in all its complexity and diversity.



Leo Tolstoy - The First Distiller, A Comedy: "All great literature is one of two stories; a man goes on a journey or a stranger comes to town." by Rich Murphy

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 114 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 41 pages
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The Journey Story

The journey story is a classic tale of transformation and self-discovery. It follows the protagonist as they embark on a physical, emotional, or spiritual journey that challenges their beliefs, values, and understanding of the world. From Odysseus' epic voyage home in Homer's "The Odyssey" to Bilbo Baggins' unexpected adventure in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit," the journey story has captivated readers for centuries.

Characteristics of the Journey Story

Journey stories often share certain common characteristics:

- **A clear goal or destination:** The protagonist has a specific objective that drives their journey.
- **Obstacles and challenges:** The journey is not without its difficulties, and the protagonist must overcome various obstacles along the way.
- **Transformation and growth:** Through their experiences, the protagonist undergoes significant personal growth and transformation.
- **A return to the ordinary:** Eventually, the protagonist returns to their everyday life, but they carry the lessons and experiences of their journey with them.

The Stranger Story

In contrast to the journey story, the stranger story focuses on the arrival of an outsider in a community. The stranger often disrupts the established order, challenging the norms and values of the town or village. This disruption can lead to conflict, upheaval, and ultimately, a transformation within the community.

Characteristics of the Stranger Story

Stranger stories also have distinct characteristics:

- **The arrival of an outsider:** A mysterious or enigmatic character enters the community, bringing with them a new perspective.
- **Disruption and conflict:** The stranger's presence can cause tension and conflict within the community.
- **Challenge to the status quo:** The stranger often questions the established beliefs and customs of the town.
- **Transformation and growth:** The community may undergo a collective transformation as they grapple with the stranger's influence.

Examples of Stranger Stories

Famous examples of stranger stories include:

- **The arrival of the devil in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Scarlet Letter"**
- **The enigmatic stranger in Albert Camus' "The Plague"**
- **The mysterious outsider in Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird"**

The Interconnectedness of the Two Stories

While Twain's observation suggests a binary division, it is important to note that the journey story and the stranger story are often intertwined in literature. In many works, the protagonist's journey leads them to encounter

a stranger who becomes a catalyst for their transformation. Conversely, the arrival of a stranger can set the protagonist on a journey of self-discovery.

Mark Twain's insight that "all great literature is one of two stories" captures the fundamental structure of storytelling. Whether it is a tale of a man going on a journey or a stranger coming to town, great literature explores the complexities of human experience, challenges our assumptions, and ultimately, transforms our understanding of ourselves and the world we live in.

Additional Notes

- **Mythology and Folklore:** The journey story and the stranger story are deeply rooted in mythology and folklore, where they serve as archetypal narratives that resonate with people across cultures.
- **Contemporary Literature:** The influence of these two stories continues to be felt in contemporary literature, with modern authors adapting and reinventing these classic plots in new and innovative ways.
- **Movie Adaptations:** Many great works of literature based on the journey story or the stranger story have been adapted into successful movies, such as "The Odyssey" (2001), "The Martian" (2015), and "Arrival" (2016).

Image Alt Attributes



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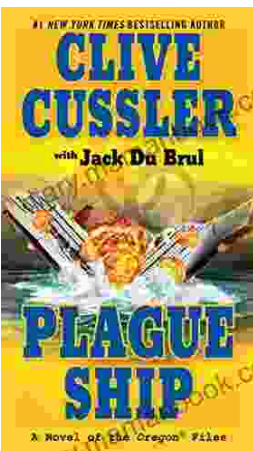


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