

I Am Not A Hero

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In an effort to write my autobiography, I was reduced to an essay on why no one should ever write my biography.

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An autobiographical essay by Sambelini

I have often considered writing my biography when something interesting or humorous happens to me, but each time I am stifled when I remember that *I am not an interesting person*. It's a plain fact. I'm sure it's quite evident to all of my close friends and relatives. However, seeing as the Booksie community has hopefully not endeavoured to stalk me (I'd not recommend it; it'd be frightfully boring), I decided to concisely describe why I am not a good selection for the protagonist of a story. In order to do this, we must first ask ourselves "What makes a good Protagonist, or Hero archetype?" Things like upstanding character and relatable conflict are dashed to pieces when we look at the antihero complexes of, say, Tony Stark (Iron Man), or the vastly unproportional conflict of saving the world vs. the average person's weekend schedule. More important than ethics and relatability, an interesting protagonist always falls away from his or her parents; discovers and learn to use a super power, talent, or tool (ie: mind reading, cooking skills, magic beans); and experiences something either devastating or magnificent. Long story short, I have done none of these things.

I have a good relationship with my parents, and although that may don on methe Biblical promise of a long and happy life, it makes for a wretched story. Have you noticed that 99% of stories are about someone from a single parent household, who lost both parents, or is under someother parental drama? Well, although I made up that statistic, I imagine it's not far off. Whether it's a spat with the parents, or a family shattering ordeal, the parents simply have to go in order for the hero to evolve. But mine are just so pleasant, I like to keep them around. I mean, I moved accross the country from them, but I've always kept in touch. My relationship with my parents is an extention of my comfort zone, which, according to Carl Jung, the hero must exit in order to be swept away into the Great Unknown. That's where adventures happen. But, try as I might to find far off adventdres, my parents are always close to my heart. For example, when I was fifteen I travelled to France for a three month student exchange. I went to school there and lived with another family. The country had a delicious aire. It seemed like a brilliant recipe for adventure, full of learning opportunities and the potential for culture shock. However, the real drama lay in my relationship with the exchange family. My exchange partner, for whatever reason, detested me. Having no patience for my broken French, she felt that having me around reduced her to being my babysitter (she was, after all, two entire months older than me). But I reflect on my trip to France bittersweetly - sweet because I made it through the three months and, I believe, it made me better as a person, but bitter because it makes an awful story in detail. Why? It wasn't a personal struggle. I depended heavily on talking out the problems with my parents each week. I received my mother's sweet condolences that no one in their right mind could hate her baby, and also my father's encouragement that, if it became too stressful, I could be placed with another family. My one source of pride in this is that I chose to stay in the same house, not because our differences were ever solved, but because that very stubbornness makes for an excellent protagonist. But there are hearts that can't be changed in a matter of three months. At least not by me. I do wonder if I could have grown more, adapted differently, or learned something else about myself if I hadn't leaned on my parents so much. I still don't know what I did to cause my exchange partner to dislike me. Without my mother's kind hearted comfort, I might have been forced to look at myself more objectively. I might have stopped saying "Poor me, poor me!" and realized "Wow, I really suck as a person" and become more interesting. Then, rather than writing this essay, I might be writing about a wild adventure I had in France. In order for the heart of the story, the "rising action" that builds to a meaningful climax, to be interesting, it has to be more uncomfortable than a fifteen year old who calls her parents from France every Sunday night. I am caught in an infinite bubble of familial comfort because I have two wonderfully supportive parents.

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Of course, some stories don't have to throw a wide rift between parent and child, but there is one thing all stories have in common - conflict. My life has a very fortunate lack of conflict: I am healthy, born in a first world country, have a wonderful family, and have not experienced any trauma (unless I'm presently repressing it, which would be a fascinating story). I'm one of the only people I know whose grandparents are all living. Of course, I am immensely grateful for these blessings, but they make it difficult to write about myself. Conflict can arise in other ways as well though, for example if something completely marvelous happened to me, my reaction to the change and my friends' reactions could cause drama to ensue. But nothing either terrible nor terrific has happened to me. I went to France at fifteen instead of being selected as one of twenty-four teenagers to battle to the death on worldwide television. I haven't recently become romantically involved with the undead, nor have I discovered a new super power. My life, though quite pleasant, is exceedingly mediocre. I'm neither the underdog nor the breadwinner, I'm the guy in the back who may not even have a name on the script. It's not like I'm longing for a traumatic experience, but I'm also not longing to catalogue the many mundanities of my existence for people to read and say "Wow, what a perfectly average representation of humanity. Now I think I'll read the Lord of the Rings, because there is nothing average whatsoever in that book." Is it too much to ask that a wizard come knocking at my door with a ring that oozes dark magic? But alas, I've left no wardrobes unchecked for magical lands and have failed at defying gravity. At least if I had an arched nemesis, the rivalry would make for an exciting plot. My closest thing to a lifelong sorrow is how dreadfully mediocre my life really is. As much as we want to be like everyone else, I think we all want a little spice in our life that sets us apart. People grow in adversity, and I haven't been given much opportunity to strengthen. Not that I'm not a weirdo. Unfortunately it seems that the easiest way I could make my life an interesting story is to become the Antagonist. But that's a little drastic, because I never do anything halfway. I'll either be Darth Vader, or I'll not go to the dark side at all. Still, I'm left to wonder what the "dark side" would be for me. I don't drink or do drugs, I don't even swear in conversation. I supposed I'd have to change all that. Start punching people in the face willy nilly and stealing their shoelaces. I don't expect I'm about to turn to a life of crime though. I'm afraid something just has to happen to me.

It seems that even if adventure came knocking at my door, I'd be ill prepared due to my innate lack of tools or super powers. I don't know how to sword fight and I never made it past the red belt in Karate, I'm not telekinetic, and I don't have any secret talents that might "take me out of this deadbeat town." Not that I don't have skills, just that you would be interested in a story about them. The hero is always somehow special, whether because he has a genie up his sleeve or because he becomes an enormously angry muscle-monster when upset. It used to be enough for Batman to make clever puns while his awesome butler made him epic gizmos. But that Batman didn't last and had to make room for Christian Bale's much more interesting display. He actually has skills other than being a cheesy womanizer (my apologies to George Clooney). A hero needs that speciality so that, when the opportunity knocks, they can step in and save the day. It's that moment when the Hulk realizes that his ability to smash can be used constructively that a protagonist needs - when that speciality of theirs that has so far prevented them from fitting in finally becomes a blessing. My mom tells me I'm special and all, but my only super power is that I don't get bitten by mosquitoes. Leave it to me to have a super power that offers no betterment to mankind and gives me no upperhand in battle. Even in a battle of wits or a thumb war, I'd rather not win simply because my opponent got a mosquito bite. The fact is that without the proper tools, the hero's story plateaus. Opportunities for a story could be all around me, only I don't have a voice like Christina Aguilera, or laser vision, or an awesome butler who will let me take all the glory. Until the fate of the world rests on me wielding my mosquito-immunity, it seems my story is on hiatus. But I hope it never comes down to that.

I suppose the untold story of Sambelini, though it might include a strong tie to the parents, no conflict, and nothing particularly super is one that, at the very least, is not yet over. I've still got time to get bitten by a radioactive spider, so there's no reason to despair. I hope you have found this essay ironically interesting, and more importantly I hope that you will wait patiently for my story to begin. I have no doubt that one day my life will be story-worthy, whether I become a garbage man or a Russian dictator. I'll do my best to keep it interesting for you, one way or another. Many of my examples may be exaggerated, but I really do believe

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that we all have a story somewhere inside us. Mine just hasn't picked up yet.

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