When Harry Met Harry

A Hero’s Journey Analysis of J.K. Rowling's Potterverse and Jim Butcher's Dresden Files

Ritgerð til MA-prófs í enskukennslu

Ásrún Ester Magnúsdóttir

Janúar 2019
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Acknowledgements

It could be said that writing this thesis has been a hero’s journey on its own as I set forth on the adventure if completing my degree. On the way I was faced with the biggest and trickiest of all Villains: self-doubt. It was only with the assistance of my trusted Allies that I was able to emerge victorious with a completed thesis. That is why I wish to rely my heartfelt thanks to all of my Allies, those who stood by me and reassured me when I did not think I had it in me to complete the challenge. First of all I would like to thank my sister, Sigríður Áðils Magnúsdóttir, who always took the time to talk sense into me whilst also working on her own thesis. It was wonderful to have her as a partner in crime, because even though we were working on our separate essays, just knowing that she was facing the same Threshold Guardians as I was gave me extra strength. This also would not have been possible without my amazing boyfriend, but he truly was my rock throughout this journey and biggest supporter. I would also like to thank my mother who was always ready with words of encouragement and, if he were still around, I know that my late father, Magnús Valsson, would be very proud of me. He was the one who taught me to never give up on my goals and to always pursue my dreams.

Last but not least I would also like to thank my supervisor, Anna Heiða Pálsdóttir, who was such a pleasure to work with again, but she also supervised by BA thesis. Anna Heiða falls perfectly within the archetype of the Mentor as she offered me the gifts I needed in order to complete my task. Her advice and criticism propelled me forwards and encouraged me to do a better job with each draft I sent to her. Then, if I ever decide to start on my PhD, she will be amongst the first to know.
Abstract

This essay compares and contrasts the heroic journey of two wizards within two separate works of literature: Harry Potter of the Harry Potter series or “Potterverse” (1997-2007) by J.K. Rowling and Harry Dresden of the Dresden Files (2000-) by Jim Butcher. According to author Joseph Campbell there exists a twelve-stage formula that makes up the literary phenomenon known as the hero’s journey. This formula has been applied by storytellers and writers throughout the ages and can be found within thousands of tales, myths and legends, and it is also presented within the two aforementioned book series. Campbell’s theory, as explained in his book The Hero With a Thousand Faces (1949), is applied to the adventures of both Harry Potter and Harry Dresden. Christopher Vogler’s study of Campbell’s theory in his book, The Writer’s Journey (1993), is also used to analyze the hero’s journey in the two series. Despite the fact that the Harry Potter series is written primarily for children and the Dresden Files for a more adult demographic it is explicated that both Potter and Dresden pass through the twelve stages at various times throughout their respective journeys. Accordingly, they are faced with a tidal wave of tests and trials and are met with Mentors, Shadows, Threshold Guardians and Allies as well as other Jungian archetypes, all of which function to either assist or attempt to hinder the heroes on their journey. Furthermore, it is demonstrated how each of these twelve stages help guide these wizards on their paths and how the journey itself ultimately shapes them into the selfless heroes they are destined to become.
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1. Introduction

The hero’s journey is a literary phenomenon that has been a revered function in storytelling throughout history. Elements from the hero’s journey can be found in almost all adventure stories, from folklore to contemporary novels. In fact, most adventure stories and tales of epic quests written over the ages are considered to follow the same outline in one way or another. This has been noticed by many authors and as Margery Hourihan mentions in *Deconstructing the Hero: Literary Theory and Children’s Literature* (1997), “[t]he story of the hero and his quest, the adventure story, is always essentially the same […] It appears in countless legends, folk tales, children’s stories and adult thrillers. It is ubiquitous” (Hourihan 2). Screenwriter Craig Batty concurs, relying on the words of author Christopher Booker as he suggests, “no matter what form the story takes, it is always structured by a universal pattern” (qtd. in Batty 46). In light of this fact, this essay will showcase how the hero’s journey is portrayed in two separate book series: one that was written primarily for children and young adults and the other for adult readers. It will be demonstrated that despite the fact that these book series were written for different types of readers, both are a representation of the hero’s journey. In order to do so, this essay relies on Carl Jung’s archetypes: Hero, Mentor, Ally, Herald, Trickster, Shapeshifter, Guardian and Shadow as well as Joseph Campbell’s interpretation of the concept and Christopher Vogler’s depiction of the hero’s journey in his book *The Writer’s Journey* (1993). Interestingly, apart from sharing elements from the hero’s journey, both series have another distinctive feature in common: the main character in both series is a male wizard named Harry. The two book series featured in this essay are the Harry Potter series by J.K Rowling and The Dresden Files by Jim Butcher, but each series span quite a few novels. According to J.K Rowling’s official webpage, the Harry Potter series consists of seven books in addition to five further books relating to the affectionately coined term: Potterverse (Bloomsbury). The focus of this essay will be on the seven main books of the series, namely:

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (1997)
*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998)
*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999)
*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007)
References will be made to all seven books and they will be referred to as follows: *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (1997) will be *Philosopher’s Stone* and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (1998) will be *Chamber of Secrets*, etc.

The Dresden Files to which the Harry Potter series will be compared currently span fifteen published novels, in addition to a couple of short story collections and seven graphic novels. At the time of this essay, the series has yet to be completed and, as Butcher states on his official website, the final product is expected to include at least five or six more novels (FAQ). This essay, however, will focus on those that have already been published, specifically the following titles:

- *Storm Front* (2000)  
- *Fool Moon* (2001)  
- *Grave Peril* (2001)  
- *Summer Knight* (2002)  
- *Dead Beat* (2005)  
- *Small Favor* (2008)  
- *Turn Coat* (2009)  
- *Changes* (2010)  
- *Ghost Story* (2011)  
- *Cold Days* (2012)  
- *Skin Game* (2014)

As stated above, both Harry Potter and Harry Dresden are magical figures, namely wizards. Although the series are directed toward different markets, the two wizards follow a similar path. Both Potter and Dresden are revered by their peers and elders, they are expected to save the day, face adversity head on, battle their way through various tests and obstacles and find themselves dealing with many other elements that the hero’s journey entails. Margery Hourihan notes: “[the hero] adventures forth on his quest and encounters evil monsters, dragons, witches and their like” (2). In light of this, what trials and tribulations does the hero’s journey consist of exactly and what are some of its major elements? Those are the factors that will be explored within this essay, in addition to examining how those elements are presented in the two series whilst comparing and contrasting them with one another.
2. The Hero’s Journey: Concept and Key

The concept of the hero’s journey is used by Joseph Campbell and is said to derive from his monomyth (a term borrowed from novelist James Joyce), which Campbell describes in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), as such: “[The standard path] of the mythological adventure of the hero is a magnification of the formula represented in the rites of passage: separation—initiation—return” (23). Thus, the concept is used to explain the cyclical journey that the main character, or hero of the story, embarks upon. It is a journey that begins and ends in the same place, always beginning in the hero’s Ordinary World, then taking the hero through to a Special World or special circumstances and lastly bringing the hero back home (see fig. 1).

Campbell notes that many myths and epic tales throughout the centuries shared certain basic elements and stages. What he also found remarkable was that these kinds of stories could be found all around the world. In his book, Campbell describes these stages thus:

A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder (x): fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won (y): the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man (z). (Campbell 23)

As a matter of fact this does not only apply to myths and legends but also to contemporary artwork, within books and the cinematic world alike. Novelist Donald E. Palumbo points out that the hero’s journey serves “as the underlying plot structure in the initial Star Wars trilogy” (Palumbo 1) and can be applied to other works in the realm of science fiction and fantasy in both literary works and filmmaking. For example, books such as *The Lord of the Rings* – which was originally split up and published in three volumes: *Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *the Two Towers* (1954) and the *Return of the King* (1955) – *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), *The Princess Bride* (1973) and *The Neverending Story* (1979). These titles all contain major elements of the hero’s journey and the same applies to films such as *The Matrix* (1999), *Back to the Future* (1985) and *The Lion King* (1994). In addition to these books and films, there are countless ancient texts and fables that are, at their core, versions of the hero’s journey. It is remarkable for how long the elements of the hero’s journey have been used in storytelling, even before the written word and the use of ink and paper. Evans Langsing Smith notes in his book, *The Hero Journey in Literature: Parables of Poesis* (1997), that “[a]mong the 40,000 pieces of tablets now scattered in museums all over the world, we have the oldest versions of the hero journey in our literary tradition” (2) and those can all be described as apt installments of the monomyth. However, works of fiction that depict the hero’s journey are much more than simple tales of heroes fighting dragons and overcoming ancient evils. The monomyth is a tale of transcendence and, what makes it so compelling as a narrative is the fact that all readers can relate to it on one level or another. Campbell claims that every one of us is a hero sharing “the supreme ordeal” (337), and that the monomyth symbolizes “that all of life’s many metamorphoses, and the challenges they engender, happen to everyone” (qtd. in Palumbo 2). That being said, it is a part of our personal evolution as our self transcends to the next stage in our lives (3). Most assuredly these findings have allowed other fields to use and apply the hero journey to their research and Smith claims that since Campbell’s book has been published,

Psychological approaches to the journey have flourished, for the basic diurnal rhythms of sleep-dream-waking follow the stages of the monomyth. Death and rebirth have become Jungian archetypes of transformation at midlife. In humanistic and transpersonal psychology, the hero journey is an image of intense growth and powerful change. (Smith 454)
Campbell’s book, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), was revolutionary in the field when it came to scrutinizing and researching the phenomenon of mythical stories. Smith points out that since the book’s original publication in 1949, the structure of the hero’s cyclical journey “has been discussed from a variety of perspectives, and its diverse ramifications from the fields of religion, comparative mythology, anthropology, psychology, thanatology and comparative literature have attracted much attention” (453). The way Campbell breaks down the structure of the hero’s journey and its elements, could be used by any aspiring author or screenwriter, to create their own hero’s journey. However, using the book as a practical guide for writing would be nothing short of a hero’s journey in itself. Which was why in 1993, teacher, screenwriter and author, Christopher Vogler wrote is own version of the hero’s journey, *The Writer’s Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*, in which he simplifies the stages of Campbell’s initial ideas – and Vogler’s book on the subject has been widely praised. Vogler manages to create a source of information that is easier to use and is more accessible as a resource for the working writer than Campbell’s book. Vogler is of the opinion that the hero’s journey is much more complex than simply a step-by-step instructional guide on how to create mythological narratives. He states that it “is not an invention, but an observation. It is a recognition of a beautiful design, a set of principles that govern the conduct of life and the world of storytelling the way physics and chemistry govern the physical world” (Vogler xiii). Vogler takes Campbell’s idea and boils the monomyth down to the following twelve main stages, describing them as a convenient map for the author to test his or her narratives against; it is “one of many ways to get from here to there” (Vogler 12). Thus, it is not the only path, not set in stone, and writers and authors alike should feel free to rearrange the stages as their story progresses. This, however, is the most common pattern of the hero’s journey that many scholars have investigated, and they have come to the conclusion that almost all mythical fables and legends adhere to this pattern either partially or wholly. Following are the twelve stages of the hero’s journey according to Vogler, in the same order:

1. Ordinary World
2. Call to Adventure
3. Refusal of the Call
4. Meeting with the Mentor
5. Crossing the First Threshold
6. Tests, Allies, Enemies
These are the twelve stages of the hero’s journey as put forth by Campbell and analyzed by Vogler. It is through them that the Harry Potter novels and The Dresden Files are contrasted and compared in this essay, detailing how theirs become two of the possible thousand faces of the hero archetype.
3. The Call to Adventure

In this chapter, the beginning stages of the hero’s journey will be discussed. This chapter also explores how both Harry Potter and Harry Dresden are called to the adventures that await them. The way J.K Rowling and Jim Butcher choose to arrange “the calling” for their respective main characters will be analyzed. Furthermore, some questions will be addressed, such as: how are the main characters introduced to the reader? What was childhood like for Potter and Dresden? When did their magical talents begin to emerge? And once the heroes received the call to adventure: what made them step over the threshold into the supernatural world? Both Harry and Dresden seem to be destined for a specific role and their feelings and reaction to that burden will also be examined in this chapter.

Writing a captivating tale is more than just sitting yourself down and starting to write. Creating a work of fiction that enthralls the reader, takes time and meticulous planning. There is also the immense amount of work entailed in creating a whole new fantastical world. More often than not, this new world is filled with its own history, creatures unknown to the reader and rules that are different from what the reader knows and is familiar with. When introducing the reader to a completely new world, a common element is to have a character that is completely new to these surroundings and knows as little about it as the reader. Thus, the writer can introduce all the wonders the new world has to behold to both said character and the reader simultaneously. This plot element is evident in J.K Rowling’s Harry Potter series, where the main character is a young boy who knows nothing of his real heritage and suddenly finds himself in the middle of a world full of enchanted excitement and adventure. Accordingly, young Harry has always felt like an outcast and is suddenly accepted into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. This wonderful place offers him everything that the normal world has denied him: a sense of belonging and companionship. He is excited at the prospect of discovering new things and, most importantly, discovering more about himself and learning things about his parents that had been previously hidden from him. Despite the threat of dark times and challenges ahead, he ventures forth undaunted.

Similarly, Jim Butcher’s series the Dresden Files follow the heroic journey of a wizard. However, unlike the hidden, parallel, British wizard’s world of Harry Potter, the majority of Harry Dresden’s adventures happen in modern day Chicago. Butcher’s contemporary magical mystery novels are chock full of intertextuality and references to other modern works, both written and cinematic. In Dresden’s case, the Ordinary World and the
Extraordinary World tend to overlap. Therefore, it becomes a more of a challenge for Butcher to introduce Dresden to the special world; this is however done by placing Dresden in the middle of the Ordinary World as a consulting detective for the Chicago Police Department’s Special Investigations Unit, or as Dresden himself puts it, “I was her library of the supernatural on legs” (*Storm Front* 7).

In the beginning, there is the Ordinary World. The main character, or hero, is living his, or her, day-to-day life oblivious to the epic journey that lies ahead. This is what helps the reader understand what is so special about the other world, by contrasting the two. In his book discussed above, Vogler states that “[t]he Special World of the story is only special if we can see it in contrast to a mundane world of everyday affairs from which the hero issues forth” (87). The Ordinary World is a place where nothing extraordinary happens; it is where the hero is living his normal life and the reader learns important details about the main character. This setting is familiar to the reader and it is here that the reader really gets to know the main character, their flaws and how they are living in the normal world. During this stage, the hero’s outlook on life is revealed, making it easier for the reader to feel empathy towards the hero and cheer them on through the perilous road that lies ahead. Vogler also points out that many writers use the Ordinary World for a bit of foreshadowing of things to come (88). However, one of the most important elements in relation to the Ordinary World, and this first stage of the hero’s journey, is that here the hero is introduced to the reader for the first time. Accordingly, this first introduction is very important as it sets the scene for the rest of the story, and what the storyteller must keep in mind is how he or she plans on introducing the hero to the reader. Vogler argues:

> What is he doing the first time we see him, when he makes his *entrance*? What is he wearing, who is around him, and how do they react to him? What is his attitude, emotion, and goal at the moment? Does he enter alone or in a group, or is he already on stage when the story begins? (Vogler 89)

It could be said that Harry Potter is, in a way, introduced to the reader on two occasions. The first time occurs in the first chapter of the *Philosopher’s Stone* (1997) when Hagrid arrives at Privet Drive carrying Harry as an infant on the flying motorbike. On this occasion, the reader is informed about the fact that a dark wizard has just murdered the child’s parents but, amazingly, their son survived the attack. Not only that, but somehow the child was able to vanquish the most powerful and evil wizard ever known to the world of wizardry: Lord
Voldemort. Hagrid and the two professors from Hogwarts engage in a conversation just before the bundle containing the boy is left on the doorstep of his aunt and uncle’s house. At this point, the reader has received vital information regarding the child’s past before his Hogwarts letter arrives. In chapter two, almost ten years have passed since young Harry was left on his aunt and uncle’s doorstep. It is made clear, right from the start, that he is not a valued member of the family as there are no photos of him displayed in the living room, which is otherwise filled with family photos. Furthermore, Harry sleeps in a cupboard under the stairs: “Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them, and that was where he slept” (Philosopher’s Stone 26). In these first two chapters, J.K Rowling has divulged important information about the hero, such as the fact that he is an orphan living with family members who do not treat him well; this allows the reader to empathize with the hero.

Harry Dresden of the Dresden Files is introduced to the reader in quite a different manner. In the first book, Storm Front (2000), Dresden is in his office, an adult man working openly as a professional wizard. Dresden is having a conversation with the mailman who pokes fun at the sign on his office door, asking if he is serious in his claim of being a wizard. Obviously tired of having to constantly affirm his career, Dresden soon shuts him down and gets his mail, in a civil manner; he does not curse the mailman or turn him into a frog. Then, as this novel is a first person narration, he introduces himself to the reader:

My name is Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. Conjure by it at your own risk. I’m a wizard. I work out of an office in midtown Chicago. As far as I know, I’m the only openly practicing professional wizard in the country. You can find me in the yellow pages, under ‘Wizards.’ Believe it or not, I’m the only one there. (Storm Front 3)

This style of narration allows the reader more direct contact to the main character and what he is going through, his thought processes and experiences, creating a very intimate connection. However, it is possible that Jim Butcher chose this narrative style as a plot device and that the reader is, in fact, diving into Dresden’s own journals of what he has been through in his life as an openly practicing wizard. The reason for this possibility being that Butcher later reveals in the eleventh book in the series, Turn Coat (2010), that all wizards keep journals going all the way back to Merlin himself. It is an interesting narrative strategy to keep in mind whilst reading the novels, to consider if it is really Dresden himself recounting
the events rather than an observing storyteller: that perhaps his heroic actions deserve more scrutiny. Steering back to the main topic, once the main character, our hero, has been introduced to the reader and his way of living in the Ordinary World has been established, it is time to introduce change and turn his world upside down. This would be the time for the writer to bring forth an event that will take the hero from his regular world to the extraordinary. According to Vogler, all the hero needs is a little nudge, because “[t]he Ordinary World of most heroes is a static but unstable condition. The seeds of change and growth are planted, and it takes only a little new energy to germinate them” (99). This is how Vogler begins to describe phase two of the hero’s journey: the call to adventure. The journey of the hero begins when the hero is called into action. Here the writer has a lot of freedom, as the call can be manifested in a number of ways: it can be anything from a mysterious murder to a simple letter. The important thing is that, no matter how the call brings change to the hero’s way of life, it convinces him to leave the comfort of what is known to him and to start the journey towards the unknown. Joseph Campbell mentions different ways that this unknown world can be presented:

This fateful region of both treasure and danger may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state; but it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds and impossible delight. (Campbell 48)

Considering the book series in question, it can be assumed that the seed of change is the magic that blooms within the wizards in question: Harry Potter and Harry Dresden. When the first novels of the series are compared, the *Philosopher’s Stone* (1997) and *Storm Front* (2000), there is a lot more information provided to the reader relating to Harry Potter’s childhood and how his magical talents began to show themselves than there is to Dresden’s. Compared to Dresden, Potter’s story of magical training begins right there, *ab ovo*. Meanwhile, Dresden’s story of apprenticeship and study of his magical capabilities are revealed gradually throughout the series in *medias res*. This is done in the form of flashbacks, or information offered to Dresden by magical entities he encounters. Then it is up to the reader to piece together the story of Dresden’s coming into his powers like pieces of a puzzle. Therefore, the call to adventure does differ, though a major part in getting the stone rolling and unraveling the narrative of the Dresden Files is the fact that Dresden developed magical
talents at a young age. If he had not, then the story might have been of an accountant in Chicago and not of a professional wizard.

Both Harry Potter and Harry Dresden are orphans. This seems to be a common narrative arc when it comes to the hero’s journey and there is a long list of heroes who have been brought up without one or both parents. These are, for example: Oliver Twist from *The Adventures of Oliver Twist* (1838), Richard Cypher from *Wizard’s First Rule* (1994) and Katniss Everdeen from *The Hunger Games* (2008) to name a few. Campbell mentions it specifically in his book, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), that in most tales of the hero’s journey, the hero had a very difficult childhood:

The folk tales commonly support or supplant this theme of the exile with that of the despised one, or the handicapped: the abused youngest son or daughter, the orphan, stepchild, ugly duckling, or the squire of low degree […] the child of destiny has to face a long period of obscurity. (Campbell 280)

Facing adversities when he is young seems to be of importance in the progression and self-discovery of the hero. For Potter and Dresden, the fact that they are orphans plays a large part in their character development, in particular their longing to be a part of a family. That being said, the family does not need to consist of their blood relatives, but friends who band together and work alongside them in order to achieve the ultimate goal. That stage will be examined closer later in this essay as it relates to the Ally archetype, which is an important part of the hero’s journey.

Harry Potter is orphaned as a mere baby, never knowing his parents. Parts of his heritage and knowledge of the world of wizardry are kept hidden from him by his non-magical aunt and uncle, who raise him. The Dursleys and their home function to represent the first out of the twelve stages, as described in the previous chapter: the Ordinary World. Harry’s aunt and uncle are bitter towards him and they both seem to be angry and annoyed with him for simply existing. They are plain people who despise anything out of the ordinary, they know of the talents Harry’s parents possessed and fear that he will inherit their abilities. Therefore, they decide not to tell him any of it and if any magical talents show themselves, they will make sure to suppress them. It is possible that they would have succeeded if not for the letter that arrived just before Harry’s eleventh birthday, announcing his acceptance to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. However, the Dursleys do their best to prevent that from happening, as Uncle Vernon states when Harry’s letter from Hogwarts arrives, ‘I’m
not having one in the house, Petunia! Didn’t we swear when we took him in we’d stamp out that dangerous nonsense?” They tear up his letters and even relocate when the letters continue to arrive. Specifically, they hide in a hut on a remote island but that does not stop Hagrid from locating Harry. However, even when Hagrid arrives at the hut, Harry’s uncle still attempts to keep Harry in the dark; “’Stop!’ he commanded. ‘Stop right there, sir! I forbid you to tell the boy anything!’” (Philosopher’s Stone 44, 59). It is apparent that the Dursleys have their mind set against having anything to do with things that are out of the ordinary and attempt to refuse the call on Harry’s behalf; the reason being that they like their life the way it is, normal and boring. They are the anchors weighing Harry down to the Ordinary World, giving the reader a sense of monotony and un-excitement, which, in turn, will make the world of wizardry feel even more fantastical. It is a depiction of the Ordinary World that Vogler approves of, stating that “[i]t’s a good idea for writers to make the Ordinary World as different as possible from the Special World, so audience and hero will experience a dramatic change when the threshold is finally crossed” (87). For this reason, the Dursleys are not people who seek thrills or excitement, least of all anything magical or supernatural. The Dursleys’ strong aptitude towards being normal and despising anything out of the ordinary quite possibly stems from the human tendency to be afraid of what we do not know and do not understand. Hence, it is clear that there is a certain animosity towards young Harry right from the start, on his aunt and uncle’s behalf, due to what he could possibly become: a thing that they do not understand. Ned Walsh quotes an unknown author on this subject, “[w]hat we do not understand, we fear. What we fear, we judge as evil. What we judge as evil, we attempt to control” (The News & Observer) and that is precisely what the Dursleys do; for the first ten years of Harry’s life, every aspect of it is micromanaged by not only by his aunt and uncle, but also by their son, Dudley. Moreover, it is made very clear that Harry is not welcome in their home and is not a part of their family unit. Growing up, Harry never receives any praise or acknowledgement of any sort, his aunt and uncle berate him and his cousin bullies him. Even Uncle Vernon’s sister, Marge, does not care at all about the boy. He has no safe haven, not even at school, as his fellow students try to steer clear of him for fear of being beaten up by Dudley if they are nice to Harry: “[N]obody liked to disagree with Dudley’s gang” (Philosopher’s Stone 38). No one dares befriend him. Thereby, it is safe to say that his childhood is not the most magical one, but the thing that makes up for all that are his innate magical abilities. Moreover, those abilities prove to be the key he needs in order to access the Special World, to be able to escape from the people who treat him so poorly.
Therefore, the moment he learns of that other world, that there is an unknown place to which he can escape, Harry jumps at the chance, feeling that he has nothing to lose.

Harry’s magical talents begin to show themselves at an early age, long before he even begins to receive the Hogwarts letters. It is clear that magic has been getting him into trouble most of his life, though he might not have realized it. When the Dursleys and Harry are about to head out to the zoo for Dudley’s eleventh birthday, uncle Vernon gives Harry a stern warning, “I’m warning you now, boy – any funny business, anything at all – and you’ll be in that cupboard from now until Christmas” (Philosopher’s Stone 31). Harry desperately tries to convince his uncle that he is not planning on doing anything, but is reminded of the numerous times strange things have happened around him. For example, the time when bullies were chasing him at school and he inexplicably found himself on top of the school’s chimney. It is clear that strange things happen when Harry is under a significant amount of distress. In fact, this is something that Hagrid points out when Harry doubts his magical capabilities: “Not a wizard, eh? Never made things happen when you was scared, or angry?” (67). Those words remind Harry of strange incidents and make him wonder if Hagrid is right that he might really be a wizard. During this encounter attempting to convince Harry that he is, in fact, a wizard, Hagrid assumes the role of a Herald. As a rule, the Herald is an archetype who acts as the messenger responsible for bringing the call to the attention of the hero, hereby informing Harry that he is a wizard and that a whole new world awaits him. Correspondingly, in their essay on the hero’s journey, Hartman and Zimberoff note: “The call comes to the potential hero through some extraordinary experience, encounter, or epiphany. A messenger of sorts appears to announce or ‘herald’ the call to adventure” (9). There is no way to predict how the hero will respond to receiving the call, whether they will take the messenger up on their offer and march towards the unknown or if they will turn it down. However, as Hartman and Zimberoff point out: “[t]here is a cost to ignoring the herald and refusing the call” (9). In the case of Harry Potter, the cost would be to return to Number Four Privet Drive and continue to live with the abuse and neglect at the hands of his aunt and uncle. Subsequently, there is no refusing the call for Harry and he excitedly accepts it, as novelist Gail Radley points out, he “shows no hesitation about crossing the next Threshold – catching the train at Platform nine and three-quarters” (21).

In contrast to Harry Potter’s situation, Harry Dresden’s childhood was not quite as traumatic, although his teenage years would prove to be very trying. Similar to Harry Potter, Dresden did have a parent that possessed magical abilities, as his mother, Margaret Gwendolyn “LeFay” Dresden, was a powerful and talented witch. However, she is never able
to mentor her son in these skills as she died during childbirth. It is then up to his father, a stage magician named Malcolm Dresden, to raise his only child. His father is a fan of the art and names his son after famous illusionists and magicians: Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden in honor of Harry Houdini, Harry Blackstone and David Copperfield. As Dresden recounts in *Fool Moon* (2001), the second Dresden Files novel, “[w]hen I was born, he gave me those names. They were always his heroes. I think if my mother had survived the birth she would have slapped him for it” (118). As mentioned before, the Dresden Files are told in *medias res*, beginning when Dresden is an adult wizard who has already been through his apprenticeship and training. As a result, any information regarding his childhood and how he learned to control his magic, must be told through flashbacks. Here, the reader is only given glimpses into Dresden’s past every now and then throughout the novels: “Did I ever tell you about my dad? He was a magician – not a wizard, mind you, but a magician, the kind you see at old-fashioned magic shows” (258). Being a plain and mortal magician, Dresden’s father earns money by touring the country and performing shows. Therefore, young Harry Dresden is raised on the road until his father passes away. Dresden is six years old at the time and does not know much about his mother’s abilities, as his father never told him about her extraordinary talents. Long after he discovers his powers and learns to use them, Dresden is in the field of Private Investigation and, often, finds his cases wedged between the natural world and the supernatural one. During one such case, Dresden summons a demon that might give him information. However, at the end of their discourse the demon claims to have knowledge about his mother and who she was in the past, in hopes of getting Dresden to bargain more with him. Dresden’s inner monologue during that encounter confirms that he has no idea that his mother was a powerful witch, only that he suspected her to be gifted in the arts. Dresden decides that, at this point in time, information about his parents is not of importance. This evidences that he is able to put his personal interests aside for the sake of the business at hand and the lives of others.

After the death of his father, Harry Dresden is sent to an orphanage where he becomes a ward of the state for some time. There, he is bounced around the system, not giving much of a thought to any kind of magic at all. Around the age of ten, however, his magical powers begin to stir. Dresden first encounters his own magical abilities during a field day at school when he enters a running long jump. It is an event he desperately wants to win because other boys have been bothering him, and when he jumps he feels some power throw him “about ten feet farther than I should have been able to jump” (*Proven Guilty* 456). This evidences that there are certain elements that are similar between the Potterverse and The Dresden Files.
Both Harry Dresden and Harry Potter show magical abilities at a young age that sprouted and blossomed at moments of emotional events: Dresden’s deep longing to win the event at the field day and Potter’s desperate attempt to escape his bullying cousin. These newly found powers are a part of them: a part they had not been aware of previously and have no idea how to control. Therefore, they need help in order to hone their abilities and make sure that their magic is under their command. The fact is, that a person with a lot of power, but with no means of controlling it, is without a doubt very dangerous, not only to themselves but also to the general public at large. When the powers of Harry Dresden and Harry Potter begin to manifest, a big difference can be spotted between the series, namely how the training of young mages is conducted. Largely, the plot of the Potterverse revolves around Hogwarts where Harry Potter faces all kinds of challenges, both in the form of his studies and dangers that reach beyond the school environment. Those touched by magic attend school to learn how to control their abilities as opposed to the Dresden Files, where nothing seems to be done in order to keep tabs of, or educate, young witches and wizards. However, there are laws and regulations related to the use of magic. In fact, there are the “Seven Laws of Magic” (Summer Knight 45) and if a wizard breaks any of these laws, he will be judged by the White Council, whose members act as judge, jury and executioner. What is very inconvenient in this regard, is that there is no way for young wizards or witches to know if, or when, they are breaking these laws, as there is no formal education required. Their only hope is to be taken as an apprentice by a wise mentor. Unfortunately for Dresden, his first mentor skips over a lot of things during his training. As a result, Dresden breaks the first Law of Magic and his hero’s journey almost ends before it begins. Luckily for him, however, another wizard steps forth and agrees to mentor him properly. By doing so, Ebenezer McCoy saves Dresden’s life and makes sure that he will be ready for the adventurous path that lies before him.

3.1. Embarking Upon the Quest

When the hero crosses the first Threshold, he is committed to the journey and has decided that he will go towards the unknown; it is the first and a very significant stage of the hero’s journey. Like many of the stages, the Threshold can either be a metaphorical or a literal one and Batty states that the hero must be willing to give-up his ego, relinquish his normal life, and brave the unknown for the sake of himself and of mankind. Crossing the First Threshold is therefore a crucial
The Threshold Harry Potter needs to cross after he decides to embark upon his quest is twofold. The first one is the brick wall that hides the entrance to Diagon Alley (*Philosopher’s Stone* 81), where he follows Hagrid through, and the second being the brick wall that masks platform 9 and ¾ from Muggles (*Philosopher’s Stone* 104). The first Threshold Harry Dresden crosses, on the other hand, is of a more metaphorical nature and is crossed when Dresden decides to investigate the case brought to his attention. The person hiring him is thereby acting as the Herald. This coincides with Vogler’s description of the Herald, as he notes: “Often a new force will appear in Act One to bring a challenge to the hero” (55). In this first case, the challenge is to locate a woman’s husband who has seemingly gone missing (*Storm Front* 47). In the case of Harry Potter, the Herald is Hagrid who informs him that he is a wizard and invites him to start his education at Hogwarts. This is the point where the road of trials begins for the heroes, as Campbell describes it: “Dragons have now to be slain and surprising barriers passed – again, again, and again” (90).

At the beginning of their respective quests, neither Harry Potter nor Harry Dresden knowingly cast themselves in the role of a hero. In fact, Harry Potter is a household name in the world of wizardry long before he could even walk or talk. He has a lot to live up to within this new world, even though he has no recollection of what happened the night his parents died. Yet somehow he is able to defeat the darkest wizard of all times just at the age of one. However, this creates an inner challenge for Harry throughout his years at Hogwarts. He does not quite know what is expected of him, or how to react, at the same time that he is discovering all the wonders this new and magical place has to offer. Harry longs to do the right thing and tries, to the best of his abilities, to follow the advice of the school’s headmaster Dumbledore. It is Harry’s determination to really push himself and to do the right thing that eventually led him to being heroic and to feel obligated to continue his journey.

Harry Dresden considers himself a regular wizard who is simply making a living by offering magical services as a private paranormal investigator, in addition to being a consultant for the Chicago police. Throughout the series, he investigates various cases through his business and his consultation work. Each case and each consultation is its own journey, as detective and mystery stories such as the Dresden Files often weave disparate threads together. This results in multiple journeys for the same hero, accompanied by the same characters who end up portraying different archetypes. These characters and their
various roles will be looked into further in chapter 5: Tests, Allies and Enemies. As it turns out, the cases Dresden is hired to investigate do not seem to be of great importance as stand alone cases, but when examined as a whole, all things suggest that something large and evil is lurking behind the scene, pulling supernatural strings. In Grave Peril (2001) Dresden is, amongst other things, tricked into starting a war between the White Council of Wizards and the Red Court of Vampires. Later, he later discovers that his actions did not start the war. In fact, the Red Court has been plotting to overthrow the White Council for a long time and is able to use Dresden’s actions as the perfect excuse (Death Masks 219). However, before all that is revealed to him, Dresden feels responsible and takes action in order to try and rectify what he believes to be his own doing. The reason being that Dresden is very protective of his friends and often feels guilty for the things that happen to the people around him; it is a heavy burden that, at times, threatens to consume him. The turmoil he experiences is, in fact, an aspect of his character that is supposed to get the reader to identify with him, as Vogler points out in his discussion of the hero:

We can recognize bits of ourselves in a Hero who is challenged to overcome inner doubts, errors in thinking, guilt or trauma from the past, or fear of the future. Weaknesses, imperfections, quirks, and vices immediately make a Hero or any character more real and appealing. (Vogler 33)

It is therefore essential for the hero to have one or more flaws in order to get the reader to root for him, to sympathize with his pain and share his triumphs. Dresden is highly aware of his abilities and, therefore, holds himself responsible for those who are close to him, especially those who are not as capable as him in the arts of magic. Therefore, he keeps a lot of information hidden from them, as he feels that not knowing is in their best interests. For that reason, he is wrought with guilt when the Red Court abducts his girlfriend Susan Rodriguez. That particular event is a turning point for Dresden, as he starts to realize that in order for his friends to know what they are really up against, he must not withhold information about the dangers and challenges ahead. There are times, however, where the challenge of being the hero might seem too much of a burden and thoughts of home are far more comforting and inviting than the dangers that lie before them. Vogler describes it thus: “[y]ou stand at a threshold of fear, and an understandable reaction would be to hesitate or even refuse the Call, at least temporarily” (107). Harry Potter briefly hesitates at the beginning of his journey, scarcely believing that he might be whisked away to a new and
magical world. Apart from that, he is set on his mission to defeat the Dark Lord and help save the world of wizardry. Dresden is similar to Harry Potter in this manner, as he never seems to back down and is relentless in his quest to defeat evil and assist those who need his help. This applies to Campbell’s assessment of the refusal, where he states that it “is essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one’s own interest” (49). The aforementioned evidences that both Harry Potter and Harry Dresden answered their respective calls to adventure. It is therefore apt to continue to examine their journeys and discuss their meeting with their mentors, which will be examined in the following chapter.
4. The Role of the Mentor

An important phase of the hero’s journey is when the hero meets the Mentor archetype. Considering that the journey ahead is through a world that the hero is unfamiliar with, it is vital to have someone who knows this strange land and can offer wisdom and advice. The Mentor is someone who is able to provide the hero with what they really need. Vogler explains that “[t]his archetype is expressed in all those characters who teach and protect the hero and give them gifts” (39). Vogler also states that the hero’s relationship with the Mentor is of great importance, as it is from there that the hero acquires the knowledge and confidence he needs so that he can get over his doubts and fears and continue on his journey (117). Campbell refers to the Mentor as the Wise Old Man, a person who makes it a point to “assist the hero through the trials and terrors of the weird adventure” (6) with words of encouragement.

In the Potterverse, young witches and wizards are invited to attend Hogwarts at the age of eleven. That is when Harry himself receives his letter and proceeds to attend the School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. There, the road to becoming a fully-fledged witch or wizard has a specific structure. In accordance with that structure, Harry needs to attend Hogwarts for seven years and study under the talented team of professors who are there to guide him along the journey. It is there that Harry learns that doing magic is more than simply “waving your wand and saying a few funny words” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 146). Harry has more to learn than just how to use his magic: he will also grow through his relationships with his friends and from what his mentors can teach him. Within the walls of Hogwarts, there are many that take on the role of Mentor and give him guidance in one form or another. Their role is to prepare him for what lies ahead whether they are aware of it or not, as Vogler points out: “Mentors may be willing or unwilling. Sometimes they teach in spite of themselves” (44). For this reason it could be argued that Voldemort himself is one of Harry’s most helpful mentors teaching by what Vogler states to be a “bad example” (44). Namely because Voldemort is unable to love and to show love whereas it is love that not only saves Harry but that also allows him to succeed time and time again. For that reason, when Harry is learning about Voldemort, one of the very first things Dumbledore tells him is that “[i]f there is one thing Voldemort cannot understand, it is love. He didn’t realize that love as powerful as your mother’s for you leaves its own mark” (*Philosopher’s Stone* 321). Here both Dumbledore and Voldemort are Mentors, though only one of them is a willing one.
Dumbledore wishes Harry to succeed and offers him knowledge willingly, whereas everything that Harry gains from Voldemort, is without Voldemort intending to offer it to him. Unbeknownst to him, he provides Harry with a supernatural gift that will help him save the day in the second book, the *Chamber of Secrets* (1998), namely the ability to understand and communicate with snakes. This gift enables Harry to open the way to the chamber of secrets, slay the basilisk and save Ginny Weasley, along with all Muggle-born students at Hogwarts. Thus, Voldemort is not only an unwilling mentor but he also becomes part of the full Mentor archetype “who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass” (Campbell 57). Parseltongue helps Harry gain access to the chamber but it is the sword of Gryffindor that the phoenix brings from Dumbledore’s office that is the real amulet. Other Mentors in Harry Potter’s life are many of the teachers at Hogwarts who teach him in the more conventional way within the structure of a student/teacher relationship. Nevertheless, anytime he finds himself facing grave danger, or suspects that evil is stirring, he goes to find the Mentor he holds in the highest regard, Dumbledore.

In comparison, there is no mention of magical schools or any kind of establishments in the Dresden Files where a young witch or wizard might study witchcraft and wizardry. For the most part, the wizards and witches of that world seem to be self-taught or to have studied under a mentor at one time or another. The latter rings true for Dresden, as he is adopted by a man named Justin DeMorne only a couple of weeks after he unwittingly uses magic for the first time. DuMorne is a wizard who intends to mentor the young Dresden along with Elaine, a witch of the same age. However, DuMorne is not a good man, as Dresden explains to his apprentice, Molly Carpenter, when he recounts his younger years: “DuMorne was a warlock himself. Black wizard as bad as they come. He planned on training us [Dresden and Elaine] up to be his personal enforcers” (*White Night* 168). Subsequently, that is how Dresden’s magical training begins; he and Elaine both receive harsh lessons from a harsh Mentor who pushes them. DuMorne is the kind of a teacher who believes pain to be “a good motivator” (*Small Favor* 4). However DuMorne proves to be more abusive mentally than physically and has a way of manipulating his two pupils emotionally. For example, he convinces them that it would be best not to mingle with the kids at school, as they will not understand their powers. That way he succeeds in isolating them from other children and slowly manages to train them to use violent and dark magic. They do not realize they are doing wrong, as the trust they have towards their Mentor and father figure is so strong. It could be said that in the beginning of his quest, Dresden fails the test where he is supposed to be able to recognize Allies from Enemies by placing his faith in the wrong person. As is evidenced in the fact that DuMorne is
planning to mold his two pupils into personal soldiers. However, it is not clear from the books if Dresden and Elaine were the first young mages DuMorne attempted to use for his personal gains, but they were certainly the last, as is revealed during Dresden’s conversation with his own apprentice. He explains that DuMorne was looking for young wizards whom he could use and manipulate, stating that DuMore “[t]rained, strong wizards, under mental compulsion to be loyal to him. He nailed Elaine with it. I got suspicious and fought him. I killed him” (White Night 168). Therefore, it is apt to say that DuMorne may not have been the Mentor archetype in its traditional sense, as Vogler explains that the Mentor is a person or being that protects the hero, protects him and gives him gifts to assist on his adventure (39). DuMorne may have given Dresden partial wisdom and taught him to use his talents but that is just the one half of the archetype. DuMorne fails to protect him and would thereby fall into the category of a Dark Mentor or Fallen Mentor (44). In fact, he brought danger to Dresden by summoning up one of the Outsiders when he realizes that his apprentice is not complying with his orders, as Dresden states: “Such a beast would make an ideal hunter; just the sort of thing to send out after a mouthy apprentice who refused to wear his straitjacket like a good boy” (Ghost Story 337). Consequently, The Outsider attacks Dresden who escapes, but an innocent bystander is killed. That moment Dresden is hit by the fact that the world is an unfair place in which people die for no good reason. This becomes a pivotal moment for the young wizard and he comes to the decision that “somebody ought to do something about it” (349). Dresden proceeds to vanquish the demon and, ultimately, his former Mentor. This is the moment when Dresden decides to stand up for those who are not able to face off against such strong magical beings. However, having killed DuMorne, Dresden has broken one of the Seven Laws of Magic and is almost sentenced to death, but wizard Ebenezar McCoy saves him when he offers to take Dresden on as his apprentice: “Justin DuMorne had taught me how to do magic. But it was Ebenezer who had taught me why. [...] That the power born into any wizard carried with it the responsibility to use it to help his fellow man” (Blood Rites 294). Thereby, McCoy does not only save Dresden’s life by taking responsibility for him so that the White Council would not kill him, he also instills valuable lessons into the young wizard. His lessons consist of a lot of hard work on his farm, along with magical teachings. McCoy also teaches him to take responsibility for his own actions and that he has to live his life for himself and not be controlled by others:

After I killed Justin and got my head together at Ebenezer’s place, I promised myself something. I promised that I would live my life on my own terms. That I knew the
difference between right and wrong and that I wouldn’t cross the line. I wouldn’t allow myself to become like Justin DuMorne. (*Dead Beat* 444)

It is clear that McCoy has a hand in shaping the wizard that Dresden eventually becomes. But during his journey, Dresden meets various beings that fall within the Mentor archetype, each assisting him in their own way, each expressing what Vogler describes as “different functions of the archetype” (45). In the past, Dresden had two Mentors: DuMorne and McCoy, one taught him magic, the other how to use it for good. When the reader is introduced to Dresden, he is not in the company of either of his former Mentors, but is by himself, running his own investigatory business. With each case he works, he meets different people and many of them, in their own little ways, are able to mentor him along the way. Their gifts may not be of a physical nature but rather in the form of vital information that will help him along the way. Vogler states: “In other cases the Mentor shows the hero something or arranges things to motivate her to take action and commit to the adventure” (42). As it would happen, this is precisely the role that Bob plays. Bob the skull is an advisor, a spirit of intellect who resides within a carved human skull whose job it is “to remember things” (*Storm Front* 96). Similar to Harry’s power of parseltongue, Bob is a gift rendered unwillingly to Dresden, as Bob previously belonged to DuMorne. Bob is an ageless spirit who is meant to assist wizards with their magic. Creatures such as Bob take on the attitudes and parts of the personality of whoever has the skull, as Bob himself says, “Hey, I’m just a mirror, boss. Not my fault you’re ambivalent” (*Cold Days* 121). It is therefore safe for Dresden to accept Bob’s assistance while he has ownership of him. Bob may have been evil while he was in DuMorne’s possession, in the same way that Bob becomes a bit of a smart ass in Dresden’s hands. Having been in servitude for hundreds of years, Bob has access to substantial knowledge and is able to assist Dresden with all kinds of spells, potions and enchantments. Additionally, Bob is able to offer him information on various things connected to the Nevernever: the supernatural world of faerie that seems to be paralleled with our world. Therefore, Bob does not only fulfill the archetype of the Mentor but is also able to offer Dresden supernatural aid (Campbell 57).

There are various kinds of Mentors and, according to Vogler, there are many different types of Mentors who fulfill different purposes, some even “may be to initiate us into the mysteries of love or sex” (43). As much as Bob would love to mentor Dresden in this way, the fact remains that Bob is a bit of a pervert who likes to read explicit romance novels and, when given the chance, hangs out at strip clubs (*Blood Rites* 207). It is however Michael
Carpenter, Dresden’s good friend and Knight of the Cross, who tries to steer Dresden towards the path of love. Michael pesters Dresden to get him to admit that he loves the woman he is currently dating.

“I’m talking about your Susan, Harry. If you love her, you should marry her.”
“I’m a wizard. I don’t have time to be married.”
“I’m a knight,” Michael responded. “And I have the time. It’s worth it. You’re alone too much. It’s starting to show.” (Grave Peril 5)

Michael then confesses to Dresden that he worries about him, stating, “You need to keep up human contact, Harry. It would be so easy for you to start down a darker path” (5). As a powerful wizard who constantly worries about his companions, Dresden is not overly thrilled at Michael’s suggestion. However, as the series progresses, Dresden soon finds himself surrounded by more and more friends and Allies – an archetype that will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Both Harry Potter and Harry Dresden take up the role of Mentor themselves at one point during their respective journeys. Harry Potter does so when he and his band of friends initiate a secret group within the school to teach their fellow students proper defense against the dark arts. Harry Dresden becomes a Mentor in the more literal meaning as he takes an apprentice upon his arms, Molly Carpenter, who is living under the Doom of Damocles just as Dresden himself once did. By doing so, they become another variety of the hero as Vogler explains, producing a hybrid, which happens when the hero temporarily wears the mask of another archetype (34). Both of them are excellent Mentors, producing skilled students who repay their education by providing assistance when it comes to dealing with Threshold Guardians and Enemies.
5. Tests, Allies and Enemies

The hero is not alone on his journey. In fact, the hero meets with a lot of people and strange beings on his travels. Some of them become his Allies whilst others work for the villain and attempt to bring the hero down before he can reach his goal. These tests might appear insurmountable but the hero has made trustworthy Allies who are more than ready to assist if needs be. According to both Campbell and Vogler, the testing is a very important part of the hero’s journey, as it is what will prepare the hero for the final challenge: “Storytellers use this phase to test the hero, putting her through a series of trials and challenges that are meant to prepare her for greater ordeals ahead” (Vogler 136). This chapter discusses this stage of the hero’s journey, as it is a very important function within the hero journey structure. For that purpose, the focus is on the tests, Allies and Enemies as they are represented in both the Harry Potter series and the Dresden Files.

5.1. Friends will be friends

The hero will not be able to succeed in his mission all by himself. The challenges are too great and the villain is too powerful. Therefore, he needs the assistance of good friends and Allies. At this point, the hero needs to be sure who are friends and who are foes and Vogler even suggests that for the hero to discover whom he can really trust is a test in itself, stating that “examining if the hero is a good judge of character” (137). The friends and lesser adversaries all serve a purpose in the end and, as mentioned above: that purpose is to prepare him for what lies ahead.

In the Philosopher’s Stone (1997) Harry Potter is no sooner through to Diagon Alley than one such test is set in motion. He is getting fitted for his school uniform when another boy who is also headed for Hogwarts strikes up a conversation. This boy, Draco Malfoy, soon reveals his character as he speaks ill of Hagrid and wizards not born to pure families of wizardry. Therefore, it does not take Harry a long time to make up his mind because the more Draco speaks, Harry finds himself “liking the boy less and less every second” (88). The real test, however, happens in the Hogwarts train where Harry is sitting in a compartment with Ron Weasley. The two boys are immersed in conversation when Draco appears, as he wants to lay eyes on the one and only Harry Potter. Draco offers his assistance to Harry, saying that he is able help him tell the right sort of wizard families from the wrong, to which Harry replies in a calm voice, “I think I can tell who the wrong sort are for myself, thanks” (120).
Thus, he has chosen to befriend Ron Weasley instead of Draco. Moreover, Harry soon welcomes Hermione Granger into his group of friends, and, by doing so, he has made a strong alliance with two individuals who will be of great help in the tests and challenges ahead. It is even safe to say that without their aid, he never would have succeeded in triumphing over Voldemort.

Harry also has a good friend and confidante in Sirius Black, as well as other members of the Order of the Phoenix. Essentially, anyone who is against Voldemort’s rising back to power is considered to be an Ally in Harry’s eyes. Allies have another important function, in addition to aiding the hero, because, as Vogler points out, they “also serve the important function of humanizing the heroes, adding extra dimensions to their personalities, or challenging them to be more open and balanced” (71). That being said, the most effective way to humanize the hero and make them more relatable would be to showcase a flaw in their character. Ideally, this would have to make it apparent to the reader that the hero is not perfect due to the fact that perfection is something that no person can ever attain, therefore a perfect hero would be very difficult to sympathize with. Harry Potter is relatively flaw free but there are a few characteristics that might be considered character flaws. He is impulsive and rather reckless, he tends to make rash decisions and gets his friends to go along with him, despite Hermione trying to be the voice of reason, much like Jiminy Cricket to Pinocchio. As the series progresses, he seems to develop anger issues and in the *Order of the Phoenix* (2003) his fuse has become very short. He is prone to anger and even lashes out at his friends, dealing with some teenage angst. This, however, does not reflect on his relationship with his friends and Allies as they are still willing to offer him assistance and protection. This can be seen in *The Deathly Hallows* (2007) when members of the Order, the Weasley family, and other friends of Harry, drink the polyjuice potion in order to look like him. This is done in order to confuse the Death Eaters that are lying in wait, hoping to catch Harry when he leaves the safety of his aunt’s home in Privet Drive. At the beginning of his journey, Harry Potter may have felt alone, but as he goes through all the trials of it, he is quick to gather a whole flock of people around him. These are his friends and loyal followers, they care about him and what he stands for and, furthermore, they are prepared to lay down their lives in order to secure the safety of the hero.

Harry Dresden is not unlike Harry Potter in the series’ first book *Storm Front* (2007) in the sense that he is also without friends at the beginning of his journey. Dresden lives in a small apartment and has no relationships to speak of. He keeps a laboratory in the basement of his apartment within which Bob the skull is located and consults him on various occasions.
Furthermore, he also has a working relationship of sorts with detective Karrin Murphy. However, they are not on the best of terms as Murphy is, more often than not, suspicious of Dresden and his knowledge. Nonetheless, throughout his journey, Dresden encounters people and beings that become good friends of his. Even so, considering that the Dresden Files total fifteen books so far, and span at least as many years, it does not come as a surprise that Dresden’s relationship with his friends and Allies become complicated from time to time. Occasionally a friend will turn on him and a character that used to be an enemy makes an alliance with him. On the whole, Dresden has a squadron of Allies who are willing to back him up when going up against any villain. This corresponds with the archetype as Vogler points out: “Heroes on great epic journeys may acquire whole ship-loads of Allies, building up a team of adventurers, each with his or her different skill” (72). Moreover, it is evident that this applies both to Harry Potter and Harry Dresden.

Detective Karrin Murphy becomes one of Dresden’s most trusted Allies. In the beginning, however, she is more of a Threshold Guardian who later transforms into an Ally. Her relationship with Dresden is analyzed further in this chapter’s section 5.2: Threshold Guardians. Another Ally is Michael Carpenter, Knight of the Cross and wielder of the sword Amoracchius, the Sword of Love. In addition to fulfilling the archetype of the Ally, Michael is also a Mentor to Dresden and has, on more than one occasion, saved his life. Other members of team Dresden include werewolves Billy and Georgia, along with others from their pack, the White Court Vampire Thomas Raith (who is also Dresden’s half brother), along with Dresden’s fairy godmother the Leanansidhe. She gives him some trouble and acts as a Threshold Guardian while under the influence of Nemesis, but in Changes (2010) she is free from his power and offers Dresden valuable supernatural aid. She is, for example, able to change Dresden and his group of friends into a pack of dogs, in order for them to reach their destination faster. By doing so, his group of Allies become subject to the Shapeshifter archetype, and experience a psychological shift having been turned into animals. Another Ally of Dresden is his pet Temple Dog named Mouse. Mouse is a huge and talented creature that is able to provide his owner with supernatural aid when Dresden is faced with a problem or a challenge that he is not able to overcome. Mouse is, for example, able to rouse and alert a whole apartment building with his supernatural bark and get all its inhabitants out in time. Yet another of Dresden’s Allies is Dr. Waldo Butters, who first appears in the seventh book of the series, Dead Beat (2005). Dr. Butters is skeptical of Dresden in the beginning as a realist who refuses to believe in magic. Later, however, he goes through various masks of
archetypes as he begins to trust Dresden and offer him his aid, he then becomes skeptical of the hero transforming from Ally to a Threshold Guardian.

### 5.2. Threshold Guardians

Having set out on his mission, the hero now has to face even more trying challenges. These tests function to test the hero in various ways. The obstacles he faces can be of a purely physical or psychological nature, they can also be people, animals or things sent simply to get in his way or try to prevent the hero from continuing his journey. Threshold Guardians are an archetype that will show up in order to try and drive the hero back from their quest. These Guardians are used to test the hero’s determination for the dangerous road ahead and help to strengthen his character. It is most common for this archetype to present itself after the hero has met his Mentor, as then they are better prepared mentally for the challenges ahead. However, as Vogler points out, Threshold Guardians “may pop up to block the way and test the hero at any point in the story” (129). Their function is significant for the development of the hero as they offer obstacles and as Batty notes: “A crucial feature of the journey is that the obstacles faced are progressive – they develop, transform and grow, allowing the hero to reach his full potential by stretching his abilities” (63).

In Harry Potter’s case, he is met with Threshold Guardians even before he starts his journey. Because, in addition to being the very reason why Harry Potter is so desperate to leave his normal life behind, the Dursleys also function as Guardians of a Threshold. As mentioned in chapter 3, above, they have kept the truth from him since the beginning, striving to make sure that the boy grows up to be a normal person: attempting to suffocate all magical abilities as they start to surface. Because of them attempting to force normalcy upon him through neglect and abuse, Harry Potter ventures forth, excited to cross the Threshold towards the new chapter in his life. To Harry’s dismay, however, he must return to Privet Drive at the end of the school year and spend the summer vacation at his aunt and uncle’s house, who are still active Threshold Guardians. It is safe to say that Harry encounters numerous Threshold Guardians in the *Philosopher’s Stone* (1997) alone, including having to locate a train platform that does not seem to exist and go through the sorting ceremony at Hogwarts. There are also more conventional Threshold Guardians to be found in this first narrative. In fact, there are quite a few of them. As Margery Hourihan points out: “The hero is constantly confronted by enemies which he must overcome, so he is above all things a man of action” (Hourihan 3). Accordingly, Harry Potter always happens to be in the middle of the action, just like Harry Dresden. At Halloween, for example, a troll is let inside Hogwarts, and
it is Harry and Ron who manage to defeat it and save Hermione. The three of them then face a series of Guardians created by the teachers of Hogwarts to protect the philosopher’s stone. They must put their heads together in order to get through all the hindrances and outwit the teachers who placed them. Harry and his friends discover that the enemy has already incapacitated the three-headed dog, having enchanted a harp to play music that lulls the beast to sleep. The three of them are therefore able to get through the trapdoor without much difficulty, but the dog is just the first in a line of Guardians, each with their own test for the hero to solve because “[w]hen heroes confront one of these figures, they must solve a puzzle or pass a test” (Vogler 50). Each Guardian that Harry and his friends are faced with provides a specific challenge that each of them holds the secret to solving. The second one is a plant that catches the trio when they jump through the trapdoor that the dog was guarding. Hermione manages to get herself free and tries to coach the boys through it, but the plant already has a tight grip on them. She proves her worth as a valuable Ally by rescuing her companions from its tangles. Harry solves the third one himself, flying on a broomstick provided to catch a specific key out of hundreds that are flying around the room. It is a test that is easily solved by our hero, as he was “the youngest Seeker in a century. He had a knack for spotting things other people didn’t” (Philosopher’s Stone 301). The key opens the door to the fourth: a life size game of wizard chess. Here, it is Ron’s time to shine, as he happens to be an excellent chess player and the test is won, but at a cost. Ron is knocked unconscious and Hermione stays behind to tend to him, resulting in what Vogler refers to as higher stakes (149) as Harry crosses the Threshold to face the villain alone. There he faces the largest test since the beginning of his journey and succeeds in his mission. Harry must then return to live with his aunt and uncle during the course of the summer, happier and more confident than he was at the beginning of his journey.

In the beginning of Chamber of Secrets (1998), Harry is faced with a couple of Threshold Guardians: his aunt and uncle who have locked his magical things away and Dobby the house elf who does not want Harry to return to Hogwarts. Dobby is, in fact, acting as Herald and Threshold Guardian, as well as Trickster in this matter by providing Harry with information but also preventing him from being able to return to Hogwarts. A part of the test Harry needs to pass is to get out of Privet Drive, and then, later, to get to Hogwarts as he is unable to reach the train in time because the brick wall disguising the platform was blocked by Dobby. As Vogler states: “Testing of the hero is the primary dramatic function of the Threshold Guardian” (50), and it is with the help of his Ally, Ron, that Harry is able to pass these tests and get back to Hogwarts. A multitude of other tests are presented to Harry along
his journey, as, for example, during the Triwizard Tournament in the *Goblet of Fire* (2000) where he is faced with both extreme and dangerous tests. These tests include retrieving an egg from a dragon, saving a loved one from merfolk in the lake and, last but not least, navigating a large maze. Whilst navigating the maze, Harry encounters, amongst other things, a sphinx whose question he must answer correctly before he can go on. Dealing with the sphinx happens to be one of the prime examples that Vogler makes regarding the main goal of Threshold Guardians, referring to Oedipus and the riddle the Sphinx presents him stating that “before he can continue his journey, Threshold Guardians challenge and test heroes on the path” (50). The sphinx’s riddle is only one of many tests Harry must pass, as his path is littered with various Guardians by the likes of dementors, charms, magical beings and monsters. The above examples of Guardians are considered apt in order to establish that the series is riddled with them and that the challenges Harry needs to face are near endless. Batty points out: “As the treasure (goal) is closer to being reached, the guardians protecting it become more determined to stop the hero” (64).

Being an investigator who usually is faced with a different case in each book, Harry Dresden confronts at least one or more Threshold Guardians during his investigative work for each case. Therefore, the Guardians he is faced with will not all be listed here but the more important ones will be discussed, with focus on recurring ones.

Donald Morgan is a member of the White Council who is assigned to be Dresden’s warden, or parole officer. When the White Council decides that Dresden’s life is to be spared, it is Morgan’s job to make sure that Dresden does not use black magic or break any of the Seven Laws of Magic, and, if he does, Morgan has permission to kill him. Morgan tends to show up when Dresden is in difficult situations relating to his job as an investigator. Due to his duty as Dresden’s parole officer, Morgan shows up to sniff around every time Dresden casts a spell: “Morgan was my Warden, assigned to me by the White Council to make sure I didn’t bend or break any of the Laws of Magic. He hung about and spied on me, mostly” (*Storm Front* 83). In fact, Morgan does more than spy on him, he makes it his business to get in Dresden’s way during his investigations. In *Storm Front* (2000) when Dresden is investigating murders that were committed by sorcery, Morgan’s first thought is that Dresden is the real killer. During the course of the first six books, Morgan’s character creates conflict and setbacks for Dresden, as Morgan worships the White Council because he believes they keep the darkness of the world at bay. The only reason he truly despises Dresden is because he is of the opinion that he will one day turn warlock and cause significant damage to the world. All Morgan wants to do is to keep the people of the world safe: he can be extreme, but
he is not evil. For him there is only good and evil, black and white, there is no gray area and he is the equivalent of lawful good. The character of Donald Morgan is, in this way, similar to inspector Javert from Victor Hugo’s novel *Les Misérables* (2018): they both have an obsession with the one that got away. There is no doubt in Morgan’s mind that Dresden should have been executed by the White Council when he is first brought to justice for killing his mentor, and he resents that Dresden is allowed live. In the book *Turn Coat* (2010), Morgan finally accepts that Dresden really is a good man and that it is the system that is corrupt. During the course of their relationship, Dresden is tested every time that they meet and, after every encounter, Dresden’s character grows. Morgan is a tricky Threshold Guardian whom Dresden may not defeat by force or magic; instead Morgan forces him to think of other ways to reach his goal. Dresden does not allow Morgan to get in his head and is able to show restraint and patience that will help him with the challenges to come.

Another Threshold Guardian who is close to Dresden throughout the series is detective Karrin Murphy. She knows that Dresden is a valuable asset to the Special Investigations unit but the fact that he holds out on information with her always bothers her. With Murphy being a dedicated detective, she wants the whole truth, not a truth that Dresden cooks up for her. But as discussed in a previous chapter, Dresden feels very protective of those around him and, therefore, he knowingly keeps things hidden from her. This creates tension between the characters and makes Murphy believe that Dresden is involved in the crimes they are investigating, resulting in her arresting Dresden on more than one occasion. As a result, Murphy acts as a Threshold Guardian, causing Dresden’s investigations to be stalled until he manages to pass the test and get out or is released. Dresden’s reason for not telling Murphy the whole story is his way of protecting her from things she does not understand. However, that plan backfires as it only infuriates her and strengthens her belief that there is something dodgy about Dresden. It is not until the fourth book, *Summer Knight* (2002) that Dresden finally decides to offer Murphy all the case-related information that he has. He does this after realizing that by not placing trust in his friends and keeping secrets from them they are more likely to get hurt, simply because they do not know what is lurking in the darkness. This is made evident to him after a great loss when his girlfriend, Susan Rodriguez, follows Dresden to the vampire masquerade in *Grave Peril* (2001). Due to his secrecy Susan has no idea what she is walking into and that is her undoing – the vampires turn her into a half vampire and her relationship with Dresden ends. After these shocking events, Dresden realizes that he will not always be able to protect his friends and he must instead give them the tools to protect themselves. That means he must offer them proper
knowledge so that they can at least make up their own minds regarding the situation and properly assess the danger. This is major character growth on Dresden’s part and comes hand in hand with the increasing trust between him and Murphy. In turn, Murphy herself is able to lower her fences and begin to work with Dresden instead of against him and, by doing so, she becomes one of his most powerful Allies. Harman and Zimberoff mention this kind of transformation of the Guardian, noting that sometimes the “obstructing dragon guardian transforms into knowledgeable guide” (3).

Another growth in Dresden’s character comes soon after he discovers that his actions have consequences, which comes about when he is faced with new enemies in Dead Beat (2005) who plan to bring forth the Dark Hallow. They were apprentices of Kemmler, an evil wizard, and, in order to be able to stop them, Dresden needs more information on the subject. As luck would have it, Kemmler once owned Bob the skull and Dresden asks Bob to tell him what he remembers. However, the spirit has locked off that specific knowledge and for a good reason, as having access to it causes him to take on part of the personality of Kemmler. It makes him different, it makes him evil and when Dresden commands Bob to remember, he transforms into Evil Bob, and, subsequently, turns into three different archetypes: that of the Shapeshifter, Shadow and Mentor. That is to say, he provides Dresden with information but, simultaneously, attempts to kill him. Dresden narrowly escapes, driving the memories back deep within the spirit. Regular Bob comes forth and apologizes, explaining that Kemmler “took what I was. And he twisted it. I destroyed most of my memories of my time with him, and I locked away everything I couldn’t. Because I didn’t want to be like that” (38). Dresden, not wanting to risk that this part of Bob ever come forth again, forbids him from recovering memories of Kemmler forevermore. Bob complies, managing somehow to cut off all that he had not been able to forget and throws it away. Later, during the course of Ghost Story (2011), Dresden catches glimpses of what appears to be a strange version of Bob the skull and soon realizes that it is, in fact, a form of the memories he had cut off, Evil Bob. He is in league with an adversary, the Corpsetaker’s spirit, who was desperate to get her hands on a new body so she could join the mortal world again. In order to be able to face off with the Corpsetaker, Dresden needs to use the Nevernever as a shortcut, a place to cross through in order to be able to get to the inside of a factory where Corpsetaker is holding a hostage. But the moment Dresden steps through, he is met with someone familiar, “this being had only a bare skull sitting atop the uniform’s high collar. Blue fire glowed in its eye sockets and it regarded me with cold disdain” (Ghost story 457). There, in the Nevernever, Evil Bob acts as a Threshold Guardian, yet another test for Dresden to pass before he is able to face off with
the Corpsetaker in her stronghold. He is, however, not alone and, with the help of his newly acquainted Sir Stewart and the sudden appearance of regular Bob, he is able to pass over the Threshold and continue on his path towards the adversary who awaits on the other side.

Over the course of the novels, Dresden is met by numerous other Threshold Guardians including phobophages, spiritual entities who feed off fear and thereby taken on the forms of famous movie villains such as the Xenomorph from *Aliens* (1986) and the murder doll Bucky, an obvious nod to Chucky from *Child’s Play* (1988). These creatures are terrorizing people at the theatre and prove to be challenging Guardians against Dresden. This is only one example of Butcher’s play with intertextuality, as he frequently references pop culture, TV-shows and films, such as *Star Wars, Star Trek, Firefly* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, to name a few, while Rowling consistently stays within her own canon, keeping her hero’s Threshold Guardians, Allies and Enemies exclusively inside her world of wizardry. In the end, whether the Threshold Guardians turn out to be a helpful friend or an enemy on a mission, they serve as practice rounds for the hero. For that reason, they offer a chance for the hero to warm up before coming face to face with the main villain. As a result, the hero is offered a chance to hone their skills during their encounter with the threshold guardians, whether it is in combat or a battle of the wits and, by defeating each Guardian, the hero becomes both stronger and wiser.

5.3 Elusive Enemies
The archetype of the Shadow is that which is most commonly connected with enemies of the hero. They need not be the hero’s main villain but are often his agents, determined to try and derail the hero before he gets the chance to bring the villain down. Vogler claims that “[t]he challenging energy of the Shadow archetype can be expressed in a single character, but it may also be a mask worn at different times by any of the characters” (66). That is the way an enemy or Shadow can become a different archetype temporarily, for example a Mentor or a Herald. In the fourth Harry Potter novel, the *Goblet of Fire* (2000), a new defense against the dark arts teacher arrives, professor Alastor “Mad-eye” Moody. He mentors Harry and arranges events so that he is able to overcome the challenges of the Triwizard tournament. In the end, it is discovered that professor Moody was a Death Eater, posing as the professor with the use of a polyjuice potion, in order to gain access to Harry. Subsequently, he is simultaneously wearing three masks: that of a Shadow, Mentor and Shapeshifter, much like Bob the skull the moment he turns into Evil Bob.
Another, and perhaps one of the major Shapeshifters in the series, is Hogwarts’ professor Severus Snape. Snape is a very complex character and is consistently believed to be a Shadow, or an enemy, by Harry and Ron throughout the series. Hermione attempts to be the voice of reason, as they seem to have been jumping to conclusions again and again, suspecting him of being in liege with Voldemort: “Dumbledore trusts him. […] And if we can’t trust Dumbledore, we can’t trust anyone” (Order of the Phoenix 490). But near the end of the Order of the Phoenix (2003), Snape murders Dumbledore and joins the Death Eaters, making it look like Harry and Ron are right in suspecting him all along. However, at the end of the series Harry learns the truth and discovers that Snape is not a double agent but a triple one: as he does work for Voldemort only to report his actions to Dumbledore. He even goes as far as to kill Dumbledore in order to save his cover, at Dumbledore’s own request as he was already dying. Consequently, Snape is then able to take over as headmaster at Hogwarts and make sure that the students are safe, at least until the war breaks out. Furthermore, it is he who leads Harry to Gryffindor’s sword where it lies frozen in the pond in the Deathly Hallows (2007). That event coincides with the ninth stage of the hero’s journey, or the Seizing of the Sword, this being the second time the sword of Gryffindor presents itself to Harry in his hour of need. Even so, despite being able to find the sword and wield it, Harry’s journey is not near its end, which is why the sword then passes from him only to emerge when it is needed again.

On the subject of enemies, any leader promising a new world order would be amiss without a cult following and that is where the Death Eaters come into play. They are a group of individuals, mostly pure blood wizards and witches who have pledged their allegiance with Voldemort. Although, according to Vogler’s definition of the concept, these minor enemies might rather be considered as Threshold Guardians themselves:

There is often a symbiotic relationship between a villain and a Threshold Guardian […] villains of stories often rely on underlings such as doorkeepers, bouncers, bodyguards, sentries, gunslingers, or mercenaries to protect and warn them when a hero approaches the Threshold of the villain’s stronghold. (Vogler 49 - 50)

This would suggest that Peter Pettigrew, Bellatrix Lestrange, Lucius Malfoy and other Death Eaters are more likely to fall into the Threshold Guardian archetype than that of the Shadow. But where then could one place Dolores Umbridge in the group of archetypes? She is a well fleshed-out character in the books that readers love to hate, even more so than Voldemort.
since he is so far out of reach for the reader and presents more of a looming threat. When asked to write a review for *Entertainment Weekly* on the fifth book in the series *Order of the Phoenix* (2003), renowned horror writer Stephen King stated that professor Umbridge “is the greatest make-believe villain to come along since Hannibal Lecter” (King). King supports this opinion by explaining that the reason why she is so scary is because everybody remembers having such a scary teacher growing up. She could be out there right now tearing into a student in some school and that makes her even scarier than Voldemort himself.

In the Dresden Files, Butcher not only makes numerous references to pop culture but he also makes use of both Greek and Norse mythology, as well as various religions and classic literature. Those texts prove to be good places to find out-of-this-world enemies to pit against the hero. Consequently, he borrows Queen Mab from the Arthurian legends who, in the Dresden Files, is Queen of the Winter Court of fairies. She is constantly plotting against her twin sister, Queen Titania, leader of the Summer Court of fairies, but Queen Titania was originally written by William Shakespeare and featured in *A Midsummer-night’s Dream* (1595-6). Mab, being the Queen of Air and Darkness, was “the mistress of every wicked fairy in every dark tale humanity had ever whispered in the night” (*Changes* 288). She is more cynical than her counterpart, Titania Queen of the Evergreen, and, on occasion, Dresden finds himself in the middle of conflict between the Summer and Winter courts. For some reason, however, Queen Mab seems to have a special interest in him, wanting him to take the mantle of Winter Knight and become her servant. Meanwhile, Dresden fears the evils she might make him perform, which is why he continuously denies her request. Eventually, however, he finds himself forced to accept when he is literally paralyzed during his quest to save his daughter from the Red Court of Vampires. That event raises the stakes for the hero (Vogler 149) and forces him to summon Queen Mab because, in his opinion, she is “the least evil” of the options that were available to him in his dire condition (*Changes* 294). By doing so, his full mobility is restored and he is able to continue on his quest and rescue his daughter. Later in the series, it turns out that Queen Mab is not inherently evil after all, but more of an antagonist proving to only be behaving according to her nature. In fact, she is the guardian of the Outer Gates and, by keeping them safe, she is watching over humanity and our reality. After Dresden becomes the Winter Knight, she also picks up the mask of the Mentor preparing him for things to come. As events begin to unfold, it would seem that Queen Mab has some knowledge over events in the future and Dresden’s part in fighting the Outsiders: evil beings that are trying to gain entry in our world through the Outer Gates. She manipulates Dresden and trains him, clearly preparing him for what is to come without
coming straight out and telling him. Coincidentally, the way she goes about it mirrors the way Dumbledore mentors Harry Potter, steering him on his path all the while knowing that a part of Voldemort lived within the boy and, in order to destroy that, Harry Potter would have to die. As the Dresden Files are ongoing, it remains unclear what plans Mab has for Dresden exactly but it is certain that she is preparing for war. She is very invested in her desire to protect the world that she even sacrifices her own daughter, Maeve, after she had been infected by Nemesis.

Another enemy Dresden finds himself up against, on more than one occasion, is Nicodemus Archleone. He is the leader of the Order of the Blackened Denarius and is, most certainly, a sociopath. He shares his body with a fallen angel by the name of Anduriel who manifests in shadows, a rather literal but apt depiction of the Shadow archetype. His kind, the denarians, are the reason the Knights of the Cross exist because something must balance the scales, and whenever Nicodemus’ crew show up to play, they are never up to anything good.

In the first few novels, there are various enemies to be dealt with but as things begin to progress Dresden soon realizes that all of the earlier events have something in common. For that reason, he begins to suspect that a group of wizards on the White Council are arranging and plotting things, dark things. It is not long before Dresden dubs the group, the Black Council, and soon assembles the Grey Council, members of which containing wizards and witches he knows he can trust and will be, both willing and able, to work against the Black Council. These three factions mirror nicely against the Ministry of Magic, the Death Eaters and the Order of the Phoenix in the Harry Potter series.

As vampires, the Red Court can automatically be flagged as both Shadows and Shapeshifters. They are, without a doubt, dangerous but seem to be able to live quietly in the city that is, until they use Dresden as a patsy in their plans of declaring war against the wizards. For the most part, it could be said that the war with the Red Court of vampires functions to test Dresden and prepare him for bigger challenges to come. If the war between the Red Court and the White Council had not broken out, Dresden would not have had to become the Winter Knight, and without the power of winter that is tethered to that mantle, he would not have been able get through the Gate of Ice and collect the artifacts from Hades’ vault in the underworld.
Most of the enemies listed in this chapter are foot soldiers and underlings working for the main villain. They have been commanded to derail the hero or even kill him so that the villain may rise to power. They are tools that test the hero, making sure that he has the determination, resilience, and resources to go up against the final foe who will be the topic of the next chapter.
6. The Villains

The previous chapter discussed various enemies of Harry Potter and Harry Dresden. Those enemies offer challenges and tests for the heroes on their respective journeys, attempting to thwart them before they are able to come face to face with the main villain. In this chapter, the main focus will be on those wicked villains, namely Voldemort in the Harry Potter series and Nemesis and The Outsiders in the Dresden Files. This chapter will discuss the relationship between the two heroes and their villains, what the villain’s ultimate goal is and how the villains are presented in relation to the twelve stages of the hero’s journey. These beings all fall within the Shadow archetype and, according to Vogler, they are “usually dedicated to the death, destruction, or defeat of the hero” (65). This chapter will also determine just how effective these villains are because in his book Vogler states “that a story is only as good as its villain, because a strong enemy forces a hero to rise to the challenge” (66). Subsequently, without a convincing villain causing havoc, there would not be much of a journey for the hero to embark upon.

6.1 Voldemort

In the beginning of the Harry Potter series, Voldemort has just been brought down from terrorizing the world of wizardry. He is mentioned in the first chapter during a conversation between Dumbledore and McGonagall where Dumbledore urges his colleague to call Voldemort by his name and mentions that, “[w]e’ve had precious little to celebrate for eleven years” (Philosopher’s Stone 17). That statement suggests that Voldemort has been in power for over a decade, which makes the fact that he was overthrown by a baby that more remarkable. Once it has been established that Voldemort is attempting to rise to power again, it becomes Harry’s goal to make sure that does not happen. Voldemort is the Jungian archetype of Shadow and, despite his intentions, Voldemort fulfills this archetype’s dramatic function by bringing out the best in the hero as he continuously places Harry in what Vogler describes as “life-threatening situation[s]” (66). Furthermore, Vogler argues that the “Shadows need not be totally evil or wicked. In fact, it’s better if they are humanized by a touch of goodness, or by some admirable quality” (67). There is, however, no trace of any humanizing qualities in Voldemort. His wickedness derives from the fact that he believes himself to be doing what is right and is therefore the type of villain that Vogler describes as the most dangerous, stating that one should “[b]eware the man who believes the end justifies
the means. Hitler’s sincere belief that he was right, even heroic, allowed him to order the most villainous atrocities to achieve his aims” (68). It is therefore fitting that Vogler mentions Hitler in relation, as Voldemort is without a doubt a literary representation of him. Much like Hitler, Voldemort believes that there is a race that is better than others and dreams of a perfect world where (pure blood) wizards have taken over and done away with the inferior race, the non-magic Muggles. Additionally, he is obsessed with immorality and lusts for unlimited power. In order to try and survive death, Voldemort goes so far as to split his soul into six pieces, or horcruxes, and places each one within an object that can later be used to resurrect him. He has no intention of creating a seventh but does so by accident, as is revealed near the end of the seventh and final Harry Potter novel, *Deathly Hallows* (2007). The seventh part of Voldemort’s soul is living within him, as Dumbledore explains, “[y]ou were the seventh Horcrux Harry, the Horcrux he never meant to make” (*Deathly Hallows* 568). Consequently, this part of Voldemort’s soul residing within Harry is the reason why he was able to speak and understand parseltongue: because Voldemort could. Moreover, this ability not only gives the hero and his allies a heads up to some of Voldemort’s plans but also enables Harry to save the day in the *Chamber of Secrets* (1998). More than that, as one of the horcruxes, Harry is connected mentally to Voldemort, and able to experience his anger and witness his actions in dreams. In the end, Harry realizes that in order to be able to defeat Voldemort and save his friends, he must die.

According to Campbell, the belly of the whale imagery is applied when the hero “is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died” (74). For the reader, this is the Ordeal where they do not know whether the hero will be able to emerge victorious. This rings true for both Potter and Dresden, seeing that at one point in their respective narratives both are considered deceased. In the case of Harry Potter, he knows that in order to win the fight against the Dark Lord, he must lose, and that there is no hope for the others to survive unless he first offers up his own life. Lord Voldemort is therefore responsible for Harry Potter’s “death” near the end of *The Deathly Hallows* (2007). Voldemort deals him the deadly blow but instead of dying, Harry Potter finds himself in a familiar place with a familiar face. He meets his old Mentor once more as he draws near to the last chapter of his journey and receives answers to questions that have plagued him, along with explanations to the nature of the place where he is now. Harry Potter also learns that it is his decisions in life that have defined him and because he sacrificed himself, and by allowing Voldemort to kill him, the seventh horcrux is eliminated instead of him (*The Deathly Hallows* 567). After this encounter, Harry returns to his body where he resumes his mission, more enlightened, more
secure and even more determined than before. Vogler states that it is the thrill-seeking side of the reader who enjoys being held in suspense when the hero is staring at what feels like certain death, claiming that it is the kind of excitement the reader is after and that “[i]dentifying with a hero who bounces back from death is bungee-jumping in dramatic form” (Vogler 162). Following that same line of thought, Vogler, states that “the hero must die or appear to die so that she can be born again” (15), and much like Harry Potter, the other wizard, Harry Dresden, is also faced with his own death. It happens soon after he emerges victorious from Chichén Itzá, having successfully saved his daughter from certain death in Changes (2010). However, the Ordeal stage is dealt with differently in the Dresden Files than it is in the Harry Potter series: in most of the Dresden Files novels, Dresden gets beaten up and knocked out, which results in him blacking out near the end of his cases. That is when his Allies come running and are able to help take care of him, so that he may heal in order to stand up again and face his foes once more. It is therefore apparent that the Ordeal does not hold as much weight in the hearts of the readers of the series as it could have, which explains the swift change that comes in the final chapter of Changes (2010), where Dresden receives a fatal bullet from a sniper not long after his return to Chicago (454). The constant reader of the Dresden Files is therefore, as Vogler says of the hero’s follower, “held in suspense and tension, not knowing if he will live or die” (Vogler 14) and is left to deal with the Ordeal until the next book in the series, Ghost Story (2011), in which Dresden has returned as a shade whose task it is to solve his own murder. During the investigation, his spirit analyzes all his actions of the past and how they lead him up this road. One of Dresden’s greatest fears is that he might become one of the bad guys and what he mostly fears is becoming one without even realizing it. Moreover, the speculating specter later realizes that simply the act of worrying about becoming evil is a sign that he is not. It is not long after this that his spirit returns to his body because he was not dead after all, as Campbell would describe: this is the part of the hero’s journey when “the hero goes inward, to be born again” (77). Interestingly enough, while his spirit roams the streets of Chicago, Dresden’s body is kept alive on a secret island by the magic of the location and the power of the Queen, Mab. It is there that Dresden is reborn as the full Winter Knight: ready to begin his training.

The sacrifice of the hero is a necessity as they are beings of great power and knowledge. Unless they realize how big of a responsibility it is, to have that resting on their shoulders they run the risk of turning evil themselves. Campbell phrases it thus: “The hero of yesterday becomes the tyrant of tomorrow, unless he crucifies himself today” (303), quite simply meaning that if they are not careful and mindful of their own ego, the hero is at risk of
becoming conceited and seeing themselves higher to those they just rescued. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the hero shows humility and the ultimate display of that, is through the act of self-sacrifice. It is clear that Harry Potter’s action are motivated by his need to protect not only his friends but also all Muggles and half-wizard kinds. He is ready to face death and commit the most selfless act imaginable: sacrificing himself for the lives of the innocent. The first look at Dresden’s death, however, leaves the reader confused. It is a case of who dunnit and there is a certain edgy humor in having the investigator investigate his own murder. What Dresden is able to turn up, is the fact that he himself is the person behind his own murder, and that he did what he thought he had to do in order to escape having to serve Queen Mab as the Winter Knight. He hired a sniper to take care of himself, thereby ensuring that he could do no evil deeds under the command of Queen Mab. However, she outwits him and makes sure that he is brought back, as he is essential to the plans she is about to set in motion, the next chapter of his journey.

6.2 Nemesis and the Outsiders

The first couple of books in the Dresden Files seem to have independent storylines that do not connect with the other stories. Dresden finds himself solving numerous cases that feature various villains and, at first glance, it appears that there is no distinct evildoer, like in the Harry Potter series. However, as the plot begins to unfold, the reader learns about the existence of an ultimate villain. That is not to say that all the previous cases and enemies Dresden encounters on his journey simply serve as an introduction to his Special World. They have a more important function for Dresden, as they are there to help him overcome tests, hone his abilities, gain knowledge and gather allies. However, in Cold Days (2012), Dresden discovers that the majority of the cases he took over the years were engineered by something bigger and essentially more evil, a being called Nemesis. Unlike the Harry Potter series, where the main villain is introduced in the first book, the existence of Nemesis is not revealed until the fourteenth book in the series. This villain’s mission is to get a mortal to open the Outer Gates that are located at the edge of Faerie and if he succeeds, then beings known as the Outsiders will gain entry and the world is doomed. The moment Dresden is brought to the Outer Gates, he discovers the true power of Queen Mab and all her fairy soldiers. She has enough power to take out the whole of the White Council if she wanted, and even the whole of humanity. This, however, would come at a price as Mother Summer points out, because by doing so, Queen Mab would have to “forfeit reality” (Cold Days 398) as we know it, because if her army leaves their post, the Outsiders could gain access to our world.
There is little known about the Outsiders apart from that fact that they “had been the servants and foot soldiers of the Old Ones, an ancient race of demons or gods who had once ruled the mortal world, but who had apparently been cast out and locked away from our reality” (Dead Beat 358). What that means is that, should they gain access again, the consequences would be disastrous for all normal human beings. But the only way for them to enter the normal world is if the gates are opened and only a mortal can open them. For this reason, an enemy is planted in order to get them open from the inside, namely Nemesis. It is unclear what Nemesis’ true identity is, he – or it – seems to be a magical parasite that is attempting to open the gates from our side by infiltrating the minds of beings on the other side. Once affected by Nemesis, the host’s mind is no longer his own and can be manipulated by the parasite. The best example of this is in Cold Days (2012) where Dresden catches Maeve, the Winter Lady, in a lie. Knowing that one of the key elements of a faerie is their inability to tell a lie, Dresden realizes that she is infected by Nemesis. This raises the stakes once more, seeing that anybody can be subject to the influence of Nemesis even without realizing it. Therefore, the main enemy in the Dresden Files fits not only into the Shadow archetype but is also the ultimate Shapeshifter as Nemesis is capable of being literally anyone.

6.3 Prophecies

Dreams, visions and prophecies often seem to be a big part of the hero’s journey. It is something that often seems to tie in with Jung’s Orphan archetype, as they are destined to inherit greatness and power. The hero is the Chosen One and his future has been foretold, even though he does not know it yet. The hero spends his early years in blissful ignorance, not knowing the road that lies ahead of him. An example of this is mentioned in Vogler’s book when the orphaned Luke Skywalker emerges and “seems to be the fulfillment of a Jedi prophecy that a ‘Chosen One’ will bring balance to the Force” (288). It is seems to be quite common that prophecies relating to the hero tend not to be revealed until the journey is well on its way or nearing its end. Otherwise, it is probable that the hero would lack the confidence to come to terms with what the prophecy entails. In the case of Harry Potter, for example, the prophecy is revealed to him near the end of the fifth book when his Mentor, Dumbledore, reveals it to Harry after he has managed to thwart Voldemort yet again:

*The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies... and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not... and either must*
Harry is shocked to learn that there is, in fact, another boy whom the prophecy could be referring to: Neville Longbottom. Fact of the matter is that he fears that a wrong choice has been made and that he is not the chosen one, but Dumbledore points out that “Voldemort himself would mark him as his equal. And so he did, Harry […] he chose, not the pureblood […] but the half-blood, like himself” (742). This proves that it has been clear from the beginning that Harry is special for having defeated Voldemort as an infant. In addition to that, he has foiled the Dark Lord’s plans on four other occasions by the fifth book. Therefore, it would be safe to say that there was no mistake in Voldemort’s choosing and, as it happens, the villain and the heroes usually share certain characteristics with one another and the villain could be considered the shadow self of the hero. Assuredly this is a constant reminder that if the hero does not avoid temptation, he might very well become like his adversary.

There is not a lot of speculation or knowledge of any kind of prophecy relating to Harry Dresden specifically. However, Dresden is for some reason referred to as starborn on numerous occasions and during one conversation, the circumstances of his birth are brought up: “There was a complex confluence of events, of energies, of circumstances that would have given a child born under them the potential to wield power over Outsiders” (White Night 444). Here, Harry Potter and Harry Dresden share yet another element, that there is some reason that their time of birth empowers them with the ability of great power over the villain, and having a better chance than others of being victorious in the end. Dresden wears a silver pentacle necklace, which is the only thing he has from his mother, as of yet it has not been revealed if this has any specific connection to him being a starborn and the reader does not know if he is, in fact, the only starborn in the series. What the reader does know is that Dresden is a starborn and that he will prove to be a valuable asset in the war against Nemesis and the Outsiders. Subsequently, that is the very reason why the infected Winter Lady, Maeve, is so excited about the prospect of killing him, expressing her joy at being able to “slay a starborn” (Cold Days 572). Maeve’s choice of words, however, suggest that it is possible that there is more than one starborn, since she claims wanting to kill a starborn, not the starborn. Still, there is much unknown about the trait of starborn individuals or any prophecies related to those who are starborn, other than the fact that Harry Dresden is one himself. However, it then remains a question of whether there are more starborn beings
around or whether or not there can only be one at any given time, like for example a vampire slayer. This could mean that when one is killed, another is summoned for the same task, because as long as there are Outsiders, there must be someone with the ability to kill them in order to keep balance in the world. This being precisely the reason the knights of the Cross exist – they are a power against the knights of the Blackened Denarius, just as the Summer Court of fairies must keep balance against the Winter Court and vice versa. During a panel discussion in Huntington Beach back in 2007, Butcher hinted at the fact that the other mage DuMorne was training, Elaine, could also be a starborn, having been born at the right time under the same star alignment as Dresden (Q&A). However, it has not been revealed if she is one, only that she has the potential. Again, here is an element that contrasts nicely with the Harry Potter series since, according to the phrasing of the prophecy; there was another boy who also had the potential to overthrow the Dark Lord. Voldemort, however, is the one who chooses Harry Potter as his nemesis over Neville Longbottom. In light of this, it will be interesting to find out once and for all, if Harry Dresden is the only starborn, if he was chosen over Elaine or if in fact they are both starborn and it will take the strength and knowledge of the pair of them to bring down the Outsiders and Nemesis.

Much like Harry Potter had the part of Voldemort living within him, Dresden also carries an entity within his own mind for a while. It is a part of an enemy that at the same time is a valuable asset and great Mentor, but ultimately very dangerous and needs to be handled with great care. Unlike Harry Potter who had no idea a part of Voldemort resided within him, Harry Dresden is fully aware of where his extra knowledge is coming from, as he picked up a Blackened Denarius coin (Death Masks 430). The coin he picks up belonged to Lasciel, “a fallen angel […] one of the thirty demons of the Order of the Blackened Denarius and she was known as the Temptress and the Webweaver” (Dead Beat 408). In order for her to gain full command of his mind, he needs to accept her but he does not. Instead, he buries her coin in his basement, but a shadow version of her takes up residency in Dresden’s mind and it is her mission to tempt him into picking up the buried coin. She showers him with gifts and knowledge, such as access to hellfire and the ability to understand many foreign languages. By doing so, she proves to be of great help to Dresden on his journey. She offers him these things in order to show him what kind of power he could possess if he were to embrace the full power of the real Denarian. As the story progresses, it would seem that Dresden’s possession of Lasciel’s coin was in fact a big test for things to come, Lasciel’s shadow resided in Dresden’s head “for years” (White Night 483) before it was gone. It can be estimated that the shadow spent the good part of five years whispering in his ear, at the very
least, it was there throughout *Dead Beat* (2005), *Proven Guilty* (2006) and to the end of *White Night* (2007). During that time, the shadow tried to tempt Dresden into picking up the coin and thereby gain access to its full power, yet despite the shadow’s best efforts, Dresden is able to resist her offerings and never picks up the coin. Thus, he is able to pass yet another test and is free from the Denarian. When Dresden successfully passes this test, he becomes the perfect candidate for the mantle of the Winter Knight. Dresden knows that bearing that specific mantle comes at a price and that it might one day turn him into a monster, as it has done with previous bearers. Even Bob the skull attempts to explain the situation to Dresden, stating that “the mantle changes whoever wears it. […] You’ve… probably felt it starting. Um, strong impulses. Intense emotions. That kind of thing. It builds. And it doesn’t stop” (*Cold Days* 118). Even so, having been in possession of one of the coins of the Blackened Denarius, Dresden is used to warding off temptation and denying gifts offered, knowing that they will come at a great cost. This, thereby, proves that if anyone has the chance of being sane while bearing the Winter Mantle it is Harry Dresden, who is most likely the only person who will be able to use it for good and defeat Nemesis and the Outsiders. He is a Chosen One.
7. The Road Back

The last and perhaps most noticeable difference between the Harry Potter series and the Dresden Files is the fact that Harry Dresden has yet to conclude his journey. As mentioned in the introduction to this essay, Dresden’s journey has been analyzed with regards to the fifteen books that have been published. However, according to Jim Butcher’s official website, the series will span around twenty novels, in addition to short story collections (FAQ). Dresden, however, seems to have been through most of the stages of the hero’s journey, and some of them more than once. He has received The Call to Adventure on many occasions, as every case he accepts to investigate could be considered a call of its own. He has both attempted to refuse cases and refused to give up on cases no matter how many times he is beaten down; it is a fact that Harry Dresden always gets back up on his feet, even after being paralyzed. He has met various Mentors on his journey who have taught him, both knowingly and unknowingly, and he has gained many friends, Allies and Enemies during his trials on the journey. He has approached the inmost cave: a task that he was specifically groomed for as the bearer of the Winter Knight mantle. It is a fact that if Dresden had not been gifted with the powers of the Winter Knight, he would never have been able to get through the Gate of Ice presented in Skin Game (2014), during which time he had to get through in order to reach Hades’ vault and cross all the Thresholds: Gate of Fire, Gate of Ice and Gate of Blood. It can therefore be concluded that Harry Dresden has fulfilled the hero’s journey time and time again and seems to be stuck in a loop, having to embark on the journey again and again. During the course of each book, or each case, he steps through portals, he is tested, he goes through many ordeals and returns victorious in one way or another. His foes become stronger with each book and his friends and Allies seem to evolve right alongside him, each becoming more powerful and capable each time around.

In order to fulfill the prophecy that both Harry Potter and Voldemort could not live while the other lives, Harry Potter makes up his mind to meet his death head on if means the last horcrux will be destroyed. Similarly, it is highly likely that Dresden, who in the beginning considered himself alone against the world, will complete his cyclical journey by choosing to perish if that means that his friends and family will survive. In fact, he has done it before. However, if he chooses to go down that path again, neither he nor the reader can know for sure if he has a chance of coming back again, which is why it is the ultimate act of selflessness and heroism. Particularly, that would be very similar to Buffy Summer’s sacrifice...
(The Gift), when she gave her own life in order to save her sister, plunging herself through the portal in order to seal it – because that is the heroic thing to do.

That brings us to the twelfth and final stage of the Hero’s journey: Return with the Elixir. After having been through such a harrowing adventure, it stands to reason that the hero does not return to the Ordinary World empty handed. Because if he does, he is not a hero at all, according to Vogler:

If a traveler doesn’t bring back something to share, he’s not a hero, he’s a heel, selfish and unenlightened. He hasn’t learned his lesson. He hasn’t grown. Returning with the Elixir is the last test of the hero, which shows if he’s mature enough to share the fruits of his quest. (Vogler 221)

Therefore, Vogler casts forth the question “[w]hat does the hero bring back with her from the Special World to share upon her Return?” (220). It is a reward for the trials the hero has endured and can be interpreted in a literal or metaphorical sense, because the “elixir” can be in the form of a physical gift or in the form of wisdom or knowledge. At the end of each book, Harry Potter does receive a reward of sorts, albeit having been able to achieve a goal, such as saving the philosopher’s stone from the hands of Voldemort or gaining knowledge, for example knowing that he was able to save his innocent godfather from certain death. The largest reward, however, is awarded to him at the end of the Deathly Hallows (2007), when the whole school rallies behind him and, in the end, Harry is able to vanquish the Dark Lord. Afterwards, a sense of unity becomes a cornerstone in Hogwarts. The final challenge for Harry Potter will be deciding whether to return back to the Ordinary World or stay within the Special One. He has defeated the villain and along the way he has also found true love in Ginny Weasley, who comes from a line of pure blood wizards having resided within the world of wizardry her whole life. It is therefore safe to conclude that for Harry the world of wizardry has transformed into the Ordinary World, making the normal world seem more alien to him and not as welcoming. Therefore, at the end of his journey Harry has faced many dangers, done heroic deeds, and come out as victor and he has also found a home and a family of his own, much like the one he was taken from as an infant in the first chapter of Philosopher’s Stone (1997) and concluded his cyclical journey.

Harry Dresden also returns with an elixir of sorts at the end of almost every book in his series, albeit in the form of a gift or having more knowledge than he did when he accepted the case at hand. The fact remains however that his biggest gift is yet to be achieved, as the
series is not yet finished despite standing at fifteen published novels, in addition to the short stories. However, in the most recent novel *Skin Game* (2014), Dresden returns yet again from having approached a Cave – which this time is Hades’ vault in the underworld – with the most important gifts yet. Dresden is assigned to work with Nicodemus of the Blackened Denarius to steal the Holy Grail. However, as he nears the end goal, he is visited by Hades himself who reveals that he must in fact retrieve other items of power from the vault and keep them hidden from Nicodemus. Amongst all the gold and gems in the vault, five objects catch Dresden’s attention where they are sitting on display in the middle of one of the rooms in the vault:

- An ancient wooden placard, its paint so faded that the symbols could not be recognized.
- A circlet woven from thorny branches.
- A clay cup.
- A folded cloth.
- A knife with a wooden handle and a leaf-shaped blade. (*Skin Game* 447)

All of these are associated with Jesus Christ and judging by the fact that in the Dresden Files, faith and belief is a cornerstone of power, especially in the land of fairy, every single one of these objects would be valuable for the Fay in the war against Nemesis and the Outsiders. Nicodemus manages to get away with the clay cup – the literal Holy Grail – but Dresden is able to secure the other four and plans to research them further. He is returning to the Ordinary World with items of great importance and value, items that will undoubtedly allow him to put an end to Nemesis and the Outsiders and save the world from grave peril or he will die trying.
8. Conclusion

The hero’s journey has been a function in storytelling for as long as we have been telling stories. It is a narrative structure revolving around the main character or hero who is plucked from his everyday world and passes on to an extraordinary one where he is faced with many wonders, dangers, tests and trials but ultimately returns as victor. The structure has been studied and scrutinized not only by novelists but also by psychologists and various researchers, who are able to make use of Campbell’s model in their fields. In this thesis, the Harry Potter series and the Dresden Files have been compared and contrasted using Campbell’s and Vogler’s definitions of the concept and it is clear that both adhere to the twelve stages of the monomyth in their respective narratives.

The Harry Potter series is a prime example to employ when analyzing the hero’s journey as it fits the model extremely well. The hero is a young orphan who is unaware of his famed past: a Prince in Hiding. Moreover, he is met with a Herald who informs him of his lineage and urges him to cross the First Threshold where he ventures into a fantastical new world. Once there, he meets his Mentor, makes friends and Allies, faces Guardians and is opposed by a Shadow whom he ultimately defeats. Accordingly, each book puts Harry through a different series of tests and once he has passed them, Harry returns to his home in the Muggle world where he has grown both wiser and more knowledgeable in the art of magic: a function that is necessary for his ultimate stand off with Voldemort, whom he eventually succeeds in beating down – it is the classic battle of good versus evil.

Applying the hero’s journey module to the Dresden Files is a bit more complex as his story begins in medias res, when Dresden is already an adult wizard who has long since passed the First Threshold and accepted the call to adventure. His Mentor has finished training him, strictly speaking, but Dresden does consult McCoy on occasion. On the whole, Dresden mainly seeks advice from Bob, the spirit of intellect, as well as other Allies and Queen Mab. One of the major differences is that Dresden is still on his journey, as noted in the previous chapter. The hero is yet to fully conclude his cycle despite having been through all of the stages of the journey at one time or another through his work as an investigator. Although Campbell’s model of the journey is not represented linearly in the Dresden Files, the structure still applies as Vogler states that “[a]ny element of the Hero’s Journey can appear at any point in a story” (234) to which Batty agrees, arguing that “although the stages of the Hero’s Journey appear in the linear order presented, there is no reason why
manoeuvrability is not possible” (80). In fact, most of the elements appear time and time again, such as Dresden’s encounter with many of the archetypes such as Threshold Guardians, Allies and Mentors.

According to psychology Professor Scott T. Allison, both Harry Potter and Harry Dresden can be considered to be classic heroes as he describes them to be “often an underdog or ‘everyman’ who is summoned on a journey fraught with extraordinary challenges” (197). It is then the task of the writer, their creator, to carve out a fully rounded character, a hero that the reader not only relates to but also empathizes with and will want to cheer on. In accordance with all that is accounted above, it is clear that both Potter and Dresden are faced with extraordinary and spectacular challenges and their struggles are relatable enough that the reader is compelled to long for their success. Allison quotes Carl Jung and Von Franz noting that we are prone to identify this type of hero and find ourselves drawn to them (198).

Furthermore, Batty is of the opinion that Campbell’s reason for why readers see the hero’s journey module in works of fiction time and time again is because the reader “believes that we purposefully probe stories to extract meaning, which will help us to move forward in bettering our lives; we actively seek the myth within the manifestation” (Batty 44). It is not just narratives of epic fantasies that adhere to the hero journey structure even though the two stories analyzed in this essay feature worlds of fantasy, magic and supernatural beings, because, according to Vogler,

The stages of the Hero’s Journey can be traced in all kinds of stories, not just those that feature ‘heroic’ physical action and adventure. The protagonist of every story is the hero of a journey, even if the path leads only into his own mind or into the realm of relationships. (Vogler 7)

Furthermore, Batty points out that hero journey narratives are “a trajectory of hope, fear and renewed hope” (47). This experience of emotional growth is something that every person can relate to. Thereby, we are primed to identify and relate to the hero simply because we are all living our own personal versions of the hero’s journey, facing our own Threshold Guardians all the while receiving assistance from Allies and learning from our Mentors, whilst also hoping to successfully return with the elixir and live happily ever after.
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