

# CROWNED:

*From Divided Woman to Queen of Your Life*

BOOK PROPOSAL

By

Stacey L. Simmons, PhD  
33300 Eastern Ave  
Santa Clarita, CA 91390

225-302-0641  
818-861-6450

[staceysimmons@mac.com](mailto:staceysimmons@mac.com)

## Table of Contents

Overview.....	5
So What Journey do Women Take?.....	6
Why the Queen? Why not the Heroine? .....	7
Archetypes .....	8
The Divided Woman Archetype .....	9
The Divided Woman in Culture.....	10
Familiar MISORs, MIPes, and Queens .....	18
Why am I the Person to write this Book? .....	19
Competitive Analysis.....	20
Background:.....	20
Comparison Titles.....	21
The Author .....	24
Production Details.....	27
Book Structure .....	28
Chapter Outline.....	29
SAMPLE CHAPTERS .....	52
Introduction: The World is Run by Archetypes.....	52
Chapter 1: Invisibility vs Sovereignty .....	61



Every woman is a divided woman.



# CROWNED: From Divided Woman to Queen of Your Life

How come no one ever asks *Clark Kent* whether fighting for “truth, justice, and the American way” will get in the way of having children? Why doesn’t Alfred snarkily tell *Batman* that he shouldn’t have that doughnut before a night of vigilante justice? How is it that no one asks *Luke Skywalker* if he’s worried that wielding the power of the Force will make him too woo-woo to find a serious wife?

Because they are heroes...not women.

## Overview

In 1949, Sarah Lawrence College professor, Joseph Campbell published a book entitled, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The book became a tome of our western literary and psychological imagination. Claiming the hero represents the singular representative of the human condition, Joseph Campbell’s work has resonated for more than seventy years to give Westerners a cultural touchstone that has unified film, literature, psychology, and more. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* has influenced everyone from George Lucas to Oprah Winfrey, inspiring people to think mythologically about our place in the world. *The Hero’s Journey* has been adopted by the authors of film, television, novels, comic books, and every means of modern storytelling. It has been examined psychologically, and employed as a means to challenge ourselves to consider transformational paths for men and women. However, there is a problem at the core of the Hero’s Journey, and it is that women have never been included in the call to take up our own quests.

Joseph Campbell said that the great myths of culture, from the West to Asia were told by, and for, men. They are stories of MALE heroes. Women have been left out of what Campbell arrogantly called “the monomyth” of the hero. Campbell scoffed at the work of his student, Maureen Murdock, who outlined what she called, the Heroine’s Journey. Murdock reported that Campbell disagreed with her because women didn’t need to take a Hero’s Journey. This point of view was also captured in a 1988 interview. In PBS’s *The Power of Myth with Bill Moyers*, Moyers asked Joseph Campbell about women and the Hero’s Journey. Campbell offered that women don’t have to take the Hero’s Journey, “woman is already at the center of the universe, she is the place the hero is trying to get to.” In other words, “Ladies, you just stand still, look pretty, and all the boys will come to you.” And if I want my own adventure? Then I’m doing “woman” wrong, at least according to Campbell.

### **So What Journey do Women Take?**

Maureen Murdock created a model she called the Heroine’s Journey that looked a whole lot like Campbell’s Hero’s Journey. In doing so, she accepted Campbell’s assumption that the journey was a “monomythic” narrative structure describing a universal human experience. However, her Heroine’s Journey is mostly a psycho-spiritual treatise. It reads like a New Age book asking women to see their wounding as a need to unite with their inner masculine self. Over the last several decades scholars, mythologists, writers, and critics have weighed in, pointing out that there is a “woman problem” at the heart of the Hero’s Journey. In response, other writers have come up with Heroine’s Journeys, all buying into the idea of the hero or heroine as the centerpiece of human endeavor. In every one, the implication is that the analog to a *hero’s* journey is a *heroine’s* journey.

But I disagree, and I have discovered that there is an analog, and it is NOT a heroine’s journey. At its best, a heroine’s journey is a derivative of the hero’s journey. At its worst, the

heroine is an imposter, walking a path that actively disparages her for undertaking the quest. So what is the analog to the hero's journey then? It is the The Queen's Path. On this journey a woman moves through stages that take her from being a subject in a patriarchal society to becoming the Queen of her own life. It is the road to owning herself completely, with no one telling her who she ought to be, or what she needs to do in order to "belong." This path has a structure, way-markers, and familiar battles. It has been hiding in plain sight for several thousand years. You will find it in every form of storytelling from sacred literature to the latest show streaming on Netflix.

### **Why the Queen? Why not the Heroine?**

The Heroine Archetype hasn't been defined phenomenologically in a way that is unique to women's journeys. Grafted onto the hero's story, she appears to be just another impostor- a woman in a man's world. The Hero's Journey is a constant reference in culture. There is even a new "science of heroism" emerging in organizational psychology and business. Campbell's model underpins every method of modern storytelling from the narratives on our screens to the stories we tell about ourselves. Chris Vogler famously developed the Hero's Journey in the service of filmmakers. His original fifteen-page outline sparked a cottage industry of Hero's Journey workshops and story models. His book *The Writer's Journey* has guided thousands of writers to rely on that model for developing narratives in everything from memoir to soap operas. There is an inherent problem with this structure. Women are only tacitly included in the Hero's Journey. But the truth is we don't need to be included, we have our own, very different path.

Over the course of seven years I have engaged in research that uncovered this analog, and it is decisively NOT derivative of the hero's journey. The structure has been hiding in plain sight for thousands of years, and yet it has never been codified. I call this structure, "The Queen's

Path.” I didn’t invent it. I discovered it, it shows up in everything from the first narrative poem, *The Descent of Innana*, through every form of sacred literature, down to the present. Archetypal structures exist whether we acknowledge them or not. You can find the Queen’s Path in everything from the *New Testament*, to *Frozen*, to the 2016 American Presidential election. In all of these narratives, a woman is seeking to define her own being. Only once she realizes she no longer has to submit to external expectations can she truly own herself.

The Queen has arrived. It is time we tell her story. In doing so, women align ourselves with our own “monomyth.” The Queen’s Path guides women to take our places as leaders of our own lives, deciders of our own fates, beholden to no one. The Queen’s Path illustrates the road we are given by culture and provides a clear path to remake ourselves in the images of power and sovereignty that all women deserve. The ultimate goal is for every woman to find herself at the end of the journey crowned with sovereignty. She owns herself. She may choose to align herself in marriage or not. She may choose a career or not. She may choose to raise children or not. But in every woman’s path there is the option of sovereignty. She has only to decide that she wants to own herself more than she wants to belong to the outside structures that have taken or limited, (and would happily continue to take) her sovereignty for thousands of years.

### **Archetypes**

Why should anyone care about archetypes? Because they permeate everything we do—they are unconscious imprints on our collective and individual psyches. Right now, our culture is reeling from archetypes that have changed right before our eyes: The Strongman has replaced the Statesman. The Angry Man has replaced the Working Man. Old female archetypes no longer hold. We have blunt instruments as archetypes for women: mom, bitch, hottie, boss-babe, dumb-blonde. Women’s archetypes are changing, and we have not done a good job naming them as yet.



Culture is unprepared for this change- many journalists, politicians, and other leaders are shifting what they talk about, and HOW they report. But most are still trying to figure it out. Archetypes reflect the ideals of a culture. They last a long time because once they are defined, they are easy to reproduce through stories and mythology. Archetypes are critically important for connecting with people across cultures, in our communities, and even within our offices and families. You see this in the culture war battles on social media, or on the news. Who gets to define what ideals we espouse as a culture? That is a war on what archetypes are appropriate, and who gets to elevate or denigrate them.

### **The Divided Woman Archetype**

To understand the Queen's Path, allow me to guide you through an understanding of the most critical part of the journey, the Divide. All women are subjected to the Divide. It is the force of patriarchy seeking to keep women *managed*. While women may have all of the intelligence, athleticism, grace, and capacity of men- we do not start at the same place. Around the age of eight, children begin to feel the pressures of being groomed for their future roles in society. Women historically have been encouraged to become smaller, obedient, quiet, and demure. Men historically have been encouraged to take up more space, to be bold, take charge, and to become leaders. There is a direct connection between these social expectations and the Hero's Journey and the Queen's Path.

The Hero's Journey embraces a culturally acceptable vision of ideal manhood: active, brave, strong, virile. Patriarchy's "ideals" of womanly virtue don't align with the active role of the hero. Traditionally, to be an ideal woman means being: demure, caring, domestic, beautiful, and silent. There has been some shift in the zeitgeist recently, women have been called to "Lean in," by Cheryl Sandberg and to "Stand in the Arena" by Brené Brown. But even when we stand

up for ourselves, fight in the arena, or lean into our struggles- there are still expectations on women that hearken back to very old ideals of passive femininity.

Women are given not one, but two options of who to become. The reality though is that the first ideal is praised and modeled in everything from popular culture to scripture. The second is an outcast. Traditionally this binary becomes: good/bad, pretty/ugly, pure/dirty, thin/fat, virgin/whore. But these binaries mask the fundamental truth that to be a woman is to constantly wrestle within these binaries. Women find ourselves *divided*, split from an early age, with only two options available to us: be a good girl, or be on the outside, and by default— a “bad” girl. When you’re a “good girl” you’re protected, taken care of, (or you’re supposed to be). Women often fight this image, even while most of us try to live within it. Consider the contradictory messages women endeavor to make sense of starting at a very young age:

- Be available/Be unobtainable
- Be effortless/Work hard
- Be agreeable/Be mysterious
- Be intuitive/Know more to be taken seriously
- Be like-able/Be confident

### **The Divided Woman in Culture**

Since the earliest writing, women have been represented by two archetypal halves. Culture accepts the passive form of woman and exiles the active form. You see this in different representations of women in mythology and sacred literature: Lilith and Eve in the Hebrew Bible; Mary of Nazareth and Mary Magdalene in the New Testament; Ariadne and Athena, Persephone and Demeter, Helen and Cassandra, in Greek Mythology. You’ll find it in film and television, where there are *representatives* of the Divide, with one character fulfilling the “good girl” role and another the “bad girl”. We find this Divided Woman in: Elsa and Anna in *Frozen*, Cassandra

and Nina in *Promising Young Woman*, Diana Prince and Wonder Woman in *Wonder Woman*.

The list goes on and on. Most times the Divided Woman is represented by a single woman with different personalities (Diana Prince and her alter ego, Wonder Woman). Other times she is represented by two characters who show the Divide through their different behaviors or attributes (Elsa and Anna in *Frozen*, June Osborne and Serena Joy in *The Handmaid's Tale*). All of these stories demonstrate a pattern of acceptable expectations for women as we grow into adulthood.

Glennon Doyle writes about this experience in her book *Untamed*. She describes losing her spark at ten years old. She reflects on how the world “sat her down” and explained all the cages she was going to be limited to, the feelings she was allowed, the body she must strive to maintain, the ways she was expected to behave, the beliefs she was allowed to hold. Doyle describes this as the beginning of becoming increasingly smaller to fit into the life that was expected of her. For Doyle, being the “good girl” became synonymous with dying. She started the cycle of bulimic bingeing and purging at eleven years old and was drinking alcohol to the point of blacking out by sixteen.

The Divide came and grabbed Glennon Doyle, as it comes for all women. Some are relatively unaware. Others insist that they are above the struggle, even as they are gobbled up by patriarchy- their fight made more difficult by their loneliness in it. When I have spoken to my psychotherapy clients about the possibility that they aren't at fault for: not being thin enough, not following the expectations set out by parents or spouses, or not wanting the lives they have so heavily invested in since childhood, most of them stare at me. Next, I ask my client to describe a world where SHE defines the standards for her life, not an external ideal that she was given by society. At this point, most of my women clients burst into tears, many not even able to describe a tiny piece of what a world like that could look like.

In my research, I found an active process happening here. Women are *rendered*, torn apart from a young age, to be set at odds against themselves and other women. When we are young, most of us feel it, but we can't name it. It is in the pressure to be effortlessly thin, successful, and beautiful. It is in the snarky ways that women sometimes tear each other down. It shows up in the "girl games" that women perform when they're around powerful men. Women often have to live in the Divide in order to survive. There's no shame in survival. But shame is the name of the game in the Divide, and I know exactly ZERO women who haven't been touched by it.

The more patriarchal a culture, the more harsh the Divide can be. Women in extremely patriarchal cultures even today can be killed for speaking up, or for just wanting to be educated. In the West, we like to believe that we are beyond all of this. We most definitely are not. The Divide shows up in the way we dress, in the way we parent, or the expectations we face with our partners. If you doubt me, think about how many times you've heard people say that a girl or woman is "asking for it" if she dresses scantily. Or have heard whispers shaming a teenager for eating too much. Or perhaps it shows up when a woman can't get pregnant, or when a teenager does. Expectations of living up to an archetypal ideal are everywhere. Most women internalize at least some of these. The passive, servile, helpmeet is revered, while the bawdy, intellectual, or sexual is ostracized. Women who find their power in their intellect, their body, or their outspokenness are pushed to the margins of what is acceptable.

This isn't a book about becoming a femi-nazi. Indeed, the point of bringing all this into the light of day is to reveal the false dichotomy in the way women have been tricked into thinking that being a "real woman" means anything other than what an individual woman wants for herself. If a woman wants to be a stay-at-home mom, a childless soldier, a mother and attorney,

or a celibate professor, all of those paths lead her to the crown of sovereignty. The whole idea is that SHE is the one who decides who she is, not a family, a church, a state, a filmmaker, a boss, or the Supreme Court of the United States. The false dichotomy IS the Divide itself.

Women around the world have been punished for rejecting the Divide. Whether we are talking about women suffragists who believed they should have the right to vote in the 19th century, or women who led the charge into the professions of politics, medicine, and law in the twentieth, women have always had to fight to define ourselves. Think about women like Madonna, Hillary Clinton, Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, and Malala Yousafzai. They have been portrayed as pariahs. Each has found herself a target because she wouldn't "submit" to cultural expectations, or a man telling her what to do, who she is, or should be. Each of these women have been perceived as a threat because of what she stands for... the right to define her own being.

The above pattern is produced and reproduced over and over again, whether in stories, or in the narratives that get told about women. She is either traditionally feminine or painted as a "nasty woman." It is important to note that the archetypal forces I'm describing are not "good" versus "evil", though they are often characterized that way. It is far more complex.

Around the world women have been given a model of acceptable, small, passive female behavior. If they adhere to it they are culturally accepted, but still potentially broken apart by being denied their true nature. If a woman doesn't adhere, for whatever reason, she is ALSO given a model of small behavior- she is ostracized so that her offense is reduced by her role as an outcast. This second woman is often represented as magical, or "too much" or just simply "other". By being "too much" or "other" we are allowed to discount her. She doesn't meet our standards. If a woman can find the fortitude to navigate this winding path she is lucky. On that journey

there are way markers, milestones, and places where monsters dwell. I have found them in biographies, memoirs, movies, Broadway plays, and fairy tales. Many women go to battle against the forces of division, but most of the time, those women lose. To achieve sovereignty, women as individuals and as a collective must transcend these divisive energies. Being queen means knowing the terrain, and making room for all women, whether they understand the Divide or not. Transcendence though comes after the fight, not in lieu of it. Only after we recognize that the false dichotomy is the problem, can we stand up and accept ourselves as individuals, and every other women's absolute right to self-determination.

Like any social process, the Divide *becomes* part of us. However, it is not a natural part of our identity or personality. Once we start to uncover this implanted structure, we can dismantle the internal and external forces that endeavor to keep us small. The Divide is the primary way marker along the path outlined here. Think of it as a fork in the road. Understanding that place is central to understanding this research. **The central premise of CROWNED is that without a woman understanding the Divide, her struggles are misunderstood at best, and dangerous at worst- leaving every individual woman to believe that she is suffering because of her own failures.** Women internalize the struggle; we see and believe that our inability to adhere to the structures and expectations means that *we* are broken. Rarely does it occur to us that the structures are broken. No matter how much of ourselves we sacrifice to fit in, no matter how small we make ourselves to be acceptable, we can never be small enough for the patriarchy. The only option is to overcome the whole thing- to choose our own wild and wonderful life, regardless of what anyone else thinks.

Every woman walks the Queen's Path, whether she's a real person or a fictional character. The Divide is the part of the path set up for any woman by culture. She herself is NOT the

Divide. She is a whole being, for whom the world becomes smaller as she reaches adulthood. The Divide is simultaneously a metaphorical state, a psychological process, and an archetypal place. To be in the Divide is to be torn apart, in a specific way, with a designated outcome that has only two options. Her way out of the Divide is to overcome it. She cannot ignore it. She cannot bypass it. Successfully navigating the Divide leads the woman to Sovereignty. Her archetype is the Queen. Before she can arrive at this place, however, she must traverse the Queen's Path. While in the Divide, she will identify with one of two sub-archetypes.

If she is on the path of the passive feminine, a sub-archetype I call Maiden in Search of Relationship or MISOR (MEE-sohr), she is rewarded by culture for being pretty, docile, and serving those around her. She often dedicates herself to a life of "care". She can claim the protection of her family or husband. She is seen as virtuous if she marries and has children. This side of the path is rewarded by social acceptance and cultural protection. The MISOR is often represented as a "good girl", even if she's not. Think about Cinderella, Snow White, Regina George from *Mean Girls* or former governor and Vice-presidential candidate, Sarah Palin. All of these women perform the cultural ideals of "womanly" virtue well.

Women who don't fit the MISOR role, may self-select out by accident, wanting their intellect to come first, or because they don't want to marry or have children. They may get pushed out because they don't want to be passive, or maybe simply because they can't play the game. This sub-archetype I have given the name Magical, Isolated, Powerful, and Endangered or MIPE (MEE-pay). The MIPE is the witch, the outcast, the unpopular girl, the one too smart in her class, or too big for her breeches. She may long to be included, but she rarely gets the opportunity. When she steps outside of the lanes carved out for the MISOR she is often represented as a rebel, or worse, a traitor to her sex. Imagine former First Lady, Secretary of State, and Presidential

Candidate Hilary Clinton, or Representative Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez for modern examples of these MIPE women. In movies you can see these qualities represented in characters like Elsa in *Frozen*, or Josie Geller in *Never Been Kissed*. She is an outsider, and eventually finds that playing the game is too painful, even if she had longed to be one of the “pretty girls”.

In order to become sovereign and hold her own power, a woman must unify the two halves of her being, identify her primary archetype (MISOR or MIPE) and then reconnect to the other side (the secondary sub-archetype), unifying these two halves, reclaiming the lost sister-self. She will always be more one side than the other, and that is expected, welcomed. Her journey is to find HER unique powers, and thus “own herself”. Sovereignty is impossible without both sides unified in relationship with one another, not for the benefit of anyone but the woman herself. The MISOR and MIPE are not synonymous with “good vs evil”, it is culture who gives us these designations. No, a MISOR can be awful, and a MIPE can be wonderful. The importance of this research in breaking these binary expectations cannot be overstated.

The purpose of this book is to explore these portrayals and offer a blueprint for wholeness that ultimately embraces both sides of the Divided Woman as she walks along the Queen’s Path. CROWNED examines the reunification happening in contemporary society with new archetypes, characters, and ideals in the collective that illustrate this reunited woman. Overcoming the Divide is its own quest. At the end of this complex and harrowing journey a woman will have a choice. Does she give in to the world deciding how she should be defined? Or will she decide for herself, and embody the full, deep, woman she is? If she completes it, she gains sovereignty over herself, and thus agency in her own life. She is sovereign, a Queen.



### ***Why this book now?***

With the current devastation to reproductive freedom, women haven't been in this much peril since before the 1970's. It is imperative that women have the tools to recognize the complex portrayal and expectations of women in culture, AND that they have a path to overcome it. Reconciling the Divide empowers women and helps them to gain autonomy and sovereignty over their bodies, minds, and ambitions. Women cannot be free without owning ourselves, and no other model has developed a structure that describes how women can do that, and still be authentic to who they are in the deepest aspects of themselves.

The goal of *CROWNED*, is to offer women:

- A path to self-sovereignty that is based on a woman's unique history and goals
- Deeper *internal* relationships- with herself, her history, and her desires
- Deeper relationships to family, friends, and other women
- The opportunity for an individual woman to see herself as ***unbroken*** and whole
- Provide a history and model of the psychic rendering of the primordial woman into two roles: the MISOR and the MIPE.
- A story model for developing a narrative of one's life, a lens through which to identify significant life events, traumas, and desires.
- Development of their own personal values based on their unique path to Self-Sovereignty
- A model for examining women's roles in film, sacred literature, mythology, politics, and more.

If the #metoo movement has shown us anything, it is that women's experiences of domination have been hidden in plain sight for a very long time. The Women's March, the fury over the appointment of Brett Kavanaugh to the United States Supreme Court, the overturning of Roe vs Wade, the predatory behavior of entertainment moguls like Harvey Weinstein and Bill Cosby,

the rise of the *incel* phenomenon, all of these (and more) have focused awareness on the systems of domination that women endure.

This book is the culmination of seven years of research into psychology, history, politics, film, theater, literature, pop culture, sacred literature, mythology, and working with women clients in psychotherapy. In patriarchy there are only two categories for women to inhabit. One type of woman is acceptable, and another is not. The Women's Archetypal Journey is to see *how* she is split, and then to re-collect and reunify the rendered pieces in her own way, and by her own volition. In doing so she rises above the domination, physically setting herself free, living a life of sovereignty over herself.

### **Familiar MISORs, MIPES, and Queens**

The Divided Woman is everywhere. She shows up in every woman's personal story. She appears in every film, every television series, every novel, every memoir with a woman protagonist. She is front and center of our political discourse. The Divided Woman appears in the world in everything from sacred literature and fairy tales to history and pop culture. Once you "see" the Divided Woman, you'll see her everywhere.

#### MISORs

Sarah Palin  
 Lauren Boebert  
 Melania Trump  
 Margaret Thatcher  
 Queen Elizabeth II  
 Ellen Ripley  
 Eve  
 Celie Johnson  
 Audrey Hepburn  
 Cersei Lannister  
 Sansa Stark  
 Serena Joy  
 Mary of Nazareth  
 Anna  
 Aurora

#### MIPES

Hillary Clinton  
 Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
 Michelle Obama  
 Gloria Steinem  
 Princess Di  
 Xenomorph XX121 (The Alien)  
 Lilith  
 Shug Avery  
 Marilyn Monroe  
 Daenerys Targarian  
 Arya Stark  
 June Osborne  
 Mary Magdalene  
 Elsa  
 Maleficent

Recognizable Queens

Oprah Winfrey	Malala Yousafzai
Michelle Obama	Former German Chancellor Angele Merkel
Queen Victoria	Elle Woods at Graduation from Harvard
Lady Gaga	Celie Johnson at the end of <i>The Color Purple</i>
Beyoncé	Diana Prince at the end of <i>Wonder Woman</i>
Maya Angelou	Sansa Stark at the end of <i>Game of Thrones</i>

These archetypes have been with us for the last few thousand years of storytelling. What is new is that she is moving into a new identity, where the Divided Woman, through a series of trials and reconciliations can become a Queen. By choosing, and bringing together the broken pieces, she has the opportunity to gain sovereignty over herself.

**Why am I the Person to write this Book?**

To be frank, it's because this is MY discovery. Writers have been trying to ferret out what's wrong with the Hero's Journey for decades. Many of them offer the Heroine's Journey as an analog. But as Laura Miller from *The New York Times Review*, and James Parker from *The Atlantic* have both pointed out, there's a "woman" problem at the center of the Hero's Journey. Contemporary writers like Maria Tatar (*The Heroine with 1000 Faces*), Carol S. Pearson, (*The Hero Within & The Heroine's Journey*), and Maureen Murdoch (*The Heroine's Journey*) fail to address the question, "What about the women?" The presumption is that because Campbell said that the Hero's Journey represents why he called "the monomyth of human experience", that he was correct. I cry foul. The Hero's Journey can be true for men or women. But a woman on the hero/heroine journey must FIRST be or become a Queen- otherwise she's treated like an imposter.

My research demonstrates that there IS an analog to the Hero's Journey, but it is NOT a heroine's journey. It is the Queen's Path. I have now done thousands of hours of research, written about this extensively, taught it to people, and had it challenged by colleagues and friends. I

have scoured academic research looking for anything comparable. Some researchers have come close to describing what I have uncovered, but no one has done the depth of analysis or formed a whole model that is not derivative of the Hero's Journey. If another author has come close, they have not reached the conclusion that for women to participate in the world, they first need absolute autonomy. No one yet approaches the depth of historical, mythological, archetypal, and psychological research that I have engaged in.

### **Competitive Analysis**

#### ***Background:***

Clarissa Pinkola-Estes described a wild woman archetype in *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, analogous to the wild man in Robert Bly's *Iron John*. But no one has studied and exposed a unifying monomyth for women in the same vein as the Hero's Journey... until now. *CROWNED: from Divided Woman to Queen of Your Life* codifies the emergence of a set of female archetypes throughout history, mythology, and popular culture. It then takes these parallels and shows how there is a growing emergence of the Archetypal Feminine through a new lens. Some parts of our Western Imagination are ready (the arrival of characters like Katniss Everdeen and Queen Elsa), and others are still resisted with a vengeance (the presidential run of Hilary Clinton).

Authors Maureen Murdock, Gail Carriger, and Victoria Schmidt have offered alternatives. All three have authored books titled: *The Heroine's Journey*. These models all contain elements of what I call "The Queen's Path" or in the UK, "The Sovereign Path" (teaching in the UK has shown me that the queen archetype is replete with negative connotations). But all of the above authors, with the exception of Carriger, position the heroine as a derivative of the hero, expecting that the heroine is struggling to unite her feminine and masculine sides. These authors ignore the structural impediments of what being a woman in patriarchy actually means. The

struggle for female agency and sovereignty is the story of women determining their own destinies in *spite* of patriarchy, NOT *ignoring* women's lived experience *within* patriarchy.

The works of Murdock and Schmidt appropriately focus on an internal struggle. They posit that women must heal a wound in order to overcome adversity, in that vein, my findings are similar. Carriger posits that heroine's journeys are about creating community. All of these authors advocate for a union in the end, similar to my work. However, they miss the (potentially negative) impact of their models. For Murdock in particular, her model advocates a union of masculine and feminine within the individual woman. Murdock is a Jungian analyst and her work clearly is adapted to the Jungian ideal of balance in the internal psychology between masculine and feminine. But she ignores an important Jungian idea, and that is the tendency for that inner masculine side to actually show up as an internalized patriarchal abuser.

The problem with models that advocate for a "Heroine's Journey" is that the form of the protagonist (whether a character in a story, or a living, breathing woman) is still defined by a relationship to men, or to maleness. CROWNED is bigger than that, because it examines women's lived experience and gives them the tools to overcome the patriarchal limits imposed on them. As a result, in CROWNED a woman can identify herself in the divide, and then slowly piece together her own unique path to reunify the abjected pieces of HERSELF, rather than an internalized, masculine other. When she does so she is free of the psychological bonds of the patriarchy, even if she still lives within it.

### **Comparison Titles**

*Untamed*, by Glennon Doyle, The Dial Press. Hardcover and Digital Editions March 2020. Hardcover sales to-date: 1,471,321. Digital sales to-date: 347,974.

This memoir is beautifully written with crisp prose and beautiful stories. Some chapters are very short, others longer. The book goes into detail about Doyle's life and how at times she

has found herself looking for honesty and authenticity in the face of tragedy, pain, or the unknown. She writes about her marriages, her children, her writing, and her topsy-turvy ascent to becoming a thought-leader on women's issues. Straightforward and heart wrenching, Doyle's work has an approachability that is accessible for most readers. Her journey parallels the Queen's Path perfectly, with every part of her story aligning to the model.

*Atlas of the Heart: Mapping Meaningful Connection and the Language of Human Experience*, by Brené Brown, Random House. First Hardcover Edition, November 2021. Random House. Hardcover release to-date: 776,392, Digital sales to date: 64,537).

Brown gives her famed "every woman/every-day" stories in this work. She offers readers a guide to complex emotions to help them name, identify, and make sense of their feelings. In psychology if you can't name something you can't treat it, because you can't even find it. Her work covers something I often discuss with my clients, "precision of language". For me, this is the idea that our ability to say something accurately is a mirror to our being able to understand it objectively, rather than being fused or identified with it. In this regard her work is similar to mine. Her work is an "Atlas of Feeling and Emotion" and mine is a "Map to Sovereignty".

*The Heroine with 1001 Faces*, by Maria Tatar. First hardcover edition September 2021, Liveright Publishing. Sales to date: 8,247.

This book is a great examination of stories of female characters, whom Tatar calls "heroines" that we may not be familiar with. It examines the ones we may have forgotten about, and reminds readers that women have been portrayed with different kinds of power in the world's myths and fairy tales. However, its commentary on the current place of women's narrative is

limited to reminding us that we have other places to seek inspiration rather than the usual tropes. Her book is interesting, but not illuminating. It offers women no models to follow, only stories to examine that are outside of our expectations.

*The Heroine's Journey: Women's Quest for Wholeness*, by Maureen Murdock. First paperback edition 1990, Shambala Publishers. Most recent edition, August 2020. Sales to-date of most recent edition, 3,876. Original and subsequent editions published in multiple languages.

This book is dated, but it is still popular with women looking for corollaries to the Hero's Journey. The whole thing reads more like a New Age tome for the Divine Feminine, while still rooted in the ideas of the Hero's Journey. Murdock espouses a need for all women to unify an internal masculine and feminine. While this was appealing at the time the book first appeared (1990), it feels very much that the model is derivative of the Hero's Journey. Rather than place women at the center of a female-oriented personal narrative, Murdock claims that all women suffer from a wound, and that we all must overcome the desire to be masculine in order to fit in. She calls for a healing of the patriarchal wound but doesn't dig deeply into the wounding itself. Further, her healing of the wound never calls for the reader to acknowledge the wounding, and reclaim her broken pieces as she heals, only that she heal the wound and unite her own masculine and feminine sides. In a patriarchal culture, it is impossible to identify whether the internal masculine voice is part of the Self, or the voice that keeps women policing themselves. Her work has been pivotal in even conceiving of a woman on the Hero's Journey, but it doesn't meet the moment.

*The Writers Journey: 25th Anniversary Edition: Mythic Structure for Writers*, by Christopher Vogler. Michael Wiese Productions, Paperback Edition, August 2020. Current edition sales to date: 12,583 (numbers reflect only the 25th anniversary edition). First edition published in 1992, and translated into multiple languages.)

In this book Vogler outlines the 12 steps along the path of the Hero's Journey, and offers it as a literary model for storytelling. The book was originally intended to be a book for screenwriters, but the book's offering has made it a staple of writing programs in novels, poetry, biography, and television. What's more the book is a part of a broader movement called "heroism science" which studies the Hero's Journey across cultures, and sets the model at the center of human endeavor. For obvious reasons I cannot agree that the Campbell's monomyth idea is accurate. Women are rarely represented there. But Vogler's work has stood the test of time. It is used in university writing programs, hobby courses, and can be found on the shelf of every screenwriter in Hollywood.

## **The Author**

I have a PhD with a focus on social and media psychology. My PhD research focused on how moral panics emerge in communities, and how the accused perpetrators are represented in the media. My academic career united a background in film and television production with a mandate from the Governor's office that Louisiana develop a new economic sector in high performance computing. I joined Louisiana State University (LSU) as part of their flagship initiative, the Center for Computation and Technology (CCT). My contribution was to unite the ambitions of the Governor's mandate for a new Louisiana economic sector with the policies, symbols, and programs that the legislature and the electorate could connect with- the entertainment products that they consumed but could not yet produce.



I have worked in or around the studio system for more than two decades. I founded The Red Stick International Animation Festival, which from 2004-2010 was the largest in the US. I co-founded the Animation, Visualization, Arts, Technology and Research (AVATAR) Program at Louisiana State University, which is now among the top ten programs of its kind in the United States. I won a governor's technology leader of the year award for bringing animation, video game technologies, and technical film programs and projects to the state of Louisiana. I have toured and talked about animation and film at schools, trade shows, and communities all over the world.

My own journey into the world of depth psychology began when I was at LSU. The uphill climb in academia rendered me deeply disillusioned. By 2007 I found myself suffering from debilitating sleep disturbances- horrific nightmares that made me afraid to sleep. I had nightly intrusions from disturbing dreams, night terrors, and nightmares. I began a difficult and painful personal analysis that revealed that I was constantly at odds with myself. I tried to balance the world of my ambitions with the roles that were placed before me. They could never meet. As soon as I would enjoy some achievement, there was a hindrance, or an injury added to the success.

I left LSU after eight years of very successful fund-raising, grant-development, program creation, public awareness, and policy development. Despite the successes I had there, I felt empty and beaten down. I returned to Los Angeles, and through a series of synchronicities found myself studying to become a therapist at Pacifica Graduate Institute in 2013. I had dedicated myself to my own psychoanalysis since 2008, uncovering and identifying the broken pieces of myself. But nothing prepared me for what happened when I arrived on the Pacifica Campus. My nightmares and dreams STOPPED. They just stopped. I was no longer haunted. I was able to

sleep through the night. My psyche took a deep breath, and began to assimilate, and then integrate, all the broken pieces of myself that had been chipped away along my own journey as a Divided Woman.

I earned a Master's in Psychology with a concentration in Depth Psychology from Pacifica Graduate Institute, where my thesis focused on the portrayal of women in family films. It was in this research that I first formerly encountered the Divided Woman as an archetypal force. I was fascinated with the changes in how women characters were portrayed across the Disney feature animation filmography. For my thesis I wanted to explore what appeared to be an increase in agency for women characters incrementally over the eighty or so years since *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). While I still want to do that research, I focused my research on one aspect of this archetype, the Divided Woman, for my thesis. Since completing that master's degree in 2016 I have been refining this model, presenting it at writer's and academic conferences, talking to women's groups about it, and discussing it with depth psychologists and mythologists.

Since completing my master's at Pacifica I have found my niche as a therapist. I work primarily with creative professionals. Directors, actors, writers, musicians, come to my practice to work on their own divides, including their experiences with anxiety, impostor syndrome, and more. This work is deeply satisfying and has offered me my own Queenly domain. I enjoy more agency, personal power, and self-acceptance in finding my own personal path to satisfaction and sovereignty. I am no longer tortured by dreams, nightmares, or a constant internal nagging that I am not good enough, or that my work is in service only to the Divide.

I have contributed articles to several blogs and websites including: Shondaland, Upjourney, and Medium, and to various journalists writing about psychology and creativity. I also am

preparing an article on the Divided Woman for *Feminism and Religion*. I am a psychology consultant for Disney Feature Animation. I have very successfully changed perceptions of challenging topics (High Performance Computing, CGI Animation, Film finance) in my career. In my second career as a therapist, I break down challenging archetypal ideas on a daily basis. I am well prepared to take this information to a broader audience and consider myself an excellent public speaker and instructor. While I have never written a book for publication, I have written a thesis and a doctoral dissertation.

I also have presented this information at conferences for writers, mythologists, psychologists, and women who are working on personal development issues. Everywhere I have presented this material it has been well-received, with dozens of questions and email relationships begun as a result. I have also shared this information with studio colleagues and have been asked to consult on everything from feature film scripts to children's television series.

I am prepared to hire my own publicist to help me promote my work. I have built a course and a website already, complete with several videos and free resources for visitors. I gladly work with and give presentations to writers' groups, and women's book clubs whenever I have the opportunity. I have been interviewed on podcasts that are interested in my work, and I am prepared to make more efforts when the book is released, including hiring a booking agent dedicated to podcasts and interviews.

### **Production Details**

The book is expected to be approximately 100,000 words ( $\pm 10,000$ ). The book is designed for two primary audiences. Women who want to learn more about their own sovereignty through reuniting the Divided Woman, and for writers who create women characters and want something more appropriate to women's journeys. I am planning on adding two workbooks, one for individual women or women's book clubs, and the other dedicated to helping writers use CROWNED

to help develop women characters. Each chapter includes historical, mythological, personal, literary, and pop culture references to help demonstrate the ideas in the chapter.

## **Book Structure**

### **Section I: Sovereignty and the Divided Woman**

This first section of the book goes into an in-depth analysis of the concepts of the Queen and the Divided Woman. It starts with an explanation of Sovereignty, and then details the Maiden in Search of Relationship (MISOR) and the Magical Isolated Powerful & Endangered (MIPE) sub-archetypes. In order for a woman to reach her own sovereign-self she must first identify her primary sub-archetype and examine the discarded parts of the one she has been forced to cut herself off from. The process of becoming queen requires her to reconnect to the pieces of herself that she has rejected. By identifying whether she is primarily a MISOR or a MIPE, she can then identify the “lost sister-self” in the opposing sub-archetype. In doing so she can reclaim aspects of herself that she may have had to repress like courage, intelligence, nurturing, or service. She can then identify those aspects that she cast away or rejected, reunite herself to the lost self, and reclaim her individual right as a fully autonomous human being to design her life per her unique vision of womanhood.

### **Section II: The Queen’s Path**

The Queen’s Path takes a woman through four quadrants and thirteen way markers. At the beginning of the book there is a detailed graphic that shows the way markers of the Queen’s Path. It is currently available for download on my website as a full color PDF. The Map is complex. It starts with an axis that denotes the “World of Visible Power and Form” above the horizon, and the “World of Danger and Mystery” below the horizon. There are then four quadrants that roughly map to the face of a clock. The first quadrant, from the twelve to the three. The second that takes us into the underworld, from three to six. The third where the most peril lies, from

six to nine, and the fourth which returns us to “the world of visible power and form” where the woman is returns to the world sovereign over herself.

These are the milestones in each quadrant.

- In quadrant one she starts off undifferentiated, and in the world of visible power and form. In this quadrant she is cursed and marked.
- In quadrant two she crosses into the underworld and encounters the Divide in earnest. She is rendered onto either the path of the MISOR or the MIPE
- In quadrant three she faces death and the option of possible reunification/connection to her deepest self.
- In quadrant four she returns to the world of visible power and form. To solidify her sovereignty she experiences a physical change and reclaims her life for herself alone.

## Chapter Outline

### *Section I: Sovereignty and the Divided Woman*

This provides a brief intro to the section. There is a discussion of the archetypal model, introduction to the wheel of the model and how it is laid out. It includes a brief introduction to what lies ahead. I go into an examination of the current use of the Queen archetype and how she is emerging organically in everything from linguistics (“YAASSSS Queen”) to social media memes.

#### *Introduction: The World is Run by Archetypes*

Carl Jung introduced us to the word “archetype” but the concept has been with us since Plato’s *Forms*. Every culture has sacred forms (Gods or goddesses, saviors, sacred ideas, or concepts) that are used to embody the grand metaphors of life. Some of these are easily accessible, “God the Father” and others are very complex like “American.” Everything in culture is run by archetype and metaphor, from our political ideas to our most sacred religious beliefs. In order to understand how we fit into those archetypal ideas, we must first know how to recognize them.

This chapter explores how the world of archetypes affects us and helps set the stage for the work in the following chapters.

### *Chapter 1: Invisibility vs Sovereignty*

What does it mean to have sovereignty? We speak about sovereign nations. We talk about bodily autonomy. But what do we really mean when we ask people to be responsible for themselves? The definition of personal sovereignty is “self-ownership.” This boils down to the concept that the person owns her own body, and has a right to bodily integrity and autonomy, and to be the exclusive arbiter of control of the body. What social structures enable or limit sovereignty? Do we even know what it means to truly own ourselves in the world? How has sovereignty been shaped for women and marginalized people over the last hundred years? Women’s rights to bodily autonomy have been chopped to pieces in the past year. How can we reframe and reclaim what it means to have sovereignty over oneself?

### *Chapter 2: The Divided Woman*

As early as 500 B.C.E. Sun Tzu instructed generals and kings in the use of division in conquering countries, lands, and peoples. “If your opponent is temperamental, seek to irritate him... If his forces are united, separate them. If sovereign and subject are in accord, put division between them. “Stories have reproduced this division for as long as we have been telling them. Women have been trained to turn on themselves and one another practically, politically, and in relationships --from neighborhood Tupperware parties to high school mean girls. This division is easily exposed in women’s mythology, as in the story of the first women, Lilith and Eve, to the fairy tales of Cinderella and her stepsisters, right down to the present day in the telling of stories like *Frozen* or *The Handmaid’s Tale*. In this chapter I introduce the concept of the Divided Woman and preview the new unity that is emerging as a renewed mythology where being

CROWNED is possible. The MIPE and MISOR are introduced and discussed in depth with an explanation of how to identify your own archetypal lanes.

### *Chapter 3: Divided In the Political Arena*

Women in politics often are forced to play the “girl” game in its most engineered forms. Politics requires that women live up to archetypal ideals in a particularly prescriptive way. This chapter examines women in politics and how their stories have been told as Divided Woman stories. For example, Sarah Palin as the MISOR, and Hillary Clinton as the MIPE. In this chapter I discuss how women in politics are often placed into the categories of MISOR and MIPE to make them satisfactory to the political communities that support them. This chapter examines some of the stories of women in the political arena, and how they have been held up as models of either the MISOR or MIPE model. There have been few true “Queens” in the sense of women who avoid the labels associated with the Divide. Though she is not a political leader, Malala You-safszai is one example of a woman with sovereignty over herself, a global inspiration for women’s rights.

### *Chapter 4: Women in Sacred Literature*

This chapter examines stories in the Bible from the Talmud to the New Testament. In it I examine the stories of Lilith, Adam’s first wife who refused to submit to her husband and chose exile rather than submission. I compare her to the story of Eve who was created “from” Adam in order to make sure that Adam’s second wife was subordinate to her husband. I look at the stories of Hadassah and Esther, and of Rachel & Leah. In the New Testament I examine the relationship between the popular understanding of Mary of Nazareth versus the historical treatment of Mary Magdalene.

### *Chapter 5: Women in Mythology*

This chapter examines several world myths and how the goddesses reveal their MISOR and MIPE qualities. The chapter will examine the stories of Demeter and Persephone, Helen of Troy and Cassandra, Ariadne and Athena, Isis and Nephthys, Innana and Erishkigal, Freya and Hel. Other mythological counterparts may be examined as well.

### *Chapter 6: Women in Fairy Tales*

We are so familiar with the fairy tale versions of the MISOR and MIPE, that it will seem obvious when looking at stories of wicked witches and damsels in distress. Snow White and Rapunzel in particular are particularly ripe for this examination. But what about earlier fairy tales that we may not be as familiar with. What about Hans Christian Anderson's *The Red Shoes*? Or *The Little Mermaid*? I will examine these and other fairy tales to expose the pattern of the acceptable (MISOR) versus exiled (MIPE) woman at the heart of most fairy tales.

### *Chapter 7: Women in Literature*

In this chapter I examine well known female protagonists in everything from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* to *A Room with a View*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Beloved* and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Whether discussing Cathy from *Wuthering Heights* or Jane and Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice*, the MISOR and the MIPE can be found in how we have read about women since some of the earliest literature. Depending on length I may also include some French and German literature as well.

### *Chapter 8: Women in the Movies*

Some of the most famous women in the movies clearly line up with our expectations of women in the MISOR and MIPE models. Whether we're talking about Melanie (MISOR) and Scarlett (MIPE) from *Gone with the Wind*, or Lorelei Lee (MISOR) and Dorothy Shaw (MIPE)



from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, we can see the clear examples of the Divided Woman in the movies. She continues to show up throughout movie history in Maria Von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*, Ellen Ripley in *Alien*, Sarah Conner in *The Terminator*, Celie and Shug from *The Color Purple*, Gracie Hart in *Miss Congeniality*, Elsa and Anna in *Frozen*, or the eponymous *Moana*. Regardless of genre, the movies are the perfect place to find the Divided Woman and her sub-archetypes, the MISOR and the MIPE.

#### *Chapter 9: Women in Television*

The Divided Woman is practically EVERYWHERE in television. She is often portrayed here in an overtly characterized fashion whether in comedy or drama. You see the familiar MISOR and MIPE in *Bewitched* as Samantha and Serena, and in *I Dream of Jeannie*, Jeannie and her sister, also called Jeannie. In dramas we find her in *The Handmaid's Tale*, (Serena Joy and June Osborne), *Game of Thrones* (in four characters: Sansa Stark (MISOR) and Arya Stark (MIPE), Cersei Lannister (MISOR) and Daenerys Targarian (MIPE)). She appears in cable and traditional television. You see her in *Euphoria*, *Killing Eve*, *The Nevers*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, *The Shining Vale*, and *Outlander*.

#### *Chapter 10: Women in Psychotherapy*

My clients are always telling me the stories of how they “should” be. They almost always have some aspects of both the MISOR and the MIPE in their ideals. Mostly these are MISOR ideals (be pretty, be available, be perfect, be thin, be nice) that bump up against their MIPE ideals (be successful, be smart, know your stuff, be accomplished, have your own money). Most women come into psychotherapy because of problems in their primary relationships. They truly believe that *if they can become a better partner*, that their relationship will improve, regardless of whether the partner does his or her own work.

What usually happens is that the woman in her therapy comes to some realizations about herself- sometimes these are reflective of her limitations- (I need to work on my anger, or I need to ask for more time/attention/collaboration), other times these are examples of places where she is “overdoing” the role she has been given (MISOR/MIPE) to the exclusion of some part of herself that she is desperate to reconnect with. For most of my clients, this comes as a sad awakening, with the realization that she is the only person who is aware that there is something missing in her. Her partner may feel that there is something wrong with her, but most times it won't be that she is doing “too much” of one of her roles. *Her* changing things often creates more conflict, and this has to be managed very carefully.

Women who navigate this split well often realize that they are not their relationships or their roles. While this can be a difficult transition, it is absolutely essential to that woman knowing that she owns her story, her path, and herself. By choosing her identity rather than having it given to her by society, culture, or tradition, she has the right to self-determination.

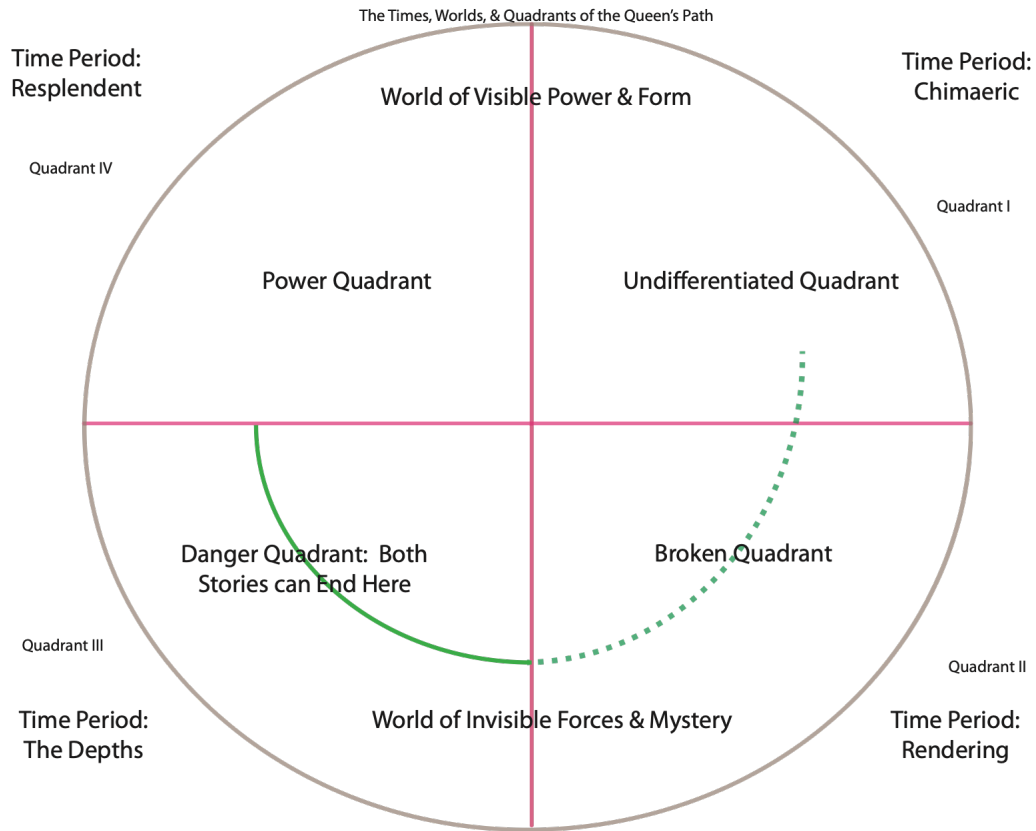
## **Section Two: The Queen's Path**

### *Introduction: How We Tell Stories*

#### *Chapter 1: The Worlds and the Quadrants*

Before jumping into the deep end of this new way of looking at women's narratives, we must first understand the structure of the model. The model consists of a circle, broken into four quadrants. Two quadrants sit above a horizon line, and two below it. The model begins at 12 o'clock and rotates around clockwise. But the quarters and halves represent different parts of the structure. The upper half of the circle is the visible world, which is punctuated by power and form. The lower half of the circle is the invisible world, punctuated by mystery and unknowable forces. These can be thought of as the conscious world, above the horizon, and the unconscious,

below the horizon. It is critical to not reduce these structures too far, lest we lose their complexity.



The green line marks the path of the Divide. This chapter discusses the structure of the model, and can be used as a reference for the reader throughout the book. From this point, the book’s chapters are defined by the way markers of the path, with a single chapter for each “pie piece”. These chapters are organized by the four quadrants of the Queen’s Path, and each subsection begins with a diagram.

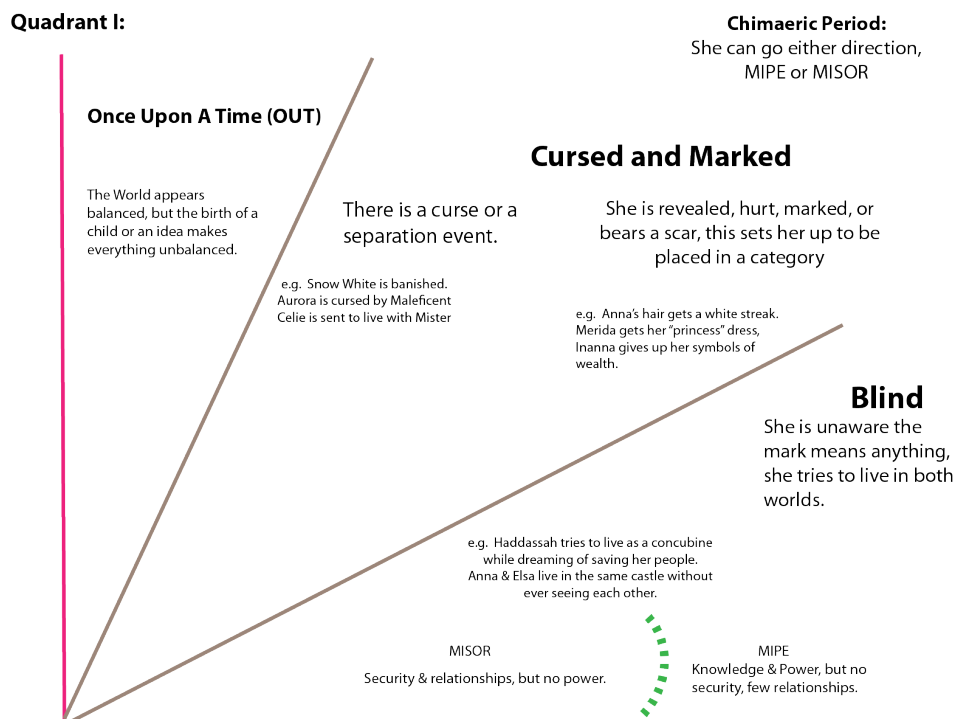
### Quadrant 1: The Chimaeric Period

Introduction to the Chimaeric world of being undifferentiated. In this brief introduction I discuss the overall nature of the first quadrant, and the journey that will take place there. From the first “pie piece” of this quadrant where we discuss the meaning of “Once Upon a Time” to

the final pie piece which is the gateway from the upper world of visible power and form to the underworld, filled with danger and mystery. The chimaeric section of the model moves the woman through the experience of being undifferentiated to the first hint of becoming the Divided Woman.

*Chapter 1: Once Upon a Time*

This chapter discusses the first “pie piece” in the model. Every fairy tale begins here. The story begins with “once” indicating something special, a separation from the normal course of events. And then, “Upon a Time,” tells us that the story is outside of time, removed from the linear narrative of history. This opening implies that the story is timeless, eternal. Beginning it as an eternal story also sets up the introduction to the “girl’s” life. She is outside of time. Her story IS always disruptive. Women wield the power of life, and as such, the arrival of a woman’s story always has the power to remake the world. In this chapter we discuss the disruptive power of women, and then open the discussion of the model by talking about what it means to start out in



the world *undifferentiated*. At the beginning of a woman's life, she is not yet set on the tracks of the Divided Woman. She has all the power and possibility of life before her. In this chapter some examples of "undifferentiated" story beginnings are shared: *The Garden of Eden*, *Legally Blonde*, *The Color Purple*, *Wicked*, *Wonder Woman*, and *The Wizard of Oz*.

### *Chapter 2: Cursed & Marked*

This is the beginning of understanding the Divided Woman. In stories, and in real women's lives, we begin to feel unsettled. Something in the deep begins to show us that things are not what they appear to be. The curse of being female is "given" to us. In fairy tales, this often comes as an actual curse by another character, or by magical powers. Aurora is cursed by Maleficent in *Sleeping Beauty*. Anna is accidentally cursed by her sister in *Frozen*. Or it can be a symbolic curse, demonstrated as a sexual identity coming forward. For Celie in *The Color Purple* it is being sexually abused, and her children taken from her. The curse doesn't always take a sexual form, but it almost always bears the weight of a woman's power over birth. The purpose of the curse is to remind a woman that she is a subject first, and a woman second. The mark is connected to the curse. Sometimes in stories it is a physical scar or wound, Anna's shock of white hair in *Frozen*. It could also be a cultural "stamp" like the "A" worn in *The Scarlet Letter*. It's Janine losing her eye in *The Handmaid's Tale*. It's Celie getting slapped hard in the face by Mister when she talks back to him. In personal stories it can be a hard slap across the face when a woman tells her mother that she has her first period. No matter where we go, women make sense of their *curse*, through their *mark*.

### *Chapter 3: Blind*

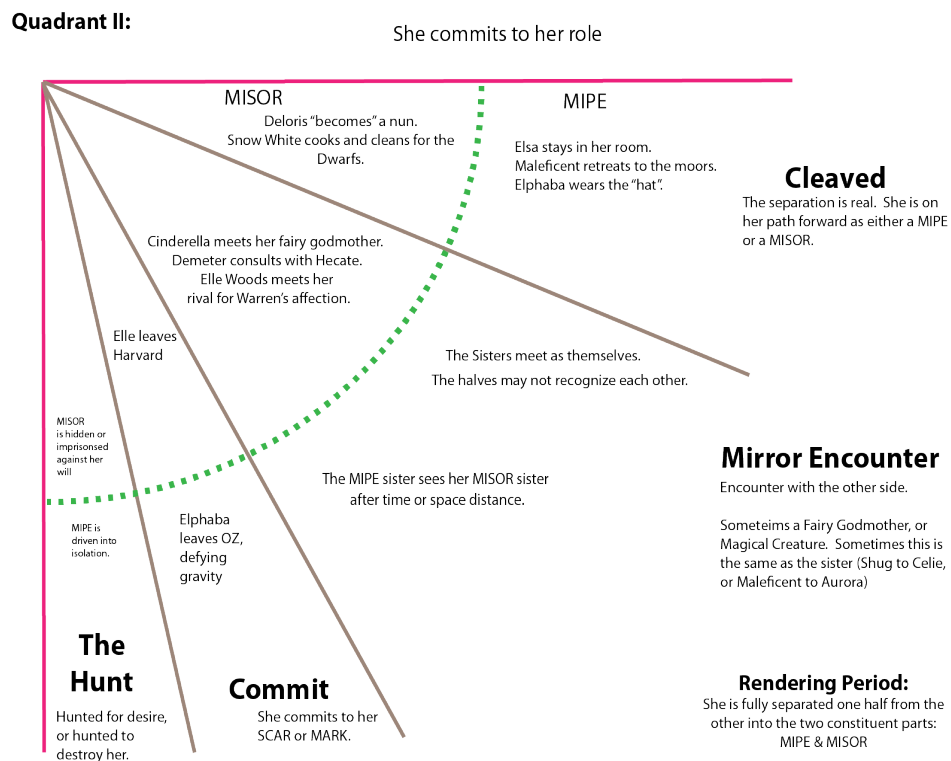
Almost every woman, whether in her own story, or in a powerful narrative like *The Color Purple* or Cheryl Strayed's *Wild*, goes through a period where she tries to see beyond the divide.

She doesn't believe in it. Culture tells her there is no divide. Society says she's crazy. Pop-psychology tells her to just lean-in. "There is no divide, it's all you!" She tries, and fails to make sense of her story as she desperately tries to piece together the path blindfolded, while the women around her, or the business she is in, or her compatriots also pretend that there is no divide, even as they treat her in an alignment with her archetypal lane. Sometimes the character is met by a powerful seer, someone who sees the divide and tries to point it out. Most times though, the woman, or the character, is left in the darkness. For Cheryl Strayed on the Pacific Crest Trail, her blindness begins with her drug use after her mother's death and continues into her preparing for her hike. For Celie in *The Color Purple*, it is when Sophia confronts Celie about advising Harpo to beat his wife. In the 2018 film, *I Feel Pretty*, the main character Renee is actually blind to reality, having been hit on the head in an accident, she sees herself only as she wishes to be.

The Divide is in view, it is coming for you. In stories this is when the character starts to notice that something is off, something is about to happen. Sometimes this is the "inciting incident" of the story. The moment from which there is no turning back. Women sometimes believe that they have a choice, but they have only two options. They see the MISOR and the MIPE paths. They fear being put into one. They resist. But the divide is coming for them, the archetype will live through them. This is Elsa preparing for her coronation. It is Celie telling Nettie that she knows her sister will need to leave soon. It is Cheryl Strayed when she realizes that she wants to "be alone".

## Quadrant Two: The Rendering

The girl is now squarely in the underworld, in the world of invisible powers and mystery. The only way out is through. In the second quadrant the woman must face the divide. She is being groomed for a track of either being a MISOR or a MIPE. As she traverses this quadrant, she will start to see her place in the world, and she will push against it. The pie pieces generally fall in order, but sometimes they shift a little bit in this quadrant.



### Chapter 4: Cleaved

This experience breaks the woman. She is separated from her sister self. This can be in the form of a narrative where the woman is separated from a literal sister or mother. Or it can be

the first time that a character is made aware of the binary options for women. Cleaving is when the character is forced into her lane. She will live as a MISOR or a MIPE whether she likes it or not. In *The Color Purple* this is when Nettie is forced to leave the Johnson's farm, Nettie will be a MIPE in relation to Celie. In the book and play *Wicked*, it is when Elphaba leaves her family for the University of Shiz, off to figure out how to live a magical life and save the Animals (book), seeing herself squarely in her role as a MIPE. In *Waitress* it is when Jenna realizes she can't escape her husband, she will be a MISOR, longing for relationship. In Patty Jenkin's *Wonder Woman* this moment comes when Diana leaves Themiscyra and is told she cannot return, she is a MIPE, endangered without the protection of the Amazons.

#### *Chapter 5: Mirror Encounter*

The protagonist sees a version of her sister self. Sometimes this is a magical encounter, sometimes it is seeing an option from a distance. It can lead to the mirror moment, where the protagonist sees her "other" in the mirror, either admiringly or recoiling against her. The encounter is the first hint, and how it unfolds is critical to the journey the MIPE or MISOR will take. How does she treat the "other" in the encounter? In *Frozen* this is the coronation ball, when Elsa and Anna are exchanging polite words on the dais. In *The Color Purple*, it is when Mister brings Shug Avery home for the first time. In the Broadway version of *Wicked*, this is when Glinda and Elphaba are paired in their dorm room together.

This is the moment when the woman sees her herself AND the sister side in their respective lanes, for the first time. She may hope to escape. She starts to see herself as inside or outside in a meaningful way. She reacts in shame, anger, acceptance, pity, or rage. Often the door to see her own circumstance is through the assistance of her sister self. Either the woman is mirrored for the first time by her counterpart or a powerful other, or she sees her reflection in the sister



self. In *Waitress*, this is the moment where Jenna realizes that her friend and co-worker is also having an affair. In *Frozen* it is when Anna confronts Elsa in the Ice Castle. In sacred literature of the New Testament, it is when Mary visits her cousin Martha who is also pregnant. At this point in the woman's life she earnestly believes that she can use her lane to her advantage.

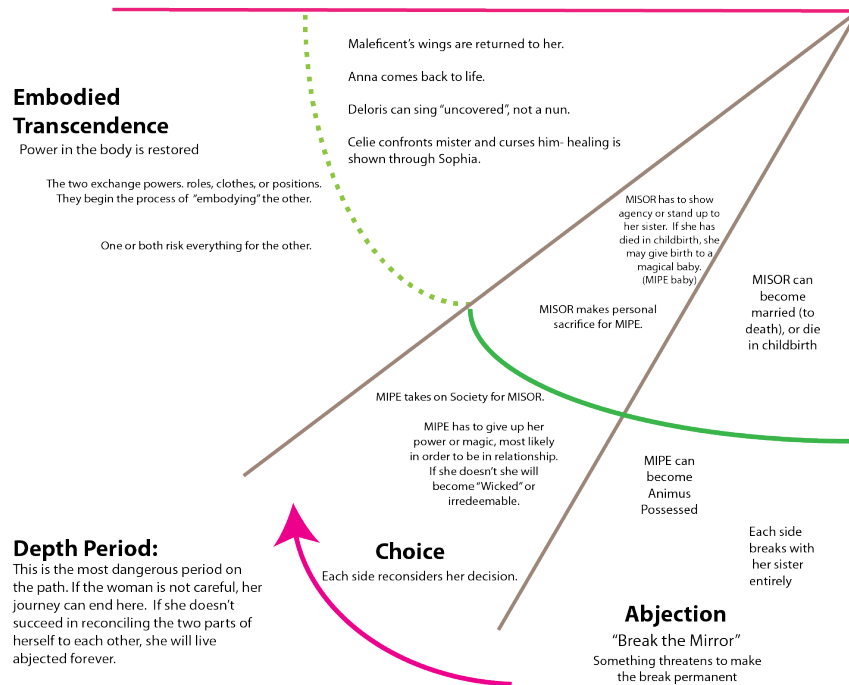
### *Chapter 6: Commit*

Once she sees *herself*, the woman commits to the lane she occupies. If she's a MISOR she's going to be the best housewife, mother, secretary, or helpmeet possible. If she's a MIPE she's going to stop hiding, and instead use her powers, and she knows that those powers were given to her for a reason! Sometimes this commitment has the best intentions, with a woman believing that the purity of her effort will bring her the happiness she desires. But this happiness rarely comes. In this moment *Legally Blonde's* Elle Woods commits to studying, the montage of her successful efforts bringing her satisfaction at Harvard Law School. In *Maleficent* it is when the eponymous character starts to tutor Aurora, meeting her secretly at night. In the film, *I Feel Pretty* with Amy Schumer it is when Renee dedicates herself to her role at Lily LeClaire cosmetics, helping to turn things around. In sacred literature, this is Mary of Nazareth telling her betrothed, Joseph that she is with child. In *Frozen* it is the powerful scene and song, *Let it Go* when Elsa builds her Ice Castle on the North Mountain. In the musical version of *Wicked*, this is Elphaba's commitment to be independent marked by the song *Defying Gravity*. In Patty Jenkin's *Wonder Woman*, this is Diana taking charge and heading into the battlefield at the beginning of Act II.

### *Chapter 7: The Hunt*

The transitions between the quadrants are always intense, fraught with fear and threats. The transition from the second to the third quadrant is filled with anxiety and danger. The

woman is hunted, chased, or perhaps she has turned the tables and is doing some of her own hunting. If the woman is a MISOR she will be chased through the underworld, the forest, or another frightening, wild place. If she is a MIPE, she may be the one doing the chasing, trying to force a man, or her sister self into a role that helps her achieve a goal, usually one that she presumes will give her power or a treasured state (motherhood, being married, a prestigious position). This can feel like a quest. Sometimes the goal that is the object of the hunt has the qualities of the hero's quest, but the achievement falls flat for the Divided Woman. She cannot truly have the object of her desire WITHOUT sovereignty.



### Quadrant Three: The Depths

In this quadrant, the woman is in real danger. It is in this quadrant that fairy tales and stories of monstrous women end. In this quadrant we find The Happily Ever After (HEA) ending,

and the Animus Possession (AP) ending. Animus possession is a Jungian term that highlights the experience of women when they are overly driven by what Jung called the Animus or “masculine side” of their psyche. In this quadrant, the woman has emerged from the chase or the hunt and she is faced with either a “happy ending” where she submits to men, family, culture (HEA), or professional success (AP) without fulfillment. The HEA ends with her married or having children without her own imperative, without a meaning to her life outside of those. The AP ending sees her giving up any culturally accepted “feminine” identity, ie, submissive and/or mothering and striving for ego, career, or financial success.

As the woman traverses the depths, she is at real risk to lose not only her identity, but her life. She can be absorbed in the experience of the HEA and be invisible except as a wife and mother. She can die of sadness, or her life can end violently if she identifies with the MISOR and a man, culture, or even if she herself wishes to stay “pure”. Her life can also end if she cannot be subsumed enough for her children or partner. She is no safer if she takes the track of the AP. She can lose her identity, and her life there too. In the AP ending, she either dies alone and isolated, or her life ends through violence because she wants too much power, which is a threat to those around her.

### *Chapter 8: Abjection*

In this chapter I examine how the woman sees her sister self and is angered, enraged, or hurt. Sometimes this is a protection, or a defense mechanism. Sometimes it comes in the form of a betrayal. Breaking the mirror is almost always painful. When we break the mirror, it is because we cannot bear to look at the “other” side. In movies like *Frozen*, this moment comes for Anna and Elsa when Anna comes to the ice castle to confront Elsa and get her to come home and bring

back summer. In *The Color Purple*, it is when Celie is reading one of the letters and is envisioning the life of her sister Nettie. Mister slaps her hard, making her nose bleed. Celie considers cutting Mister's throat rather than continue to be abused by him. In mythology you can find this in the story of Demeter Erinys (angry Demeter) who when she can't find her daughter, Persephone, wanders the world letting everything die around her. Hecate comes to Demeter to tell her that Persephone has been taken to the Underworld. This is the moment when Princess Di seriously considers suicide after learning of her husband's affair. It is the moment in *Game of Thrones* when Sansa Stark is remanded to the sadistic Ramsey Bolton as a bride.

This chapter describes the crisis of abandonment. A woman will often "perform" the experience of her own abandonment by denouncing the part of herself she feels she must reject in order to survive. After breaking the mirror, the woman vows never to allow her sister side *in* again. She commits to disowning or completely destroying her sister self. Often *Breaking the Mirror* and *Abjection* happen quickly one right after the other. In a woman's life this often happens against her will. She is forced to "lose" this side of herself. Some women never recover. For example, a woman who has always been a MISOR, whose husband leaves her, may never forgive him, she may hate the MIPE life so much that she refuses to become independent. This is why this quadrant is so dangerous. It is ripe with opportunities for the divide to become permanent, ossified. A woman can "die" in, or because of, her Happily Ever After. The same is true of choosing a career. A woman can "die" because of her effort to force her visibility through Animus Possession. This needn't be an actual death, it is enough to refuse the call to sovereignty, which requires that she go back and address the divide in herself, confronting and making choices about what she wants or needs to reclaim.

In *Frozen*, this moment comes when Elsa is overwhelmed by her sister's pleas to return to Arendelle. There is a reprise of her "Let it Go" song, that ends with... "I can't", when she launches a flare of magic that pierces her sister's heart. In *The Color Purple*, this moment comes when Celie decides to leave Mister once and for all over Thanksgiving dinner. In *Legally Blonde*, this moment comes for Elle when after her professor hits on her, her sister-self, Vivian confronts her in the elevator, reminding Elle that she's just a dumb blonde after all, "Callahan never saw me as a lawyer, all he saw was a piece of ass." Elle decides to leave Harvard at that moment. It is in the abjection phase of the model that the character is confronted by choosing an HEA or AP ending. If she chooses the HEA, then the story ends with a wedding or death. If the woman chooses the AP ending, then she is banished or killed. An example of the AP ending in death can be found in 1987's *Fatal Attraction*. Alex Forest, who has an affair with the protagonist, Dan Gallagher, becomes obsessed with him. In her pursuit of him she wants desperately to have the life that his wife has, wanting a baby with her new love interest. She dies, killed by her sister self, Dan's wife, Beth. The most frequent genre to end the movie for a female character in this stage is the horror genre. This abjection happens every day in real women's lives. We push aside the ambitions, or the intellectual curiosity, or the forthright sexuality to live in our ideal, where we can be safe MISORs, or we push away motherhood, domestic partnership, or comfort, in pursuit of an ideal of being a powerful MIPE. All women confront the Divide.

### *Chapter 9: Choice*

If the woman survives abjection, she will have the choice of meeting her sister-self and exchanging powers. In real life, this feels like returning to an earlier version of herself, but with a deeper awareness. This feels like another danger but, is almost sure to end in reconciliation of the two sister-selves or sides. In *Legally Blonde*, this moment comes when Elle decides to represent

Brooke at her murder trial and realizes that it is her previous life as a MISOR, obsessed with hair and fashion that will save the day. Elle's confidence, that was shaken as she tried to embody the MIPE version of herself, returns in plain view once she is talking about an area that she feels confident about. For Elsa, in *Frozen*, this moment comes when she throws herself around Anna's icy body. It is this act of vulnerability that brings Elsa back to her sister-self, and it is Anna acting in bravery that saves them all. This part of the story, or narrative, is about the sisters, or halves exchanging powers. In a real woman's life, this is the place that is most difficult to feel comfortable in. She has to create a new self from parts of herself that she had buried or thrown out entirely.

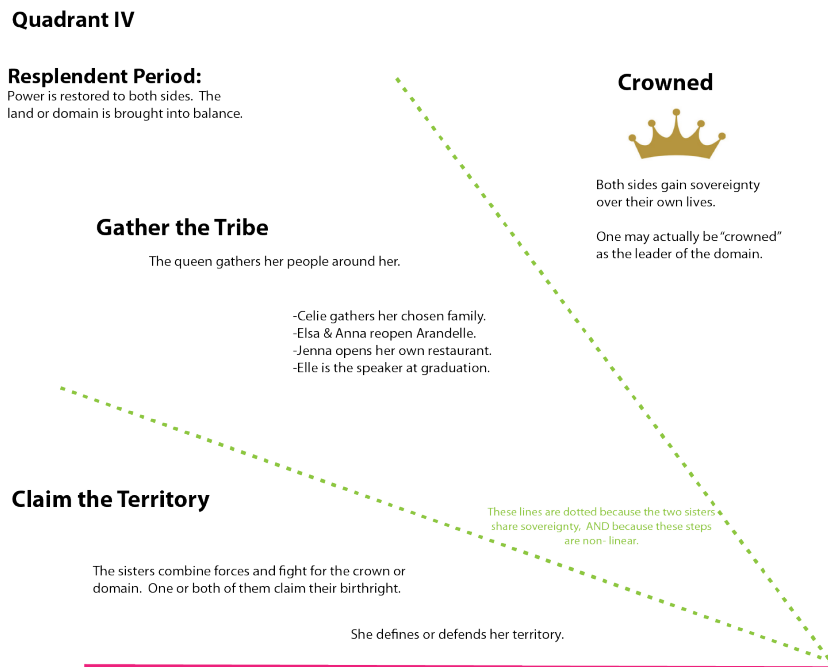
#### *Chapter 10: Embodied Transcendence*

In order to fully seal the exchange of powers, the woman must act in a physical way or undergo a physical change. For some women this is a move away from home, or a change in situation. It is most frequently symbolized in a physical change. In *Waitress*, both the film and the Broadway version, the main character Jenna goes through labor, giving birth to a daughter. She realizes that she is stronger than she thought, and doesn't need the men in her life anymore. In *Maleficent*, the eponymous character is reunited with her wings. She uses them in battle, fighting simply for the right to exist. In *The Color Purple* it is when Celie defiantly claims her place in the world, standing up for herself, and threatening Mister. Their exchange ends with Celie joining Shug in the car, and giving her speech "I'm poor, black, I may even be ugly, but by God, I'm here". In *Wonder Woman*, it is when Diana realizes that she can use her body's powers to defeat Aries, claiming that the fight is about love, not power. For women, transcendence comes THROUGH *embodiment*. Culture tries to separate women from our bodies. We are shamed for not being modest. We are shamed for being too modest. We are shamed for breast feeding. We

are shamed for giving our babies formula. We are shamed for not losing pregnancy weight fast enough. We are shamed for eating, and for not eating. We are shamed for having sexual desire and shamed for being frigid. By claiming the body for our own purposes, we act in a revolutionary way. Embodiment is the path to transcendence for women, realizing that they have the power of LIFE, and the first life we have power over is our own.

Quadrant Four: Resplendent

This section of any woman’s story, whether real or fictional has the most flexibility. The stages are not there to create a clear path to sovereignty, but rather exist as markers that can enoble the journey, helping to make the path to self-sovereignty more easily understood. This part of the journey is not linear. The diagram of the model marks the pie pieces here with dotted lines



to indicate that the sections easily flow in and out with one another. The woman crosses from the Underworld back into the World of visible power and form. She re-enters the world, but with new powers, and new awareness. She emerges safe from the trials and perils of the depths. She is

reunified from the experience of being rendered. The exercises in this section become focused on the “becoming Queen”.

### *Chapter 11: Claim the Territory*

This moment allows the woman to reflect on her embodiment. She sees herself embodied, and her power in the physical world becomes evident. This is a moment to underline the experience of embodiment. This is the moment when the body becomes sacred, holy, re-membered, or elevated. In real life, this is the moment when a woman who has left her husband with great trepidation, looks at the physical work she has done to create a new life for herself, and feels empowered, relieved, and satisfied in her strength. This is the moment in *Wonder Woman* when Diana for the first time realizes that she is a Goddess, and that she is the ONLY one who can destroy Aries. In *Waitress* this is the moment when Jenna is in labor. There are multiple moments in Season 3 of *The Handmaid's Tale*, from the moment that June kills Commander Winslow, to when sacrifices herself in the woods to get the children safely to Canada.

### *Chapter 12: Gather the Tribe*

This part of the story is often the most satisfying, whether in real life, or in a narrative. This is the moment when the woman realizes she belongs. She is surrounded by her people. She has made a place for herself, or she has successfully defended her territory. She is no longer broken, isolated, or disempowered. This is *The Color Purple's* Celie standing on the porch, surrounded by her family of choice as she looks out to see her sister and children approaching the house. This is the moment in *Wonder Woman* when Diana surrounded by her new friends, reflects on the photograph of her beloved Steve Trevor. It is the moment in the myth of Demeter when she reveals her divinity to the family whose child, she has been nursing. It is when Renee



in *I Feel Pretty* stands on stage and gets the credit at the make-up launch even after realizing that she had seen herself differently, she had never actually “been” different. In *Legally Blonde*, this moment can be seen when Elle Woods descends the stairs of the courtroom surrounded by her tribe. Her ex tries to make up with her, and Elle rejects him, claiming her goals and ambitions for herself alone.

This may seem like an obvious culmination of the woman’s journey. But it is an important note that needs to be underlined. She must *see* her integration. She must make the unconscious, conscious. A woman who has undergone the trials and difficulties of the work to integrate the broken pieces of the Divided Woman, MUST do so with awareness. If she does the work without awareness, she cannot have sovereignty. Consciousness of her journey, (and its costs) is the key to her sovereignty. She must walk into sovereignty fully aware that she has done the work, and that she is a united being, a woman who was cleaved in two as a child, and who through her own work, journey, and embodiment has become whole. We see this in movies symbolically, where the sister selves face one another. In *The Color Purple*, Celie literally faces her sister, Nettie, and one by one, brings each of her children into an embrace, reconnecting the broken pieces of her soul. Her sister “translates” for her, as each broken piece of Celie’s life is welcomed, integrating her soul by literally embracing all the pieces. In *Frozen*, this moment comes when Elsa and Anna embrace, and Elsa has the realization that “Love will Thaw” with her sister’s embrace. In *Legally Blonde*, this moment is when Elle gives the commencement speech at Harvard. She has been chosen by her peers, and she even quotes her professor as an indicator of having pulled in multiple pieces into her new identity. For a real woman, this moment will likely not have the fanfare of movies and stories. Instead, it will be the moment she realizes that she is

surrounded by people who love her and is no longer longing for their approval. She values her own complexity over and above making other people happy or comfortable.

### *Chapter 13: Put on the Crown*

In real life, this moment is similar to the archetypal versions. There is a ritual, a ceremony, a symbolic passing of power. It might be a graduation or being given the keys to a home or an office. It might come in the form of a big pay day for a project or creative endeavor. In stories and movies, this is the coronation, or another ceremony celebrating her accomplishments. She is often portrayed AS crowned or sovereign. This moment is the physical affirmation of her sovereignty, the experience of the woman having THE say over her body, mind, well-being, and decision making. No one controls her. No one keeps her from herself anymore. The divide is overcome. The rendered pieces have been reconnected and healed. The crowning can come as a coronation ceremony like in *Maleficent*. It can come with a graduation with a mortarboard atop her head like in *Legally Blonde*. It can come with a wedding like *In Her Shoes*. It can come with wearing Crown braids like in *The Color Purple*'s end scene when Celie and Nettie are playing "Ma-kee-da-da". It comes at the end of *Miss Congeniality* when Gracie Hart stands under the giant flower crown and accepts the eponymous sash. It can come when the character changes the world around her, like Jenna buying and renaming the pie restaurant at the end of *Waitress*.

### *Conclusion:*

Women's stories deserve the same archetypal treatment that the Hero's Journey has enjoyed for the last fifty years of psychological analysis and storytelling. Women have our own monomyth, and while we still live in a patriarchal society, this structure helps us to organize our narratives. When we have moved beyond patriarchy, we will need a new model. Perhaps this new model will ask us very different questions. But for now, women are finally free to be the

Queens of their own lives. We have a path to tread that explores our experiences, our dreams, our gifts, and our struggles. No two women's footsteps along the path are the same. But every woman can relate to the journey. Every woman can become Queen of her own life.

# SAMPLE CHAPTERS

## **Introduction: The World is Run by Archetypes**

### *What's in an Archetype?*

The world is filled with archetypes. A day doesn't pass where we aren't assailed by at least one archetype or symbol. In my therapy practice, these structures parade in and out of my clients' sessions, most days without a moment's recognition. Archetypes hold our most cherished ideals, and sometimes our greatest fears. They tell us who we are, and who we wish to be. Most often archetypes come to us from a cultural perspective. We learn them from our parents, teachers, pastors, and our favorite stories. We take the archetype on, aligning with it, investing in it. We take on the symbols associated with it. Our savior archetype becomes Jesus, our deified salvation. Our father archetype becomes Yahweh or maybe when brought down to Earth a bit, Liam Neeson in "Taken." Our mother archetype becomes the Madonna, Demeter, or KwanYin. When we struggle, we compare ourselves and the people around us to ideals that we mistakenly label "normal". The word archetype itself means "old type," but an archetype is so much more than just an arcane model. An archetype is a collection of behaviors and qualities seen and experienced together repetitively across cultures. Usually, these are personifications, but not always.

My world in the last several years has been punctuated by the work of famous psychologists and mythologists, all dedicated to archetypal models in one form or another. Marie-Louise von Franz, James Hillman, Marion Woodman, Joseph Campbell, and Carl G. Jung, all wrote and spoke about archetypes as structures that occupy a psychological space in culture and the indi-

vidual psyche. We don't make up archetypes, they are always there. At different times in our history, certain archetypes are favored over others, and they take up more of our intellectual and psychological attention. Archetypes in one form or another have been known to us since the time of Plato's *forms*. Most of the time we are unaware of these archetypal powers and their influence on us, and yet we see them, reproduce them, and create expectations of ourselves, and others based on their prominence in our cultures, families, and our personal expectations.

We are probably most familiar with a related concept, a stereotype. A stereotype is a reduction of an idea into its most basic or culturally understandable form. Often stereotypes are negative because anytime you overly simplify something you run the risk of reducing it to its most base attributes. Archetypes are similar, but the word itself suggests that the form you are examining holds meaning and structures across a longer period of time. Archetypes also carry the possibility of deep meaning, and so are often (though not always) expected to hold the "ideal" or "ultimate" versions of the type.

Cultures build their expectations for how we behave on archetypal patterns. Every culture has a hero archetype for example, though the individual hero may be different. He might be Achilles in Greece, Ogun in West Africa, or King Arthur in Medieval Europe. Every culture has a Goddess of Love, whether she is Oshun in West Africa, Aphrodite in Greece, Erzulie in Haiti, or the Madonna in Western Christianity. An archetype carries the expectations of the culture. We place meaning in the archetype and use it as a touchstone for understanding. Sometimes an archetype has a negative association, like a villain, a ghost, or embodied evil like a devil or demon. Archetypes always hold multiple levels of meaning, and they can cross cultural boundaries because they are not named and associated with any given place or culture.

When you think of the Father Archetype, for example, you will likely have a powerful, strong, guiding, sometimes dominating idea of what “Father” should be. When you think of the “Mother” you probably think of kindness, loving support, nurturing, and warmth. When you think of a Warrior Archetype, you probably see some attributes of male, brave, honor, and ferocity. If you experienced anything different than archetypal behavior in your own life, then you likely compared that “other” behavior to an archetype. For example, as a psychotherapist, I see many clients who have experienced less than ideal parenting. It is a rare thing that my clients do NOT compare their experience against an ideal. It usually goes something like, “Why couldn’t I just have *normal* parents?” or “Why did I have to have *this* experience? Why couldn’t I just have a *normal* family?” What they are actually sad about is how far from the ideal their experience was. My answer is almost always the same. There is no normal. There is ideal, and then there is how we realize the ideal in ourselves and our experiences. Most people cannot withstand the pressure of how they measure up to their ideals. In retaliation, they push against anyone or anything that reminds them of these failings, rather than examine those archetypal expectations. This is a painful, and avoidable reality. Successfully navigating the space between the archetypal ideal and lived reality can be difficult, but it is the best way I know for building a happy life. In order to be capable of that negotiation though, you have to first be able to identify the archetypes at work in your psyche, your world, and in your relationships.

### **The Gendered Soul in Culture**

We welcome children into the world with a sense of great joy. The entry of the new soul into our lives is seen as a gift from an unknown realm into the *terra firma* we see every day. The new person is not a zombie or a golem awaiting a soul’s arrival. The soul is here, with the newborn, becoming itself, divine potential unfolding into flesh. Until the threshold of puberty, all

children share a cultural identification with innocence. This is an unfair attribution, one that associates secondary sex characteristics with sexuality and gendered behavior, and thus with corruption.

Around the age of eight or nine we start to expect girls to “act like a lady” and for boys to act “tough” or “man up”. In both sexes, their appearance is judged. Children at this age start to identify with characters in games, movies, or television. Also, around this age, children begin to place themselves in the hierarchy according to the expectations and behavior of their family members. For men, the transition from boyhood moves the innocent child into a track ascending from innocence to power. For women, this movement away from innocence gives women two prescribed options: move into social acceptance or social isolation. Acceptance is associated with being protected, and the other is associated with having personal power but being isolated.

Sex and gender are complex issues. Sex is what you are born with. Gender is what you perform in the world. In many cultures, these two are conflated, and any difference between the two is treated with disdain at the very least, and violence at the very worst. Cultural issues around sex and gender are complicated, mostly because of this conflation. When we can separate out the cultural aspects of gender from the biological issues of sex, we often find ourselves with more tolerant laws, cultural norms, and robust structures supportive of all people. When structures reinforce the connection between sex and gender, we often find that cultures and social structures are more rigid. People are expected to stay in their gendered lane, according to their biological sex. This can make many people feel more restricted, and while it may make people with traditional expectations of sex roles feel safe, it makes anyone outside of those norms, who may deviate even a little, feel disempowered and at risk.

The performance of gender according to traditional sex roles is at the core of many conservative cultural norms. These inform everything from stereotypes of what is considered feminine and masculine behavior, to archetypal ideals of motherhood, fatherhood, marriage, family, and ideal work. There are dozens of models of female expectations we can examine: mother, whore, lover, witch, spinster, wife, secretary, nag; there are new ones that have entered our lexicon as well: bitch, angry black woman, nasty woman, Karen... When working in any realm where we are interacting with other people, archetypes will be alive in the discussion.

The tumult over Hillary Clinton's emails and the general view of her as "untrustworthy" in the 2016 elections wasn't about her as an individual, it was about her alignment with an archetype. She was a "bitch" a "feminist". She didn't know her place. It wasn't just that she had an opinion, it was that her husband cheated. The implication was that even her husband didn't want to have sex with her because she was too opinionated, and that this lack of submission was unattractive, undesirable, and unwomanly.

The more a group is vilified or subverted in society, the more the representation of that group will be dominated by archetypes and stereotypes. Similarly, if a group is losing ground in society, it will latch onto archetypes and stereotypes as easy simplifications of good and evil in order to make their message more clear, and their cause more plain. Complexity ceases to be possible in the face of archetypes and stereotypes. Archetypes typically expand qualities, and stereotypes narrow them. Archetypes traverse cultures, where as stereotypes often are limited to the society or culture that adopts them. Stereotypes can of course be transmitted across cultures, but they don't expand the categories as they do so.

Symbols are the next step in cultural explanations. Archetypes tend to create categories, for example, every culture has a savior archetype, a mother archetype, and a father archetype.



The culture will assign a symbol to this archetype in order to connect with it and make meaning. In the West, Luke Skywalker is a contemporary hero. Luke is the symbol, hero is his archetype. In the 2016 election, Hillary was the symbol, bitch was her archetype. She has another, the MIPE (MEE-pay), an archetype we will dive into as we traverse the landscape covered in this book.

### **Recent History and the Hero**

The Hero's Journey has become one of the most important archetypal stories of the last century. It has been used in historical analyses to examine how great men and women of history have made their way in the world. It has been used in psychology to help people navigate the travails of life. It has been used in literature to help codify what makes a good story. This complex archetypal pattern examines the hero's life cycle as he traverses the realm of life from being called out of the wilderness of the unconscious and into a life of purpose. In the traditional structure, the hero is called to his purpose, he refuses the call, he is pulled, meets a teacher, goes on a quest, gives up or loses something important, learns something transformational, and ends up returning to the place of origin to share his wisdom. Depending on what kind of work you're doing there could be anywhere from twelve to seventeen steps along the hero's journey.

Joseph Campbell was the first to identify the hero's journey by examining myths that had been passed down across time through multiple cultures. His work was deeply influenced by that of Swiss psychologist, Carl G. Jung. Culture makers have relied on Campbell's structure to give us our history, help us make sense of our present, and build a framework for our future. But the framework has never been robust enough to also hold the story of women's lived experience. Women's lives include decisions and experiences that are relatively universal to women, but that the hero on his journey never has to confront. The hero never has to struggle with whether or not he is culturally acceptable based on his looks or has to deal with life and death issues that focus

on marriageability, virginity, and fertility, for example. As a result, the hero's journey has been insufficient to contextualize the paths of women.

The hero's journey cannot fully hold the space of women's struggle with these realities. It cannot precisely reconcile the forces that push women into a singular identity that is almost always a reduction of the whole self, balancing the demands of desire and motherhood, and the powerful role women struggle with in being the channel of life for the continuation of humanity. The different stops and struggles along the hero's journey don't include these aspects, and they cannot, for the hero's journey tells the story of men. Men's journeys usually don't preclude whether or not they are fathers, at least not archetypally. Whether or not a man gets married does not fundamentally change the arc of his story from a cultural perspective. No one assumes a married man has a different path to becoming a lawyer, banker, adventuring archaeologist, or Pulitzer Prize winning writer than a single man. That is a very different calculus for women.

For a woman to be on a hero's journey she must have already taken on the mantle of "outsider". Before she even begins that journey, she has had to navigate what I have come to call, The Queen's Path, outlined in this book. The traditional hero's journey does not address how women navigate the world of reconciling multiple identities, some of which are compromised in culture, others empowered, and all of which are subject to cultural, gendered norms that assume women are subjects. If the ideal of the hero archetype is always male, then a female hero will always be second to the male hero, at least archetypally. So, from a cultural perspective, it doesn't matter if a woman is the hero of her own story, her story will always be less important in culture to a similar man's story. A female hero is almost always seen as an outsider at best, and an imposter at worst.

Women know this, and most of us are uneasy about it. We know at the core of who we are that there is nothing about our identity or our work that is less valuable. And yet, simultaneously, day after day, we are faced with the evidence of men's work being given more attention, more money, more credibility, and thus, more value. We know that this is a constructed reality, not a reality borne of anything more than behavior that is reinforced by a system perpetuating itself.

The domination of male story patterns in our culture is constantly produced and reproduced. Cultures continue to repeat the Hero's Journey as an organizing principle found in sacred texts, fairy tales, and cultural myths. We find this structure in film, novels, and television. You'll find it in comic book heroes like Superman and Batman. You'll also see it in sacred literature from the Torah to the Gospels, to the Upanishads. Psychologists use it as an organizing principle to help people make meaning in their lives by reframing the client as a hero navigating through their own hero's journey. Joseph Campbell called this a "monomyth". In that terminology he intentionally put the Hero's Journey forth as a universal story structure for everyone. Except, he didn't include women.

Women have our own archetypal structure, or to use Campbell's term, monomyth. Our journeys have to include the impact of the patriarchy, as well as the way of overcoming it. I know many of my feminist colleagues see the world as rooted in patterns of greater usurpation of power and violence. I don't disagree with these points of view. Women's lives are mediated and punctuated by violence in ways that culture does its best to sweep under the rug or normalize. However, I don't think that at this particular moment, addressing the problem from the point of view of women as victims is the most meaningful.

Women are changing the world. We can make these changes for ourselves, for our children, and for men. First though, we have to tell our own stories. That begins with an archetypal journey that focuses on women's experiences, not one that adapts a man's monomyth, trying to force a woman to ignore the cultural, social, familial, and biological forces that make her care about her role, her destiny, and her legacy. She is a Queen, and by reclaiming her rights to her journey, she can remake the world. Like the pieces on the chessboard, the Queen has more power, more maneuverability, and more flexibility. She moves in ways that kings, bishops, and soldiers cannot. If she can learn to see the game, and break it, she can claim a territory for herself, that prior to this moment in time had only been available to a king.

## Chapter 1: Invisibility vs Sovereignty

It was 2007, and I found myself in that deep pain again. I had moved my mentally ill mom in with me, my marriage was a wreck, and I worked in a stressful, awful, and very high-profile university job. I had earned a Ph.D. focused on social and media psychology five years earlier and had been in therapy at that point for more than fifteen years. I was tired of telling my story, “trauma, abandonment, betrayal... blah blah blah... death, guns, drugs, anorexia, drowning, rape... blah blah blah.” My narrative had become boring, even to me.

Steve, my latest therapist wanted to try something different. He complained that he had been doing cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for decades, and it only scratched the surface. He asked if I would be willing to be one of his first patients to try something called Acceptance Commitment Therapy or ACT. He felt it could help break through the wall I had built up. That January day in 2007, something broke in me. I don't remember if I actually moved, but my memory is that I stood up in Steve's office.

My body felt foreign, and I felt...fear. No—Terror.

The leather sofa held me up tentatively by pushing back against my calves. Was I really standing? Or was it one of the ACT exercises of watching a train go by? I don't remember it as my therapist's office. It *felt* like I was standing on a platform at a train station. Steve's voice somehow traversed the distortion I felt. “What emotion are you avoiding?” My jaw couldn't move, as though the entire apparatus of my mouth was concrete. The bones fused, silencing my voice. I felt away from my body, swaddled by a night sky, surrounded by pinpoints of light like

stars. My mouth wasn't connected to my awareness, and I couldn't find the power to move my lips.

Steve took me back to an early trauma, a near drowning at age seven. I lay at the bottom of the pool looking upwards. Lifeguards pulled me from the deep end and gave me mouth-to-mouth. After, my mom looked me over. Unfazed she decided that if I was breathing, I was ok- then went back to the conversation with her sister. I wandered away from her in pain, a yellow towel wrapped around my shoulders. My lungs hurt, my eyes burned. My skin stung, and everything in the world looked and felt different. I stared at the trees and the brick wall, my back to the pool and my mom. I couldn't bear to look at anyone or anything. It was too much for my seven-year-old psyche to process.

*I almost died, and she didn't care.*

“What are you most afraid of feeling?” Steve asked, going deeper.

I felt a clutch at my throat, my voice silenced, an invisible hand like a fist in my throat. There was no air. “I'll die,” cracked painfully and almost inaudibly from the back of my mouth. Steve pressed again, “What feeling makes you feel like you're dying?” deeper still. Abject terror. I shook my head, and then I felt a tiny eruption out of the most hidden place of my body, the smallness of the sound a betrayal of the depth of the pain.

(can't speak.)

“That I am invisible,” a barely audible crackle, and almost impossible to say.

(Death is right here, breathing in my face)

“And what would happen if you let yourself *feel* invisible, for just a moment?”

I shook my head again, slow, the clutch at my throat holding the air just beneath my heart.

“You’re safe, let yourself feel it, just a little bit. I’m right here. I want you to say it, but louder this time, “*I am invisible.*”

Through a wall of resistance, out it came, “I am *invisible.*” And with that utterance, a hurricane of tears, sadness, anger, confusion, and rage erupted like a tsunami from the seat of my psyche. I hadn’t known there was so much feeling in my body. My unconscious had been holding back the ocean for decades. I was so terrified of being invisible, that I had buried it. Invisible was my reality, covered in the detritus of shame, anger, pain, and multiple abandoned dreams. I had tried to make a mountain of accomplishments, degrees, notoriety, and success so high that no one could ever make me invisible. But it was a lie. I was nowhere to be found on that mountain. I was under it.

And the higher I built it, the more invisible I became.

### **Discovering Invisibility**

My experience of being invisible is not unique. Almost every woman I know battles “invisible” daily. For women of color, it is even more pernicious. For trans women, deathly perilous. In depth psychology, we are taught that unnamed archetypes are the most dangerous. They hide in the shadows. They haunt places that reject the light of discovery. Unnamed archetypes create psychic prisons- in individuals and culture at large. I had felt invisible for a long time, imprisoned in expectations and roles. I could not locate myself in anyone’s gaze. No one saw me. They only saw the roles I played.

*The Invisible Woman* has been explored in many different genres, from books, and movies, to comics. Invisibility as an experience weighs on women in almost every part of the world. Women patients have described their invisibility to me in various ways. Sometimes their pain, either physical or psychological, goes ignored or diminished, rendering it invisible. Sometimes

invisibility shows up simply as a wall that ostracizes. There is an invisible wall separating us from the life others have, enchanting us as “other.” Some parts of the world consider women’s invisibility virtuous, covering them in yards of fabric, or cloistering them out of public view. In the West, we often pretend that women’s invisibility isn’t happening—ironically laying invisibility on top of invisibility. Sometimes we describe it in euphemisms about our experience like “the glass ceiling,” an invisible barrier that we bang our heads against but can never break through. Other times it happens when we are reduced to a function, “baby-maker,” “sex-symbol,” “nasty woman,” the individual woman is swallowed up by a broader force anonymizing her.

It shows up in the increasing morbidity of women in childbirth. Invisibility is what causes the systemic medical problems of under-treating the symptoms and physical pain of women of color in hospitals and doctor’s offices. Invisible is the experience of women in board rooms when male colleagues take credit for their ideas right in front of them. It is in the mansplaining that women experience. Invisible is pervasive, the hand of power reducing women’s agency. Above all, invisibility is the consequence of *a process*. It first shows up at a point in women’s lives between childhood and adulthood. Women internalize the idea that they are supposed to be “effortless” in their performance of beauty, housekeeping, childcare, and other traditionally gendered ideals. What is underneath this push towards invisibility erupts like a gaping maw in the earth beneath our feet. Women are women first, handmaids to patriarchy. Our existence is functional. We are human beings second, sometimes even third, or fourth to the roles we fulfill.

My therapist had opened a secret door. I didn’t know the door, or the space behind it even existed. I didn’t know that there was a place in myself I wasn’t allowed to go. And now that it was open, I was terrified of what it would mean. That day with Steve was the first in all my years of therapy that something unmediated came out of me. In every other form of treatment, I



learned to intellectualize my pain. I could describe it. I could diagnose it. I was able to connect the dots of feeling to earlier trauma. But I could barely *feel* it. Sure, I had cried in therapy before... a LOT. But I had never felt the deepest part of myself. I had never FELT my deepest fear.

Years of therapy helped me to see myself in the context of a culture that silences women, but it didn't do anything to help me move past it or rise above it. Fast forward a decade from that day in Steve's office, I was a frustrated creative working around creative people, not ever getting to be creative. I lost my city to a devastating hurricane. I almost lost my partner to a drunk driving accident. I lost my home in a failed business. I nearly lost myself to depression. I started having nightmares. I don't mean anxiety dreams of forgetting your lines in a play, or even the kinds of nightmares I had my first year in graduate school where I was on a roller coaster that always ended in a terrifying death drop. No, I started having recurring dreams and nightmares with terrifying animals and one haunting character every night for almost eight years. I couldn't escape. I didn't want to sleep, but not sleeping made me feel like death on toast.

I found my way through by submitting to the vertigo of psychoanalysis, and the pieces came together very slowly. The nightmares didn't completely go away, but I was able to self-regulate even in the midst of them. They were a little less vicious after analysis. I regularly communicated in a dialogue with my psyche. Write out a dream, break it down, and bring it to a session with my analyst. Wash-rinse-repeat. After several years of dissecting the images, themes, and emotions, I was literally in a new place. Back in Los Angeles, working in entertainment again, out of academia, and far away from my deep Southern roots.

Soon I would find myself back in graduate school, this time studying to *become* a therapist. Through a series of powerful synchronicities, I found myself enrolled in Pacifica Graduate

Institute's depth psychology program. Three months after arriving in Los Angeles, I moved into a rental house that was in a secluded hillside neighborhood called Lakeview Terrace. The house was small but beautiful and was on the top of a hill backed up to the Angeles National Forest. It was like heaven for my weary soul. On my move-in day, my landlady introduced me to the neighbor across the street, Dr. Eris Huemer, a stunning blonde who was almost six feet tall. She noticed an oversized book with a bright red cover on my coffee table. Carl G. Jung's *Red Book: Liber Novus*. The book contains beautiful hand-painted images by Jung himself from a time when he explored the depths of his own troubled psyche. He vowed to explore and befriend rather than pathologize his experience of what most would have labeled psychosis. In doing so he discovered a rich world of meaning that informed his work for the rest of his life. When mediated through art and reflection his exploration revealed deep needs *and solutions* in his psyche. He used these techniques on himself and then perfected them with his patients to create a unique form of treatment. As one of the fathers of modern psychology, many of his discoveries are used by therapists around the world to this day.

Eris practically squealed with delight, "Oh the Red Book! I love Jung, I went to Pacifica for my master's degree." She and I then spent almost two hours talking about psychology, her patients, the cable television show she was making, and my years of psychoanalysis. When she left, I looked up Pacifica Graduate Institute and applied on the spot. After two interviews and some personal writing, I was accepted into their master's program.

Depth psychology explores the unconscious and its symbolism, its connections, and its mysteries. Depth psychotherapists play in a rarified world of dreams, archetypes, and symbolic communication. Once classes began, I felt I had found my place and my tribe. The grounds are a repurposed Jesuit monastery built in the 1960s. On the cornerstone of what was once the church,

(and is now the central auditorium) are carved the words “Reina de la Paz” or Queen of Peace, a reference to the Madonna. Having grown up in Catholic schools, the presence of the “blessed mother” as my family called her was soothing and familiar. The grounds even looked like St. Joan of Arc Catholic School, likely built by the same 1960s architect. I felt I was home. I spent almost three years at Pacifica, going to class three days a month, and working full time. Being there always calmed my soul. And most importantly the dreams and nightmares that had made my life a personal hellscape *just stopped* once I began my studies. The faculty warned us on the very first day of class that the program is *psychoactive*, meaning that it is designed to make you think, feel, and reflect- and not from an intellectual place, but to dig deeply into your own psyche to understand the psychological issues you’re learning about. Knowing yourself makes a better therapist. And they added a caveat, the program is not here to heal you- they instructed that we each needed to get our own therapist.

Two years into the program each student chooses a master’s topic. Pacifica is one of the few programs that still requires students to complete an original thesis. Having worked in animation I thought it would be fun, and much lighter than the psychoactive years prior, to examine the way women had been represented in the Disney canon from Walt Disney’s first animated feature, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, to what at the time was its most recent film, *Frozen*. This topic was far too enormous to tackle in a thesis with a fifty-page limit. So, I focused on the two most recent films from Disney with female protagonists: *Maleficent* and *Frozen*. I had no idea what I was looking for in these two films. But soon a remarkable pattern emerged. Not only had I discovered something new, but I also found an answer to my experience of feeling invisible. I discovered why I had always felt like an outsider.

## **Frozen and Maleficent**

*Frozen* was a box office marvel. The entire franchise itself has earned over \$2.73 billion, and persuaded millions of children to “Let it Go.” The story surrounds the relationship between sisters. Elsa, the eldest, wields magical powers allowing her to control ice and snow. Her younger, non-magical sister, Anna, isn’t jealous of her sister’s magic. In fact, as children, Anna thrilled in the fun they had creating snow drifts and a snowman in the film’s first act. But soon, Elsa’s power is out of her control, and Anna suffers a magical injury. A ray of freezing magic pierces Anna’s head, leaving her unconscious, with a streak of white hair as a reminder. Anna is healed, but Elsa is forced to hide her powers thereafter. The two are separated from each other until they reach adulthood when Elsa celebrates her coronation becoming queen of Arendelle. Soon, magic again drives Elsa from her domain, as she accidentally displays her power during the coronation ball. Elsa runs to the North Mountain, and Anna, suddenly understanding their years of separation, goes on an adventure to reclaim her sister and bring her back to the castle.

The story celebrates the bond between the sisters, turning the “true love’s kiss” story on its head. *Frozen* redirects the idea of true love as being between family, rather than focusing on romantic love. In the end, it is the non-magical Anna who saves Elsa from certain death at the hands of a bad man. The story celebrates women’s power, and pokes light fun at the idea of “happily ever after”.

We’ve all seen the memes and viral videos of little girls and grown women singing the film’s power ballad “Let it Go”. It’s the ultimate freedom song, the lyrics reflecting the feelings we all want to celebrate. In it, we are reminded that women have the right to own ourselves, even when it is difficult. We are entreated to choose our own power over the idea of settling for the “warmth” that comes from giving into cultural expectations of perfectionism.

The songs, costumes, creativity, and artistry made for an incredible film. But more than anything audiences responded to the empowerment of the sisters relying on, and connecting with, one another. There was no “evil queen”, though in early Disney storyboards Elsa’s character exhibits the traits expected of a Disney villain; akin to the film’s original inspiration, the title character in Hans Christian Anderson’s “The Ice Queen”. But as the story developed, the cultural moment of women coming together in sisterhood rather than competition developed, likely because so many of the creative team were women.

The story of family love shows up again in 2014’s *Maleficent*. In Disney’s original 1959 version, *Sleeping Beauty*, Maleficent is an evil fairy who curses an infant Princess Aurora because she wasn’t invited to the baby’s christening ceremony. In this version, the eponymous fairy queen is portrayed as a magical creature betrayed by her lover, Stefan. The bond they shared as young lovers becomes Maleficent’s torture, as it is “true love’s kiss” that enables Stefan to mutilate Maleficent, cutting her fairy wings from her body. Stefan takes the wings and presents them at the royal court, a tribute to win the favor of a childless king. Having succeeded in his quest, Stefan becomes king after the old king dies, and Maleficent in her fairy kingdom becomes his mortal enemy. The betrayal sets the stage for her to curse her former paramour in revenge by cursing his newborn daughter to a life of servitude and sleep until she is freed by “true love’s kiss” a clear reference to his betrayal of her. Maleficent says these words in a mocking tone before the whole court, showing her disdain for the betrayed promise of true love.

But Maleficent isn’t a cold-hearted monster, she feels badly that she cursed a child who had done her no harm. Magic cannot be reversed, so she finds herself acting as Aurora’s guardian, protecting her from the curse after the child is sent far away from the kingdom to live in se-

clusion. With no mother and only some buffoonish fairy guardians, Maleficent takes it upon herself to protect and educate Aurora. Soon she has formed a motherly bond with the hidden princess and tries to find a way to break the curse she placed on her. It ruefully occurs to her that perhaps true love *could* save Aurora, but before she can do anything about it, Aurora learns that Maleficent is the one who cursed her. The princess sets herself on a path to return to her father's kingdom. Upon arriving at the castle, Aurora soon falls under the spell of the curse and pricks her finger on a spinning wheel which puts the princess into a deep sleep (a not-so-subtle acknowledgment of domestic servitude's ability to turn any woman into a zombie). Distraught,

Maleficent attempts to find a prince to love Aurora, hoping the caveat in the original curse could save the princess after all. When the princely kiss doesn't awaken Aurora, Maleficent kisses her forehead with a mother's love, giving her a heartfelt apology and vowing to always take care of her. Aurora opens her eyes, free from the curse. True love doesn't always mean romantic love.

A pattern emerged in watching these films. In both stories, there are two bonded women characters. In *Frozen*, they are sisters. In *Maleficent* it is a mother-daughter bond. I noticed that one character was magical, and the other one was without power. The magical creature was an outcast. The powerless one was always trying to connect. I noticed that the characters followed almost identical arcs in each film. They start their lives in innocence and then experience a curse of some kind that leaves a scar or a mark. After, each is pulled onto a forked path. They will either become an "acceptable" passive woman always seeking relationships, or they will live their lives magical, isolated, and unprotected.

It wasn't as simple as seeing that one character was a "wicked witch" and the other was a "princess." No, there was a binary that was being shown to me in these two characters. Most importantly, in both films, there was a queen that emerged at the end. This queen was not power hungry, she didn't seek to destroy her sister. No, in becoming queen, she gathered the lost parts of herself back and ruled with confidence in her own power and authority. She gained sovereignty over herself.

I wrote my thesis, presented it, and thought I was done. But soon, I started to see this pattern in other places. I saw it in the lives of my clients as they talked about the expectations put on them, and the roles that they were pushed into. I saw it in television shows like *The Handmaid's Tale*, and *Killing Eve*, and in films like *Practical Magic* and *Promising Young Woman*. I saw it in comedies like *Legally Blonde*, and dramas like *The Color Purple*. I saw it on Broadway in *Wicked* and *Waitress*. I looked backward to older films and found it in *My Fair Lady*, *Imitation of Life*, *Out of Africa*, and *Gigi*. I looked even further and found it in the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments. I found it in ancient myths about the *Descent of Inanna* from Sumeria and the *Rape of Persephone* from Greece. This pattern was everywhere, and it had been right in front of me, in front of all of us for thousands of years.

What was I seeing? Ultimately, I realized that I was seeing an archetypal model that represented the lived experience of women. It is an analog to the Hero's Journey, but it is not derivative of it. I named it The Queen's Path, because it reflects what women experience as we traverse the world of expectations, roles, marriageability, sex, accomplishment, desire, motherhood, and if we are lucky, sovereignty- the ownership of our bodies, minds, and desires.

To unlock the mystery of following The Queen's Path, we must first understand the most important development in the story, and that is *The Divide*. If you want to understand women or

a woman character, you will examine the moment she crosses into this territory. It is at once disorienting, disconcerting, and ephemeral. Girls are presented with one clear option for becoming women. Be a “good girl”. In almost every patriarchal culture, this means that a woman is defined by her ability to be silent, passive, demure, dutiful, obedient, fertile, and motherly. But what happens to the women who don’t or can’t become that? They become “other.” But this second group isn’t “othered” randomly. Their *othering* follows a pattern. The “other” woman when generously portrayed is seen as powerful, sexy, intelligent, assertive, and unafraid. When the portrayal is not kind she may be seen as sexually perverse, hungry, evil, power-mongering, and emasculating. For these traits, she often has to be silenced. So much so that we don’t even give her a real title in patriarchy. We rely on the unconscious to find her, banished to the unconscious realms where we have named her witch or bitch. To be *other* as a woman is to haunt the underworld.

The journey into The Divide starts when we are little girls. We are set on a path by the culture that surrounds us, by parents, teachers, and clergy. If we learn to be quiet and obedient, take polite turns, and defer to authority, we have the option of becoming the idealized passive feminine. If we don’t learn these things, or if we have circumstances or trauma that keep us from becoming that idealized version of woman, we are relegated to second-class womanhood. We become divided. This is not because as a woman I chose the divide. Rather, as a woman, I am given two invisible paths. I may get pushed into the first, and if I fall off the ideal path, I am relegated to the second one. Some of us never get the choice, we end up on the second path of The Divide against our will.

These are archetypal paths. The path of the *ideal* I call Maiden in Search of Relationship (MISOR). Women who walk this path understand the power of submission. They know that to get by in patriarchy you have to look and play the part. You can become a lawyer, professor,



doctor, or even a Supreme Court Justice, as long as you play the role of the demure mother who defers to authority. If you get pushed onto the second half of The Divide, you take on the part of Magical Isolated Powerful and Endangered (MIPE). The MIPE is always “other”. Her magic doesn’t always refer to true magical powers, but rather things that make her “surprising” to those around her. She may have great artistic talent, intellect, athletic prowess, or be extraordinarily beautiful. The MISOR’s power comes from family or marriage, while the MIPE’s is her own, and as a result, she is unprotected by family or culture.

To be a woman is to be thrust into The Divide, whether you want to be or not. It is inescapable. Our stories, myths, histories, and sacred stories demonstrate this again and again. In the original story of the creation of human beings in the Hebrew bible, two creatures “male and female” are created by God. These are Adam and Lilith. They are created at the same time, both out of the earth, and both imbued with the breath of God to bring them to life. Adam wants to be in charge and directs Lilith to submit to him (literally expecting her to lie beneath him during sex). She refuses, giving him chapter and verse as to how they were created equally. She chooses to leave the Garden of Eden rather than submit to Adam’s control. As a result, the ancient midrash reports that she flew away and became a demon. So just to recap and underline the story points. Adam and Lilith are created together as equals, he wants to rule over her, she refuses. She prefers exile to control. And for not wanting to live with an abusive narcissist, her reputation is lost forever, and she is referred to as a demon ever after. Seems like a story an abusive ex tells about his first wife.

If you start to look for these stories you will find them everywhere. They are sometimes obvious like the story of Lilith. Some are more sophisticated, like the story of Snow White, or June/Offred in *The Handmaid’s Tale*. One thing is consistent. All women are placed on the path

of the Divide. As a result, we all become “divided”. We are all set against our will to be either MISORs or MIPES. Whether you wanted to be one or the other, if you are a woman, you will have been placed on this path. It is the Divided Woman that separates The Queen’s Path from the Hero’s Journey. At no point in his quest does the hero have to contend with whether or not he is marriageable. He never has to worry about fitting into the expectations of proper sexual conduct. The hero cannot be made lesser by not adhering to social norms.

### **The Divided Woman**

The Divided Woman is not just a literary trope, she is also a regular character in real women's self-reported narratives- they just haven’t heard her *named* before. Here are some of the titles my therapy clients have used to describe her:

Suzy Cupcakes	Sexy Wife	Ho in the Sheets
Bitch	Cinderella	Not his Mother
Dragon Lady	Stepmonster	Bad Wife
Tiger Mom	Perfect Mom	Bad Mom
MILF	Wifey-poo	Sleeping Beauty
Sweetie-Pie	Stepford Wife	Bad Ass Bitch
Wicked Witch	Perfect Woman	That Bitch
Tired Mom	Pretty Woman	
Harpie	Lady in the Streets	

Any of those sound familiar? Probably all but Suzy Cupcakes, a client made that one up on the spot. Susan was a badass. She had an MBA from Harvard and a law degree from Columbia. Colleagues described her as a genius at complex international banking laws. She went out of town for almost two months, traveling all over Europe working for an international law firm and handling some of the most challenging law anyone can master. She came home accomplished and exhausted, having successfully negotiated treasury agreements across several multinational banking conglomerates.

She arrived at LAX on a Thursday, got an Uber home, took a bath, and collapsed into her bed. Her husband came home an hour later and immediately went to the bedroom, trailed by two screaming children, and asked “Can you please make dinner tonight? I’m starving, exhausted, and need a break.” When she arrived at my office the next morning, I thought Susan was going to crawl out of her skin. She ranted for almost thirty minutes, pacing the floor in my office, and regaling me with the complex details that she had negotiated (that I didn’t understand). At the end of her seething, she finally screamed, “Who the fuck does he think he’s married to, Suzy Cupcakes?” She collapsed on the sofa in tears. Here was an accomplished woman with multiple high-level degrees. She spoke multiple languages and was by every account, including her husband’s, an amazing human being. But in the moment when her husband could have come home and seen her as a tired, over-taxed, professional- he saw her as a wife who had been missing for the previous eight weeks and he wanted that wife back so *he* could have a break.

This is The Divide. Women don’t get to choose which side we’re placed upon. We are given a track, and we follow it, often not realizing that we’ve been placed on it at all. We believe we are following a path of our own making, but chances are pretty good that we aren’t. We are on either the path of the MISOR or the MIPE. If you are curious about which one you’re on, ask yourself a few questions:

1. Do you feel that being a woman is easy for you?
2. Were you encouraged to be ambitious outside of marriage?
3. Do you enjoy the types of work associated with women’s roles?
4. Do you like to dress up in girly things?
5. Were you a cheerleader growing up? Did you dream of being a cheerleader?
6. Were the “girl behaviors” clear or easy for you?

7. Did you or do you enjoy “being a girl”?
8. Did you always long to be a mother?
9. Do you feel pressure to be thin, pretty, and/or effortless?

*If you answered YES to any of the above (except question number 2), you were set on the path of the MISOR. If you answered NO to any of the above (except number 2), you were set on the path of the MIPE.*

### **The Archetypes**

An archetype is psychologically defined as a collection of behaviors and qualities seen and experienced together repetitively across cultures. Every culture has archetypes. The archetype is like an overarching character that holds important meaning. Every culture has the archetypes of mother, warrior, savior, father, wounded healer, seductress, and wisdom. When an archetype takes on a specific, named identity, it ceases to be an archetype and becomes a symbol. As an example: Savior is the archetype, Jesus is the symbol. Warrior is the archetype, Joan of Arc is the symbol. Ideal Wife is the archetype, June Cleaver is the symbol. Good Witch is the archetype, Glenda of Oz is the symbol.

All women are set on the path of the Divided Woman between the ages of eight and twelve. They arrive by cultural design, not by choice. Culture tells a little girl that she can have anything she wants... but as she gets older, she learns that well- she can have anything, just not that one thing over there. Oh, and that other thing behind it- oh and wait a minute, that juicy one too- nope. No, she can desire all she wants, but she must conform. Desire is a complex puzzle, even a trap. And if she doesn't conform- she'll be ostracized- cut out of the body politic, the social group, or the tribe.

The Divided Woman is a newly *defined* archetype, but she is not a new archetype in the world. If you look at the history of story, everywhere we look, we can find the Divided Woman.

Just look into mythology, she shows up in the relationship between Innana and her sister, Erishkigal. You'll see her in the dyad between the Goddess Athena, and her fight with Arachne. She's in the Hebrew stories (the Talmud and the Torah) of Lilith and Eve. She is in the story of Hadasah becoming Queen Esther. She appears in the Christian bible as Mary of Nazareth and Mary Magdalene.

Different authors who have tried to define this have come close to discovering the divide, only to land just shy of it. Women have been defined as wounded (Murdock, 1990), betrayed (Schmidt, 2012), or ignored (Carriger, 2020) by writers trying to include women in the role of hero or heroine. But these definitions remove the structural component of women's lived experience in favor of varying degrees of agency and responsibility. As a child, does anyone have agency over cultural expectations? By definition, cultural expectations are absolute; either fall in or fall out. While men can choose between warrior, king, lover, or hero, for women there are only two options and we typically define them as "Good Girl" or "Bad Girl." But the reality is that there are two primary sub archetypes to the Divided Woman, the MISOR and the MIPE, and all female archetypes fall into one of those two categories (except the Queen, more about her later).

If you have doubts, think about how women are frequently expected to fulfill the following opposing expectations:

- Be Available/Be unobtainable
- Be Pretty/Be Serious
- Be Effortless/work hard
- Be Agreeable/mysterious
- Allow yourself to be objectified, but preferably asexual/Be desirable & sexy
- Be Intuitive & Understanding/Be Knowledgeable & Powerful
- Need Protection/Holds her Own
- Be likable/Be Confident
- Have domestic skills/Have worldly skills

- Depend on someone for security/make your own money

The Divided Woman resides at the center of the entire model. As I looked further into the stories we tell about women, I found that there was a more subtle structure underlying the stories. In every one of them, the woman starts out in the world of “Once Upon a Time” filled with promise, potential, and desire- she is *undifferentiated*.

Then we are set on a path at a tender young age to either be the idealized, helpful, passive feminine- MISORs, or we are cast aside and forced to inhabit a role where we could have our brilliance, sexuality, or unique abilities- but we are not allowed to have both- at least not in the beginning. Women are only offered the preferred version, and anything else is doomed to being “outside” of the norms and standards, even when these are unachievable or undesirable. In mythologies from movies to sacred literature, power is NOT for those born to become women, and so those women become MIPEs.

The MISOR woman acts in a way that fits our stereotypes of passive femininity. MISORs are pretty, maternal, allowing, and often perform being demure. They want children and a family or at least know that is the key to acceptance. They understand the need to be of service to men and patriarchal institutions. The MISOR is the only version of female behavior that is valued in patriarchy. Meanwhile, the MIPE is the odd one out. She may play with boys as a child. She may long for a career in fields traditionally occupied by men. She values her intellect, her body, her power, her work ethic, likely- all of these. She is baffled by finding that the more she uses the powers given to her: intelligence, strength, magic, intuition, sexuality, cunning- the more she is pushed away from the center of power- whether that’s as a daughter, wife, professional, or member of a community. Most girls reject the idea of The Divide. They don’t think it exists. And even more important, they believe wholeheartedly that the world will offer them opportunities

that are unsullied by power and domination. They don't want to believe in The Divide. And yet, the Divide comes for them, it comes for all of us- sometimes in secret, sometimes violently.

### **The Divided Woman arrives for Brunch**

I spent a fortune on quiche. More than a hundred tiny pies the size of a silver dollar covered the sideboard. I don't think I'd ever seen so many mini quiches in my life. I definitely overbought, but also didn't want anyone to go hungry. I stacked them in pyramids according to their flavor. Quiche Lorraine, tomato and cheese, broccoli and cheese. They reminded me of a fourth-grade social studies project on Mayan pyramids. Nervous, I ate a few of the strays as I put the finishing touches together. I hand-wrote the flavors onto tiny wooden signs with a chalk pen. I had pulled out the china my grandmother bought in Italy in the 1940s. The plates and their gold-painted edges brought back fond memories of parties at her house. Graceful flutes for the champagne and cloth napkins were all there for the taking. Champagne and orange juice sat next to the towers of quiche on my sideboard. The champagne chilled in a steel ice bucket, while the orange juice waited in a fancy glass pitcher built with a special ice bath to keep it cold. There were other goodies all around: fresh fruit, turkey bacon, scrambled eggs, bagels, lox, cream cheese, tomatoes, capers, Greek yogurt, fresh berries, and challah French toast with organic maple syrup.

The food was a pacifier. Research has shown that hungry people are more critical. Trial judges give more harsh sentences just before lunch, and more lenient ones after. I was hoping for a judgment but didn't want it to be handed down too harshly. I had been working on the theory outlining The Queen's Path for two years, and this Sunday morning I was going to put it in front of some of the smartest people I knew. A doctor, two lawyers, several writers, two former students, animation professionals, a cardiac nurse, and colleagues from graduate school graced my house with their brilliant minds. I invited them to tear the theory, and me, apart. If the ideas

weren't well received, I at least wanted to impress my guests with the spread. I'm a fourth-generation New Orleanian, so hospitality and good food are in my DNA. I hoped they would enjoy the menu enough to smooth over harsh words with thoughtful critique.

I had an idea of what to do with the research, but it seemed so broad that I was intimidated by the scope. I wanted my friends and colleagues to help me figure out how to make it less academic and more accessible to the people I wanted to reach: storytellers, therapists, women... anyone who had a stake in what it meant for women to construct narratives- or for anyone writing women's stories themselves.

I spoke quickly to my guests about the discovery- that wicked witch and princess were prescriptions, options based on what sort of desire women are allowed to pursue. The women stared at me. I became nervous, not sure what was happening in the group as they noshed on their quiche Lorraine. I learned later from every woman there, that it was as though someone had finally placed the missing piece of a puzzle together. But in the moment, the stares and drawn breaths seemed like boredom or disdain. Rachel sat back in her chair. Patricia sat forward focused on me. Merle took copious notes on a yellow legal pad, as did David, but his were in a hard-bound notebook replete with diagrams and drawings. I scanned the room and had nearly everyone's attention. I couldn't tell what anyone was thinking, but no one made me more anxious than Sandra.

My friend Sandra shifted in her seat uncomfortably. I met her in graduate school at Pacifica Graduate Institute. In our tiny cohort, she was the smartest. She had conquered nursing school, imaging programs, yoga teacher training, and another master's degree by this point. Small and strong, she always seemed to me like her soul was too big for her body, as though it



was desperate to take up more space- but didn't dare. Sandra stared at me with an intensity I mistook for anger.

I explained the core ideas. The Divide comes at a fork in the road. Childhood leads to the fork. We are cast into one path or the other. I spoke to my guests about examples from mythology, literature, film, and theater. Relaxing a bit, I spoke about my journey. The longer I talked, the more uncomfortable Sandra became. When I had gotten through my presentation, but before the group was set to ask questions, she excused herself and said she was feeling ill and would send me her notes. I was relieved that the look I saw from her might be that she was physically unwell. Sandra left, having hardly touched her food. I continued with my other guests in very productive discussions for another two hours discussing holes in my presentation and answering questions about the MISOR and the MIPE.

We discussed why the theory mattered, who it was for, and how it could be used. My friend Patricia argued that calling it "The QUEEN's Path" was a bad idea. She had grown up in Scotland in council housing when Margaret Thatcher was prime minister. Trisha's idea of a Queen was someone who took from you without caring if you were safe or well-fed. She felt that I'd need to change the name to appeal to readers in the UK. Several people asked me why I didn't use archetypes everyone understood already. I explained that the existing titles were packed with so much baggage it would be impossible to discern the new ideas from the old structures. Most of my guests gave me excellent feedback, thoughtful questions, and important edits. I was deeply grateful.

When everyone had left, I was feeling very satisfied, and only mildly beaten up. I went to my office to write up some notes and found that I had a long email from Sandra. In it, she out-

lined that my presentation had made her see why she had been so confused and sad for the majority of her life- constantly struggling with depression. She described how, as the oldest child in her family, she had had a great deal of responsibility, and couldn't understand that no matter how much she pursued education, degrees, and financial success, her family rarely acknowledged her.

Often they shamed her for being too "manly". They constantly asked her why she wasn't married with children and berated her for her accomplishments. She pursued men who wanted families and children, mostly because it aligned with what her family wanted for her, and what she was raised to want for herself. But every man she dated wanted her to do less, be less, and make herself smaller so that she didn't outshine him. She saw in my presentation that she had been a MIPE in a world that only recognized the MISOR. And she wanted many things that are traditionally associated with the MISOR. She wanted a family and children, but she had been trying to be part of the MISOR world with her MIPE credentials. She couldn't negate her intelligence, strength, and ambition. She reported that she had spent her life hoping to be recognized by her family, and chosen for her accomplishments. But her family and the men she had dated wanted a woman who didn't have any talents, gifts, or accomplishments. They all wanted her to find her sole meaning and purpose in serving her partner and her family.

It was in this moment that I understood the power in naming the Divided Woman. Sandra had done everything she felt was right and meaningful to honor her intellect and drive while simultaneously trying to be a "good girl." She had wanted to "have it all." Sandra was a MIPE and had never realized it- constantly doubling down on her MIPE talents and skills in hopes of scoring MISOR points. The more her parents and family pushed her, the more she used her gifts- her intellect, and her athleticism. They pushed her to use those skills only in the effort to achieve the MISOR goal of marriage and family.

Sandra wrote that she was grateful for the research and that it would be a little while before she'd be ready to discuss it again. She was going to take this insight to her therapist and try to better understand how she had internalized the expectations put on her, and struggled to be authentic to herself, while also acquiescing to her family. She wrote that she finally understood why she had to live thousands of miles away from them. She was sad, but she offered that she finally had the clarity that she had struggled to find for the last several years.

In therapy, there is a saying, "The only way out is through." The meaning often makes people angry. It is letting you know that there is no version of getting out of the situation you're in. You have to slog through- whether you like it or not. The more you avoid the slog, the longer you're stuck in hell.

### **Invisible and Divided**

The Divided Woman is the central part of this research. I get asked a lot why I created new names for these archetypes rather than rely on ones that everyone already understands. The answer is implied in the question itself. There is too much baggage in the titles we have already defined. The assumptions about MISORs and MIPEs using existing archetypes are already very biased. We think of Cinderella or Snow White as innocent young maidens, incapable of harm. We wouldn't naturally put Snow White in the same category as Regina George from *Mean Girls*. But both are MISORs using beauty, passivity (even if performative), and availability to get relationships or protection. Meanwhile, we associate the MIPE with the Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba from *Wicked*, or Villanelle from *Killing Eve*. But would you think of Diana Princess of Wales as a MIPE? Or Elle Woods at Harvard? What about Offred/June Osborne, from *The Handmaid's Tale*?

I chose these descriptive acronyms precisely because they don't come prepackaged with the overly positive and negative attributes that *princess* and *witch* already bring to the table. A

MISOR can be an antagonist, and a MIPE can be the protagonist. A MIPE can bring out as much compassion from a reader, as a MISOR. A MISOR can long for a life filled with purpose and power. A MIPE can long to be a mother.

According to archetypal psychologists Carl G. Jung and James Hillman, archetypes aren't created, they are eternal- they always exist. It is how we name them that changes- the symbols that occupy those spaces morph and turn over time. We have been living with two archetypes that fit together like puzzle pieces for thousands of years. We have treated them as though they are enemies of one another, indeed they are often portrayed that way. But they are two halves of a divided being- a woman being told that one side is acceptable, and the other is not. How she navigates those definitions is the core work for any woman following the Queen's Path.

### **What's Next**

We will wind through the Queen's Path with an eye on both internal and external narratives. A word of caution though, this model explodes the idea of women as heroes or heroines. It's not that women CANNOT be heroes or heroines, but rather that without sovereignty a heroine is always going to be an outsider, a MIPE. That means that even if she is on a heroine's quest, she must ALSO take the Queen's Path. She may succeed in her goal, but she will fail in her hero's quest if she doesn't first gain sovereignty. This model, like many before it, can help organize stories from screenplays and novels to personal essays or psychotherapeutic reflections. As an archetypal model, it is a guide, not an absolute. Gather up your notebook and colored pens and let's set our glass slippers and pointy shoes along the first steps of the Queen's Path.