20 Master Plots

#1 QUEST – the plot involves the Protagonist’s **search for (not rescue of) a person, place or thing**, tangible or intangible (but must be quantifiable, so think of this as a noun; i.e., immortality).

#2 ADVENTURE – this plot involves the Protagonist going **in search of their fortune**, and since fortune is never found at home, the Protagonist goes to search for it somewhere over the rainbow.

#3 PURSUIT – this plot **literally involves** hide-and-seek, one person chasing another.

#4 RESCUE – this plot involves the Protagonist searching for someone or something, usually consisting of three main characters – the Protagonist, the Victim & the Antagonist.

#5 ESCAPE – plot involves **a Protagonist confined against their will who wants to escape** (does not include some one trying to escape their personal demons).

#6 REVENGE – **retaliation** by Protagonist or Antagonist against the other for real or imagined injury.

#7 THE RIDDLE – plot involves the Protagonist’s search for clues to find the hidden meaning of something in question **that is deliberately enigmatic or ambiguous**.

#8 RIVALRY – plot involves Protagonist **competing for same object or goal as another person** (their rival). (Find one that is not from a sports genre)

#9 UNDERDOG – plot involves a Protagonist, competing for an object or goal, who is at a great disadvantage and is faced with overwhelming odds.

#10 TEMPTATION – plot involves a Protagonist who for one reason or another is induced or persuaded to do something that is unwise, wrong or immoral in exchange for some other reward.

#11 METAMORPHOSIS – this plot involves the morphological or phenotypic changes of the Protagonist, **reflecting their inner psychological identity**. (Find one that is not a superhero movie)

#12 TRANSFORMATION – plot involves the process of change (but not morphological or phenotypic) in the Protagonist as **they journey through a stage of life that moves them from one significant character state to another**. (Find one that is not a superhero movie)

#13 MATURATION – plot involves the Protagonist facing a problem that is part of growing up, and from dealing with it, emerging into a state of adulthood (**going from innocence to experience**). Find one that is not set in a high school)

#14 LOVE – plot involves the Protagonist **overcoming the obstacles** to love that keeps them from consummating (engaging in) true love.

#15 FORBIDDEN LOVE – plot involves Protagonist(s) overcoming **obstacles created by social mores and taboos** to consummate their relationship (and sometimes finding it at too high a price to live with). Find another besides Romeo and Juliet.

#16 SACRIFICE – plot involves the Protagonist taking action(s) that is motivated by a higher purpose (concept) such as love, honor, charity or for the sake of humanity, and the Protagonist must lose something significant in the sacrifice. (find one that is neither religious or military)

#17 DISCOVERY – plot that is the most character-centered of all, involves the Protagonist having to **overcome an upheavel(s) in their life**, and thereby discovering something important (and buried) within them a better understanding of life (i.e., better appreciation of their life, a clearer purpose in their life, etc.)

#18 WRETCHED EXCESS – plot involves a Protagonist who **pushes the limits of acceptable behavior** to the extreme and is forced to deal with the consequences, generally deals with the psychological decline of the character). (Different than #20, this one is about desire, addiction, etc)

#19 ASCENSION – rags-to-riches plot deals with the rise (success) of Protagonist due to a **dominating character trait** that helps them to succeed.

#20 DECENSION – riches-to-rags plot deals with the fall (destruction) of Protagonist **due to dominating character trait/flaw** that eventually destroys their success. Different than #18, this one is about character flaw(s)