Sarah Whitaker

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Mentor: James Leesley

Chapter 3: Essay

Herzog and the Burden of Dreams

I don’t fully agree with Herzog. Yes, his determination in the face of his dreams is awesome, but once other people’s health are on the line… ah… no. That’s where I would have drawn the line. Now, the plane crash couldn’t be helped. The entire crank system to move the boat?! I completely understand why the morale was low! If I was going to pull crap like that, I’d be right in there with them doing the work if the risks were that high! Yes, people can die at any given moment on set similar to Brandon Lee, but if you can give people safety, that is much more important than anyone’s story. Bruises and injuries happen, but Herzog knew that people were going to be in danger of losing their lives with the boat thing. The scuffles with the natives couldn’t be expected, and he did the right thing by sending out a posse to protect the crew, but the engineer was right to leave.

Yes, I agree with the philosophy of “go big or go home”, but when lives are on the line, there needs to be a line drawn. I don’t like the idea of breaking laws to get a story done either. Here’s the thing! If they see you trespassing on the film, then you can go to jail! The artists vision is a very powerful thing and determination is needed to make it come to fruition. It takes equal determination to get proper licenses and permissions to make a movie done *right*, though. The go big or go home connects to guerilla filmmaking because you need to take as much footage as possible when you can so that the editing team can work its magic. A little here, a little there, and you make it look like one location. Often times one goes through hell in order to do it right. So long as you walk through hell and don’t stay to enjoy the view, you can be a film maker.

Now, I agree that Herzog had moxie. He took risks that other film makers wouldn’t have the guts to do in order to get the film shot. He put life and limb on the line in order to get it done, as did his actors and crew. Most likely would have stopped after losing Mick Jagger. Unlike other movie makers, though, Herzog offered a very important token to the natives in order to make his film. This kind of diplomacy takes a special kind of director. I don’t hear of many other stories of directors taking such a step towards freedom and preservation of a culture. Granted, he worked the locals to the ground, but the guy got the thing done despite blow after blow. As an artist, I believe Herzog’s philosophy is to be more than just an artist but a determined warrior of many talents. It is similar to the philosophy of the samurai or the musketeers of yore. They weren’t just soldiers, they were poets and diplomats. As a film maker you are also a caretaker and must respect not only your set but your people. Nature is a brutal force and the man learned the hard way time and again that trying to control it was not going to be a cake walk.

Ah! At last we get to Vogler!

In all honesty, out of the movies I’ve seen, the Addams Family is probably the closest movie to what I want to do with my TV show. Now… hear me out. Yes, I want to do a fantasy series, but I’m working with not only a Necromancer, but his apprentices. Undead walk the town in the open and everyone’s accepting of it.

The Addams Family does such a great job having an entire group as a main protagonist. The family unit working as a team is something I really want to adapt for the TV show. This works so well for TV because the story started as a TV series. Gomez is the main protagonist… sort of. With how he and Morticia work so well together, the two work mostly as a team through most of the story, save the beginning. One could call the entire family a trickster heroes because of their odd ways in the middle of society. They buck the status quo. The antagonist, the wily doctor, uses a shape shifter (Fester) in order to get at the family fortune. Grandma sort of acts as a mentor, and Thing acts as a herald to Gomez to tell him that Morticia is in danger. The lawyer acts as a false mentor (definitely a shadow) and a bit of a threshold guardian because even though it’s the judge that sentences Gomez, the lawyer pulls the strings from behind with the doctor.

The thing I really want to play with is the concept of the mentor hero. While Mordeus has taken apprentices in the past, he has lost most of his faith in people since training his last apprentice. The first season has Mordeus as not only the protagonist, but the mentor at the same time. The pendulum shifts in the second season when he balances being both a student and a mentor. When everything comes to a head about midway into the fourth season, Mordeus steps down from the limelight and the fruits of his teachings through the years of teaching come forward as the apprentices (not just Mordeus’) come together to fight back in the war. While I wouldn’t call Mordeus a “fallen” mentor initially, the end of season one puts his reputation into question to the point where he has to forfeit his title as a doctor in order to continue teaching Wallace.

The entire concept of the team being in the lead as a whole really grabs me because you do not see a lot of that anymore. Most shows surround one lead protagonist in a group that he’s leading (Walking Dead and Lost come to mind in this) rather than a team being on near-equal time. While Mordeus could be the lead for the most part, he learns just as much as he teaches with him and the apprentices shifting hats from time to time in being the mentor. It’s the symbiotic relationship with the group that carries the story (I intend to steal a story element from Grand Theft Auto 5 and in the second season have the apprentices attacking one another’s enemies).