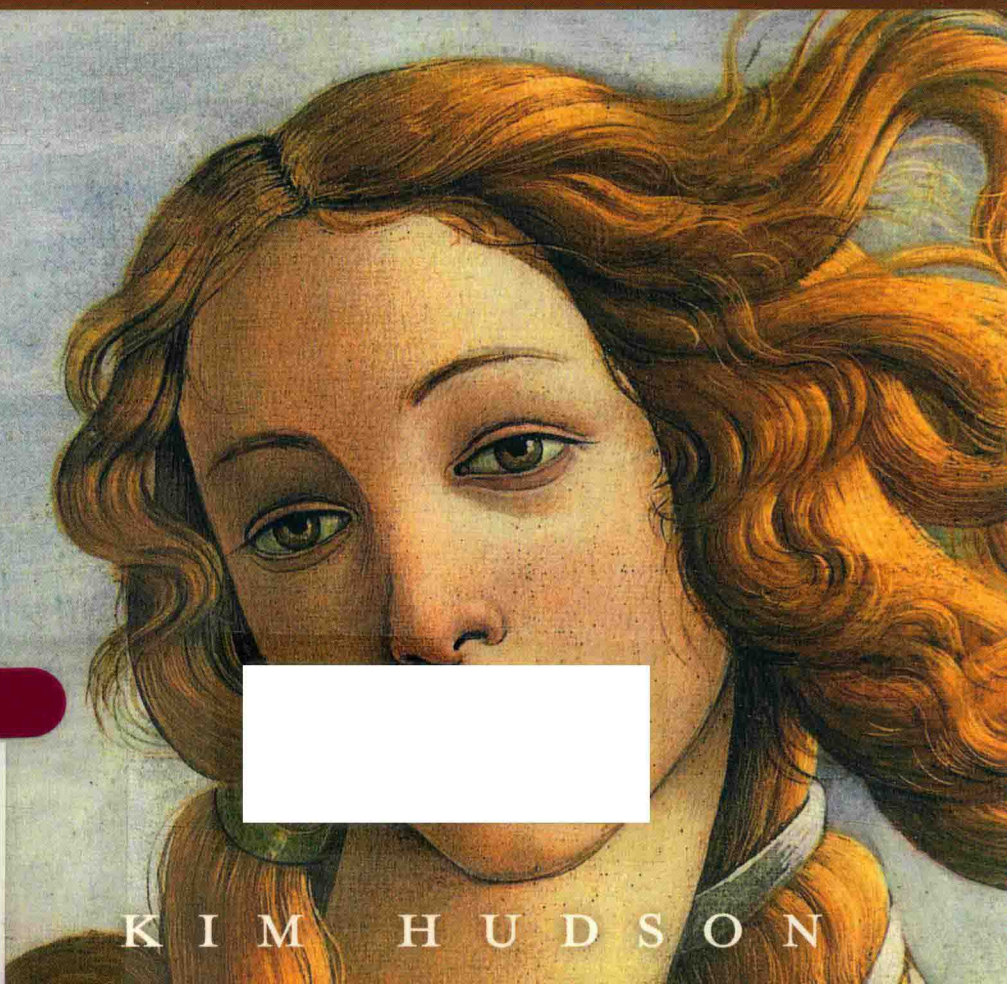


Foreword by CHRISTOPHER VOGLER, author of THE WRITER'S JOURNEY

The Virgin's

P R O M I S E

Writing Stories of Feminine Creative, Spiritual and Sexual Awakening



K I M H U D S O N

图书馆

The Virgin's
P R O M I S E

WRITING STORIES OF FEMININE CREATIVE, SPIRITUAL, AND SEXUAL AWAKENING



K I M H U D S O N

M I C H A E L W I E S E P R O D U C T I O N S

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"While everyone is keenly aware of the imbalance between the number of male vs. female focused movies, few screenwriters have known where to turn to find help composing plots enthralling enough to tip the scales. The Archetype of the Virgin is a clever one to chose, as it evokes innocence on the one extreme, and solid self-possession on the other, an arc author Kim Hudson deftly delineates in *The Virgin's Promise*."

– Mary Trainor-Brigham, M.A., author of *Deep Cinema*

"A comprehensive answer to the age-old riddle of what do those feminine characters really want."

– John L. Geiger, co-author, *Creativity & Copyright*

"Far too many talented, hardworking women and minority screenwriters are underemployed compared to male screenwriters, and women's perspectives are far too often marginalized, trivialized or ignored in the film and television industries of our world. Kim Hudson's *The Virgin's Promise* will help both male and female screenwriters think about what's involved in creating more viable female characters, and provides a ready template for those who need one. I look forward to recommending this book to my screenwriting students."

– Alexis Krasilovsky, Professor, Dept. of Cinema and Television Arts, California State University, Northridge

"The story of the Virgin is as old as recorded history. Kim Hudson has given that story new life through her book. She has allowed readers to expand their imaginations to create a contemporary vision of this 'mythical' character. A must have for any writer's collection."

– Ken Rotcop, author of *The Perfect Pitch* and creator of Pitchmart

"Behind every great film is a great story of transformation. In *The Virgin's Promise*, Kim Hudson gives screenwriters a clear explanation of the archetypal journey toward feminine creative, spiritual, and sexual awakening. Highly recommended."

– Tony Levelle, author of *Digital Video Secrets* and co-author of *Producing with Passion*

"*The Virgin's Promise* finally delivers the inversion of the much-discussed Myth of the Hero. A long-overlooked female exploration of transformation, Hudson's analysis is revealing, engaging and informative. Screenwriters, scholars, and social studies grad students alike will be thanking her for years to come."

– Jay Miles, media instructor, East Haven (CT) High School

"Kim Hudson's new book, *The Virgin's Promise*, is both a powerful writing manual and a treasure of insight into the feminine nature. It will not only help you master the ability to write powerful female characters and develop the virgin's journey in fresh ways, but also help you see the deeper meaning in the stories of our lives. I admit I'm a sucker for this kind of stuff, but I believe Hudson has added a valuable volume that should be part of any writer's – or student of humanity's – library."

– Derek Rydall, author of *I Could've Written a Better Movie than That!* and *There's No Business Like Soul Business*, founder, ScriptwriterCentral.com, EnlightenedEntertainer.com.

"*The Virgin's Promise* is a groundbreaking and profound addition to the canon on screenplay structure. With great clarity Kim Hudson offers a method for understanding and writing successful screenplays about characters whose dramatic journey follows an internal path to discovery and acceptance of their true identity in spite of formidable obstacles. I am certain that many important and successful new films will be inspired by this book."

– Sharon McGowan, producer of *Better Than Chocolate* and *The Lotus Eaters*

"A story well told can change the world. Hudson unlocks the secret to writing stories of self-fulfillment in this lovely and inspiring book. A must read for all storytellers and screenwriters."

– Mireille Soria, producer of *Ever After*

"For a work as thought provoking and even profound as this, *The Virgin's Promise* is thankfully accessible and not for a minute esoteric during its read. The icing on the cake is Hudson's style and use of language. At once simple and yet complex. *The Virgin's Promise* is a bit like the perfect haiku: Sparse and philosophical."

– Deepa Mehta, screenwriter/producer of *Fire, Earth, Water* and *Bollywood/Hollywood*

To Jamie, Jesse and Buzz



Acknowledgements

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Foreword

by Christopher Vogler

The "Hero's Journey" pattern that Joseph Campbell wrote about in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* has been a wellspring of creativity and inspiration for many people, male and female, who recognized the patterns as a metaphorical description of their journeys through life. It has been a roadmap for storytellers and artists, female and male, who find its terms and incidents to be perfectly designed to connect with the emotions and dreams of their audiences. For many people it can be a universal, one-size-fits-all guidebook to the inevitable stages of life, travel, launching a new business, or any serious endeavor.

However, and this is a big however, there has been a persistent shortcoming in this approach to life and literature, in that it has a slight gender bias towards the masculine. In my work I try to view it as neutral, genderless, a description of the general human condition, but it has been pointed out to me many times, and I have come to understand on my own, that there is more than a drop of testosterone in the assumptions and specifics of the Hero's Journey, starting with that word "hero." I noticed that when I started lecturing about the Hero's Journey, many people immediately assumed I was talking about male action heroes,

superheroes, traditionally male military heroes, etc. Women would say "Fine, I get it about the man's journey to go out and conquer something, but what's the woman's journey?"

I had no good answer. I am a man, I see things as a man, and it would be foolish to speculate what it's like to be a woman on her journey through life. So I looked around and found the work of female scholars like Marie-Louise von Franz, Marija Gimbutas, Maureen Murdock, and Carol Pearson on the mythic archetypes specific to women, and the very different ways they saw the journey. Kim Hudson, the author of the book in your hands, doesn't even think of it as necessarily being a journey, but rather an emotional process. Maureen Murdock in particular had a way of restating the unique life patterns and signposts of the woman's experience as a clear outline, so I began referring people who wondered "What is the Woman's Journey?" to Murdock's work.

But I felt there was more work to be done in this area, especially in applying the findings of sociologists, scholars, and therapists to the specialized worlds of storytelling and screenwriting, and I encouraged my questioners and all the women in the audience to develop a theory about what is unique about the feminine experience of drama and life's patterns.

I was encouraged all along by the enthusiasm with which women, especially my friends in the world of romance novel writing, took to the Hero's Journey as a useful template or toolbox for designing and troubleshooting their works. They could definitely see themselves reflected in it, but at the same time they felt free to amend it and rephrase it so it made sense from the feminine perspective. They emphasized some elements and diminished others as they saw fit, and changed terminology to reflect the realities of their business, the desires of their audiences, and the guidance of their own hearts. That seems in keeping with Joseph Campbell's idea that the Hero has a thousand faces, countless interpretations, "the one, shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with a challengingly persistent

suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told" (Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*). And among the shifting shapes must surely be plenty of uniquely female expressions.

I have a few guesses about the differences between the masculine and feminine approaches to dramatic structure, and one of them focuses on geometry. What geometric form makes a somewhat accurate model of how you see drama unfolding? Stories can be represented graphically by a straight line like a railroad track, as Syd Field diagrams screenplays in his books. You use a pyramid or a ballistic curve to represent the arc of the story, or as Campbell chose, and I have chosen to follow, you can trace the stages of a story as a circle. When women describe to me how they experience drama or a dramatic event in their lives, the graphic patterns that come to mind are a series of concentric circles or a spiral in which the female protagonist proceeds more inwardly through a series of levels than the male who tends to move out into the world. The female heroes seem to move towards the center of a series of rings that represent the different levels of female relationships – relationship with father and mother, other women, men, children, society, the gods and goddesses, and finally at the center with themselves, their own true natures. Then they may return through all those levels, unwinding the spiral, applying what they have learned at their center to each set of relationships. They may touch upon some or all of the stages of the Hero's Journey while they trace their own geometry, but they seem to be more interested in these relationships than in the external adventures and physical challenges.

But I have been hoping someone would take on this subject with full commitment to work out the details of a comprehensive theory of drama from a feminine perspective, and I believe you are about to read a book that does exactly that.

What I found in these pages was an eye-opening re-telling of the universal human story from the feminine perspective, with

quite different language and thinking than I had ever considered. Hudson starts by overthrowing the troublesome words hero and heroine and strikes out boldly to trace the unique adventure of the Virgin archetype. Many of the terms she uses are compatible with those of the Hero's Journey, and simply emphasize a different shade of meaning in some common signposts. But other elements of her grammar of storytelling are unique, recognizing turning points that don't have equivalents in the Hero's Journey language, that are uniquely feminine, or at least reflective of a more inward and emotionally based approach to drama and life. She leaves plenty of room for male heroes to experience their own version of the Virgin's Promise, suggesting the term "Prince" as the male counterpart of Virgin.

I have known a few Hollywood princelings in my career, sons and grandsons of powerful people who stood to inherit kingdoms, and so I heartily endorse the exploration of this rich archetype, which Shakespeare pioneered with his studies of the playboy prince Hal turning into the stalwart King Henry V.

Among the many revelations in this book is the author's technique of pairing archetypes, which yields many useful diagrams and insights. For example, she pairs the Virgin with its polar opposite, the Whore, and shows how the two archetypes intertwine and reflect each other. Another useful pairing is the Hero and the Coward, with Coward replacing the terms I typically use to describe the hero's moral opposite, Villain and Shadow. The choice of Coward emphasizes the unspoken quality of courage in the term Hero, and points out a deep and consistent truth about Villains and Shadow figures – they are cowards, choosing a selfish and greedy path rather than the heroic path of self-sacrifice for the greater good.

This book repeatedly pounds me with how much I didn't know. The author has done a thorough, and I mean thorough, research job on archetypes and psychological theory, and you won't find a more lucid guide to these sometimes challenging

concepts. I have already mentioned Hudson's useful diagrams that show the variations of the male and female archetypes and their positive and negative potentials at different stages of life; these alone are worth the price of the book. But there are many more nuggets of value in here, including a groundbreaking distinction between fairy tales and myths. The author maintains that fairy tales are generally the province of the feminine and tend to be domestic and family-oriented, and that myths for the most part are the outer-directed territory of masculine energy. She is not dogmatic on this or any other point, and gives ample acknowledgement of the exceptions.

Having identified them as the key to understanding the Virgin's Promise concept, Kim Hudson caresses the fairy tales to bring out every nuance of their meaning for the storyteller who wants to accurately express the feminine experience.

The author has taken care to draw parallels and make correspondences with both Campbell's language and mine, so that the Hero's Journey is not rejected but acknowledged as part of a larger system that also includes the Virgin's Promise. The two approaches are seen as complementary rather than confrontational, and combining the two of them will give you a complete set of language and mental tools for dealing with any kind of story.

I have always said that the screenwriter or novelist needs a lot of tools and a lot of language to manage and describe the many possibilities in these crafts. No one set of terms can encompass all the human possibilities, and so we need many templates, many models, many sets of terms to describe them to ourselves and communicate them to other artists. This book makes a substantial contribution to the lingo and the tools and will stimulate further thinking about this subject. For example, I have always felt that the Hero's Journey is actually asexual and genderless, and therefore someone needs to do for the uniquely masculine journey what Kim Hudson has done for the feminine.

Until then, here is a work that fills a major gap in the theory of drama and life. One more thing before this foreword becomes longer than the book it introduces. I am struck by the persistence of light in this vision of the feminine experience. Light seems to be a uniting metaphor in this framework. Three of Hudson's thirteen stages, "Opportunity to Shine," "Caught Shining," and "Chooses her Light" directly mention aspects of light and there are glimmers of light throughout the theory. Hudson reminds us that "Just as the Greek goddess Aphrodite was known for her radiance, the shining forth of an internal quality rather than any physical attribute, the Virgin's beauty is often described in terms of light such as shining, glowing, brilliant, dazzling and iridescent... In other words, the Virgin's beauty represents the shining forth of her soul." In that spirit, this book brings light to the mysteries of the unique feminine experience of life's journey, and delivers a boon to screenwriters and storytellers of all kinds.

Christopher Vogler



Preface

*A*s I developed this theory of the Virgin archetypal journey, it dawned on me that my life was following the Virgin story. I was a wife in a privileged life, busy caring for my family, and pushing my fascination with story aside. One day I noticed an ad for a Writing for Film and Television program. I thought that perhaps writing screenplays might be the easiest way to start. It's all dialogue. How hard could that be? I had a lot to learn but the thought gave me permission to do it.

On the first day of school I was all nerves, but I had a plan for survival. I would blend in with the crowd. Lay low and learn was my motto. Getting here had been a work of progressive requests and assurances until finally the space was carved out for a few months – secretly I hoped it would be for a lifetime. I decided to wear faded blue jeans and a white poet's blouse, hoping to give a youthful, artsy impression. From a distance no one would suspect I was over forty. My God, my classmates were young-faced! A woman welcomed us and read a poem by Marion Williamson. By the time she got to "We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and famous?'" I was sure she was talking directly to me.

Randomly, people were asked to introduce themselves. I slouched, made no eye contact, and silently chanted "lay low and learn," but the instructor stood in front of me and asked me to speak. It was a classic opportunity to shine in the Virgin archetypal story.

I stood up and blurted out, "I had my fortieth birthday and suddenly realized if I don't try something now, this will be all that there is." I slipped back into my chair, pretty sure I'd blown any effect my poet blouse was giving.

Eventually, a psychologist joined us. He spoke on the works of mythologist Joseph Campbell, psychiatrist Carl Jung, Hollywood story editor Christopher Vogler, and the story of the Hero's Journey. I was in love. And I don't say this lightly. The concepts just jumped out at me as truths. He described inherited archetypes that connect all humans through time. An archetype represented each of the three stages of the masculine and feminine life: beginning, middle, and end. Each stage had an accompanying shadow side, making a total of twelve archetypes. We, the three hundred people in the theater, were going to brainstorm and pull these archetypes from our collective unconscious pool.

We began by questing for a name for the beginning stage masculine archetype. Hero was chorused by the crowd. The shadow side, Coward, didn't cause the crowd to stall, either. The masculine at the height of his power was described as Father/King/God, which I vaguely remembered from an art class. We struggled to name the shadow side of being a mature masculine archetype and were rewarded with the Tyrant. Very satisfying! Then we found words for the elderly masculine archetype including Mentor, Wise Man, and Merlin. His shadow side, a Lecher, made me chuckle.

We turned to the feminine side and stalled. The psychologist wrote "Princess/Virgin" to describe the beginning feminine archetype. I was intrigued by the association of sexuality with a

feminine archetype. The description of the shadow side of the beginning feminine archetype was the Whore. Yikes!

People enthusiastically shouted out mature feminine archetype names like Mother, Queen, and Goddess. The call for the shadow side left the room popping with suggestions: Evil Stepmother, Wicked Queen. This seemed plainly wrong. That wasn't a shadow side – that was the same as the light side, except not very nice about it. The more I thought about it, Queen was more the female version of King than an opposite. I adjusted the mature feminine to Mother/Goddess in my mind. While I was at it, I decided that the masculine in my version is Lover/King. I smiled at myself. Only three hours into it and I was already questioning great thinkers like Campbell and Vogler. Then I thought that maybe this is the point. Every one of us has the ability to reach inside ourselves, look for a feeling of resonance, and make a connection with the archetypes in our own way.

The instructor called for an example of a positive image for the end stage feminine archetype. The auditorium was silent, making me feel entirely justified in my earlier vanity. Slowly I raised my hand.

“Crone?”

Several people argued that Crone was a negative archetype, but eventually it was determined she may create unpleasant circumstances, but they benefit others, so she was a light side archetype. Crone, Wise Woman, and Fairy Godmother were added to our archetypal list. For the description of the shadow side of an end stage feminine archetype, “Witch” was eagerly shouted out and accepted. I was uncomfortable writing this down. A witch may not see herself as operating from the shadow side. I was sure archetypes had to be unbiased and universal.

We paused and looked at our chart. There it was, brought up from its storage place in our collective unconscious. Then I heard that the Hero archetype also had a repeated progression of actions that mapped out a full, meaningful experience. The

Hero lives in an **Ordinary World** until one day he receives a **Call to Adventure**. At first he **Refuses the Call**, because of the great danger, but after **Meeting with the Guide**, the Hero **Crosses the First Threshold** to a foreign land. Suddenly away from everything familiar, the Hero is tested in his ability to survive. Clear in his purpose he meets allies who can help him and learns about his enemy. The allies make **Preparations** to enter the enemy's lair and increase their chances of success. The Hero faces near-death in a **Crisis**, escapes with his life, and is **Rewarded** with an advantage when next he faces the enemy. He takes the **Road Back** and meets the enemy in a **Final Battle**. The Hero defeats the enemy, sometimes at the cost of his life, and **Returns with the Elixir** that will keep the village safe.

We were told that in Campbell's theory, all story, throughout history and across all cultures, follows a mono-myth which he called the Hero's Journey; the story of the beginning stage masculine archetype, which applies equally to women and men.

Lay low and learn. I couldn't do it. "What about the whole other side of the chart?" I inquired, nodding to the feminine archetypes.

"Well," the psychologist answered, "the feminine archetypes are considered more passive and internal. Good in novels, but movies are all about action."

This did not sit right with me. For weeks, concepts of archetypes kept churning in my head as I kept doing my double shifts, film-school student by day, mom by night. Suddenly I found myself inexplicably weeping on the bus, in my instructor's office, alone at home. One day my instructor said, "It is amazing how hard people work to stay stuck." He was talking about my screenplay character but that was exactly what I was doing. I needed to stop hiding in my marriage and make room for this research.

Back and forth on the bus I kept wrestling with the concept that the Virgin archetype also had a pattern of behavior. Repeated beats emerged from watching many non-hero movies.