

Hero's Journey Analysis "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest"

ORDINARY WORLD

A car approaches

Nurse Ratched arrives

Mental hospital

Mancini is restrained in cuffs while he sleeps

Medication time

They are all wheeled up to take their doses

Chief has to be forced up to the counter

CALL TO ADVENTURE

RP McMurphy arrives

4:24

In handcuffs

People look down at him

He whoops with delight after they take the cuffs off

He's carrying on like a fairy

They don't know it yet, but Mac is their CALL TO ADVENTURE.

Nurse Ratched is told that Mac is there but rather than come in to see him, she stamps his file

They go through his belongings – totally dehumanised

She is the ANTAGONIST and the THRESHOLD GUARDIAN. The film is going to be a battle between her REGIMENTATION and Mac's more liberal fun-oriented "Therapy".

McMurphy talks to the Chief

How

6:19

Carries on like an Indian

Is told by Billy Bibbitt that the Chief is deaf and dumb

Mac circles the card players

7:07

He shows a pack of cards that has naked women
 Martini follows McMurphy
 So does Billy
 Charlie Cheswick is disturbed

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR/THRESHOLD GUARDIAN
 McMurphy meets with the head of the place

Talks about the fish the guy caught
 FORESHADOWING the later fishing trip

The guy goes through Mac's file
 38 years old
 What can you tell me about why you've been sent over here?
 Says he's been belligerent, resentful, lazy

Been sent over to determine whether he is mentally ill
 Why?
 Because he fights and fucks too much
 Why sent over from farm
 5 arrests for assault
 Rocky Marcini has got 40 and he's a millionaire

Statutory rape
 15 years old going on 35
 Very willing, you know what I mean
 When you get that little red beaver in front of you

What it says here
 They think you've been faking it to get out of work detail
 11:39

Do you think there is anything wrong with your mind
 Not a damn thing. I'm a marvel of modern science

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

The guy says that they will take him on for a few weeks
 and see how it goes

I'm here to co-operate with you 100%
 I think we need to get to the bottom of RP McMurphy

TESTS, ALLIE and ENEMIES
 Nurse Ratched does exercises with the group
 13:18

Group therapy
 Sterile
 Mr Harding was telling us last week

His wife made him uneasy when she drew attention on the street

Thinks his wife may have been forced to seek sexual attention elsewhere

Anyone want to comment further?

Mr Scanlan

Shakes his head

14:17

Billy doesn't want to

She says she wants to write just once that Billy began the meeting

RP McMurphy snaps his cards

Establishing the antipathy between the two

Mr Martini doesn't want to begin

Mr Cheswick – no, very painful

Not a man here who has an opinion on this matter

Mr Harding have you ever speculated that you are impatient that your wife doesn't meet your mental needs

Taber (Christopher Lee) says cut off the bullshit

Harding lets fly

The group is divided

Cheswick is on Harding's side

But the rest are against Harding

Harding tells him to stay off his side

17:17

Blah, blah, blah

Mancini stands up

McMurphy is doing nothing yet

He's just observing the dysfunctionality

And we are forming opinions about the group

18:38

ALLIES

McMurphy looks at a squirrel on the barbed wire

A bunch of them leave on the bus

CALL TO ADVENTURE

McMurphy asks the Chief if he's ever played basketball

Shows him what to do
Put it in the basket

REFUSAL OF THE CALL
Doesn't do anything

The black nurse says the Chief can't hear a thing

McMurphy persists
Raise your hands up

Jump up and put in the basket
Take a rest, Chief

He goes to Mancini
Gets on his shoulders

Hit me, Chief

He shows him what to do with the ball
Jump up and put it in the basket

Mancini where you going
Takes him away
Over to the Chief

Put it in the basket, Chief

No go

23:47
ENEMY
They play cards
Martini is being a pain in the arse

Do you nuts want to play cards or do you want to jerk off

McMurphy wants to find out who is pitching the opening
game of the World Series

Do you think it might be possible to turn the music down
so that the boys can talk

She says that the older men can't hear the music if they
turn it down

You're staining my window

He won't take medicine if he doesn't know what's in it

She suggests they could give it rectally
Give it to me

He swallows it
Then he comes back to the table

He shows the tablet in his mouth to Harding
Spits it out into Harding's face

She's got you guys coming and going

Want to bet
I bet in one week I can put a bug so far up her arse she
won't know whether to shit or wind her wrist watch

Taber takes the bet
29:18

TEST
Another group therapy session

She asks if anyone wants to make a comment about Harding

RP McMurphy says he has stuff to get off his chest
He wants to change the work detail so they can watch the
World Series

She says the schedule has been carefully worked out

This is no way to proceed about this

Majority rule
All those I favour
Raise their hands

He only gets Cheswick and Taber
Fails the TEST

31.45

APPROACH
Taber is baiting Harding
As Harding plays Monopoly with Martini

McMurphy turns the hose on them
Howls with laughter
A little bit of byplay

Is that what your schedule does for you, Hard On?

Who wants to come down town to watch the game?
You can't get out of here
Anyone want to bet?

McMurphy says that he will lift this unit
 Put it through the window and get out of here
 Head downtown

They all say it can't be done
 Hard On bets \$25

Billy says no-one could lift that thing

He tries to lift it
 But can't

Tries again and can't

The Chief watches

But I tried, didn't I. God, damn it. At least I did that.
 35:34

For the inmates, this has been effectively a MEETING WITH
 THE MENTOR

ORDEAL

Second game of the 1963 World Series is playing on the
 radio

Group Therapy
 Billy is discussing his feelings about a girl
 Celia, will you marry me?
 Others laugh

Why did you want to marry her?
 Because I loved her
 Your mother said you never told her about it
 Why didn't you tell her
 Was that the first time you tried to commit suicide
 FORESHADOWING

Cheswick wants to ask a question
 If Billy doesn't feel like talking
 Why are you pressing him
 The business of this meeting is therapy
 I don't understand this, Nurse Ratched
 He's never been to a baseball game
 He'd like to see one
 That would be good therapy too, wouldn't it

A new game today
 We want a new vote
 Everyone in favour of changing the schedule
 Put up your hands

They are all there – including Harding
 Only 9
 It's a landslide
 And you have to have a majority to change ward policy
 You're counting these poor sons of bitches?

All is need is one more vote?
 He tries to get that vote

The meeting is adjourned
 Chief, you're our last chance
 Just raise your hand up
 Just show her you can still do it

Chief puts his hand up!
 41:45

Would you please put the television set on
 But she wont' budge

She puts the music on
 McMurphy looks at the blank screen
 43:06

He starts commenting
 They all gather around the TV
 He keeps calling
 And they all start cheering

Nurse Ratched is not happy
 43:00

Mac has won the battle
 But Ratched is going to win the war

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR/THRESHOLD GUARDIAN
 McMurphy is with the head guy
 That fucking nurse, man

She's not honest, man
 She's something of a cunt, ain't she, doc

He says that he doesn't see any evidence of mental
 illness
 Do you want me to take a shit on the floor

A couple of other guys are observing

Do you have a question, McMurphy
 Where do you suppose she lives?
 Holds up a picture of a naked woman bending over on the
 back of a playing card

REWARD

47:07

McMurphy tells Chief to grab the fence

McMurphy gets up on his shoulders

Push

McMurphy climbs on to the branch of the tree

And walks away

Chief smiles

48:00

They all get on the bus

McMurphy starts driving the bus

Takes them all on a scenic tour

49:45

He goes and picks up a girlfriend

Candy

The boys are gobsmacked

You all crazy?

They nod

He gets them all on board

Introduces Dr Taber, Dr Martini, etc – the only one who isn't a doctor is Harding

The guy goes to report them

They take off

53:28

McMurphy puts Cheswick on the helm

And goes down below

Shows them the bait

Shows them how to put bait on the hook

You're not a god damned looney now, boy

You're a fisherman

Billy is in love with Candy

He says you've got beautiful hair

And beautiful eyes

Cheswick sings "I'm Popeye the sailor man" as he steers the boat

Then Mac retires down below with Candy

58:49

Martini goes to look through the window
 The others follow
 Mac?
 Cheswick leaves his post
 The boat accelerates

In the middle of all this
 They get a strike on the line

They all hang on to the rod

Cheswick and Harding fight for the wheel

They return to port

A chopper flies in

Safe and sound
 They are holding two massive fish

The head of the institute is waiting

THE ROAD HOME

1:02:20

They think he's dangerous
 Not mentally sick
 What do you want to do with him
 I think we've had our turn
 She wants to send him back

Nurse Ratched

She says they are just passing on their problems
 She wants to keep him on the ward

So, though it's clear there's nothing wrong with Mac, she
 is going to grind him into the ground.

REWARD

They are going to play basketball
 They have too many
 Billy sits

Chief puts it in the basket

Strolls down
 Stops the ball going in

Strolls down the other end

Chief does it again
 They cheer

Chief strides down the other end
1:06:39

ROAD HOME

McMurphy thinks he'll be out in 68 days
But he's told by the black nurse, Washington, that he
won't get released until Nurse Ratched and the doctors
let him go.

Oh, oh.

ORDEAL

McMurphy is not happy
Thinks they should have told him
But Harding says that he is voluntary
Almost all of them are
Mac can't believe it

Billy's not committed
What you ought to be out banging beaver
You haven't got the guts to walk out?
You're not
You're no crazier than the average asshole

Some of them start challenging her
Cheswick wants his cigarettes
Turns into disarray

Harding loses his cigarette
It lands in Taber's pant leg

NURSE RATCHED says she will answer question when Cheswick
calms down

She says they have taken cigarettes
Because of the gambling that mac was running

Cigarette burns through Taber's leg

Cheswick complains about his cigarettes

Mac smashes through the glass
Grabs the cigarettes
Starts fighting with the black nurse

Chief comes to the rescuer and pulls him off
Mac punches the crap out of the guy

1:16:48

They are all pulled together to meet the authorities
Cheswick
Chief
Martini

Nurse comes with medication

Cheswick goes in
Dragged in

REWARD

1:19:44

Mac hands chewing gum to Chief
Thank you, he says
Hands another one
Hmm, Juicy Fruit
Mac says, you sly son of a bitch, Chief
They all think you're deaf and dumb
Mac is chuffed
You fooled em, Chief
You fooled em all

THE ROAD HOME

What are we doing here?
Lets get out of here
Canada

McMurphy goes in
1:22:16

ORDEAL

They strap him down to the gurney

What's that?
Conductant
They put something in his mouth

Then give him electric shock therapy

Very distressing

Back on the ward
1:24:15

Mac comes back in
Plays it up
Staggers in
Looks like a zombie
Winks at Chief

Near death experience

True ordeal

REWARD

Turns to the Group

Randall's back!

Look at your faces

Nurse Ratched serious as usual

1:25:54

Nurse Ratched says goodnight

1:27:00

McMurphy slips into the nurses station

Makes phone call

RP says he can't take it no more

CALL TO ADVENTURE

I've got to get out of here

REFUSAL OF THE CALL

Chief says he can't

Chief says the drink killed his old man

They worked on him the way they're working on you

His friends arrive

1:30:30

He bribes the nurse Turkel

Alcohol

To let them in

The ladies arrive

Candy and another, Rose

Mac takes Candy for a stroll

Turkel is left with Rose

The guys wake to lights going on and off

Medication time

Night time spirits

Mac has done this to say goodbye

Turkel comes out

To find everyone is out of bed drinking grog

Tries to break it up

But the supervisor arrives

Sour-faced bitch

1:34:50

Turkel is hiding with the guys

Huge ruckus behind him

Candy is in there

Turkel tries to get them all back to bed
The place is a fucking shambles

They continue to party
It's Christmas

Billy dances to a slow tune with Candy
1:38:29

Mac goes for Turkel's keys

Martini dances with Rose

Let's go says Mac

He opens up the window and the door
Says goodbye to them all
Cheswick thanks him
I'll never forget you, Mac

RESURRECTION

Billy, what's wrong?

1:40:34

I'm going to miss you very much, Mac
Why don't you come with us?
Not that easy, Mac
Says that when he gets to Canada he'll write to him

Mac, is she going with you?

Candy?

Yeah, she'll be there when you get there?
Going to marry her?
No, we're just good friends

You want a date with her
Have to be a fast date
Not now
When?

He gets her to take Billy to bed
Closes the door
1:44:02

This ain't going to take long, Rose

McMurphy smiles
Falls asleep

1:45:54

The nurses come in and find the devastation

Mac had his chance to leave
He made the sacrifice

The window is still open
NURSE RATCHED says to close it and lock the screen

They can't find Billy
Did he leave the grounds of the hospital?

NURSE RATCHED's cap is not in good shape

They find him with Candy
Naked

He comes out trying to put his pants on
They all clap him
Billy is a man
1:50:47

Aren't you ashamed?
This is a RESURRECTION for Billy

How is his mother going to take this?

He says everyone dragged him in there
Mac dragged him in

Terrible betrayal
1:53:40

They drag Billy off to the doctor's
Where he'll receive some sort of treatment

1:54:46
Mac opens the lock to the window
Punches one of the nurses

Unlocks the window and grill

Washington arrives (the black nurse)

Nurse comes out because Billy has slashed his wrists

They are calling to mac

Candy and Rose
The window is open
Freedom is there

But Mac doesn't go

He comes in to Billy
Blood everywhere

1:56:35

She says
The best thing we can do is go on with our daily routine
Mac chokes her
They all tell him no

He gets cracked over the head by Washington
1:57:29

This is Mac's RESURRECTION
He had the chance of freedom but twice he spurns it to
help others – he SACRIFICES

SHARING THE ELIXIR
The boys are playing cards

Nurse R – she has a neck brace on

Conflicting reports about Mac

He's brought back
1:59:52

This time he's fucked
Chief is waiting for him

Undoes his restraining belts

Goes over to Mac's bed

2:01:31
Chief says he's ready now
Feels as big as a damn mountain
Mac has made that change

But Mac isn't responding
He's a vegetable

Chief hugs him

We see the lobotomy scar on Mac's forehead

Says he can't leave him this way
You're coming with me
He lays Mac back on the bed

Soundtrack comes in
Puts the pillow over his face
2:03:09

Mac puts up a fight
But Chief puts him out of his misery
The life goes out of him

2:03:53
We've returned to the eery music that opened the film

Chief goes to the Washroom

PAYOFF
Lifts the shower unit
Once
Twice
Three times
And it comes up
Water flowing out

Tosses it through the window

Chief makes his escape

Taber woops and wails

Chief trots across the lawns away to freedom