

The Wrestler (2008)

Screenplay by Robert Siegel
Directed by Darren Aronofsky

BASIC STORY MAP

PROTAGONIST: Randy "The Ram" Robinson, 50's, washed-up wrestler.

CHARACTERIZATION/MAIN MISBEHAVIOR: Unable to let go of the past

EXTERNAL GOAL: To reclaim his wrestling glory

INTERNAL GOAL: To win over Cassidy and reconcile with his daughter

MAIN DRAMATIC CONFLICT: Himself

THEME: Pride goeth before the fall.

CENTRAL DRAMATIC QUESTION: Will Randy give up wrestling for good and win the hearts of both his daughter and Cassidy?

ENDING: Randy rejects Cassidy for the glory of the wrestling ring.

ARC: Randy goes from a broken, washed-up wrestler to a man in search of love, but ultimately gives up hope for the glory of the wrestling ring.

STORY ENGINES

Act 1:

Randy's a washed-up wrestler, forced to compete in brutal matches to pay his rent.

Act 2A:

Randy suffers a heart attack and is forced to change his ways. He falls for a stripper (Cassidy) who encourages him to reconcile with his daughter.

Act 2B:

Randy attempts to turn his life around but can't stop his destructive ways. He hits bottom after his daughter and Cassidy reject him and decides to wrestle in the big rematch with the Ayatollah.

Act 3:

Randy trains for his rematch against The Ayatollah. Cassidy wants to be with Randy, but he rejects her for the glory of the wrestling ring, going to his certain death.

FULL STORY MAP

ACT ONE:

1 - OPENING IMAGES: A glory days collage of Randy "The Ram" Robinson's career over Quiet Riot's "Metal Health."



3 - Opening: 20 years later...Randy's a washed-up wrestler, reduced to performing in small-town school gyms.

5 - INCITING INCIDENT: Randy arrives at his trailer to find it's locked: rent's not paid, so he must sleep in his van.

9 - Randy attempts to talk with his landlord - landlord won't talk (Randy's done this too many times before), just wants the rent money.

9 - At the grocery store, Randy asks his condescending boss for more hours.

13 - Wrestling match - Randy slices his forehead with a hidden razor blade for dramatic effect. Bloody, he wins the match.

17 - STRONG MOVEMENT FORWARD (External): EMT cleans up Randy after match as the promoter pitches him on a rematch between Randy and the Ayatollah. Randy accepts.

20 - STRONG MOVEMENT FORWARD (Internal): Randy defends his favorite stripper, Cassidy, from young men (they make fun of her age). Cassidy's angry at first, but gives Randy a lap dance. She listens to his stories, gives affection, but there's a distance...after all, she's a stripper.



24 - Randy buys HGH from a pusher at the gym, injects and works out. Gets hair dyed, tans -- costly maintenance.

28 - END OF ACT ONE TURN: Randy's new wrestling match includes a dangerous escalation: barbed wire, broken glass and a staple gun.

29 - DECISION: Randy competes even though he's obviously being hurt.

ACT TWO-A:

35-36 FIRST TRIAL/FIRST CASUALTY: Randy suffers a heart attack and wakes up in a hospital. Doctor instructs him to stop using drugs and, most importantly, give up wrestling: he could die.



40 - Randy pays his rent and his landlord unlocks the trailer.

45 - COMBAT: Randy asks Cassidy out. She says no, but she talks to him and encourages him to see his daughter.



50 - Randy finds his daughter, Stephanie. He tells her about his heart attack and she rejects him.

55 - Randy goes to the strip club and tells Cassidy about his daughter. Cassidy offers to meet and help him buy her a present.

56 - Randy asks the boss for more work; gets a job at the deli counter.

58 - Cassidy allows Randy to call her by her real name (Pam) and helps him pick out a coat for his daughter. After he asks her out for a beer, she tells him she has a child and Randy gives her a gift: a Randy The Ram action figure.

60 - MIDPOINT: Randy kisses Cassidy (This directly pushes to the climax where Randy must choose between wrestling fame and love).



ACT TWO-B:

63 - Randy works his new job at the deli counter and his name-tag reads "Robin" -- his birth-name (he's decided to be himself, not play a role).

THE WRESTLER STORY MAP CONTINUES in...

"Story Maps: How to write a GREAT Screenplay"

E-Book by Daniel Calvisi.

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