



SAVE THE CAT!

The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need

by Blake Snyder



The Core Concept: "Save the Cat"

What Does "Save the Cat" Mean?

The moment early in your script where the hero does something (like saving a cat) that makes the audience **LIKE them** and **ROOT for them**.

Without this moment, audiences won't care what happens to your protagonist, and your movie fails.

Example: In *Alien*, Ripley risks everything to save the ship's cat, Jones. This small act of kindness makes her heroic and relatable.



The Perfect Logline Formula

**A [ADJECTIVE] [PROTAGONIST TYPE]
must [GOAL]
or else [STAKES]**

The 4 Elements of a Great Logline

- ✓ **Irony:** A situation with inherent conflict and surprise
- ✓ **Compelling Mental Picture:** You can "see" the movie from the logline
- ✓ **Audience and Cost:** Clear who will watch it and rough budget
- ✓ **Killer Title:** The title and logline work together



If you can't pitch your movie in one sentence, you don't have a movie. The logline IS your movie.



Blake Snyder's 10 Movie Genres

1. Monster in the House

Monster + House + Sin

Examples: Alien, Jaws, Fatal Attraction

2. Golden Fleece

A quest/road trip for a prize

Examples: The Wizard of Oz, Star Wars, Finding Nemo

3. Out of the Bottle

A wish granted with consequences

Examples: Liar Liar, Bruce Almighty, Freaky Friday

4. Dude with a Problem

Innocent hero thrust into danger

Examples: Die Hard, Titanic, Schindler's List

5. Rites of Passage

Life problem dealing with age/stage

Examples: 10, Ordinary People, Kramer vs. Kramer

6. Buddy Love

Incomplete hero needs counterpart

Examples: Rain Man, Lethal Weapon, Thelma & Louise

7. Whydunit

Detective solving a mystery

Examples: Chinatown, Blade Runner, The Sixth Sense

8. The Fool Triumphant

Underdog beats the system

Examples: Forrest Gump, Dave, Being There

9. Institutionalized

Group dynamics, family, or business

*Examples: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, M*A*S*H, American Beauty*

10. Superhero

Extraordinary hero vs. curse

Examples: Spider-Man, Batman Begins, A Beautiful Mind



The Blake Snyder Beat Sheet (BS2)



This 15-beat structure works for ANY movie. Based on 110-page screenplay.

1

Opening Image

Page 1

A snapshot of the hero's world BEFORE the adventure. This image should be the opposite of the Closing Image. Shows the hero's flawed state.

2

Theme Stated

Page 5

Someone (not the hero) poses a question or makes a statement that is the theme of the movie. The hero doesn't understand it yet, but will by the end.

3**Set-Up**

Pages 1-10

Introduce the hero's world, relationships, and what's MISSING in their life. Show their flaw. Introduce all major characters. This is the "thesis" world.

4**Catalyst**

Page 12

The inciting incident. Life-changing event that starts the story. The telegram, the knock on the door, the meeting. Everything changes after this moment.

5**Debate**

Pages 12-25

The hero doubts, asks questions, debates taking action. "Should I go? Can I do this? Do I really want to?" Last chance to back out. Builds tension.

6**Break Into Two**

Page 25

The hero makes a CHOICE to enter Act Two (the "antithesis" world). They leave the old world behind. Can't be forced—must be the hero's decision. No turning back.

7**B Story**

Page 30

The love story or relationship subplot begins. This character (often a mentor or love interest) will help the hero learn the theme. Provides relief from the main plot.

8**Fun and Games**

Pages 30-55

The "promise of the premise." The fun part! The hero explores the new world. This is what you show in the trailer. Lighter tone. The core concept on full display.

9**Midpoint**

Page 55

Either a FALSE VICTORY (things are great!) or FALSE DEFEAT (things are terrible!). Stakes are raised. Time clock starts ticking. The hero commits fully. Everything changes again.

10

Bad Guys Close In

Pages 55-75

If Midpoint was a victory, now things fall apart. If it was a defeat, now pressure increases. Internal conflicts (team falls apart) AND external enemies attack. Doubt creeps in.

11

All Is Lost

Page 75

The opposite of Midpoint. The hero's lowest point. The "whiff of death" moment—someone or something dies (literally or metaphorically). All hope seems lost.

12

Dark Night of the Soul

Pages 75-85

The hero wallows in defeat. Mourns. Reflects. Seems like there's no way out. The darkest moment before the dawn. But this is where the lesson is learned.

13

Break Into Three

Page 85

The hero gets the answer! $A + B = C$. The solution comes from combining what they learned in the A Story with what they learned in the B Story. Time to act!

14

Finale

Pages 85-110

The hero applies the lesson, defeats the villain, and shows they've transformed. They must prove they've changed. Act Three is the "synthesis" of the thesis (Act 1) and antithesis (Act 2).

15

Final Image

Page 110

The opposite of the Opening Image. Shows how far the hero has come. Proof of transformation. The hero in their new, better world. The journey is complete.



Blake Snyder's Golden Rules

- ✓ **The Pope in the Pool:** Deliver exposition while something interesting is happening (like the Pope swimming)
- ✓ **Double Mumbo Jumbo:** Only one piece of magic per movie. Don't ask audience to believe two impossible things
- ✓ **Laying Pipe:** Backstory and exposition must be delivered naturally, not in dumps
- ✓ **Black Vet:** The moment where the hero shows they care (saves the cat, helps someone, shows humanity)
- ✓ **Too Much Marzipan:** Don't overdo a good thing. Know when to cut away
- ✓ **Watch Out for Glaciers:** Avoid slow, grinding scenes that kill momentum
- ✓ **The Covenant of the Arc:** Character must change from beginning to end
- ✓ **Transformation Must Be Primal:** Change must be about survival, hunger, sex, protection, fear of death



Applying This to "Mane Ulidittu"

Your Film's Structure

Opening Image: Ajji lighting lamp (old world, secrets kept)

Theme Stated: "A house is not walls" - the core philosophy

Catalyst: Ajji's death and her final wish

Break Into Two: Grandson decides to find the village

Midpoint: Discovery of the metal box with clues

All Is Lost: Finding only ruins, no house

Dark Night: Grandson's realization of the pain hidden for decades

Finale: Ashes to river - bringing grandfather home

Final Image: River flowing (opposite of still opening - movement, release, peace)

B Story: The relationship between grandson and memory of Ajji

Theme: Home is not a place, but belonging, memory, and healing