

Save The Cat Beat Sheet

Opening Image: A visual that represents the tone of the story.

Set-up: Present the main character's world as it is, and what is missing in their life.

Theme Stated: What is your story about; the message, the truth. Usually, it is spoken to the main character or in their presence, but they don't understand the truth... not until they have some personal experience and context to support it.

Catalyst: The moment where life as it is changes. It is the the act of catching your loved-one cheating, allowing a monster onboard the ship, meeting the true love of your life, etc. Change is underway.

Debate: But change is scary and for a moment, or a brief number of moments, the main character doubts the journey they must take. It is the last chance for the hero to chicken out.

Break Into Two: The main character makes a choice and the journey begins. We leave the "Thesis" world and enter the upside-down, opposite world of Act One.

B Story: Often a discussion about the Theme – the nugget of truth. Usually, this discussion is between the main character and a friend/mentor/lover/etc.

The Promise of the Premise: What you saw on the poster. When Indiana Jones tries to beat the Nazis to the Lost Ark, when the detective finds the most clues and dodges the most bullets. This is when the main character explores the new world and the audience is entertained by the premise they have been promised.

Midpoint: Dependent upon the story, this moment is when everything is great or everything is awful. The main character either gets everything they think they want (great) or doesn't get what they think they want at all (awful).

Bad Guys Close In: Doubt, jealousy, fear, foes, both physical and emotional regroup to defeat the main character's goal, and the main character's great/awful situation disintegrates.

All is Lost: The opposite moment of the Midpoint: awful/great. The moment that the main character realizes they've lost everything they gained, or everything they now have has no meaning. And here, something or someone dies. It can be physical or emotional, but the death of something old makes way for something new to be born.

Dark Night of the Soul: The main character hits bottom, and wallows in hopelessness. Mourning the loss of what has "died" – the dream, the goal, the mentor character, the love of your life, etc. But, you must fall completely before you can pick yourself back up and try again.

Break Into Three: Thanks to a fresh idea, new inspiration, or last-minute Thematic advice from the B Story (usually the friend/mentor/lover), the main character chooses to try again.

Finale: This time around, the main character incorporates the Theme – the nugget of truth that now makes sense to them – into their fight for the goal because they have experience from the A Story and context from the B Story. Act Three is about Synthesis - the new hero beats the monster.

Final Image: Opposite of Opening Image, proving, visually, that a change has occurred within the character.

Film Title: _____

Author: _____ Date: _____

Opening Image _____

Set-up _____

Theme Stated _____

Catalyst _____

Debate _____

Break Into Two _____

B Story _____

The Promise of the Premise _____

Midpoint _____

Bad Guys Close In _____

All is Lost _____

Dark Night of the Soul _____

Break Into Three _____

Finale _____

Final Image _____