

Hero's Journey Analysis – "An Officer and a Gentleman"

ORDINARY WORLD

ZAC MAYO (Richard Gere) wakes in a room with his father who is sleeping with one or two Asian girls (it's pretty dark and hard to tell!).

In FLASHBACK we see his father, a naval seaman, pick him up from the airport as a ten year old. Isn't even sure it's his son. Zac's mother has died. Father clearly a shit. He's living with two Asian girls.

Doesn't have any time for this Daddy shit.
Find out his mother committed suicide because the father didn't come back.

Heroes often have an absent parent.

He sees someone getting a tat

ORDEAL

He gets beaten up in a back alley
And they steal his money

"REWARD"

In some cases, the brush with death creates what Vogler calls a "Distortion". They emerge from the Ordeal with a different perspective but not in a good way. Zac clearly emerges from this encounter hardened and self-protective.

These Flashbacks are important because Zac isn't a very nice person. We need this background in order to understand why he is the way he is.

His father comes in and throws up before opening another beer

Zac has just graduated from college - ORDEAL
They've been on a binge - REWARD

CALL TO ADVENTURE

He says he's joined the Navy
Going to Officer's Training College

REFUSAL

His father – a MENTOR figure – says that Zac is not an officer
Look at yourself
Officers don't have tattoos

He says he's on his side

But he says Officers are not like you and me

Zac leaves mad

He puts a bandage over his tattoo – a MASK of his true identity.

Climbs aboard his bike

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

Zac rides into the Air Training Command – the SPECIAL WORLD

9:54

TESTS, ALLIES and ENEMIES

Sergeant Foley (Lou Gosset) – the MENTOR – runs his eye over the new recruits
Not impressed by what he says

He gives Sid Worley (David Keith) a hard time
Says he's a queer from Oklahoma
Sid is going to be Zac's ALLY

Zac laughs at Foley
He has made an ENEMY of this MENTOR

Foley rips off the bandage and finds the tattoo
Says the wings of his tattoo are the only ones he'll leave there with

WARNING from the MENTOR
Foreshadowing the challenges the hero will face

Della Sera – short.

Foley says he has a notch in his cane for every candidate who has DORed. Dropped on Request. He believes Della Sera, a Maths graduate, will be the first one he will DOR. (Surprising that he would single him out rather than the hero, Zac)

Foley says that they will all have to get past me
Very clearly, he is the THRESHOLD GUARDIAN

Paula and Lynette work in an ugly boring factory in Seattle – their ORDINARY WORLD.

Della Sera gets his head shaved
This is a different place the SPECIAL WORLD

MENTOR gives a WARNING about Puget Sound Debs
 Local girls looking for an aviator husband
 They'll tell you they're using contraception, get
 pregnant and entrap you
 He's looking straight at Sid when he says it
 FORESHADOWING what will happen between Sid and Lynette
 15:54

Paula and Lynette drive to the dance.

All the mean are now all shaved
 Head into ther room
 Zac gets into the room first
 And moves his stuff to the top bunk
 SELFISH – leading life by his own rules
 17:19

Other Roomies come in
 Big black guy – PERRYMAN
 DANIELS (David Caruso)

They fall in
 Zac flirts with Segar
 He probably fancies her but she's out of his league
 Zac, Sid and Segar have to do push ups
 19:25

CALL TO ADVENTURE
 Paula and friend, Lynette, arrive and walk past them
 Lynette is talking about
 They call out to the boys
 Sid notices Lynette's bodacious set of tah-tahs

They go on a hike – TRAINING
 Training is common in this phase – a TEST
 They talk about only two going on to fly jets

TEST
 While all the others are buggered, Zac is fine
 His challenge is not going to be physical
 22.00
 Foley ays they are the worst he has ever seen

Zac sells shined boots
 Peterson gives him a WARNING about having this stash of
 Buckles and Boots stored in the ceiling
 Again – Zac is running by his own rules

Perryman can't pay for a shined buckle
 Mayo won't give it to him
 Perryman asks whether it's worth getting kicked out
 He's created an ENEMY here

Mayo goes over the course

And is the quickest
 But while Sid and the rest encourage the others
 Zac sits by himself
 SELFISH – CHARACTER FLAW
 He's passed the physical TEST
 Failed the character TEST

Segar struggles to get over the wall
 She can't do it
 Foley attacks her and she cries
 Walk around, he says
 She's failed her TEST
 26:28

More training
 Maths class
 This is clearly not Zac's strength

He buys boots and buckles from an enlisted guy
 Sid comes and finds him
 Wants his cut
 28:03

Asks Sid to get him through aerodynamics
 A TEAM is formed – these guys are going to be BUDDIES

APPROACH TO THE INMOST CAVE
 They go to a dance
 Zac and Sid build their team
 Perryman dances with his wife
 Sid says family is what it is all about

They hook up with Paula and Lynette

Paula thinks Sid is approaching her
 But he goes for Lynette
 Zac asks Paula for a drink
 Puts his hand in her lower back

He concocts a story about his father
 That he's an Admiral
 Fools her for a moment
 He's being a SHAPESHIFTER

Has he got a girl?
 Subtext – she's interested

CALL TO ADVENTURE
 No he doesn't

And he ain't looking for one either
REFUSAL

32:48

What is he looking for?
She says she's not looking for a husband
She says she's going to save money and travel

Lynette asks Sid whether he's been through the Double
Dunker
FORESHADOWING

Find out Sid's father and brother have been through it
Brother Tommy was killed in Vietnam

The band plays "Feelings"

Paula asks Zac whether he's going to make it
She encourages him to believe
She has read a self-help article in Cosmo
She's trying to better herself

They kiss

CALL TO ADVENTURE
Want to go somewhere else

Lynette and Sid are in the car
35:55
Lynette undoes her dress
She says she's looked after
Sid has ignored the warning of the MENTOR

Zac and Paula kiss
Lets go down the beach
That sounds good
37:00
They have crossed another THRESHOLD here

Big hangar – like a CAVE

ORDEAL

DANIELS (David Caruso) is invited up to engage in a
martial arts contest with FOLEY (Gosset)

Foley holds him around the throat
He can't break loose
Choking – near DEATH – typical of Ordeal
Says he's pissweak

He proceeds with the class

REWARD

They go to a bar
The guys are waiting for the girls
39:56

They come into the bar
And immediately hook up with the guys
Alienate the locals

She says she's been looking forward to seeing him

They decide to go to a motel

ORDEAL

A THRESHOLD GUARDIAN holds a pool cue across his path

They follow Zac and the rest outside
Knocks his hat off

CALL TO ADVENTURE

Wants to fight him

REFUSAL

I do not want to fight you

Gets pushed
Breaks his nose with his martial arts moves
43:07

REWARD

Says he should have walked away
He doesn't want to talk right now

Wouldn't kill you to open up to me a little bit
You want to fuck?

She's trying to deliver an ELIXIR
But he REFUSES

ORDEAL

If you ask me you got no chance of being no officer

His character is being confronted here

REWARD

But he stops her at the door and kisses her

He has changed a little in this moment

He wakes to find her cooking
She serves up bacon and eggs

The FEAST after the ORDEAL

He says he doesn't want to fool her
 She says that she just wants a good time until he leaves
 Last night was fantastic
 She says that he thinks he'll fall for her (joking but
 with serious undertones)

How does he normally end a relationship?

He's never had a girl

48:04

They have taken the relationship to another level

ORDEAL

The Double Dunker

Daniels is clearly struggling

Perryman fails the test

Only two more chances or you are out

He says Mayo next

You ought to be good at this, Mayo

It's something you can do alone

Another reminder from the MENTOR of the HERO's FLAW

Mayo gets out fine

Again, the physical challenges are no problem

Mayo looks cocky

Gosset just shakes his head

Segar goes next and gets out fine

Despite him saying "don't cry sugar breeches"

She wants to do it again

But he reminds her she still has to get over that wall

FORESHADOWING her RESURRECTION challenge

Daniels gets loaded in

Fails the test

Gosset dives in to save the guy

He looks dead

We WITNESS "DEATH"

Daniels comes back to life – but his dream is dead

The first candidate we've known to DOR

54:07

They prepare for inspection

The previous Ordeals haven't been testing the Hero
But that is about to change

ORDEAL

Perryman asks Zac for a buckle
Says it's too risky
He won't do it

Foley has been waiting
In every class there is always one joker who thinks he's
smarter than me
He finds Zac's stash
Couldn't happen to a nicer guy says Perryman
Foley says he wants his DOR
Zac says he's not quitting
56:01

Get into your fatigues
By the end of the weekend you will quit

Hoses him down
As he runs and holds the gun above his head

Say goodbye to your friends
Oh, you don't have friends, only customers

Are you ready to quit now Mayo?

Segar has stayed behind to build her upper body strength
Says she has more heart and more character than he'll
ever have

The MENTOR is testing the hero's character – will he cave
in?

Life has dealt him shitty cards
Knows about his mother and father
Deep down you know they are better than you
No, sir

It's now after dark
And he's still pushing him

Next day
Still pushing him
59:58

Why don't you quit?
He's not officer material

Don't give a shit about anyone but yourself
 Says he's changed
 But Foley says he hasn't
 Wants his DOR
 No! Ain't going to quit
 You're out
 Don't you do it
 I got nowhere else to go
 I got nothing else
 1:00:37

We are at the core of the character now
 He is stripped bare
 He cannot quit because this is his whole world
 No mother, no father, no friends, no other future
 He was facing a metaphoric death here

REWARD

1:01:19

The girls and Sid give him encouragement from a passing
 boat – this helps him survive

Zac runs off

SHARING THE ELIXIR

Cleans the stair with a toothbrush
 Perryman stands on the step pointedly
 Sid pats him on the back
 Zac thanks him for the encouragement he got

Zac has polished Perryman's buckles and his shoes
 That son of a bitch, he says to Sid

He's changed
 He's now a team player
 And others can now see that

REWARD

Paula kisses him
 As they make love

They laugh
 He puts his cap on her head
 They are becoming one here

He encourages her to chase what she wants
 She doesn't want her mother's life
 He says he hates his mother for not leaving a note
 This FORESHADOWS what lies ahead

On a ferry
 Lynette asks Paula about whether she'd trap Zac

She is Paula's SHADOW
 She says she feels used
 Paula never feels like that
 We are seeing how Paula differs from her Shadow
 There are things she won't do

ORDEAL

Zac has dinner at Paula's place
 Paula's father doesn't say a word
 Not welcoming at all
 3 weeks until graduation
 The roughest of the lot

THE ROAD HOME – a reminder that the journey still faces
 its toughest obstacles

Paula embarrassed
 Why do you keep staring at me?, Zac asks the father

Outside

REWARD

Paula asks what he does after this
 Pensacola after this
 And then Texas for jets
 The Subtext is a CALL TO ADVENTURE
 But Zac REFUSES this veiled CALL

Does he think about family and kids?
 Is that what you think about?
 Sometimes
 1:11:54

I'd do it different
 Marry someone I loved
 She explains that she was the product of a flight school
 liaison – officer candidate who wouldn't marry her
 No wonder her father was looking at her funny

She wants him to call
 He says he's got survival training
 He rides off

He's scared off – REFUSAL

She calls from the factory
 1:14:28

Liberty time
 Doesn't take her call – REFUSAL

Woman at the factory – who clearly has lived it herself –
 says this is when they stop calling
 When they think they can get through it without you
 May they all crash and burn

Mother says Paula shouldn't go to the base
 Don't go – because she'll do anything - REFUSAL
 She cries because she knows what she's feeling
 The MEETING WITH THE MENTOR has prevented Paula from
 crossing over into the Shadow world

Zac and Sid have dinner with Sid's parents
 Sid says Zac is only 2/10 of a second of the alltime
 record - FORESHADOWING
 Why hasn't Sid written to Susan?
 So he has a girl back home

Outside
 Zac asks him about his girl back home
 Marrying her as soon as he gets out of here
 She was Tommy's girl
 Do you love this girl?
 She loves kids
 Do you love her?
 Everybody loves her
 Clearly he doesn't

Zac has actually moved into a MENTOR capacity here
 He can see what's wrong with Sid's life
 He gives Sid a CALL TO ADVENTURE
 But Sid REFUSES it at this point

Sid's meeting Lynette over at the motel
 Zac says he should have done what he did
 Cut it off clean

REWARD
 At TJ's
 They drink to having survived survival training
 (Interesting that we don't see this)

ORDEAL
 Paula is with a flight instructor

She goes to the Juke box
 Zac joins her
 1:20:34

Sorry I didn't call
 It's OK

All SUBTEXT this scene

She's asking questions but it's all under the surface

He wanted to thank her
She wishes him luck

See you Zac
She goes over to her date

REWARD
Give me a drink
Leave the bottle
He's trying to drown his feelings

He has witnessed the DEATH of his relationship
And his response is a DISTORTION
He reverts to type

ORDEAL
Sid at the motel with Lynette
Isn't she a little late?
He says that if she was pregnant he would have
responsibilities. Do the right thing. Pay for the
abortion. Comfort you.

1:24:35
Sid not happy

RESURRECTION
Zac goes for the record
Perryman encourages him

And it is within his grasp

But he stops to help Segar get over the wall
Proving he's changed

THEY SHARE THE ELIXIR
Hug one another having completed it together

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR
But Sid is worried
She's had the test
She won't have an abortion
You're not going to marry this girl?
He says that if she has the kid he has to father it
Objects to his suggestion that it might not be his child

1:28:26

Zac says that Sid is doing everything out of a misguided
sense of responsibility

Sid says not everyone can shit over everyone else and sleep at night

There is some to what each of them says
 Sid is making a mistake
 And Zac does shit on people

ORDEAL

Low oxygen environment
 Sid fails
 Zac runs to his aid
 Says there is no problem

Sid is DORed
 Zac runs to see him

REWARD

Calls Foley a Motherfucker
 He's the best candidate in the class
 Sid quit – he wasn't failed
 He was here for his big brother
 Runs off

Again, Zac's response is a distortion
 His experiences of death aren't having a positive effect on him – yet.

ORDEAL

Sid goes to see Lynette
 Proposes to her
 1:34:03
 But when she finds out he's quit
 She's not interested
 She's not even pregnant

But he still wants to marry her
 She says no
 I wants to marry a pilot
 She wants to be the wife of an aviator
 Sid is knocked
 She says nobody DORs after 11 weeks

Sid has witnessed the DEATH of his relationship
 He gave up everything for her
 Now he has nothing

Zac arrives at Paula's
 1:38:21
 He's looking for Sid

ORDEAL

Sid checks into a motel

He swallows the ring with some alcohol

Paula and Zac arrive at Lynette's
Find out what happened
Zac calls her a bitch
Accuses her of doing to him what he's done to Paula
Accuses her of lying
Calls her a cunt
You're no different than I am, Paula
Oh, yes, I am

They arrive at the motel
Find Sid hanging in the shower from a belt
1:42:54

He's blue
He's dead
Zac hugs him
I was your friend
Why didn't you talk to me about it
He's lost his first friend
Sid has done exactly what his mother did
Left without saying goodbye
This is the worst possible outcome for Zac
He finally gave emotionally again
And exactly the same account
The person he cared about committed suicide without
talking to him

REWARD
Just like his mother, he says
Paula is trying to share the ELIXIR
But he's refusing
He tries to give Paula cash
He lumps Paula in with Lynette
But he says he doesn't want anyone to love him
He's burned again – a DISTORTION of the REWARD.

The relationship is DEAD here.

RESURRECTION

CALL TO ADVENTURE
Zac challenges Foley

REFUSAL
Foley declines

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR
Zac says he came back to quit
He doesn't' need you, the navy, anyone

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

Foley accepts his challenge

He is willing to sacrifice himself to save Zac

RESURRECTION

They fight

Zac facing his greatest adversary

His MENTOR

They spill blood

Zac brings him down

Goes to deliver the killer blow

Foley gets him in the balls

ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

The guys watch on

1:49:47

He can quit now if he wants to says Foley

SHARING THE ELIXIR

Graduation ceremony

Zac graduates

Toss hats into the air

But he has no-one to celebrate with

No family

No girl

Foley corrects Segar when she calls him "Sir"

She now outranks him

Zac tells his MENTOR

I won't ever forget you

Wouldn't have made it but for you

Get the hell out of here

1:53:40

Zac hears Foley berate the next set of recruits

1:54:40

Music starts up

Factory

White uniform of Zac walking through

Contrast

Paula's mother and others follow

Lynette sees him first

He kisses her
Even Lynette is moved

He carries her out
Way to go, Paula

Her cap falls over
Freeing her hair
Freeing her

She puts on his cap
They are one
A shared triumph

Through Zac's hero's journey, he has been able to SHARE
THE ELIXIR by freeing Paula from her ORDINARY WORLD.