

Hero's Journey Analysis – "The Castle"

ORDINARY WORLD

Lawnmowers, dogs, sprinklers

Dale Kerrigan – narrator

Extended voiceover

Dad – Darryl – bought the house 15 years ago

Right next door to the airport

And powerlines

Toe Truck driver

Met Mum at the greyhounds

Into craft

Greatest cook in the world

Trading Post

He's dreamin'

Tracey missed out on Price is Right

Eldest brother, Wayne, in jail

4 greyhounds

(Individually, these elements are fine but collectively it's a bit boring. I'm waiting for things to start.)

All Dad's most prized mementoes are in the pool room

Happy home

Dad called it his Castle

8:43

CALL TO ADVENTURE

Guy comes to value the place

Plane flies over

He knows where each of the planes is going

Guy surprised to find the airstrip is right behind

Jousting sticks

Give him a call

\$450

Tell him he's dreamin'

12:36

Compulsorily acquired

They are going to take our place and we don't get a say in it

A kick out notice

Farouk from next door comes in – he's got one too

Goes next door to Jack

Old guy

Someone's going to take me house, Darryl

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

Goes to meet council person

Compulsory

Not interested in compensation

She can understand the pain

Stop pretending to be on my side

She says there is an agreement between the governments

Compulsorily acquired for extension of airport company

It's not going to happen, he says

He goes to see a lawyer, DENNIS

16:50

Same guy who defended Wayne

He says it's not his area

REFUSAL OF THE CALL

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR

Little interlude – having dinner

Favourite show – Hey, hey it's Saturday

Wayne in jail alone

19:15

Dennis says that they have recourse to appeal

He says he's going to ring up the others and tell them

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD

TESTS ALLIES & ENEMIES

Tracey and Conn arrive back from Honeymoon

They walk back from the airport

First time they've travelled overseas

(This is a bit boring – it's interrupting the story)

They head to Bonnydoon

Radar detector just paid for itself

24:44

He has a block of land
Kit home
Right next to powerlines again
The luckiest family in the world

This sequence isn't advancing the story. And it actually diminishes the power of the story a little – surely it would be more important to him if it were their only home?

Jetskiing

Only rod in the world
The Ugly Stick by Shakespeare

Fishing

Tracey not having kids until she's at least 23
Because she has a career – hairdresser

Mum wants to get into pottery
Second time she's mentioned it

She's worried about the house

28:26

Con practises his kick boxing

You've got to have a passion for something

(This sequence isn't giving me anything – the whole story has been stopped now for more than 10 minutes. And what we have seen has detracted from the story, made their home less important.)

The family eats

30:50

32:00

He's wearing a tie

He's in the courtroom
What is his case?
You can't kick me out
What law?
The law of bloody common sense

Airlink as a federal authority
Can compulsorily acquire

It's not a house, it's a home
A man's home is his castle

This is clear as day
A family should be able to live in its own home

They lost
34:40

What are we going to do, Darryl
How long you lived her
3 years
How long you lived in the area
57 years

If it's going to be lawyers I'm going to hit em with the
big guns

36:31

CALL TO ADVENTURE
Darryl goes to Dennis
Wants him to take the case

REFUSAL OF THE CALL

Airlink owned by the Barlow group
Dennis says they can't beat them

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR
Darryl says it's house
Dennis says he'll think about it

CROSSING THE FIRST THRESHOLD
Dennis talks into his tape recorder
My client will be appealing the judgement

40:55
Darryl does work around the house

TESTS, ALLIES & ENEMIES
Lawyer from Hammersley and Laycock comes to see Dennis
Grossly undervalued the house
Offering another \$25000

They thought this may put the dispute to rest
Advise Mr Kerrigan not to delay
Threatens that if he delays the project there could be
compensation

Darryl to Dennis
Tell em to get stuffed

43:44

Did I do the right thing?
He asks wife
Son not so sure

Mum tells a story
She used to go out with Bob Thompson

Ran into Darryl
Said she was on a date
Said he wasn't going to cut anyone's lunch

That's why I love him
He's a man of principles

Message to pass on
46:43
Message is take the offer and shut up
Fuck off
Son brings a gun to the door

Darryl not happy about the gun
But likes the deal that bought it

Something gets thrown through the window of his car
47:56

Might pass on a message of my own

48:08
Says he should fill in the quarry rather than take his
home
He talks into an intercom

They pull the gates of the house off with the truck

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR
Policeman at the door
49:22

He's a mate of Darryl's

Were you in Toorak
No
Everyone in the house will back him up

Want to do this you're going to have to do it the right
way

Put the gates around the back

THE APPROACH

Farouk says he'll bomb the guy
Scared him off

They all meet up
51:05

They are going to challenge the decision
\$150 each
Darryl says he'll kick in for Jack

52:10
ORDEAL

Dennis a bit incompetent
Flicking through his documents
Finds the constitution of Australia
Says it's a violation
Which section has been breeched
No section, just the vibe of the thing

You're killing them Dennis
Use Roman numerals

Which precedent
Mabo
Classic case of big business trying to take land and they
didn't
Native land title
So what part of judgement is relevant to this case
Just the vibe of it

54:49

Can I approach?
Am I wasting my time here?
Can you give me an angle?
In summing, it's constitution, mabo, justice, the law,
it's the vibe

(He hasn't done much better than Darryl did. Don't buy
this scene.)

56:14
One hour adjournment
Darryl comes outside for a smoke

MEETING WITH THE MENTOR

Talks to Bud Tingwell
His son's first appearance
Will he get off
Appearing for the first time as a barrister

You must be as proud as punch

You wouldn't have thought of doing that
 He is clearly a barrister himself
 Says the government wants to take his house
 Says Dennis is not someone he knows in constitutional law

(This is coincidence – not strong story telling)

59:03

They lose

THE ROAD HOME

They've got to be out in two weeks

TICKING CLOCK

Dale goes to tell Wayne
 Tell Dad the only reason he loved the house is it because
 it had them in it

Darryl is packing up the stuff in his pool room

Looks at a picture of the family in front of the house

Son says he hasn't let anyone down

When are you going to sign them?
 They've got to be done by Friday
 He knows he's got to go
 But he can't sign the documents

Has told Jack he can stay with them

They can't afford a new place

Says he's starting to feel how the aborigines feel
 It has our story
 This country has got to stop stealing someone else's land

Bud Tingwell comes to visit

1:05:00

He is retired

A QC

The lawyers rich people use
 Dennis probably not a QC
 His speciality is constitutional law
 Mabo

He's had quite a bit to do with it
 He thinks they have a case
 He wants to appear on their behalf

RESURRECTION — supposedly

They go to the High Court
1:07:25

Can only acquire property "on just terms"
How can the removal of a family be considered "on just terms"

The other lawyer was good

This is all happening in montage with voiceover
It doesn't really have any power

We don't even hear the argument — compare this to say the Resurrection scene in A Few Good Men.

The guy attacks him about Wayne

Adjournment

1:11:42

Darryl says the place has memories
A place to turn to, to come back to

1:12:50

He's repeating exactly what Darryl said

"On just terms"

They want to pay only for the house
But they are taking so much more
You can buy a house
You can't acquire a home

Didn't really do it for me

Judgement

1:14:31

They win

No emotion

SHARING THE ELIXIR

Party

Only 80 minutes long

See what happens to the family
Wayne gets out
They all get married and have kids

Mum takes up pottery

SUMMARY

This film has some amusing moments that Australians have responded to. And the characters are warm, authentic and likeable. But its story doesn't really bear close analysis. There has been no genuine ordeal and no genuine resurrection, no emotional arc, no character development. In short, it doesn't have a Hero's Journey. It's hard to argue against a film that was so successful but the absence of the universal story might explain why it wasn't able to engage overseas audiences in the same way.