

The Witcher

Season 1



Six-Core Questions Analysis

1. What's the global genre?

External Genre: Action (Life and Death) or War (Honor and Dishonor)

The external genre is NOT clearly defined!

2. What are the obligatory scenes and conventions of the global genre?

Obligatory Scenes

Action:

- **Hero Sidesteps Responsibility to Take Action:** Geralt refuses to return to claim Ciri
- **Forced to leave the ordinary world, the Hero lashes out:** Geralt continues to stay outside society and kill monsters.
- **Discovering and Understanding the Antagonist's MacGuffin:** Nilfgaardians want to take over the continent, capture Ciri
- **Hero's Initial Strategy to Outmaneuver Villain Fails:** Geralt ignores Ciri
- **All Is Lost Moment:** Realizes in a delusional dream that Ciri is his destiny
- **The Hero at the Mercy of the Villain Scene:** The Core event of the Action story, this is the moment when the hero's gift is expressed:

Missing. Geralt is at the mercy of the monster's venom. Misses the last battle scene.

- **The Hero's Sacrifice Is Rewarded Scene (extrapersonal, intrapersonal, interpersonal):** Finds Ciri

War:

- **An inciting attack that challenges the morals of the protagonist. It must put them under pressure.** - At the marriage feast thrown for Calanthe's daughter Pavetta, Urcheon (half-man, half-hedgehog) claims Pavetta by the Law of Surprise which is not honored and soldiers start fighting him. Geralt joins in.
- **Protagonist(s) deny the responsibility to respond. In overtly refusing the call to change, the protagonist expresses inner darkness:** Calanthe wants to reward Geralt after saving Pavetta from a spell. Pressed into making a decision Geralt claims the law of surprise and Pavetta vomits. She's pregnant, but Geralt does not want to have a bond with that child.
- **The protagonist's refusal of the call complicates the story and the call comes a second time but in a different form, usually as a requirement to fight for someone or something else.** Geralt sees the Nilfgaardian army approach and he returns to Cintra to bring his daughter to safety.
- **Forced to respond, the protagonists lash out according to their positions in the power hierarchy:** Geralt tells Calanthe he will return when Ciri is in danger, which means he does not follow her command to stay away from Cintra.
- **Each protagonist learns what their antagonist's object of desire is:** Ciri knows the Nilfgaardian want to capture her but she's still not quite sure why. Yennefer knows that Nilfgaardians want to take over. Geralt wants to save Ciri from a fate of death or capture.

- **Protagonists' initial strategy to outmaneuver antagonist fails:** Geralt is thrown into prison. Yennefer can't hold Sodden with the other mages. Ciri runs away and gets captured.
- **There is a clear "Point of No Return" moment, when the protagonist accepts the inevitability of death:** Geralt gets bits by a zombie-like creature and admits defeat. Yennefer is prepared to die by summoning all her chaos in the big battle scene.
- **Protagonists, realizing they must change their approach to attain a measure of victory, undergo an All Is Lost Moment. The All is Lost in a war story is usually cathartic, a moment of acceptance of fate that either compels madness or resignation:** Geralt accepts that the girl in the woods is his destiny because his mother left him in the woods all by himself. And he doesn't want that fate for his daughter Ciri.
- **Big Battle Scene—the Core Event. This is when the protagonist's gifts (usually the gifts of all the team members) are expressed or destroyed. They discover their inner moral code or choose the immoral path.** Yennefer fights Fringilla at the battle of Sodden.
- **The protagonists are rewarded with at least one level of satisfaction for their sacrifice. They gain honor or dishonor.** - Even though we don't know how it turns out, Yennefer has definitely earned her honor.

Conventions

Action:

- **Hero:** Geralt of Rivia/ Yennefer? Unclear.
- **Victim:** Princess Ciri
- **Villain:** Nilfgaardians, Fringilla. Unclear.

- **Hero's Object of Desire:** Geralt: Kill Monsters and save Ciri; Yennefer: find meaning. (The problem here is that Geralt doesn't truly want to save Ciri until the last two episodes, which weakens the story I think)
- **Division of power:** One man (Geralt) / one woman (Yennefer)
- **Speech in Praise of the villain:** There are many types of monsters in the world; Nilfgaardians are zealots

War:

- **One central character with offshoot characters that embody a multitude of that character's personality traits:** the central character should be Geralt of Rivia. Offshoot-Characters are Ciri, the bard and Yennefer.
- **Big Canvas:** Fantasy World of The Witcher.
- **Overwhelming odds ... The War itself is a seemingly impossible external conflict. The protagonist confronts overwhelming odds. Often, their team is substantially outnumbered:** After the fireball attack, most of the mages run away and Yennefer and a couple of others are left to fight over 50.000 soldiers by themselves. Geralt of Rivia is fighting alone almost all the time.

3. Point of View

Yennefer, Ciri, Geralt

No clear hero, which isn't a problem, Game of Thrones did it well, however, in only 8 episodes we are introduced to 3 main characters and scores of minor characters, but aren't 100% invested in any. And the 3 characters are connected in the end, that's obvious, but the connection is slow in coming.

4. What are the objects of desire?

Geralt: Find the girl in the woods, turns into keeping the surprise child safe, changes to find Ciri (although note that Geralt always wants to save everyone innocent like Reacher)

Yennefer: Be strong and beautiful, turns into having a baby, turns into saving Cintra for Tisisia

Ciri: Stay safe, find the Witcher

5. What is the controlling idea/theme?

Action: Life is saved when 2 people (Yennefer and Geralt) are willing to sacrifice themselves.

War: Honor is gained in war when a soldier (Yennefer) sacrifices for their fellow soldier, regardless of victory or defeat in battle.

6. What are the beginning hook, middle build and ending payoff?

Beginning Hook:

Geralt of Rivia is a principled monster hunter, killing monsters in exchange for money. After saving Duny from being killed, he becomes connected to Ciri through the Law of surprise.

Inciting Incident: Cursed Duny is attacked when he asks for Pavetta's hand in marriage.

Turning Point: Geralt claims the Law of Surprise and Pavetta is with his child.

Crisis: Does Geralt take responsibility for the child or not?

Climax: He does not.

Resolution: Mousesack is scared that Geralt not accepting his destiny will release great calamity upon them all. Geralt continues his life, and later is told by a woman that his destiny is the girl in the woods.

Middle Build:

Yennefer rises to power as a witch and Geralt has more adventures, building to a quest to kill a dragon for different reasons. Yennefer is trying to regain her ability to have children and Geralt has fallen for Yennefer.

Inciting Incident: Geralt risks his life to save Yennefer from the Genie (and his last wish)
Turning Point: Geralt learns that Yennefer is on the quest to kill the Dragon.
Crisis: Does Geralt break his principles to not get involved in meaningless quests and risk losing Yennefer in her dangerous quest?
Climax: Geralt joins the quest
Resolution: Both Yennefer and Geralt end up defending the dragon eggs and Yennefer suspects that the two of them are together because of magic and so chooses to leave Geralt. Finally, Yennefer makes Geralt realize his destiny is to save and protect Ciri.

Ending Payoff:

Yennefer assists in the defense of Sodden Hill against the Nilfgaardians, eventually realizing her gift of incredible power and disappearing. Meanwhile, Geralt realizes his destiny is to find Ciri, gets poisoned during a fight with a monster, has delusional dreams, and finally finds Ciri.

Inciting Incident: Cintra falls, Ciri runs, Geralt is captured and restrained
Turning Point: Nilfgaardians attack Sodden Hill, the key to the North
Crisis: Does the council of Mages intervene?
Climax: The council decide not to intervene to save Cintra but Tissaia and other members of the Council of Mages decide to act on their own.
Resolution: Yennefer unleashes her power and saves the day after an epic battle that includes lots of innovative magic. Ciri and Geralt finally find each other.