

Ozark

Season 1

Six-Core Questions Analysis



1. What's the Genre?

Randall: Thriller is the Global Genre right? Life and death are the stakes in this story.

Parul: However, you can't miss that Love as a genre is laced in here.

The Love subgenre is a Marriage/ intimacy story where a committed relationship is now at a crossroads. *Something external provokes trust issues and challenges the lovers to recognize, accept, and love the authentic other person rather than the illusion the other displayed during the courtship phase. There is a paradoxical (win-but-lose, lose-but-win) ending. The Marriage Love story may be either prescriptive or cautionary.*

Marty and Wendy Bryde are at a crossroads, but you'll see that the thriller dominant genre add a special twist. Marty has been so wrapped up in his money laundering scheme that Wendy turned to someone else for comfort. After the inciting incident Marty has to take his family to the Ozarks - Wendy wants to leave him but is forced to stay with him on threat of death from Del. As the Season progresses, they make up, they have sex, but towards the end we see real intimacy between them. In the final scene, they are reunited and the love is real - they have remembered each other.

Morality is intertwined in this story in so far that we have a man who is using a moral code that is against the societal norm. He has chosen to take this path to help elevate his family's security and status. However, he brings people around him down - Mason the preacher, his children. Their moral code also changes.

2. What are the Obligatory Scenes & Conventions of the Global Genre?

Thriller (Global)

- Inciting Incident of the villain - kills everyone and threatens Marty and his family
- Speech in praise of the villain - FBI and Marty to his wife
- Hero becomes the villain - Marty and his family are targeted from the beginning
- Hero at the Mercy of the villain - yes, multiple times
- False ending - yes

Morality (Internal Genre)

To illustrate the presence of morality in this story, look at the showdown. What's the showdown for Morality?

- The Showdown - protagonist actively sacrifices self in service of an individual, a group, or humanity (positive) or consciously chooses to remain selfish (negative) - **We have Marty Bryd who is calmly negotiating with the biggest drug dealer and money launderer to create a situation for them to allow his family to live. He has told his family to create a life without him.**
- The protagonist faces literal or metaphorical death and either loses the battle but gains self-respect, meaning, and peace; or wins the battle but loses those things a great sacrifice. In all internal genres, there is a paradoxical ending. **He doesn't win the battle - Del is murdered, and he's now dealing with the fickle and racist Snells - but he has his family back, they love him and come back to him.**

Conventions of the Global Genre

- MacGuffin - Cartel wants its money washed
- Red Herrings - we see multiple possible solutions fail for Marty (restaurant, church, strip club, inheritance investment)
- Making it personal - the cartel sees the disappearance of its men as personal
- Clock - Marty continues to get calls about his deadline to clean the money

3. What's the point of view?

Mostly Marty's family, some from the bad guys POV. This works well to build suspense.

4. What are the objects of desire?

- Marty wants to survive
- Marty needs to save his family from death and poverty

5. What is the controlling idea/theme?

Lives are saved when the hero outwits the antagonist and sacrifices himself. Marty and his family survive when Marty outsmarts the cartel and the local drug dealers.

6. What is the beginning, middle and end payoff of the story?

Beginning Hook:

Marty, an accountant who has been laundering money for a Mexican Drug Cartel, is nearly killed when his client Del discovers that Marty's partner has been skimming money from the Cartel. Marty must go on the run to the Ozarks to launder 8 million. But it's hard to launder money, his family are upset that they've been moved. Marty considers suicide but backs out when he find the Blue Cat Inn. When the FBI approach him with a way out, he feigns innocence, choosing to not trust them.

Middle Build

When Ruth Langamore steals his money, Marty risks his life to get it back. Having trouble finding investment opportunities to launder money, he tricks Bobby into selling him the Lickety Splitz, a money-losing strip club. He also offers to build a church for the local preacher, both actions bringing him to the attention of a local Drug family the Snells. Marty chooses to pay off the Snells, adding pressure to his debt to Del. He recoups money by scamming Wendy's realtor partner Sam. Meanwhile the Langamores watch his every move with a plan to kill him for his money.

End Payoff

Marty realises it's no longer safe for his family to stay and orders them to leave. Garcia, Del's right hand man tries to stop them and is killed by their lodger, Buddy. When Del comes looking for Garcia he tortures Marty into confessing, but Marty holds firm and draws him into a partnership with the Snells. But when Del insults the Snells he's killed, leaving Marty in partnership with the Snells. Marty returns home expecting to be alone but he finds his family who have decided they would rather be together than apart no matter the risks.