

A comparison of The Underdog master plot with The Smart Kid by Bob Miller

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The Smart Kid: Parts 2 & 3 make a chronological story with a chase/thriller genre.

Chapts. 18 - 41. 24 chapters total.

Strengths of Protagonist (Michael Shale) and Antagonist (Senator John Perkins) aren't matched. Perkins has power, age, resources against MS who has nothing but being on the right side of goodness, and his brains.

ACT 1 BEGINS chapts 18-23. (6 chapts — 25% of Parts 1 & 2)

All chapters about college focus on character development of MS.

All plot movement, up until arrest, occur in chapters about Senator, as he plans arrest.

Show MS's life before Inciting Event:

- First day of sixth grade. His intention is to help the kids younger than him.
- 16 year old birthday party. Talking with friends.
 - Initial emotional negativity because his date is taller than him:
"I'll never attend another dance."
- **College Life: Movement: upward. learning.**
 1. Leaving family behind, turns to start college.
 2. Meets roomie, midget. Someone he can relate to and learn from.
 3. Learns philosophy of deflection from Archie
 4. Psych class: Learns purpose of life: Altruism.
 5. Letter from home: shows his negative attitude about himself, and progresses a few minor plot points.
 6. Student lounge: practices altruism on Valentines Day
 7. Bar: light-hearted scene. uses his anomaly to trick others, make \$. Sophomore year
 8. Party: shows his neutral reaction to sex. Also uncomfortable with groups, rather be alone. Senior year.
- **The Inciting Incident:** 5th chapt of 24.
 1. Arrest.
 2. Calls Mark
 3. Calls Mom, promises to visit her as soon as possible.
(This is the over-riding goal for the rest of the book, to get back to Mom. He finally does in last chapter, 41.)

ACT 1 ENDS

The Senator has the upper hand.

ACT 2 BEGINS chaps 24-36. (13 chaps — 55% of Parts 2 & 3)

First part of Act 2: Generally downward action. Things get worse for MS.

- Tests performed on MS
- brother, Mark, imprisoned too
- Scientists learn his secret. Ramps up bg story. New incentive to extract chrome from MS
Begins to look like the Senator and his evil plans are working.
- Dad dies

Lowest point for MS.

- **Reversal: MS escapes.** 10th chapt of 24.

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Second part of Act 2: Generally upward action. Things get better for MS.

- MS on the road.
Traveling becomes progressively more difficult/slower
 1. Rides Bus
 2. Hitchhikes: Truck w/Roy, Van w/hippies, Car with Charles
 3. In Iowa: Runs.

Escape 1 (police station): movement: down, up

- Apparent Reversal: hand-cuffed in police station
- Escapes Handcuffs.
- Runs

Escape 2 (bank): movement: down, up

- Un-reversal: Barn: Crisis of Conscience: At first he's running away. But realizes he's a super-hero and important. Must turn back.
- Bank: Achieves goal against odds, by tricking agents about bank

Escape 3 (cafe): movement: down, up, down, up

- Cafe: Becomes complacent. Foreshadowing of a capture, but is helped by friend of father.
- MS becomes demoralized when he thinks his brother is dead, and he can't ever see his mother, and has to run for the rest of his life.
- Reversal of emotions when he learns his brother is alive. Decides to act out plan to run.

Escape 4 (school): movement: down, up

- Lincoln: Last escape before final climax.

ACT 2 ENDS (and Part 2.) 19th chapt of 24.

End of second dramatic phase. MS is overall victor. Conflict is not yet resolved.

ACT 3 BEGINS

BEGINNING OF BOOK 3. chaps 37-41. (5 chaps of 24 - 20% of Parts 1 & 2)

MS has a final crisis of conscience: he wants to run, but brother convinces him to fight, when

MS learns that his mom is still alive, and he can still achieve his goal of seeing her.

MS doesn't approach as timid child, not underdog anymore. Face to face match.

- Plan attack. **Movement: down, up. nearly caught,**
- Execute Attack. **Movement: down, up. nearly caught**
- The Chase after the Attack. **Movement: up, down. crash and burn. apparent death.**
- Reunion of the team: MS, brother, counselor **Movement: down, up**
- Reunion with Mom. Finally fulfills promise to see her. **Movement: up**

Overall movement of Act 3 is: up, down, up

Epilogue & Intro to next book.

Shows MS life after conflict. Full actualization of his gifts.

ACT 3 ENDS

The Smart Kid by Bob Miller
Part of the Chrysalis Chronology Series.
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