

George Pappas
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Inst. James Kearns
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The Shawshank Redemption

In the movie, *Shawshank Redemption*, we see the story of Andy Dufresne through the eyes of Ellis Boyd Redding, better known as Red. Because we see Andy's story through the eyes of Red, Red is not only the narrator of the movie, but also one of the main characters. Without Red, the story of Andy would have never been told and therefore the movie would have never been created. The same goes for Andy, if Andy was never sent to prison, then there would have been no story for Red to tell and therefore no movie would have been created. Simply put, you cannot have this movie without both of these characters; making both Andy and Red the two main characters of *Shawshank Redemption*. The Warden would be the main antagonist of the movie. He is not only the man in charge of Shawshank but he is also the character who Andy gets back at towards the end of the movie; this normally happens to the main antagonist which the Warden certainly is. As for Hadley, he would be more of a side antagonist. He is feared throughout Shawshank because of his ruthless treatment towards the inmates. He also takes his orders from the Warden which makes him second in command and also a secondary antagonist. The Shawshank Prison itself is the setting for most of the movie. This is where most of the scenes in the movie take place; the only parts of the movie that don't take place at Shawshank are in the beginning, when Brooks is set free, and when Andy and Red escaped. The characters like Brooks and Tommy are side characters that help tell Andy's story and show what it's like in a prison. For example, Brooks was so institutionalized because of being at Shawshank for so long that when he finally did get out, he killed himself because he didn't know what to do in the world

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outside of Shawshank. However, some characters like Andy, is determined to escape before he becomes institutionalized like Brooks.

One of the biggest themes in this movie is determination. Our main character Andy is one of the best examples of how this theme is used throughout the movie. We first see this theme in Andy when he is about two months into his prison sentence. This is about the time he asks Red to get him a rock hammer; at this moment in time, we can assume that Andy had already planned out how to escape and is determined to start digging for the next 20 years. Just knowing that he was picking at rock for 20 years shows how determined he was to escaping Shawshank. The next example would be when Andy sent out the letters to get new books for the library. He sent out one letter every week for a very long time until he got a response and some books for the library. However, even after he received these items, he was still determined to make the library even better. So he decided to send out two letters a week; he then was able to get the entire library refinished, receive more books for the inmates to read, and open different programs to allow the inmates to receive an education. This leads to the next example of Andy's determination which was teaching Tommy basic high school classes so that he could receive his GED. Even when Tommy gives up on himself and throws his test away after taking it, Andy picks it up from the trash can and sends it in to be graded. Andy also learns that Tommy has evidence that can prove Andy's innocence. He is then determined to prove his innocence to a court of law to be freed from Shawshank. This fails and he is left with his determination to escape; he eventually does this and also gets back at the Warden by making public his illegal financial transactions. The Warden could also be another character example for the determination theme. He was not only determined to keep the prisoners trapped at Shawshank, but he was determined to keep Andy

tapped and working for him. He goes to the length of killing Tommy to eliminate the possibility of any evidence that could set Andy free.

The significance of Andy's and Red's friendship also plays a big role in how this story progresses and ends. Andy and Red became friends around the time that Andy asked Red for the rock hammer. Since then, they not only kept each other sane, but also helped each other escape. They both kept each other sane by talking to each other and having that social communication; something that "the hole" tried to eliminate. They also helped each other escape. The clearest example of this is when Red gave Andy the rock hammer which was the tool Andy used to dig the hole in the wall and escape. Andy also helps Red escape; when Red went in for his yearly interview to see if he had learned his lesson and should be released, Red said things that he has never said before. Instead of telling the court what they wanted to hear, he instead told them what he actually thought about the interviews and what he did. This was greatly affected by what he learned from Andy before he escaped.

One of the last things Andy said to Red was "get busy livin', or get busy dyin'." This is exactly what Andy decided to do with his time spent at Shawshank. While many others, if not everyone else there, were doing nothing productive and just sitting around waiting to either be released or die, Andy decided to make good use of his time and got "busy livin'." He spent his time in a productive way to help himself and others throughout his 20 years in prison. In the case of Red, once he was released from Shawshank he decided to join Andy in starting a business. If Red didn't have this opportunity with Andy, he might have eventually ended up like Brooks.

The scenes that we were given to analyze both represent freedom. While examining the place where Andy hid the rock hammer, we can see he hid it at the beginning of Exodus. Exodus is when the Israelites left Egypt. With that said, it is a symbol of freedom; you can see the shape

of the rock hammer which was the tool he used to gain his freedom. The scene where Andy is standing up from the river was his first look at the outside world since he got put into the prison. This is the moment when he finally feels free. He stands up from the river as if he has just been baptized. In fact, in a way, he has been baptized. He escapes his hell as a new man; as if he has been reborn.

Shawshank Redemption would be considered a narrative because of its linear structure and how the story is told. The movie starts off with Andy drinking while loading a gun and ends with Andy and Red meeting each other after escaping Shawshank. Despite its age, the movie does not look outdated or old fashioned at all; in fact, it looks like it could have been filmed very recently as it still uses many of the same filming techniques we see in modern day movies. The camera shots consisted of following shots, long shots, establishing shots, and master shots. All these helped to show different scenes and allow the viewer to understand what is going on. For example, when Andy is crawling through the sewer pipe, the director used a following shot to help the viewer better understand what it was like for Andy. The director and editor also use sound throughout the movie. There is music from a soundtrack that Andy plays for the inmates and there is the music score which creates the mood for many of the scenes. The combination of the story, music, and camera shots make this a great movie that can be easily enjoyed even when watching it multiple time.

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