



The Pixar 22 Rules of Storytelling



Andy Rosic

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You admire a
character for trying
more than for their
successes.

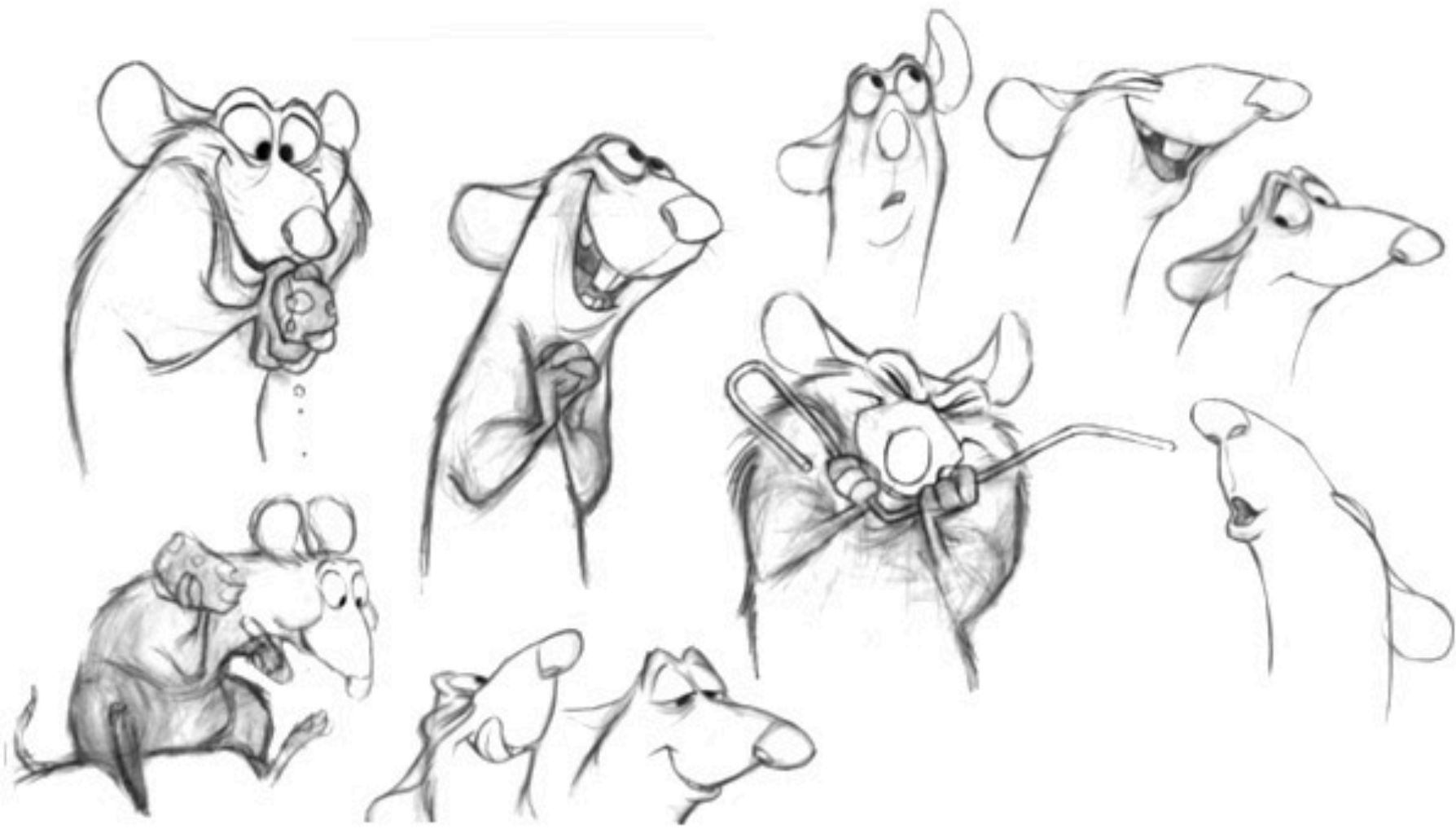


You need to keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience, not what's fun to do as a writer. They can be very different.

Trying for theme is important, but you won't see what the story is actually about til you're at the end of it. Now rewrite.



Once upon a time
there was _____.
Every day, _____.
One day _____.
Because of that,
_____. Because of
that, _____. Until
finally _____.



Simplify. Focus.
Combine characters.
Hop over detours.
You'll feel like you're
losing valuable stuff
but it sets you free.

What is your character good at, comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at them.



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Challenge them. How do they deal?

Come up with your
ending before you
figure out your middle.
Seriously. Endings are
hard, get yours
working up front.



Finish your story, let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time.

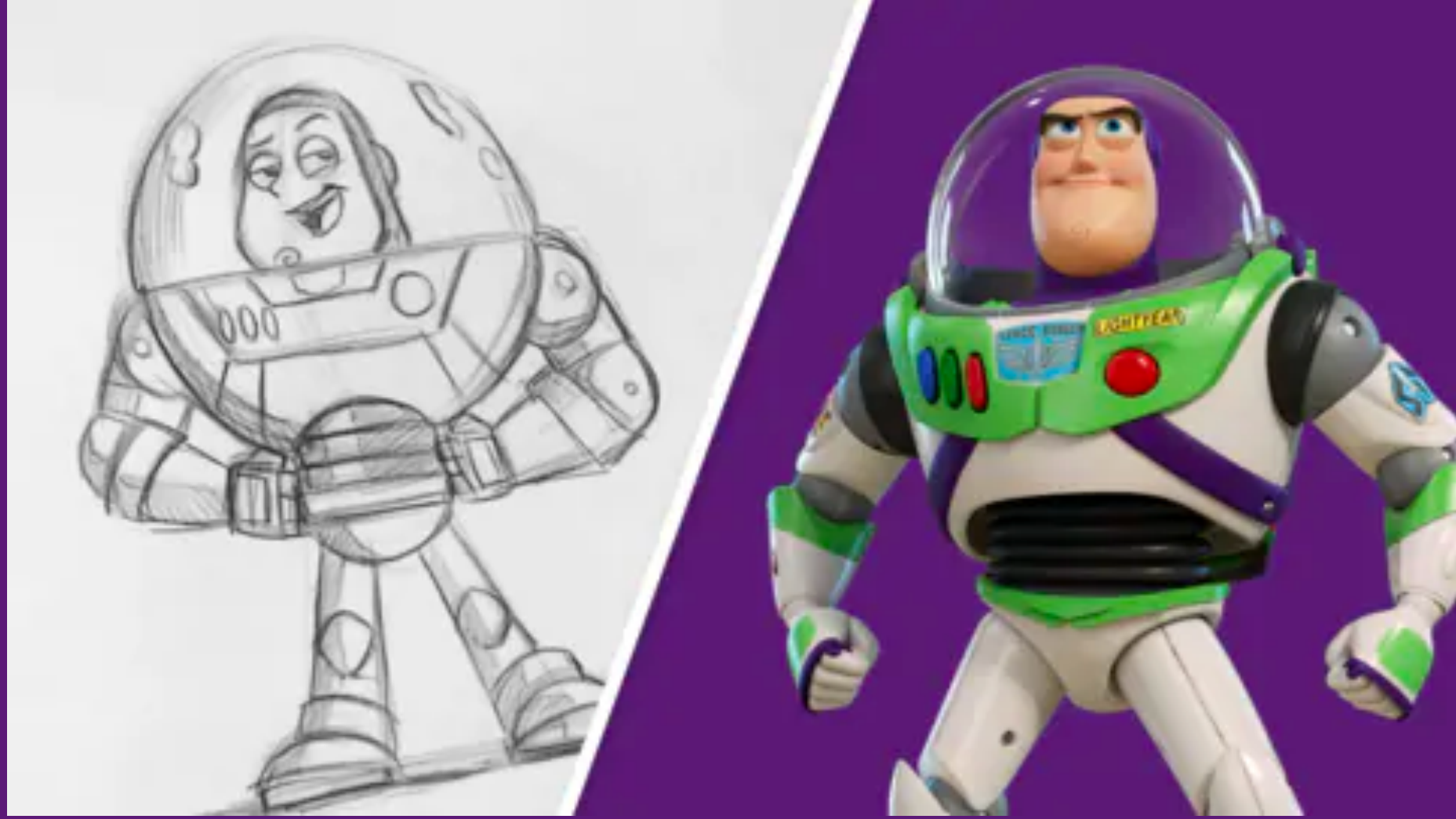
When you're stuck,
make a list of what

WOULDN'T

happen next. Lots of
times the material to
get you unstuck will
show up.

Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you; you've got to recognize it before you can use it.





Putting it on paper
lets you start fixing it.
If it stays in your
head, a perfect idea,
you'll never share it
with anyone.

Discount the 1st thing
that comes to mind.
And the 2nd, 3rd, 4th,
5th – get the obvious
out of the way. Surprise
yourself.

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Give your characters
opinions. Passive or
malleable to you as you
like, but it's **poison**
to write, but it's **poison**
to the audience.



Why must
you tell THIS
story?
What's the
belief **burning** within you
that your story feeds off
of? That's the heart of it.

If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations.



*What are the stakes?
Give us reason to root for
the character. What
happens if they don't
succeed? Stack the
odds against.*



No work is ever wasted. If it's not working, let go and move on – it'll come back around to be useful later.

You have to know
yourself: the difference
between doing your best
and fussing. Story is
testing, not refining.





Coincidences to get characters **into** trouble are great; coincidences to get them out of it are *cheating*.

Exercise: take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How do you rearrange them into what you DO like?



Meme generated atop a Fox Broadcasting Co image.

You have to identify with your situation or characters, you can't just write 'cool'. What would make YOU act that way?



What's the essence of
your story? Most
economical telling of it?

If you know that, you
can build out from there.

Storytelling is Everything

—*Andy Rosic*

Filmmaking

Selling

Fundraising

Marketing

Building

Writing

Recruiting

Developing

Supporting

Leading

Disrupting

Allying

Changing

Managing

Financing