

Fighting Tradition

Genre: High Concept Drama/Sport

Format: Feature

Nutshell: Amish meets “*Road House*”

Logline: Cultures collide when a peaceful Amish farmer is thrust into the savage world of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA).

Note regarding this submittal

Having been raised in a close-knit community that contained many Amish and Mennonite families, I can attest to the diversity of their practices, from strict adherence to Anabaptist bylaws, to more relaxed observances that include use of electricity, phones, cars, alcohol, etc. So could an Amish farmer actually compete in Mixed Martial Arts? Yes! UFC fighter Dustin Stoltzfus’ parents are of Amish heritage, and Harley Yoder, a state wrestling standout from Montana, was raised Amish.

Fight movies with multifaceted plots attract viewers

The recent release of the gritty, action-packed *Road House* reboot made a smashing debut. In its first two weekends, the Amazon MGM Studios film attracted more than 50 million viewers on Prime Video, breaking records as the studio’s most-watched launch worldwide. The public’s fascination with the mystifying Amish lifestyle is evidenced by the success of many Amish-themed movies and reality TV shows which delve into their diverse culture.

OVERVIEW

A young Amish farmer’s chance encounter with a drunken MMA cage fighter leads to an avalanche of events in which the simplicity of the Amish lifestyle collides with the modern reality of fast cars, luxury hotels, scantily clad women and back-stabbing maneuverings where temptation abounds. The protagonist’s conflict of conscious brings intrigue to the script as he unwittingly becomes drawn onto the bloody MMA stage by a ruthless villain. Our Amish hero not only fights opponents in a cage, but fights to save relationships with his family and fiancé. The honor of his entire community is at stake. With a main character that promises to be the “Rocky Balboa” of MMA, this explosive clash of divergent cultures makes for a captivating plot and ensures audiences will cheer for the struggling hero throughout the film. It’s a confrontation of deeply held traditional Amish values with the trash-talking world of MMA fighting. Which will win?

CHARACTERS

Nathan Fisher – Young Amish farmer whose calloused hands reflect the many hours of back-breaking work on the family farm. A conflicted man, he has a deep sense of responsibility to his family and strives to be a role model for his younger brothers, but pushes boundaries to achieve his goals. He was raised to believe that hard work can solve any problem.

Riot Jackson – An aging ex-MMA title contender on a losing streak. A desperate man who’ll do anything for money. Rude, crude, lean and mean, it’s hard to find anything endearing about this greedy self-centered jerk.

Greg Sampson – Riot’s manager. A fast-talking hustler, always looking to score a big payday. Currently Riot is his only client, but Greg dreams of making it big. After witnessing Nathan’s raw capabilities, he coerces the young farmer into the world of cage fighting, promising him the money he so desperately needs.

Samuel – Nathan’s father. Highly suspicious and untrusting of “the English”. Proud to be Amish, he’s respected throughout his entire community. A serious man who intimidates with a menacing stare.

Hanna – Nathan’s fiancé. Brought up to be a traditional modest and demure Amish wife, but under her quiet exterior lies a headstrong and passionate woman with a mind of her own.

Mateo – Owner of the local gym where Nathan trains. An ex-fighter who once battled for the title, he now gets satisfaction in helping others. He’s the coach you want in your corner.

Gina – Fellow MMA fighter training with Nathan. A curvaceous beauty with a heart of gold, she represents all the temptations of non-Amish life. Will she lure Nathan away from Hanna?

Joey – Riot’s sidekick. A massive man with a shaved head, menacing tats and piercings.



SUMMARY

25-year old Nathan Fisher leads a typical Amish life of long days of hard labor on the family farm. His father oversees the work with a stern eye, keeping a tight rein on Nathan and his younger brothers. Nathan's spare money is gladly devoted towards construction of a new house in preparation for his impending marriage; however this year's severe drought has depleted the family's finances. Now progress on the young couple's new home is halted and their marriage postponed.

Dejected, Nathan and his young brother head into town to sell his last crates of vegetables at the local grocery store. As Nathan leaves the store, he sees a group of drunken thugs from the bar next door taunting his younger brother. Nathan does his best to ignore them, but the pack leader, Riot Jackson, an aging, loud-mouth, ex-MMA title contender, is determined to start a fight. Riot swings at Nathan's head but Nathan instinctively ducks; the force of the attempted blow flings Riot's body around. Now under threat, Nathan reacts by grasping his adversary's waist from behind. As if he were lifting a hay bale on the farm, Nathan effortlessly hoists Riot above his head and slams him to the ground. Riot's cohorts look away in embarrassment as the inebriated fighter lays motionless. His disgusted manager films the action on his phone.

After an intense argument that leads to a bloody beat down by Riot, his enraged manager releases the shopping center video online, hoping it will reign in his unmanageable client's overblown ego. The video immediately goes viral. Initially Riot is embarrassed and holds press conferences to brazenly deny that he's the fighter in the video. However, he soon changes his strategy when he notices the public's fascination with the Amish guy. He owns-up to the brawl and insists on a rematch, assuming that a real fight with the amateur will be an easy win and bring him the million dollar payout he so desperately desires.

Riot's manager is impressed by Nathan's raw talent and innate strength. He convinces Nathan that by fighting in small venues he could easily make the money to finish constructing his house. Nathan reluctantly agrees and begins secretly training by using equipment from the farm, hiding his efforts from his stern father. Nathan starts sneaking out of his house at night to fight in underground matches. His training has paid off and he racks up a steady list of wins . . . soon he'll have the money to complete his house. But Nathan's father becomes incensed when he uncovers the truth and orders Nathan to stop fighting.

Desperate for a million-dollar matchup, Riot begins using the press to bash Nathan and mock the Amish lifestyle. The Amish community is horrified when one of its young boys gets caught in the cross-fire and is brutally attacked by Riot's misguided fans. Despite his family's objections, Nathan has no choice but to fight Riot in order to stop the violence. The story makes national headlines and in-depth coverage blankets the airwaves.

Now Nathan begins training in earnest: he's at a state-of-the-art facility with professional managers, renowned trainers and world-famous MMA coaches. He has something to prove: The Amish are peaceful, but they won't be taken advantage of. Nathan is thrust into an environment he knows little about. Temptation abounds both inside and outside the gym. His manager drives him around in fast cars, checks him into luxury hotels, and takes him to parties where scantily-clad women clamor for his attention. After becoming friends with Gina, an attractive female MMA fighter, even Nathan's love for his fiancé is tested . . . will he remain faithful?

The entire nation is captivated by the impending confrontation. The press fans the flames, hyping it as "The Fight Between Good and Evil!" The arena is packed with screaming fans for both sides as the dramatic competition begins.

Riot wins the first three rounds, but battered and beaten Nathan refuses to quit. As the fight proceeds, Riot's age begins to show and he gasps for air. Nathan begins pummeling his exhausted opponent. Now desperate, Riot attempts to survive by poking Nathan in one of his badly injured eyes. Even Riot's staunchest supporters are disgusted and are now chanting for Nathan.

Nathan recovers and begins delivering heavy blows, pinning Riot against the cage. The final bell sounds and the referee rushes in to separate the bloody combatants. As Nathan walks away, the crowd explodes in cheers. Confused, Nathan looks back just in time to see Riot's battered body fall face first to the mat. Nathan has lost the fight on the judges' scorecards, but he's won the hearts of the nation.

