

Wonder Woman '84: Fixed

A personal writing experiment: assuming several studio must-haves, could I improve the cohesion, pacing, and lore of the DC movie, Wonder Woman 1984 with minimal rewrites?

Fixes:

- *Generally: tighten scenes by making them pull double duty*
- *Narrative symmetry: Themyscira training montage and Themyscira final confrontation*
- *Wonder Woman's first rescue is the museum that Max Lord's thugs fail to rob*
- *Giving backstory on the Lasso of Truth (and tying it to the Wishing Stone)*
- *Better establishing and foreshadowing the Invisible Plane*
- *Giving Steve Trevor a puzzle only he can solve (how to work the Invisible Plane)*
- *Narrative weight to Wonder Woman's choice on renouncing her wish*
- *Setting up Barbara's future as a magic relic hunter*

The following is a mix of loose outline and screenplay.

Themyscira, years ago:

The Amazons are holding a contest in their colosseum

(prize: see a vision of truth from the Lasso of Truth)

Quick montage of Amazon feats of strength: horse handling, weapon handling, whip tricks, etc. (including using a lasso to navigate a giant jungle gym - foreshadowing Diana later lassoing lightning bolts)

Themyscira, wide shot. Amazon colosseum.

Colosseum shots: horse handling tricks, sword work, throwing knives, whip & lasso tricks. Show Amazons using lassos to navigate a massive obstacle course, to foreshadow Wonder Woman's combat skill later on. Horses cross the finish line and the crowd cheers.

Colosseum interior shot. Young Diana (Wonder Woman) at horses. She turns and looks as the crowd cheers.

Young Diana loosens a strap on the horse's saddle.

YOUNG DIANA

They'll be cheering for me next!

Hippolyta appears suddenly from behind Diana, grabs her.

HIPPOLYTA

You would use sabotage against your fellow contestants?

YOUNG DIANA
But it's the only way I'll win!

HIPPOLYTA
A hollow victory, one you would come to hate.

YOUNG DIANA
But I don't care about the victory, I just want the prize.

HIPPOLYTA
The prize? Does wielding a godly gift hold that much appeal to you, my child? Then let me spare you the contest and give you your spoils.

Hippolyta holds out the lasso of truth.

HIPPOLYTA
Our most prized gift: the lasso of truth.

Forge of Hephestus, interior. Hephestus is hammering a lump of glowing rock, with inscriptions. Zoom in on the forging.

HIPPOLYTA (Narrating)
Hephestus took Language itself and stripped from it the lies.

Close-up shot on anvil's base.

HIPPOLYTA (Narrating)
The lies we tell to protect...

A chunk of white-blue rock drops, then goes mostly transparent. (Note: This will be later revealed as the source of magic that creates Wonder Woman's invisible plane.)

HIPPOLYTA (Narrating)
... the lies we tell out of fear...

A chunk of shale rock drops.

HIPPOLYTA (Narrating)
... and the lies we tell to take from others...

A chunk of obsidian rock with a distinct shape drops. Zoom in on this with ominous smoke or effects coming off of it. (Note: This will be revealed as the Wishing Stone.)

HIPPOLYTA (Narrating)
... leaving nothing but the truth.

We see Hephaestus set down the hammer. All that is left is language: glowing symbols and letters. He threads them together, forming threads, then strands, then... a glowing rope. He coils it, and loosely ties it into a lasso. He contemplates his creation.

Hippolyta holds the rope out similarly. Then lightning quick, she wraps the lasso around young Diana.

HIPPOLYTA
Perhaps you will believe your own lips! I have told you before, but you must answer it yourself: are you ready for this challenge?

YOUNG DIANA
(Struggling, emotionally upset)
No.

HIPPOLYTA
And why not?

YOUNG DIANA
Because I'd be stealing from others.

HIPPOLYTA
Stealing what?

YOUNG DIANA
Their hard work, their dreams, their truth.

Hippolyta releases Diana.

HIPPOLYTA
And now you know: people are more important than the things you desire.

Pan to child Diana sabotaging the saddles of the horses of the other contestants, trying to cheat.

Diana is caught by Hippolyta, pulled away to be disciplined (in the Lasso of Truth room). Hippolyta asks why Diana is interfering in the contest, is Diana really ready to compete?

Diana insists she's ready.

Hippolyta wraps the Lasso around herself, I am telling you: You are not ready.

Diana still insists.

Hippolyta wraps the Lasso around Diana, forces her to reveal:

She's not ready. And it's not because of her age, her ability, but because she tried to cheat.

Young Diana cries.

Lasso still around Diana, Hippolyta says "But you wanted to win the contest so badly, I will give you the prize for free. I will show you the truth of how the Lasso came to be."

Cut to:

Hephestus is forging the Lasso of Truth. Hippolyta narrating.

"Hephestus took Language itself and stripped from it the lies."

(As different lies are named, pieces of detritus appear on the floor around Hephestus.)

"The lies we tell to protect" (chonk) "The lies we tell out of fear" (chonk) "The lies we tell to take from others" (chonk! - camera focuses on this lie/concept - it will be revealed as the Wishing Stone).

Back to Hippolyta. "Look at them. How dare you take a fair contest from them and then lie about it?" (Something here too about the contestants being so jazzed about the competition they're able to enter a flow where they can float/fly on currents - and we see a few of them "fall with style" to foreshadow Diana's ability to fly later.)

Present-day 1984 Diana in D.C.:

She's walking to a museum event, either an 80's party or a special event, but something where there's a kids and adult section and where Max Lord is 80's business manning it up.

Diana meets with Barbara in a back office.

Room for Barbara / Diana flirting here, Barbara flustered at Diana's statuesque hotness.

"Haha, usually when I work with private buyers, they're much more greasy. Not that you're greasy at all, I mean you do look like you moisturize, but... I mean I guess you are paying me a lot..."

"It's alright. Do you have the piece?"

Diana is buying a piece of Amazonian armor, belonging to Asteria.

"This means a lot to me. It's a little piece of a home I can never return to."

Mini-flashback: Diana tells Barbara the "myth" of Asteria holding off the hordes of men so the other Amazons can escape to live forever in Themyscira, and her armor being destroyed in the process.

Barbara: "Wow, that was quite a story. Men amiright?"

Diana: "I've only met one worthy man." (slip in guilt and regret at Steve's death.)

Barbara, "Oh, ah, lucky him, I guess. Anyway, kind of cool it used to be armor, because that little piece of metal was being used to 'guard' something in a way, so to speak. I'm not surprised you had trouble finding it. It was part of a locking mechanism on a chest with a weird stone in it."

Diana immediately concerned: what stone?

Barbara: "Sure I'll show you. There's a metal band around the stone, can't even recognize the language, though."

Diana pulls it out. Viewers will recognize it as the stone that's "the lies we tell to take from others". She interprets it to read the inscription on a metal band surrounding the stone, saying to touch the stone and make a wish. As she's holding it (touching it) to read the inscription, she subconsciously wishes to bring Steve Trevor back to life. It's vaguely ominous, but nothing immediately threatening.

But just then oh no, the museum is being robbed by a bunch of thugs, and kids at the party are being threatened. Wonder Woman has to show up and save the day and impress the kids, and ultimately impress Barbara, who has the stone. She also rescues Steve Trevor in the crowd and is surprised and overwhelmed by the fact that he's back. She's distracted by his return, and we get sweet shots of them reconnecting, and Steve being awed by "modern" tech. Real delightful fluff.

Meanwhile, it's revealed to the viewers that the thugs were hired to steal the gem! Hired by... Maxwell Lord.

Since Max Lord's thugs failed, he tries to show up and wheedle the gem out of Barbara without paying her (he's broke, and wants the stone as a last-ditch solution to all his problems). She catches that he can't afford it, and refuses to give over the box the stone is in (we see her greed).

He tries once more to get access to it by lecturing that it's a wishing stone, but it takes a price and that she'd be better off being rid of it. She refuses (more of her greed). "I'm sure I can figure out how to avoid any consequences, I just have to figure out how to word my wish."

He says "I already have." He lunges for it, they struggle, he wins, opens the box, makes his wish "I wish to be the wishing stone itself." Wishing stone crumbles, he's obviously infused with power.

In anger at being overpowered, Barbara places hands on him, wishes to be The Cheetah.

He says, "wish granted, but my price is taking away your ability to harm me, directly or indirectly."

She tries to claw him, fails repeatedly, screams in anguish and bolts.

Max Lord starts his chaos run of granting wishes, but taking things from the wishers. It's taking a toll on his health and relationship with his son. He assures the kid he'll figure it out, kid nods.

Meanwhile, Steve and Diana have figured out what Wonder Woman's paid price was: Themyscira is no longer hidden. The whole world sees that this new island has appeared in the Atlantic. Oops.

Max also notices this new land, wonders what it might be. Knows it's not from a wish he granted, so it has to be from someone connected to Barbara. He goes to ask Barbara, who comes around to the fact that they might as well be allies. Barbara connects Diana's Asteria story with the new land. Says this island is populated by immortal women, and all Max would need to do is trick one of them into wishing for their dear Asteria back and he'd be able to take their immortality in return. "Solid plan for me, but what do you get out of it? I can't make you immortal." Barbara: "I'm sure they have a treasure trove of other magical objects I can take for myself and figure out something from there."

Steve and Diana confront the villains, manage to tie up Barbara, and Lasso of Truth the plan out of her. Max manages to save Barbara (forces someone to jump unless WW saves him), and Max and Barbara escape.

Max, justifiably paranoid, assembles a helicopter / plane army that he flies towards Themyscira.

Wonder Woman's out of ideas on how to stop him now. Steve has a long shot: back when he was in the army, there was an invisible plane program. Maybe it's been realized?

They break into the government facility. Aside from basic guards (easily taken out by Diana) it's abandoned. The old WWI planes are all still there, in top condition (some cameo from like Gail Simone or someone who has been keeping the place running).

The problem is: the plane uses a magic stone to turn invisible, but using it makes the plane stop working. This magic stone is visually similar to the wishing stone. Diana makes the connection:

The Wishing Stone is the "lies we tell to take from others" and the plane's stone is the "lies we tell to protect". She says that the plane is actually running, but all the panels are off, the engine sounds dead, and there's no tangible displacement of air because the plane is lying. The plane will actually work and will actually fly.

They gas it up, go through the startup process and start it moving, but there's a mechanical problem that's basically impossible to diagnose because everything looks off and invisible. Steve closes his eyes, uses his almost magical knowledge of planes to address the issue and get them going again.

There's a nice moment of calm of them flying together, the calm before the literal storm.

Then there's an air battle over Themyscira in the middle of a thunderstorm. The plane gets damaged, and WW has to lasso on lightning bolts to reach Steve in time to grab him and save him and then float on air currents (fly) to safety.

Cheetah then attacks and there's a battle on the land.

They just in time make it back to see Maxwell Lord triumphant, next to a head-bowed Queen Hippolyta. He has granted Queen Hippolyta's wish: that Diana would return to her and stay forever (in exchange for Queen Hippolyta's immortality). Max says Hippolyta willingly made the trade, peaces out, "bye, glad you won't be following me."

WW angry at her mother: why are you now taking the saddle off of my horse? I need to win this race. The entire world is at stake. Convinces her. Queen Hippolyta relents and renounces her wish.

WW chases Max Lord down, uses the Lasso to force him to see what he's giving up: the earth is being destroyed, his son is in danger or is turning away from him, or something. He renounces his wish. All the wishes have been reverted... except one, Steve points out. (Wonder Woman's).

"No, we don't have to revert my wish, maybe the world is ready for Themyscira." she argues.

Steve sighs, "It's not my call to make. You know your people better... but know that I lived my life, I had a full time, and I was so grateful for extra time with you. Who gets that?"

Queen Hippolyta to Diana: Asteria sacrificed to keep us safe. If you have any love for us, you will follow her example.

"I'll never forget you, Steve." She renounces her wish and he dusts away.

Amazon's weaponsmith combs over the wreckage of the ship to be able to rebuild the invisible plane. Barbara slinks or has already slunk away on an escaping helicopter: now that she knows magic artifacts are real she's hooked. Maybe she's already stolen an artifact that can come into play in the next movie.

Mid credits: reveal Asteria's actress: Lynda Carter.

Post credits: Booster Gold appears to a semi-reformed/reforming Max Lord: this is just a downturn for you, let's get you back on top with some soda commercials!