



SCREENPLAY READERS

SCRIPT NOTES * SCRIPT COVERAGE * CONSULTATION

XXXXXXXXXX

A. WRITER

104 pages

DRAMA/ACTION / PRESENT

Analyst: RI

20XX-05-21

LOGLINE:

When her parents are killed under suspicious circumstances, the teen author of a DNA project that would lessen the value of oil when published must work out who killed her parents and why.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS:

FILMORE, 30s, and NEDDY, 40s, set up spy cams in a wooded rural HAMILTON road In a school lab, PALOMA JENSEN, 17, bonds nucleotides while lecturing friend HEINRICH BLEDSO, 17, on the virtues of getting out and having a life.

Boyfriend TEDDY FARKUS, 17, hang-glides. Paloma's working on increasing a yield, by altering kelp DNA, to make it ready for ethanol process. RICH DIRKMAN, 50s, placates his upset 9-year-old daughter BETTY - he has to go away and work. They look at his model of a ship and he explains how the LOOKOUT boy has to follow rules and deliver. "Why don't they talk to the other people instead of shoot them," she says "Talking doesn't always win, honey," he replies. Out with Teddy, Paloma texts with news that she GOT THE LETTER (accepted into college)!

She uses hug emojis - only for her dad. On a TIDAL ROAD, Filmore adjusts the cameras and reminds Neddy, "An accident, remember." Paloma takes Teddy to

swim through her family's farm - the kelp - and points out how the Audobon people set up loads of osprey cameras, but when she gets out she realizes it's a spy cam and thinks it's Heinrich's doing!

In the houseboat, PHEE SMITH, 40s, jokes about her day out - unlikely, given she has agoraphobia Dad CHAZ asks about the college acceptance and she shakes her head. Later, Chaz encourages Phee out of the house to go to Paloma's science fair. Paloma notices Filmore and the blue van. Dirkman turns up to the science fair - Phee is thankful for the scholarship he is providing Paloma whilst Chaz is bothered about an unfair agreement they made to get it. Heinrich annoys subject PRINCIPAL DR JESSE DILLS, 50s, with his privacy project. Paloma has a go at Heinrich about the cameras but he doesn't recognise them. TOM BEECHER, 40s, hands over his card to Paloma. He's from a small venture capital firm , FASTTRACK ENERGY.

Two days later, Paloma confides in Teddy that she tore up the letter - home is where she gets her energy. She rubbishes Teddy's claim that she could end up like her mom. Finishing her work and getting it published will have to do. The wind turns and she tries calling her parents, but connection is out. A storm arrives and their boat hits something and sinks! They die, and Paloma vows to continue the plan to complete and publish her research. Dirkman is pleased, but Lee gives her a leaflet about RIGA WIND POWER, MYSTIC, CT. In the wreckage, Paloma finds documents with STRUCK & MORTON on them. Beecher presses for a meeting Paloma wears her dad's cap. A FLASHBACK shows how he was proud of the family inheritance and he felt she would do great things right there on the farm. He tells her, "make sure our little spot never loses its magic."

Paloma examines a rusted pipe found at the wreckage and confides in Lee that it's not from the farm. She starts to wonder if her parents were murdered. SGT SCALZO and LT HARLAN don't believe her. They all think she must be as nutty as her mom. Paloma calls Dirkman, "I think someone's trying to kill me" Beecher turns up at her aunt's place where she is staying, so she evades him and escapes out back of her house. She can't leave town, though, so she goes to the new lab at school that is being built in her name. Lee explains the agreement makes them a partner, thus liable. He claims she's ruining it for him Neddy and Filmore turn up and Paloma needs to get away.

Lee lets her climb down via a winch, but she can't do it because of the heights. Filmore spots Paloma climbing in a chute and grabs her hair. She gets away and sets off on a sail trip with Teddy's family. They chat about her staying in town -

Teddy says if he stays he'll grow, if she does she'll shrink Neddy loses his cell. Paloma waits on the sailboat while Teddy and his parents go to a museum. Someone creeps on - Neddy - and she uses dental floss to attack him. She catches up with Teddy and they run. Filmore and Neddy follow them onto the water in an inflatable, which Teddy eventually stabs. They grab Teddy's backpack and find a leaflet - they know to go to the "FLEET CONVOCATION" event. Paloma and Teddy separate and Paloma wears a disguise while a diversion takes the bike. Teddy makes it back to his parents just in time to evade suspicion from the cops. Paloma tries confiding in Harlan again but he doesn't believe her - Beecher is a respectable man Scalzo later questions him, "Ever consider she could be right?" Police question Paloma's aunt BELINDA and she mentions Heinrich. Heinrich warns Paloma they're after her. She makes it to the AIRBORN WIND POWER LAB SITE where NASR, 40s, excitedly explains their work (a kite to generate wind power).

He tells her to think about who stands to lose - in her case, oil. Paloma visits the location of Beecher's address which isn't what she was expecting. Heinrich confirms Neddy's phone is traced to New York also. She's only just made it to Connecticut, now she'll need to go to New York! She makes a fearful journey on the train with Teddy, but they have to abort because of an incident that requires a bomb squad. Heinrich reveals Lee is dead!

Paloma tries to visit Beecher's offices but they're closed, and in a dumpster she finds documents with the Struck & Morton name. Heinrich reveals Beecher's into oil and on his last deal people got killed. Back at home, MARINE OFFICER adds credibility to Paloma's claim that a storm could not have been the sole cause for her parents' deaths. Paloma calls Dirkman, and he comforts her BUT she sees him in the building she is scoping! He's been lying! He claims he thinks of her when he dreams of what Betty could become. He's desperate to help her make the world a better place She runs, and sees newspaper articles showing Beecher is dead! So it couldn't have been him behind it all.

Heinrich helps Paloma look into Dirkman. She uses her knowledge that Betty lost a pet dog recently to lure Betty into talking to her. Heinrich codes a pacemaker-tampering action into her phone so she can defend herself against Dirkman if need be. She gets into Dirkman's place and tries searching his office, but he catches her! He talks about the lookout guy again, "if he doesn't deliver, the whole enterprise goes down." Again, he turns on the charm and she almost believes him until he talks to someone on the phone and his demeanor changes. She zaps him and gets away, into the arms of the cops. Heinrich says he needs Dirkman's

phone, and he encourages Paloma to break through her "box" and beat the bastards, rather than just taking Dirkman's offer. "There is no offer, dummy," he says Paloma is bailed and expects to see Teddy but is instead taken by Dirkman. Turns out it's all about containing the idea, not stealing it, to increase the valuation of the oil business: "Scarcity drives the value." Paloma uses a hot cigarette lighter to attack Dirkman and she escapes the vehicle to hide in a drain pipe in a wooded area. She calls Heinrich to say he will have to meet her out on the water as he has to run the deep-water prototype. But he's is tied up! When Paloma arrives, she realizes it's a trap and escapes up the tether. She's on the kite and needs to control it! No problem - Teddy taught her about hang gliding. Meanwhile she's being shot at, but she's generating energy, and the sparks get her assassins!

Eventually the kite goes down. Paloma emerges on the inflatable with dead Neddy and Filmore. Back at home, Dirkman arrives on Heinrich's doorstep. He freaks, so Paloma runs. There's a big chase at the water tower. Dirkman tries to get her and kill her! Heinrich finds footage on osprey cams of operatives going onto Paloma's houseboat that night. Dirkman is busted. He claims he's the one who delivers like the lookout. "Even if you find out your team might have it wrong. Your job is to deliver." He nearly falls off the edge and she holds onto him. He doesn't want his daughter to find out what happened, but they do have friends in court as a backup. So he could well get away with it.

Paloma and Teddy break up. Paloma tells Heinrich he can rediscover her formula independently and publish it. She wants him to make all the deaths worthwhile. Her farm is looked after by LAND TRUST and she heads away to Stanford.

WHAT WORKS / WHAT DOESN'T / SUGGESTIONS

XXXXXXXXXX is a smart, slick script that draws the reader in with ease and provides a smooth read, free of annoying typos (except for minor ones such as a character name typo on page 45). We can really get into the plot and root for/against the characters and their journeys, and we have a nice balance between the drama and the action.

Just watch out for any niggly things such as the fact that Paloma spelling out loads of letters from alphabet soup would literally take forever. Also be careful with clarity - when Paloma shakes her head at Chaz's question about the letter, does this mean yes or no? This would then clarify whether she refers to Dirkman as her dad or not with the first set of emojis. We're also not sure why Dirkman

mentions the pacemaker sabotage not working, when they're on the tower.

Usually, there are questionable occurrences in a script. Thanks to the strong characters in XXXXXXXXXX, we bypass many of these potential trip-ups in favor of suspending disbelief. However, one occurrence - Lee allowing Paloma to do dangerous things on unsafe school premises - seemed a little odd. We question whether Lee is aware that Filmore and Neddy are dangerous, because he claims they look normal (despite not knowing them and the fact they are entering his school premises).

The "two days later" skip felt unnecessary. Sure, if we're skipping weeks then fair enough, but why two days? I'd consider cutting this and instead focusing more on the intense build-up to the parents' deaths. For example, currently it's just coincidence via the weather that Paloma doesn't return home for dinner on that fateful night, but why not cause extra tension via there being another reason - an argument with her parents, perhaps, or a distraction by Teddy that causes tension between them later on.

Both Teddy and Heinrich are both treading on eggshells at times when they upset Paloma through mentioning her parents or her reliability, so it might be an idea to give them some unique conflicts; if incorporating the aforementioned suggestion, for example, you might have resentment simmering between Paloma and Teddy whilst Heinrich is just his usual [unintentionally] insensitive self. We have some great personal issues that the characters are working through that work really well with the plot; particularly Paloma with her fears and how this affects her relationship with Teddy. Heinrich's crush on Paloma and his desire to be her hero also works well to highlight "fight versus flight" reactions. When push comes to shove, when Dirkman arrives on his doorstep, Heinrich shuts down and Paloma can't carry him.

With Paloma, however, things are more complex; understandably so given she's our protagonist. One thing that came across as potentially confusing was what exactly her fear is. Is it just heights or a general sense of agoraphobia stopping her leaving home, or is it something else, such as a pull to remain with the family and the family business?

We question why, if this is the case (and indeed if the business is so important to the family) Paloma's parents practically gave it all up for her scholarship. What does this really mean, we wonder, deep down... What are they sacrificing, and why, so that their daughter can leave? We perhaps need a little deeper

understanding of that they really want for Paloma, and what she wants, before we launch into the main meat of the story. Several occurrences explore the different reasons for fear, such as remembering how happy Paloma was with her family, being scared to do things involving heights and being afraid to travel on a train and drive a car out of town. Why exactly, we wonder, did Paloma rip up the Stanford acceptance letter, and how does this translate to the end of the script when she chooses to leave after all?

It strikes this reader that there could be more of connection between Paloma's fears and actions and what she and her parents want for her - the plan - in the script's opening. Chaz is clearly really proud of his daughter; they go to the science fair despite it not being allowed. Yet Paloma strikes us as the type of girl who wouldn't be bothered if she wasn't at the science fair - she's more invested in what the project means for science and the environment and for her family as opposed to what she can personally gain from it. With this in mind, it might be worth creating a stronger set up in the first act.

Consider how stakes can be raised for all characters, more strongly directing the plot as a result. For example, what if Chaz and Phee - whilst still being a loving couple - are opposing in what they want for Paloma? Chaz might want her to do well for herself; hence encouraging the science fair and top college education, but what if Phee wanted her to stay? And/or think in terms of what Paloma wants - perhaps her parents try to stop her going to the science fair but she is passionate about research in general so insists (being unaware of the contract)? Perhaps their love for her ultimately cause them trouble in this sense.

Conflict like this could work really well to make Paloma torn in her personal goals and decisions. She'll want to please both her parents, and Harlan does have a point when he [unfairly and judgementally] suggests Paloma may have the same afflictions as her mother. If Paloma was beginning to feel like she doesn't want to leave her home town, closing in her "box" (nice symbolic connection there to Heinrich's later advice) then it would make sense that she rips up the college offer and makes excuses via Teddy to stay at home.

However, Paloma needs to figure out what she really wants. There's a great sense of her overcoming her fears throughout the events in the plot, and her choice to go to college in the end proves she does want to be a scientific researcher. Yet she essentially lets go of the family project (whilst still supporting it going ahead and being known via Heinrich). Despite the security of having her land be taken over by a preservation trust, we do still wonder how she manages to break away from

that hold her home town has on her. Is it just the fact she has faced her fears, or could there be more to it in line with "letting go" of her parents and the farm?

There are several inclusions of flashbacks throughout the script - another device like the skipping of days that could be potentially unnecessary. Instead of using them as reminders of things that happened earlier in the script (after all, VO can still be used to good effect for this) it's worth considering using the flashback to Paloma's childhood to better effect here, to support her personal journey. In the one flashback of this nature, Chaz talks of family traditions, how she'll do great things "right here" and how she should never let the family land lose its magic. What if, going back to the earlier suggestion of giving the parents some more conflict in the set up, it was the other way around? What if it was Chaz reigning Paloma in, afraid that the magic will die and he'll lose everything that's dear to him? Phee may in fact be the one who wants Paloma to get away, so that Paloma does not suffer the imprisonment she has through her mental health issues.

The option to have a preservation trust "reserve the magic" may not have been a clear option to start with - plus Paloma was threatened by Dirkman. Perhaps there could be a way to tie in some other characters or connect things that are said or done in a meaningful way when it comes to making her realize this option? For example, Dirkman is always going on about "being the lookout". In a way, Paloma is looking out; preventing trouble, by handing over to a preservation trust.

This leads us onto Dirkman himself; a character who doesn't seem to have a turnaround/conclusion. We're a little sketchy on his motivations - what happened to Betty's mother and why is his whole motivation geared around his daughter and emulating the role of a lookout at all costs? The dialogues on page 74 from Betty are sweet, but they don't really impact upon Dirkman. He still continues to carry out his orders without ever questioning his actions. Could Betty have more of a role in Dirkman's turnaround - perhaps he could even come good, in a way? What if talking IS a way to win - a way to win back his family instead of going to prison. Paloma is very capable of negotiating also. Why not have her "win" by talking him round?

SCREENPLAY READERS SCRIPT ANALYSIS GRID

STORY	SCORE
Concept is fresh and/or original	95
Concept is/contains a strong and/or buzzworthy hook	90
Theme is well executed/interweaved well	95
First 10 pages set up the story well	80
First 10 pages are compelling	85
Script is well structured	90
Every scene in the script feels essential	85
Scenes are the appropriate length	90
Stakes are clear/conflict is strong and/or compelling	75
Characters' choices drive the story forward	75
Pacing is strong and the story keeps moving	90
Story is not overly complicated or hard to follow	85
Story is not bogged down by exposition	90
Tension builds/escalates throughout	85
The climax/resolution is satisfying	85
CHARACTER / DIALOGUE	
Protagonist(s) is (are) likable and/or compelling	90
Supporting characters are likable and/or compelling	90
No characters were extraneous	75
Dialogue reads naturally/believable within this story	95
Dialogue reveals character	95
READABILITY	
Format and presentation adheres to industry standards	100
Spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage	95
Action text is concise, not overly descriptive/prose	95
Action text "shows" instead of "tells"	95
Overall readability	100
AVERAGE SCORE	89
RECOMMENDATION	Consider

GLOSSARY OF ANALYSIS GRID TERMS

Concept is fresh or original

How original, fresh, or unique our analyst found your script's concept to be. A low score in this category isn't always bad, as many script buyers prefer tried and true concepts.

Concept is/contains a strong and/or "buzzworthy" hook

Does your concept have a strong hook? In short, this is a measure of how much our analyst estimates it would cause people who hear it say "I wish I'd thought of that."

Theme is well executed/interweaved well

Does your story have a strong theme or motif? Is it worked into your story well?

First 10 pages set up the story well

How our analyst feels your first 10 pages help get things in motion.

First 10 pages are compelling

Do your first 10 pages draw the reader and the audience into your story and engage them?

Script is well structured

Does your script have a structure, whether it's 3-act, 8-act or something completely different? If it sets up a new structural convention, does it serve the story well?

Every scene in the script feels essential

Does each and every scene serve a purpose in propelling the plot, or revealing character, or setting a tone, or engaging the reader?

Scenes are the appropriate length

Are your scenes too long, or too short, for what they're presenting?

Stakes are clear/conflict is strong and/or compelling

Are the stakes high enough? Is it clear what they are? Does your story have conflict?

Characters' choices drive the story forward

Do your characters' actions, choices, and reactions drive the story? Does causality drive your plot, or do your scenes unfold too arbitrarily, or too episodically?

Pacing is strong and the story keeps moving

Whether your story is intended to be fast-paced or a slow burn, does the pacing feel right?

Story is not overly complicated or hard to follow

Do you have too many scenes, characters, plot threads, reveals, or any other elements that are making things too hard for a reader or audience to follow?



Story is not bogged down by exposition

Is your story explaining things a bit too much? For example, over-explaining via too much backstory, too many flashbacks, too much voiceover, etc.?

Tension builds/escalates throughout

Does your story build tension? Does it do it well?

The climax/resolution is satisfying

Did everything in your story come to a resolution in a way that makes sense, and will be entertaining to an audience?

Protagonist(s) is (are) likable and/or compelling

The protagonist doesn't necessarily have to be likable, but they should at least be fun to watch.

Supporting characters are likable and/or compelling

Are your supporting characters interesting to watch?

No characters were extraneous

Does every character in your script serve a purpose? Or do we spend time with characters that don't do much for the story?

Dialogue reads as natural and/or believable within this story

Does your dialogue sound authentic within the parameters you've set up for your story? If it's a modern, gritty cop movie, do the cops sound real? If it's an alien space adventure, do the alien overlords speak in way that lets us suspend our disbelief?

Dialogue reveals character

When your characters talk, does what they say or how they say it tell us more about them as characters?

Format and presentation adheres to industry standards

Does your script look and feel like what the film industry at large would consider to be a pro screenplay?

Spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage

How well did you manually spellcheck? Did you use "their" when you meant "there?"

Action text is concise, not overly descriptive/prose

Are your action lines crisp, brief, and easy to visualize quickly? Or do they have a lot of extraneous description?



Action text "shows" instead of "tells"

Does your script's action text and description tell us how a character is feeling? Or, preferably, does it show us by having that character do something?

Overall readability

How easy to read our analyst feels your script would be for an agent, agent's assistant, contest reader, producer, or other film industry reader.

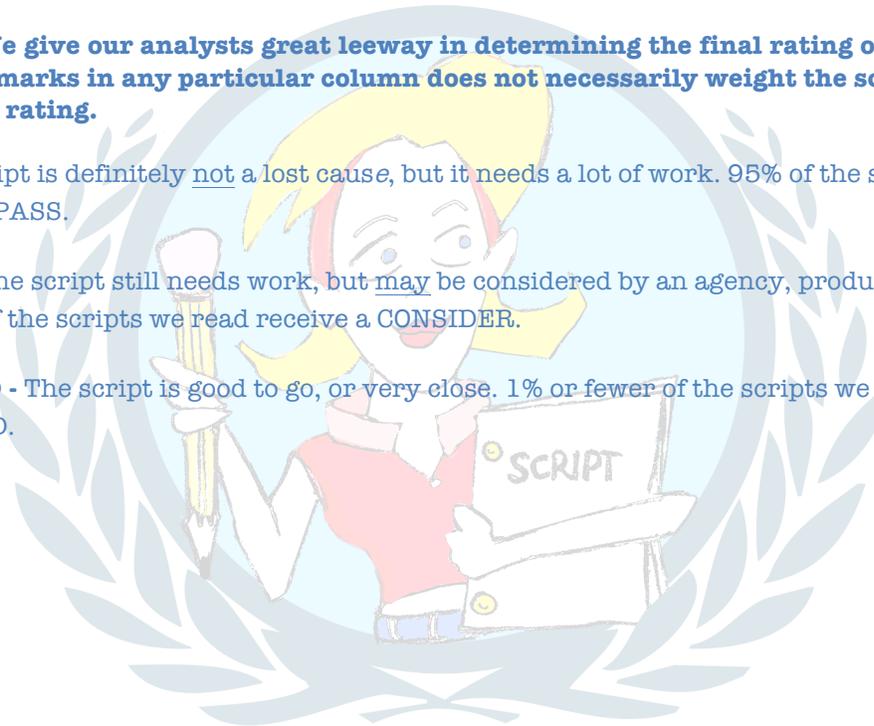
Overall Rating

Please note: We give our analysts great leeway in determining the final rating of your script. The total of X marks in any particular column does not necessarily weight the script towards any particular rating.

PASS - The script is definitely not a lost cause, but it needs a lot of work. 95% of the scripts we read receive a PASS.

CONSIDER - The script still needs work, but may be considered by an agency, producer, contest, et cetera. 4% of the scripts we read receive a CONSIDER.

RECOMMEND - The script is good to go, or very close. 1% or fewer of the scripts we read receive a RECOMMEND.



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