

SHORE SCRIPTS

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Title: ██████████

Location: Basement

Writers: ██████████

Circa: Present Day

Length: 35 Pages

Budget: Medium

Genre: Thriller

Coverage Date: ██████████

Format: Short

Logline:

A young woman trapped in a sadistic zealot's basement must use all of her courage, wit, and fortitude if she is to escape and ensure he can never harm another like her.

Industry Scorecard:

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	PROFICIENT	NEEDS ATTENTION
PREMISE	X			
CHARACTERS		X		
DIALOGUE/SOUND	X			
STRUCTURE	X			
PACE	X			
PRODUCIBILITY		X		

FEEDBACK:

Premise/Theme

████████ focuses on a young woman who has been kidnapped and held captive in a fortified basement by a religious obsessive. Drawing on all her inner strength, as well as her imagination and cunning, she resolves not only to escape but to ensure this man can never hurt another woman again. As such, this script uses a particularly disturbing and horrific, yet extremely relevant, 'overcoming the monster' story archetype. ██████████ must overcome horrendous trial after trial, manifesting all of her skills and fortitude, if she is to escape, drawing on the sinister

fact that it is not only her that she will be saving if she makes it out to tell the world what happened to her.

This is a stunning, visceral script that takes an unflinching look at an incredibly important subject. The script works extremely effectively both as a self-contained story as well as at an allegorical level. Crucially, while the metaphorical nature of the script is present and recognizable it is by no means heavy-handed. Aspects of symbolism such as the character of The Boy and what he represents, as well as the realization that [REDACTED] is not the only one, and the nature of the 'respectable'-looking Man and the 'respectable'-looking suburban community she is held in, are particularly effective, though by no means the only elements that work.

Hook/Stakes

The only concern with the actual content of the script is the ending. [REDACTED] escaping and taking her revenge on The Man, potentially even saving the other women there, is immensely satisfying and cathartic. However, given the allegorical nature of the rest of the script, might it be more effective as a representation of the struggle women face in overcoming systemic oppression for the ending to better reflect this? Could it end just as [REDACTED] learns that she is one of many, seeing all the identical houses? This is a painful note to give, making a dark script even darker, and robbing the audience of the satisfaction of the current ending, but if the writers want to go in that direction, this could be an incredibly powerful, symbolic one.

Characters

Characterization is one of the most difficult aspects of the short-film script due to the limited nature of the format. The script does an excellent job of showcasing and paralleling the characters of [REDACTED] and The Man. Particularly effective in this sense is the use of the fantasy sequences that feature [REDACTED] and give us a real glimpse into the imaginative, humorous nature of her character. On-screen, there is enough in the script to capture [REDACTED] character. However, on the page, the writers might miss a trick by not employing a 'character intro,' which can be one of the most useful weapons in a screenwriter's arsenal. The writers are closer to this with their description of The Man when he is introduced. Although the description of his clothing and physicality, I would argue, is unnecessary – just the country club reference works! A great character intro for [REDACTED] might immediately hook a reader in and help them better visualize the piece and understand the character far more quickly.

Dialogue/Sound

The dialogue in the script is excellent. Specifically, the dialogue in the fantasy sequences is particularly strong. And it is these two elements in partnership with one another which allows them both to be so effective. These sequences are where the dialogue really shines, as the writers capture the feel, syntax, and rhythm necessary for each of the fantasy sequences to work. Impressive, too, is the use of sound in the script, with the repetitive 'BEEP! BUZZ!' is not only very evocative for the reader's imagination but also creates a compelling story device that ramps up the tension as well.

Structure/Pace

The tension builds brilliantly throughout, rising and falling in a way that conveys ██████'s fortitude and strength of will as she is beaten back time after time. Where this script could use some editing is not in the vision, but in the way, it is executed on the page. Take on page 5, for example – 'she begins to drown in the realization that she is, in fact, completely on her own'. This goes against the traditional screenwriting tenet of 'show, don't tell.' What does this look like, her 'drowning in realization'? How does this manifest itself visually? Later on, in some of the most important scenes in the script towards the end, the writers suddenly seem to become very conscious of page count, writing long paragraphs of action seemingly from a need to save space. Interestingly, they don't do this early on, so it is unclear why this is adopted later on. Long paragraphs can kill the readability of a screenplay. As such, the writers are advised to treat each line as if it were a shot or short sequence and write a maximum of four lines for each. This keeps the read flowing smoothly and the piece as readable as possible.

Production/Representation/Presentation

This script could be especially effective in the short-film market, where symbolism, theme, and meaning are often raised as high or even higher than 'entertainment' value (for want of a better word), due to the format's closer links to 'art-house' sensibilities over the commercial appeal. If the writers were to consider writing this script as a feature, then introducing that kind of ending might be more questionable (though possibly even more effective). There is a definite market in both mediums for this script (the writers could well consider creating a produced short as a proof-of-concept for a feature). This is especially true given the huge success of projects with similar subjects, beats, and themes like 'Promising Young Woman' and 'Room,' which show that there is a large demand for this kind of story out there.

Current Predicted Industry Outcome:

RECOMMEND	CONSIDER	PASS
X		

Conclusion

This script is an unflinching and extremely evocative piece that presents a lot of important and relevant subjects and themes that will resonate with a modern audience. The writers might consider changing the ending (though sticking with the current one, is effective as it is), and adding in elements like character intros to help their protagonist quickly jump off the page. Lastly, the writers are advised to look at the readability and pacing of the ending to ensure that their vision is executed as well as it can be on paper. Already being a very strong script, these improvements could put this script in an incredibly promising position.

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