



Writers Room Notes & Scores

Feature Screenplay: XXXXX

Analyst: S. Schellerup

Writer: Malcolm Durrant

Genre: Historical Fantasy

Category: Feature

The following scores and comments are objectively presented and intended to be illustrative, instructive, and helpful in guiding the writer along a professional path. Scores and comments are in accordance with current professional film and television industry standards.

Scores/Comments:

Concept/Originality: (3)

XXXXX offers a glimpse of one of the best known legends in Western literature. It's not quite clear, however, at what point in time the story meets with Arthur-- he could be anything from a child to a young adult-- nor is much description of his world offered. This lack of description leads to a situation in which it is easy to mistake the setting for Camelot/King Arthur's "actual" world, and it's not until Conan's line on page 6 ("No one has seen it since the time of King Arthur way back in the dark ages") that the reader gets some indication that this is a different Arthur. This revelation doesn't quite work as an effective, surprising twist, primarily because there would almost certainly be some kind of on-screen 'give away' right from the start (period costumes, technology, architecture, etc.). Because of these missing conceptual details, it is uncertain what this script's 'angle'

is on its well-known subject, leaving its originality and overall intent in question. The writer might consider adding more grounding/world-building details in order to more effectively convey the concept underpinning this script.

Plot/Story: (4)

These introductory pages focus on a sequence in which Arthur, alongside his grandfather, finds a literal ‘King’s Path’ that seems likely to function as Arthur’s figurative path through the narrative as well. However, rather than take the path and set out on his hero’s journey, Arthur closes the path back up and goes to church with his grandfather. At this point, on the subtlest conflicts are offered, such as his mother’s worried expression, or his grandfather’s advice not to tell his father about the path. This narrative choice positions the intrigue of the King’s Path far off on the horizon, clearly framing it as foreshadowing rather than immediate plot, which leaves the narrative feeling unbalanced. The writer might consider combining immediate and future conflicts to avoid creating this kind of ‘plot inertia’ that leaves the narrative’s trajectory invisible and reduces overall stakes/tension.

Pacing: (4)

By relegating the story’s presumed set-up event/inciting incident to the periphery (closing up the King’s Path and heading to church), the writer upends the story’s sense of pacing, the benefits of which are unclear. The writer might consider reworking this introduction so that the first ten pages arrive at a set-up event that more immediately shifts the plot in an irreversible direction; this will potentially create strong, engaging stakes and improve the narrative’s dynamism.

Characters: (4)

This exposition-heavy introduction also impedes character development; Arthur and Conan spend most of their time talking about the distant past, leaving little space for their

own viewpoints and choices. Opening with a more dynamic, conflict-oriented sequence might allow more opportunity for the development of these characters. Even adding a simple constraint, like Arthur's mother insisting he arrive at the church on time, would give these characters a means of demonstrating their priorities and attitudes. Lastly, at least two characters are mentioned but are not actually introduced in the script, Arthur's mother and someone named Peran. The writer might consider giving these characters a more standardized introduction, in the interest of demonstrating their relevance to both Arthur and the plot as a whole.

Dialogue: (3)

Although the dialogue effectively creates a couple moments of character development/tone (e.g., "And he did ramble a lot as he got older," page 4), the bulk of the dialogue is geared toward exposition, much of which may already be familiar to a broad swathe of audiences. The dialogue may also benefit from some syntactical adjustments (e.g., "The steps are the path young ARTHUR that are The Kings Path..." page 4) that will ensure the accessibility of each line's meaning. As a last note, the writer might consider streamlining the use of parentheticals ("wrylies"), which in this script are frequent, long, and perhaps better suited to lines of action.

Final Comments: While it seems possible that there is an engaging conceptual take on the Arthurian legend within this script, too little is presented in terms of character, setting, world-building, tone, conflict, etc. to get a firm grasp on what it might be. In many ways, this introductory sequence seems to operate 'out of time,' with few grounding details, and while this could create a sense of timelessness/legendariness, it's not clear that such a feeling or tone will work in an opening sequence because of the way it inhibits conflict and obscures many fundamental narrative details. Nonetheless, there remains abundant potential in a compelling, modern update of this ancient story, and perhaps this script could fill that role with a more fully conveyed concept.

