

Ep #65: The Best Female Characters and Why

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On this episode, we're talking all about the best female characters. Yes, it's all about the women that leave an impact. So listen in. This is the Script Reader Pro podcast, hands on advice, insider hacks and deeper discussions for the screenwriters who are serious about breaking into the industry. Desiree you're back. I feel like it's been so long.

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Oh, I'm sure the audience missed you. I'm sure last time they were like, where's Desiree? Or else they're like, Desiree's voice sounds deeper than normal. How was your time with Ryan? It was good. We had a good chat.

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It's always fun to talk about, talk about writing with my someone who cares, yeah, someone who cares exactly you say homies, homies, okay, never say homies.

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Your homeboy. Homeboy. Yeah, I actually got the notification to my phone on Wednesday saying New episode Script Reader Pro podcast. Scott Ryan and I didn't listen to it. Sorry to tell you. Oh, thanks for the support, honey.

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Always here to support you. Hey, this is the Script Reader Pro podcast, by the way, I'm your host, Desiree, yes, and I am Scott. I am here to talk about screenwriting and all the great aspects of it, and that's so great.

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What are you here to do? Not talk about screenwriting.

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Yeah, she's a great host, that way.

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I don't really like screenwriting. Hey, Scott, I've had quite a few people send me requests for it to be their friend Facebook friend requests by some screenwriter, yeah, see, you're

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making an impact. Making an impact. Yes, I'm not a screenwriter. So unfortunately, guys, those people that want me to read their stuff and everything, you could not pay me enough money to read your work. I'm sorry, even if it's very good, I fall asleep within like, what? Two pages of

reading anything? Usually, yeah, yeah. True story. True story. Scott, we're talking all about female characters that are amazing, like myself,

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Yes, like you, yeah, oh yeah, because you totally screwed up that episode.

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Yeah. It's it was. Liz, we were talking about great character introductions, and about halfway through desert is like, Okay, wait a minute. Why are there no women on this list? And I was like, Oh, gosh.

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Then you went over the list, no, there was one woman, I think, yeah. And then you were like, oh, oh yeah. Because I

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just kind of, when I was putting the list together, I just like, looked around my room, my movie room, and thought of all of the My Favorite Things and my favorite characters. And it just happened to all the guys. Well, not all the guys, but hey, don't dig a hole. No, I'm just saying so we said, You know what? We should do an episode about all the way, because there's just many strong and iconic women characters. So we should do an episode about, what about all

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of the Oh, I was yawning midpoint there. Oh, all I heard was bald.

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Do you see what I deal with here? I talked to my wife about something, and she's just yawning the whole time.

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Well, I was yawning, and then I was in the process of looking for printable rice paper for decoupage.

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Okay, everyone, if you want to shift over to Desiree's decoupageing

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podcast, hey guys, I could talk about decoupage for a long time.

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Yeah, it is a very creative process. And it actually, it's very telling on how someone's brain works when it comes to creating things out of nothing, just like a screenwriter. So you're kind of like a screenwriter. Shout out with Mod Podge and tissues and napkins and thrift store. Hey, my

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stuff is pretty amazing.

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It is amazing. Yeah.

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I mean, would anybody expect less than amazing?

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No, speaking of that, amazing women, amazing women. But let's get on with the podcast. How do we normally start this?

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We normally start by me talking about myself and what I'm into lately. And then I need to bake you guys, did you guys know I am an exceptional Baker. I thought I

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was one with ADHD. You're just going off on every tangent.

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And Scott was like, Oh yeah, we're getting low in the freezer with all the goodies here. Yeah, we are, because I've been decoupageing, right? So I don't

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get baking anymore. I get Mod Podge plaster eggs with bunny tails on them.

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Okay. Anyways, guys, the first thing we always talk about is what we've seen lately. We went to this movie, actually yesterday. It was playing for a limited time only.

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Was it, did it sign? I don't know, but it was called hunting Matthew Nichols, and saw a couple couple of the Instagram Movie Review places that I follow, like the documentary girl, documentary girl was talking about it, this horror guy who's just loves horror movies, and they were talking about this, and I was like, I saw it? And I was like, Hey, I've seen this. No, I haven't. Yeah, have you seen it? No, I read it. I know this. I know who made this, and it's a. A mockumentary written by Sean Harris Oliver, him and his his kind of friend, Director, character, not character, director friend. They were working together, and he's like, I want to make this movie. I knew him through Script Reader Pro. Actually, Sean had sent in scripts over the years for notes, and we kind of connected and chatted and just kind of became colleagues. Did you chit chat? Chit chatted? Did some chit chatting. And he told me about this movie, and then he went and he made it. He just went out and he said, I'm gonna make this movie. And got a bunch of funding and did fundraising and investors and made this movie. That's a testament

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to say, though, that you don't necessarily have to have someone sign on with 10s of millions of dollars. No, that he did it himself. He wanted to make the movie, so he went out and he did it,

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yeah, and it's so good, like, it's so good, and the production quality is incredible, yeah. And anyways, I didn't expect it to end up in theaters. It's just having a theater run, which is insane these days, that just doesn't happen.

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So there has been an uproar, though, online saying, for the people who recommend documentaries, saying things like, Well, you shouldn't be recommending this movie, because it's not actually a documentary, right? Yeah.

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So there's been a set up to look like a found footage, actual documentary movie. But when,

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after what, when I was watching it, I was like, anyone clearly could tell this is not a documentary. It's not it, yeah, it doesn't follow exactly the same format as a typical documentary that I'm used to seeing.

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Yeah, I mean, but it definitely if no one had told me that it wasn't that, it wasn't a documentary, they said, Oh, watch this documentary for the first little while, I would be thinking, this is, this is just documentary, yeah. But then it gets that deeper, kind of like that project thing where characters who are making it or talking, and in the documentary, you don't see the director of the documentary, you don't see the behind the scenes talk to the camera person. So, you know, but, but, yeah, it's anyways. Go see it. I thought it was really great, really great really great twists and turns. Few Jump Scares that have me run into

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my seat. You jump scares? I kept saying to you, stop you kick with the popcorn.

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Go check it out. Shout out to Sean. Shout out to Sean.

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Yes, great job. Before we go on to I want to say something about that. Though, in movies when there's a scary part, Scott is so annoying, because not only does he run into him, is in his seat and gets scared. After he gets scared, and the audience is all engaged, he finds it great to laugh. And it's like quiet squad, like people just because you that's

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find it funny how scared I get you. I know

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people in the audience don't know that. And so there's just a scary movie. Why is that guy

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laughing about this person just getting their head caved in? It's not funny. Do better. It's a reaction.

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It's it's embarrassing. Do better, it's a reflex. Do better. Okay, okay, today we're talking about the best female characters in movies and TV. And why? Yes, and I said Desiree, that's

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gonna be fun, because I'm gonna talk about all these guys. Talk about all these characters, and then you're going to have to guess what movie they're from, or TV show. So do

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you notice that I'm not saying anything over there? So okay, get a bit of a head start looking at the list, guys. This is going to be exceptional.

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But I just started thinking, Okay, who are all the greatest female characters that I remember, and the ones that stood out and for specific reasons, right? So we're just gonna name a character, and we're talking about why their character is memorable, why it sticks out. And the reason we're doing this is because there are a lot of male screenwriters out there, and a lot of male screenwriters just may not have the best understanding on how to write women, and so a lot of women in screenplays tend to come off as just very one dimensional. They're there just to because they're pretty or so you can talk about their body, or they are there for some sexualized reason, or they're objectified, or there's just no substance. And sometimes you'll look and be like this, this character just needs more than just being a woman. They just do kind of, quote, unquote, you know, women,

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women things. I knew you're gonna say, women things. What are women things?

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Scott, well, that they just don't have impact. They're they're there to just make the guy look good, or they're there so that the guy has something to do or say or right? And that's just not I mean, you don't do that for male characters, so why do it for female characters? So that's what we're gonna talk about, and I think it'll be fun. So these are all I'm not the characters I have in this list doesn't mean that they're the best of the best. And if you don't think they're great, you don't think they're great. And if I missed one, I missed one. But these are just, I thought, some

really great examples, because they are from a bunch of different genres. So it's not just, oh, the big action, you know, heroin character. So first character, Ellen Ripley, you put cheat here, yeah, one, cheat, one. She's from Alien because I knew you didn't remember that. So she, no, I didn't actually, you know. So she's one of. The, she's like the original badass female action lead. You know, she is the, she is the one. You know, in Alien, there was really no strong action female characters in a lot of movies at that point. So she really made a difference. And I talked about that in that in the podcast, when we talked about the other character introductions, about how people ask James Cameron, you know, how do you write women so, well, what do you do when you're thinking of writing a female character, and he's like, I just write a character. I don't worry about whether she's female or not. I just make her an amazing character, just like I do with men. So that's kind of for me, that's the that's the thing keep in mind. So, yeah, Ellen Ripley, great character, damaged, broken, pushed to the limits, overcomes everything, becomes the strongest person on that ship, fights an alien, wins, and we're doing

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this again because Scott likes to hear himself talk, but also because, as a writer, it's very important to have a diverse group of women that have different characteristics.

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Yeah, yeah, it's true. And what

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works well and what doesn't work well, and these just happen to work really well, yeah.

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And you gotta, if I mean any screen reader, man or woman, you gotta look at your script and and, and take a look and see if there is a good balance of men and women in in your story worlds. My One example is like, Oh, well, oh, I don't need to, because it's just, this is just what men are like, and this is, this is a male dominated field. And I'm like, Okay, fine, but if it's not something like World War One, where every single soldier on the field is a man, then there should be women in there, right? So it's just, it's called life, right? It's a good balance, yeah, so that's why, okay, next one, Desiree, Clarice Starling, where's she from? Hey. Good one. Yes, Silence of the Lambs. Good one there with your sound. Hannibal Lecter, yeah, with Hannibal Lecter. And that's the thing is, everyone always talks about silence the lambs. Oh, Hannibal Lecter, Hannibal Lecter, he was only in the movie for, like, I think, 17 minutes or something. That's not in it a lot. Oh, interesting. Yeah, it's her movie. And a lot of there's a lot of great stuff in that movie that showcase how she is kind of the only woman in that movie. She's the only female FBI agent in the training and in the elevator and all these places. So she really stands out as that, that specific character. But she's intelligent, she's brave, she's psychologically layered, but she's also broken. And that's the key, is make a character as strong as you want, man or woman, there should always be a piece that's broken and and the best part of that movie is that, I mean, that's where the title comes from, right? It's when Hannibal is talking to her, and, you know, playing with her, manipulating her to find out what's going to break her, what's going to push her. And it's a memory that she talks about. And so she's she, she has to

put these walls up because of the world she's in. Stronger around all these men and present herself in a different way, or no one's gonna take her seriously. So she's a great example of just owning her position in that story and not letting everything else dictate who she is. So fantastic character, another

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one that doesn't allow herself to not, you know, be dictated by what people believe is the next one, which is Rose. DeWitt buccater, mu Kate here,

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yes, Rose, everyone always talks about Jack. Jack. Dawson, Oh, Jack, Jack, Jack, yeah. Leo's awesome that movie, and Jack's awesome in that movie. Do you want to talk about Jack Dawson? No, but she rose is great, because

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what do you want to talk

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about Jack Dawson? Do we have time to talk about Jack Dawson? Desiree and I met eons ago, way on the internet was a major thing, and we met on the telephone chat line we did. And so, yeah, it was called one to one and you would call, you would you would go in, and you'd leave, kind of like a voice greeting, right? Saying, Hey, this is me. And then people would listen, if they liked it, they would send you a message, and you would go back and forth, and in my message,

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well, you like Jack Dawson,

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I love Titanic. I it was, it was the Titanic was the thing of the moment. Back then, together

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13 times or something, oh, 27 times.

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I saw that in the theater anyways. And so in my mess, in my voice message, I said, just say that I'm Jack Dawson looking for my rose. And if you get that, then leave a message personally.

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Yes, leave me a message. I remember it.

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Yeah, so and then

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and tell the rest of the story, and then there's one girl you can make it still appropriate.

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This one girl left a message. No, there were several telling me off, yeah, telling me off at how awful inappropriate I was. And get off this thing, because I guess the way my voice is, and when he recorded it for some people, it didn't sound like I said, my name is Jack Dawson. They thought I said, my name is Jack doff.

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Luckily, you didn't. This guy's a real keeper in here that way, or we wouldn't be right now, probably Yeah. And I wonder if that lady is out there listening right now, probably not. Because, guess what, I won and you lost. You lost. Yeah, okay.

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So the reason Rose is so great is because she's so broken and vulnerable and strong at the same time. One of the, I mean, we meet her and she makes an impression. She's just quiet and she's fitting in what

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everyone's saying. She's supposed to be like, seen as more fragile, right?

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Because then she goes to kill herself on the back of the boat, and then Jack shows up, and the rest is history, right? But she's, she's in a time where she's being told, as a woman, she has to live a certain life. Her mom was putting her in that life. You know, it's like out of society, society, and it's society

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as a whole, kind of at that time, that's what was expected, right? Yep, and she just

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felt, and she just obviously came across like she was in a prison. She's telling you how to get out of it. Yeah, the guy's a Cal's abusive, and there's that scary moment when when he just kind of explodes at her and and you can feel it like she's literally shaking, and but then she finds Jack, and she, you know, she learns that maybe she doesn't have to be this bird in a cage, and she could do what she wants. And obviously everything goes from there. But she's just a really layered character, right? Because she becomes so many she's a different person when she's with Cal, different with her mother, different with the unsinkable, but let's just totally and then different with Jack, right? Let's just be

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real, though, because that's what I think a lot of people in the world are definitely which is a sad thing that that the world has made people think that they can't be the same way that they are

with every single person that they encounter. Yeah, well, I am, I admit it, that I'm not the same person.

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There's certain people in everyone's life that you have to just be a little bit different with, slightly because though they don't like that aspect of you, or they don't have that sense humor, or they just, they don't like whatever their their their religion makes them a little bit. You got to be careful with what you say. Like, you always have to be a little bit different. And so that's how character should be in a movie, right? They should be the same

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with every person, not the not all the way through. I don't know, how can

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you pronounce this next one does Nope.

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I don't, obviously even know who try it. I want you to try it.

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Yeah, there you go. Daenerys Targaryen from who is that in the Game of Thrones? She's the blonde who rides the dragons. She is. She's a controversial character.

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Why is she so controversial?

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Because everyone, because she was, she was supposed to be just this. She's the daughter, she's the daughter of the of the of the rightful king, but her brother's supposed to be the king. So she's just like, you know, off to the side, like women were back then. But she eventually goes through the series and becomes the most powerful person in the whole, you know, kingdoms. But she gets she goes very dark. She She allows what she believes to really drive her. She doesn't make people, you know, she doesn't do what people say. She she goes against the grain. She's She's a rebel, right? But her ambition, she's too she has too much ambition, she has too much power, and she doesn't know how to control it. No one taught her. And so it's a really good especially because there's a television series that goes so far, it's just a really incredible arc to watch her just become stronger and stronger and stronger to the point that it essentially will destroy her, because she is so strong. Anyways, fantastic character. Everyone knows her. You lost me.

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No, everybody doesn't know you knew. No, I did not know who she was. When I said

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she's the blonde girl who rides the dragon.

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Still don't know. I honestly, I know you haven't watched everybody jumped on this huge bandwagon with it, and it's just like, What the heck you guys? What is wrong with everyone in this world to like that show? Because you don't

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like things that can happen and it has dragons.

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No, the wolf is so confusing. When I started watching the first couple episodes, I was like, Okay, next. I'm not interested.

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Thing, yeah, no, no. But that character stands out as well in history, what's the next one? Desiree bag, where's that from? No, but just a second,

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you don't have the person's name here, that's the

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character's name. She doesn't have a name.

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What is her name? There's no friend.

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Refer to her. Never has a name in the whole story.

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That's interesting. Lee bag, I liked that show. Yes, it was not a movie. It was a series. It was really well done. It is

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and the reason it was well done is because, because we hadn't really seen a character that was character that was so brutally honest, like, that's like, you right? Just like she will not. There's no filter. Says whatever she thinks. And, you know, it's it was just so raw. And she was just like, she was a hot mess, like she was just, she had so many issues and so many problems. But the reason that she works so well as a character is because of, of giving us an opportunity to look behind the curtain and see that it's okay if you're broken, it's okay if you're messy, you just need to find your way through it, right? And so she's a great example of that. She was also shocking, because she was so, you know, she was so over the top, and so out there and and she owned her sexuality. And it was just unexpected, you know, at the time it came out, and the writing is

brilliant, but her character, it's, you think of her, when I think of her, I just picture her standing somewhere, and they're just like, side eyeing the camera, right? Because she always looked at the camera and talked to the camera, and it was just she had such a personality. So really great character work. Next one, Desiree, Miranda, priestly, do.

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Have no idea The Devil Wears Prada. There's a new Devil Wears Prada. Two coming out. Yes. Oh, you want to want to know how I know? How do you know? Well, number one, I saw preview, duh. Number two, they have a limited time drink at the theater. Devil Wears Prada, which is cherry and lime or something interesting, which I'm like, cherry and lime, barf. Anyway, that's how I know those two things.

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You guys. Good. So Miranda, priestly, she, I mean, she, which one is she? She's Meryl Streep's character. She's the devil. She's just so ruthless, right? If she doesn't care, she's mean, she's hateful, but she's not. She just has to be present. She processes to present herself that way, because if she doesn't, it's a world that will just rip her off of that pedestal and a man will take over, right? She has to be she has to be that way, because that's the only way that she knows she can survive. And so she's ruthless. She's iconic, but inside, you can see that she is also scared that everything can be taken

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away at any moment. But I don't see her as being kind

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in any way. She's not kind in any

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way, right? Even once the once the doors are closed in her own space, I think she's still real be.

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She is to, but she's, she's not to Stanley Tucci character, right? The guy, the her assistant, he she, he gets the real her and the real her is very much different. But it's because, I mean, she becomes this iconic character, because she is so mean, right? Like she's so mean, she's so awful the way she delivers things, that's why you remember her. So there's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with that. Maybe a character that people love to hate, that's, that's part of what a villain needs to be, right? So, yeah, and then next one, another villain, Ursula. Oh, that's right. Hey, that's really good. Yeah. I mean, Ursula is the ultimate villain. She doesn't she refuses to, to get over how scorned she is. Why was she scorned again?

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I don't remember, for some reason. I know it's Little Mermaid, yeah, I

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don't remember exactly. She was banished to the to the bottom of the sea, and she had to just, kind of, like, live there alone, without anybody but her little eels. She's just, she's angry at the world, and she wants what she didn't have. And, you know, she will stop at nothing, right? She's just pure, like, there's no goodness in her at all. There's not an ounce of goodness in there. You feel bad for her a little bit because of, you know, she has to just try so hard to be seen, but she's just, she's so she's just a great evil character. She makes an impact. Next one, Phoebe buffet. Who's Phoebe buffet friends, right?

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The only way I know is because I didn't know Phoebe's last name was buffet. Oh, but Phoebe?

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Phoebe, yeah, smelly cat. Smelly cat.

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I keep looking at our smelly cat here, and she Why is she so so adorable, but she's so grouchy.

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Why is the grouchy Shola she's just giving us? Like, why are you in my space? I know she's

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evil eyeing right now. Yeah, smelly cat. Smelly cat. What are they

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feeding you? Yes. So she stands up because she's so stupid. That's kind of like her thing, right? She saw her, but that's, that's how she has feelings framed, that she's just No, I think she's just simple. She's simple. She's incredibly smart, but she's very stupid in how she moves through the world. She's simple, she's silly. She says things she doesn't seem to understand what she says half the time and what it comes across as. But a character like that is all about delivery. And if you have a female character in your stories, that's going to be simple, very blonde, you know, quote, unquote, blonde, you have to make sure that there's more to her than just the dumb blonde character, right? That she has a lot going on, that she can, you know, create a lot of different things, and, you know, be a good friend and all these things so and be creative and so funny, care, funny female characters really do stand out. And so, you know, every character in that show has very specific personality, but she really, without her in that, in that show, it would not have been as funny, right? The guy characters, they are all set up to be hilarious, right? The female characters, Jennifer Anderson's character, wasn't that no more serious, wasn't? I mean, she was kind of, you know, silly but, but without Phoebe, it wouldn't have been as funny to balance things out, but she had to bring more to it as well.

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Okay, yeah, makes sense.

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One of my favorite animated characters of all time is Mulan. I love Mulan, the movie,

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you know, looking at Mulan now, in this day and age, it kind of is seen as almost transgender, wow.

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I mean, yeah, like, and that's the thing, is, these days someone puts on a movie where that wouldn't have been allowed. I'm saying these days again, it wouldn't happen now.

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No, it's question. People are so tight about these things, they would be like, well, she shouldn't be dressing like a man, like she's not a man, whereas, back in that time, like it was just a simple it was a simple concept that she has to go and fight, right? Yeah, she wants

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to represent her family, because her father, if she doesn't go, her father will have to go and he will die and only decide. Can go so she Yeah,

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simple people, really. People really ruin things like that,

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yeah, in this Dani movies like, I know, right? I know, yeah, Milan, so great, because she won't let men tell her who she can become and what honor means.

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You wrote, you wrote here, what, who are, H, O, R, right, yeah, make

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sure you do the spelling right, because that wouldn't have sounded good. I'm talking about women. And yeah, right. You wrote who are here? The N, in honor, okay,

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the N, yeah. So she, H, O, R, R, who are means, yeah. But she changes everyone.

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She changes everyone's perspective. And that's a great kind of a story. Changes herself too, changes herself and her family and views and all that kind of stuff, and how women are measured. But the whole idea of it is that women, in movies, in any movie, they should have an opportunity to prove to whoever else is seeing them in a negative way that that they need to flip it right, that they need to then see that they're not just, she's not just a woman, she's a person, she's a human. That's, that's the key. That's all by that story.

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Women shouldn't have to fight for what they do fight nowadays. Still have they get a bad rap with things like, they get the bad end of the deal with a lot of things, yeah, and that's the thing.

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A lot of times you'll like, I don't know. I don't know. I'm not in all the rooms. But it's like, oh, yeah, okay. Well, we don't what we don't need to see. You know, no one wants to see a movie about a woman trying to fight for her place and stuff. And it's like, well, we don't need to see that anymore. Well, yeah, we do because they still have to. It's still happening. Just like, if every other diversity angle, right? If someone is still having to fight for their place in this world, then their stories still need to be told, right? And so, yeah, it's, it's, it's an important, it's important. One, next 111, do you know who 11 is? Never mind,

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11 is from the what's it called Show, yes, Stranger Things.

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Yeah, she's a great character because, just because of how she's written, how she's act, she's just so great. But the whole idea is she's loyal beyond fault, right? Once she learns what it means to be a friend, that's everything, because she grew up in that situation where she didn't know what that was. So she's very selfless, she's sacrificial, but she's also incredibly fragile, and she's lost, and she doesn't know kind of how to feel and how to deal with emotions. And so she is so layered. And the best part of that story where all those seasons is she never forgets that. The writer never forgets it. The writers, she never forgets it. It's a great example of a really strong character who is also also very fragile. And could, could, could go either way at any moment. And that's it's those layers that every character is supposed to have, but, but, yeah, very iconic role.

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Yeah, I can't speak on that because I don't watch 95% of these I do not like, nor would I ever watch them. So thank you for compiling lists where I really don't know very much. Okay, yeah, you're welcome.

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It's part of what I try to do

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for you. This other one here, too sounds familiar because I've heard about her name enough times that I want to barf, which is what Stark tells me that's that stupid one.

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Aria Stark from Game of Thrones. Yeah, barf, Game of Thrones are great because every every every female character in that story has has depth and layers, and they

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they all stand out. That's the one that doesn't make any sense to me. I never understood it.

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You just talked about that.

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I know. So why are we talking about it again?

28:32

It's a great story to showcase how, how female characters should be written. So great example. We're gonna move down this list, because I didn't realize how many I have, and just go on and on and on. But let's pop down to Annie Wilkes. You know that one Desiree? No, you don't. It's Kathy Bates, character in misery, where the author crashes and she brings him in and and did I watch this one? I don't know. Maybe years ago, she brings him in, and then she ends up torturing him and breaking his legs to stay in her bed so he can finish writing the book that she's been waiting to read. But she is so crazy, and she's so psychotic. And I mean, Kathy bits won an Oscar per that character, but that character is just so messed up on so many levels. Every new scene, she cracks a little more and a little more. She gets scarier and scarier and creepier and creepier. But that's the thing. Is, there was a time when people were just afraid to write women as villains and some of the greatest villains. When do you think that that changed? I don't even know. I don't know. I can't I can't place it, but I don't know, probably 80s and 90s, right, when they started kind of shifting things and women got a more prominent kind of position in film and television. So what about Vivian ward? You know that name? Yes, I do.

29:57

Vivian. I know from working women, when

29:59

you think of Vivian. Or what stands out to you as as what makes her a character

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to remember, she's had a tough life, but she still wakes up every day and does the best that she can do with the cards that she's been given. And doesn't, she doesn't give up easily, but she's got such a great sense of humor.

30:20

Yeah, she does. She's I think that for me, the word that I think of is just authentic. She is just her authentic self. Yeah, she happens to be a prostitute, but she that doesn't define who she is, right? She's funny, she flosses before bed, she she laughs, she's ridiculous, she's over the top. She doesn't care what people think, and that's why she stands out? Because everyone in the world that she is set into is very proper, very careful, very measured, and she comes in as this. She's just like a firecracker, right? And so that's why you're like, you cannot exactly. You can't help but love this woman, yeah?

30:57

Because like that scene, right? With the horse racing

31:01

match, yeah, yeah,

31:03

in this very nice dress, polka dotted dress, yeah, nice shoes, very proper. And then does the crowd? And everyone's just like, Who the heck is this woman? Exactly. She doesn't belong here.

31:15

Yeah. And then at dinner, and they bring escargot, and she's trying to eat them, and they fly across the room, and she's like, Slippery little suckers, like most people in that world would be, like, so embarrassed, and like, oh my gosh, and she just made a joke of it, and that's why everyone just can't get an authentic, yeah, authentic. So make your character authentic. And the best way to make a character authentic is to know their story before the movie starts, right, not meaning that that has to fill the movie, but know the movie or so know their story before the movie starts, and give them layers beyond just just the job they're in or just the life that they're living in the moment. So that's important. What about Elle Woods? Does that sound familiar to you? Princess Diaries? No, Legally Blonde,

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who's the one from Princess Diaries.

32:02

Anne Hathaway, yeah, I don't know her character name, though. Sorry. So where's this one? Al woods from, from Legally Blonde, the lawyer. She's like, wears pink all the time.

32:12

I don't know why you remember all this, Scott, and it sometimes is frustrating because you can't remember, like, important things, and then this kind of stuff, it does. It does get a little angry. I will see why that you remember things like, Oh, the clothes that this person wore when it's like, you don't even remember to put on underwear. Oh, please, that's a stretch. Well, do you know what I'm saying? Though, yes, but I

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see it's Velma got a visual brain. Do you see blonde and she's dressed when there's things

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you need to get done that in a day, maybe start visualizing them. I will

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that make you happy. So Elle Woods is a character. She's just everyone underestimates her, and she's, you know? She again like Phoebe, right? She comes across as very simple, not the smartest. She wears pink all the time, carries her little dog around in her purse, but she wants to go, I believe it's Harvard, to be a lawyer, and she and everyone discounts her because of what she looks like, what she dresses like, how she talks. And so she just pushes boundaries, right? She's smart. She's underestimated. When you when you have an underdog in a comedy, it's always going to be setting up a situation that that's, you know, ripe for opportunity for creating laughter. What about Regina George? Asha always talks about this her daughter, because you watched a movie with her that was probably a little inappropriate for her age back then, which was called, oh, it was with the singers, right? No, Mean Girls.

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Didn't they sing?

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No, they were just bullies. See, guys, this is not a good thing thinking of Mamma mia, because the girls was in

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that I'm thinking of the girls in high school that ended up joining a band, and then they were singing

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Josie and the Pussycats.

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No, Scott, not that

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I don't know. Then. Anyways, anyways. Regina George, I let out.

34:05

She bothered me about that for years. Oh, that's really appropriate, mom. I can't wait to took me to that movie.

34:11

Yeah, because she checked the weather by squeezing her boob or something. I don't know. Who knows. Anyways. Regina George, she's the, she's the social villain perfection, because everyone, everyone who's went to high school knows when knows a Regina George there was that high school. I don't know why mean girls become Mean Girls, but the mean moms probably the reason that a role like that is memorable and stands out to everyone's because we all experience someone like that. So don't be afraid to take a female character and make her an awful person, just like you would a man, right? Doesn't it like don't let that define it. Women and

men can both be awful human beings, right? But then try to allow us to understand it, to understand why they are that way. What? What is effective about it? What about. About Belle.

35:02

Belle is from my favorite cartoon that I cannot think of. The name of, see,

35:08

this is what beauty and and Scott beast, thanks. Wow, that was nice. But, yeah, Belle, I mean, she's a great character because she she gets stuck in this situation, and she's like, the only person who would be built to see this beast for who He was. And she just, all she cares about is her father, and she's sacrificial and, you know, but yet, she she's set up that the world, she's just the world is open for her, and she sees everything in a beautiful way, and she just doesn't want to just go through life and just be the same person. So she's She's kind, she's curious, she's independent. Worst possible person to lock up in a giant house and think everything will just be fine, and she'll stay there, and she changes everyone around her. So great, great example of a character who does it, doesn't just that. So her she is a character doesn't change necessarily over the course of the story, right? She kind of is who she is at the beginning, and issue is she is at the end, but she is an agent of change. She changes every single person around, though, in every character, everything. So it's great when a character can do that, especially a woman, because women are just more layered than men. It's just, it's just true. They have so many more layering, more dimensions, more thought.

36:22

Not to say that men aren't nurturing, but women tend to be more nurturing.

36:26

Well, just women tend to be better at everything about living. Is true, though, like women, women are just so much better as as layered people overall, saying everyone, but it's just part of who women are. They're complex, right? They have a lot more complexity. Like, it's those memes where you're like, the woman's laying in bed with her husband, and he's off, staring off, and she's like, Oh, I wonder what she's probably thinking about girls. He's probably thinking about that woman than we saw today at the cafe. And then they show the bubble in his head, and he's like, Man, I miss my Hot Wheels when I was a kid and the tracks that I would do, yeah, simple on a Hindus car, yeah? Like, just, you know what I mean? Like, that's what makes me think of like, not that men are all like that, but it's just, yeah, don't forget to make your female characters as complicated. And because that, to me, from what I see when I read things, is that that is forgotten. Not like most female characters that are in stories are just not layered enough. They're just there. They're just moving through the story to to be there, to make the man story happen, which is not how it should be so. And then my absolute, I think one of the greatest female characters, probably the greatest female character ever written, ever ever, is ever, ever, ever, ever. June Osborne, who's that Desiree? May the Lord open under his eye. Yeah, ham, his tail. I always say, like, I was just like we said that early on in the podcast, man, if we could get Elizabeth Moss on this podcast. Love talking. I know because she's so good. Like, June is a character like holy like, can you put a character through more than you could put June through?

It's ridiculous. How much she faces every single day, how much she goes through, how much, how just broken and beaten and abused she is, and she doesn't give up. She is the ultimate Rebel, and like she was, she never even had to speak in that, in

38:14

that show, it's all the looks and her eyes,

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like she's so emotional, like it's just unbelievable, but like, you just want to see what she's going to do next. You want to you're on her side. You want her to get through even when she goes dark and she's like, Well, I'm just going to kill someone. Now, you're just like, Yeah, girl, get it, you know, like, do it. I don't care. Like, you've been through enough, but you can see at the same time, she's just so broken by it. Yeah, it's

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just but her values and morals. She still maintains her, maintains who she is throughout the whole thing

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she does but, but it's she also embraces that carnal being that we all are inside, where it's like, if we are threatened, if someone we love is threatened, if someone we something we care about, is threatened, we will attack, right? It's just, it's more animals, right? But, yeah, like the top and then, and then you have the like, you have her, and you hope for her, and you're just like, she's so kind. And you just, she's a good person. She's trying to help so many other people and save these kids and save these other women. And then you have aunt Lydia on the other side of that, and she is the most one, probably one of the one of the character, I don't think they hated as much in a TV series as aunt Lydia, just how awful she is. And then she tried. She has these moments where she's, you think she's kind. You're like, wait, I know she's not. There's something good in there. And then she'll zap someone with a cow prod after, like, No, never mind. She's off.

39:34

The crazy part is that she was a teacher and you thought she had good in her like, when you saw the flash story, yeah, you're like, Oh, wow. She took this kid in or whatever,

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and then she found love with someone. And then the guy's like, No, I don't like you. Like that somehow. And then that was it. She's like, that's it. I'm done. I had my one. I gave one more shot to men being good, and then they weren't good. And then she's like, that's it. And then that was it. She was done. But. I mean, such a and that's a great that's just overall screenwriting tip. Have that contrast between your protagonist and your antagonist. There should be an incredible contrast there. That's what fuels drama. That's what fuels conflict and tension, all that kind of stuff. But yeah, June Osborne, like study that character. If you haven't watched Handmaid's Tale, some people it's gonna be hard to watch. Some people probably can't. There's a lot of

triggers in there, for sure. You sure, but if you can, if you're able to watch that and just study June, every episode, you just see such depth. You feel her fear. You feel her hope. It's so crazy, how well of a job they do with her and Elizabeth Moss. Just like I couldn't imagine June being anyone else. No, June couldn't be anyone else wouldn't be the same. Anyways, fantastic, fantastic character. So that's just a handful. I mean, I have so many more on my list, but I just got crazy because I just started thinking of all the awesome characters. But the important thing to take away from if you look at all of those, is that every one of those characters has a lot going on. There's they showcase their different dimensions and layers. They're strong, but they're also fragile. They're a rebel, but they also are afraid to fight that system. They all have something to lose. They all have something to gain. They're just overall great characters. It doesn't matter that they're female. You look at all the attributes of each of those characters, has nothing to do with whether or not they're a woman or not, right? Those attributes so they speak to why. Maybe those have happened to them, or they've had to, you know, have those pieces of themselves because of how they grew up in the world as a woman, right? Like any other character, somebody like, oh, but shapes you, you know, it's like, oh, I can't, you know, sometimes I'll say, oh, there's, there's too many men in this story. Make like, oh, I don't want to add new characters. Okay, well, make one of your characters. I want characters a woman, then you got these two detectives, and make one of the detectives a woman, and then they're like, No, that doesn't make sense though. I'm like, well, that doesn't make sense to you, because that's all you're seeing. But just like, try it and see what happens. Like this is because, like, all those characteristics can still be there for that man if it becomes a woman, they may go about it differently. But doesn't mean you have to remove all of the layers and the issues and the whatever the things that they're how they see the world, right? You just have to see them as people. And if you do that, then your character is going to become that character, not that man or that woman, that character. So those are some things to think about. Those are some things to digest. Think about that while we pop out for a second tell you about one of our services,

42:28

feel like you've taken your script as far as you can on your own. We know how frustrating it can be sometimes to get the great ideas that are in your head properly on the page. But imagine having a professional screenwriter jump in and rewrite it for you to create a market ready script. Send us your script for a rewrite proposal, and the pro of your choice will write up a page or so of notes on exactly how they'd approach a rewrite. Head on over to www.scriptreaderpro.com/rewrite and use the code rewrite 15 during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

43:10

Thank you so much for still sticking with us after Scott rambled his face off for the last half an hour or so. Yeah, you're welcome. Yep, we hope that you guys got something good out of hearing about female characters in general, and what makes them memorable, I guess in any script, right? Yeah, and

43:30

I'm sorry that I'm a man trying to tell people about how to write a woman, but I just I write characters as characters, and I just wanted to point out some of those things.

43:38

So, okay, so we've come in this part of our episode where we do the questions and answers from Scott. Well, you try to ask me to answer but it never goes well, okay, I'll answer them. How about that? The questions come from listeners like you. And I want to remind everyone you can submit your questions to hello@scriptreaderpro.com First question, yes, comes from Paul from Chicago, Chicago. Why do my characters feel flat, even when their backstories are detailed?

44:12

Ooh, that's a tough one. Hmm, usually when a character feels flat, it's because they, they're, they're kind of like one beat, right? That they just kind of like act the same in the same predictable way, and they just kind of stay in their lane and go through the motions. That's for me, that's what it is. It's going through the motion.

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So even if the backstory is good, yeah, it

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doesn't matter how great your backstory is. Is for your characters, isn't surprising us, is doll? Yeah? Is it doll? Or isn't being challenged, or doesn't have, isn't trying to overcome their flaw, or it's just everything's too easy on them. There's a lot of different reasons why that might be, but one thing you can do is kind of look at it and say, okay, just track that character and see if they are going through the motions, or if they are doing things that challenge them. If they are, you know, like if someone is a backstory, but it never comes out, right? It doesn't matter how detailed it is, if it doesn't come to the surface, if, if the issues that made them who they are don't create drama and tension and conflict, and, you know, get, they get in their own way, or they, you know, they say the wrong thing, and the world explodes. Your character is just going to feel like they're just moving along. And you don't want to have them moving along. A movie is supposed to be the single most important snapshot of that character's life in their entire life. If it doesn't feel like this, like this story has to happen to this character, or there's no point in them even living their life anymore, right? There has to be something there. So, yeah, have a detailed backstory. Understand who they are, but you have to put it into action. You have to have that backstory cause them to react in ways that create drama and surprise and, you know, just break things apart. So it's all about that setup and payoff, right? And set up the greatest backstory in the world. But if it's not paying off in ways that surprise your audience, it's just not going to be as effective. Good answer. I hope that makes sense.

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Next question comes from Jesse from Kansas City, Missouri,

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Missouri, Missouri. No, Missouri, depending if you're from Missouri or Missouri,

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all I know is it's mo How do I write chemistry between characters without relying on cliches?

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Oh, that's an interesting one. Yeah, chemistry is a really tricky thing, where, especially if it's in like, it could be like, even if it's like a cop movie, right? You have to feel chemistry between your two detectives that are working together, for example, right? Because if you don't, you're just like, I don't know.

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We're not necessarily talking good

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chemistry either, no. But something that, like, yeah, like, something that just makes it interesting and interesting. So we've

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talked about lots of times and the chemistry between the guy who got sent into the basement to work. Remember, we've talked about department Q,

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oh, department Q, yeah, yeah, yeah, the cat, yeah, there was chemistry, but it was, it was bad. It was bad chemistry. There can be bad

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chemistry and good chemistry, but they worked so

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well off each other, yeah? Or, like, especially in any kind of story that has a romance, you have to feel a chemistry between the two characters and cliches are there, because there's a big difference between a cliché and a trope, right? A trope is something we just expect to happen in a certain movie. A cliché is something that's been done so many times that it's boring, right? And so try not to be boring, try to try to try to change things up. And a lot of times the chemistry will come from a character being incredibly original, right? The more original a character is, the more new something feels, right? You can still like, we watched that movie. We had the writer, we talked to Aaron about it, the maintenance required, right? It was kind of like it was a You've Got Mail kind of thing. Oh, here's this character who's running their own business. Now, this big business is going to come in, and they're going to make an impact, and this business will close, and the man and the woman, they'll meet each other and, right? But it was done in such surprising ways. The characters were unique. They had different interests, that it was a different kind of situation. It was the same old thing. It was the same Oh, it's two characters chatting online. They don't know who each other are. They actually know each other in person like that's a cliché, right? But it's done in a way that's original and unique in a different setting, with

different circumstances and right? You just have to, if you're doing, if you're going to have a cliché, just give us something we've never seen before, give us a character who is new and unexpected. Flip it around a little bit. That's how you do that, because then, if you have that, you allow your characters to uncover things about each other that are interesting, and the more interesting we think they are, the more the more interested we are in them. Yeah, and then that's where the chemistry comes from. So there's nothing wrong with using a cliché. Just don't have it be like every other time we've seen it. Well, it's more

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the audience is more interested as well. Right? Exactly. Okay, question from Paulina from Cape Town, what does a professional level rewrite process actually look like?

48:49

Oh, that's a good question. That's a really good question. Professional level rewrite essentially means you have to do it, whether you want to or not. That's the big difference. If someone gives you notes on your script and says, Yeah, you should probably rewrite this. All these things are wrong. You don't have to. You should probably try, just to give it a try. Well, if

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someone's suggesting it right, but you

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don't have to do it, the only person it's going to hurt is or you. Maybe it won't hurt you, right? But a professional level rewrite means that you are expected to do this. This producer has notes. This director has notes. This actor has notes. They want this change. They want this to happen. You have to do it. You have to do it in your way of doing it. But that's the big difference, and that's what you want to try and push yourself to do. If you're going to go in and do a rewrite, don't just go and change some things. Don't just go and play with it. Don't go and read through it and read through it and like, oh my gosh, I'm such a good writer, and fall in love with it. And don't, don't do anything. Pretend someone told you you have to, and you have until this date to get this handed in, and it has to be perfect, and if it isn't, doesn't address all these things that we think need to be addressed. Fire and get someone else to do it. We'll get someone else. That's the difference. It's, it's like, there's risk there. And so put that pressure on yourself and see what it does to your rewrite process. Tell yourself you have, like, a lot of times you get notes like, I'll work with writers. Be like, yeah, these are the things that I think you need to do. These are the areas that you should probably work on. And then it'll be like, Oh no, because I did this for this and this and this, right? And it's like, Okay, fine. Well, what if I, what if I'm a producer, and I'm saying this doesn't work, you need to fix it, because if you don't fix it, I don't care anymore, right?

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And then you're going to fix it. So do it.

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Tell yourself that that's the difference, so that that'll help you understand what it actually is like. So that's what. That's a great,

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great way to try it. Okay, good idea. Question number four, why do some mediocre scripts sell while better ones don't? And that comes from Sandy from New Zealand.

50:48

Yeah, no one knows really, either draw really. It is so many factors. It could be that the concept is just the concept is amazing, and they instantly, instantly see dollar signs, but the script just doesn't execute it well. Well, they'll buy the script because they know they're going to make that movie, and then it's just going to go through rewrites and they'll find the right writer if the original doesn't work, that's part of it. You know, if they see a really great piece of IP that's built in and connected, they'll be like, well, there's an audience. Let's just do it. Let not and that's the thing is, not every great script makes a great movie. That's the big deal.

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Could be so many factors. There's so many factors, because it could be the producer like it could be a beautiful movie, but then depending on who comes on board, they could make it

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not great too. Exactly. You bring in the wrong person on and it just falls apart, right? But, I mean, it really is what you said there about how everything, just everything, has to line up in the right way, right? It doesn't mean that that script is the best script ever written, but it had good marketing. It had a good rep behind it. It made an impact. It's touching on the zeitgeist of the moment, whatever it might be, right? It just happened. So that's why you like, I would say you Bart, Baker, screenwriter, great guy. That's the best piece of advice he ever gave me. All you can control is what you put on the page. You can't control any of the other stuff. You can't I mean, if you never try and market it, then yeah, you can control that, but you can't control whether someone's gonna buy your script or like your script even all you can control is doing the best you possibly can on that page. So, right? So, yeah, go and write. Knows why something does and why something doesn't, but all you can

52:27

do is write good, right? Do your best at the end of the day. Great, right? Heart, that's the end. That is it. We are done. I want to remind everybody to subscribe

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