

Ep #79: Originality Within the Familiar

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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.

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Hi, everybody. This is Desiree, and this is the Script Reader Pro podcast. I am your host. That's cheesy. Why is that cheesy? Because I'm sure that they don't want to see us holding hands. But we're married. Why can't we hold hands? It's kind of weird and cheesy. Okay, fine.

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Do you guys hope it's cheesy? You can be the host. I'll be the guest.

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I think it'll be a very exciting episode today because you have me, yourself, and I.

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That's original. I

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actually don't remember the movie.

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Are you serious?

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No.

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Okay. So, but there's

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me, myself, and I read.

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Yes, that's not the movie we were talking about. But I am Scott. I'm one of our team here at Script Reader Pro. One of the mentors, writers, all that kind of stuff. One of our reading team, so that's where that's where I come from. Desiree

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is

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awesome. Yes, and she is our hostess, like the mostess.

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Haven't heard that one before, guys. Have we? If

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you're new here, this is a podcast where don't do my fake laugh. Well, it's a fake laugh. This is a this is a podcast where we talk about screenwriting inside tips from someone who's been on different sides of the the business and you know getting feedback as reader as a writer and how to say and write because I noticed watching some of our podcasts back I say write like 500 times and it's okay so. unless you want to make it a drinking game where you just say right, you take a drink after every time I say

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right. Stop saying right. You get the the right from your sister because Carrie does on all the drinks.

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Right, yeah. And then remember that guy you sang with.

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Yeah, saying that

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after every sentence. Thank you, guys,

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for joining us once again.

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Yes, we

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are now episode 79.

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Yes, 79, and we are talking today about originality

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and what it's what what to make. I guess what or how to make it original with what's already there.

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Yeah, it's hard to find completely unique ideas, but there's nothing wrong with taking something you've seen but giving your own take on it because that's what Hollywood wants. They don't want original stuff anymore. They want something that that already has a built-in audience. So they don't want original stuff. No, no. Look at all the movies that they're remake. They're all remakes or sequels. That's really all that we get these days in the theater. I'm very

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confused by that one thing. They don't want originality.

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They don't. Well, they don't want that. No, they want originality. They want originality in writers, but they don't want a completely like like original movie with nothing behind it. No, no, not adapted from a book, not a remade, not a sequel. Like, hey, I just wrote an original script, make it. You hardly see original movies anymore.

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Was the movie that we're talking about to be original?

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Yes, but it's also kind of you've got mail type of story,

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but you are contradicting yourself.

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No, that's why I'm pointing this out because, and this is Netflix. Netflix is different. Netflix, Prime, Apple-they're doing original stuff. Movie theaters, not so much. But it's a both

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original to the like. It's original to the viewer. You're getting very confusing.

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How come? I don't understand. Like, if so, there's there's an original idea,

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yeah,

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right. Which means no one, there's nothing about it that any has ever been done.

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I love stuff like that,

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right? Everybody does. But

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you said they're not making up. But

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Hollywood, okay. So producers, executives, they don't want to risk their reputations, their jobs, their future on an original idea if it tanks. So if you're going to go to bat for a script that has nothing attached to it, it's completely original. The writer's never done anything, and you want to bring that to your bosses and say, "Hey, let's get 50 or 30 or \$20 million here. Let's risk that on this script. I'll put my name on it. That's very scary for people. So, if you're going to strike with your originality, sometimes it's about taking something like a formula or some kind of, you know, like taking a movie into swapping genders, for example, right? So that's kind of what we're going to talk about today: how to breathe originality into something that's kind of already been done.

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Okay,

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does that make more sense?

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Yeah, but I don't think you should use the word original, like originality or original, because it's like, but you want to see original. You want people to be excited to see something original. I that's my favorite type is original movies. I know. So you're saying that they don't want original movies, so don't do that.

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No, that's not what I'm saying. I'm saying you have to make yourself stand out as original and unique. But if you can somehow take something that's been done and give your original take on it, it has a much better, you know, option for success because people are willing to go to bat for something that they can say, oh yes, but the audience that watched this movie, we can kind of pitch it like that. They're gonna go to this.

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That makes more sense. Okay.

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All right. Sorry if I'm confusing. I just assume that people understood that. What writing in the writing world, most people in the movie business, to do business, people who are writers, they understand the idea of how scary original products are for producers. Anyways, we usually start an episode by talking about something we've seen recently, and we watched this movie. Are we

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are we talking about this movie today? Yeah, this is the one

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we're actually talking about, the one we saw. So the one is

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original of you.

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No, remember when we watched it? I said I have to do a whole podcast on this because it is so original. So voicemails for Isabel is the name of the movie. It's on Netflix. It it's the familiar kind of story of like miscommunication. You know, the girl and boy, man and woman, they kind of like they fall in love, but one of them has a secret. There's not everything is told that's going on, and then that secret eventually comes out, right? That's a classic Ron Paul formula. We've seen it in You've Got Male, which is also that that maintenance required movie that we talked about.

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Yeah, we it was based interviewed,

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yeah, Aaron Faulconer, and and that was a you've got mail kind of situation. This one was as well, right? Because the one person knows something about the other, gets involved with them, starts to fall for them, doesn't want to tell them the truth because they know it'll ruin everything. So that's the familiar thing that an audience looks for in a movie, just like Hallmark movies, there's a formula people like those movies. So you go and you think, how can I do this in the most original way?

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Right.

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That's what we're talking about.

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Right.

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Right. And that's that's what everything about this movie. So what we're going to do today, yeah, is we're going to go through a number of things that that stood out in the movie as this is the original way they did it, just to kind of like help people understand how you can take something that that's considered a trope, or

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something in my language, something existing, yeah, an existing film,

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yeah, or or an existing trope, meaning like the cute meat or the meat cute, right? There's always going to be this cute, fun way of the two characters meeting each other in a raw. So you're

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taking something existing, flipping it around to make it unique in your own way.

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Exactly.

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That's how that started.

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Say that again, Desiree. Okay. Well, anyways, we're going to go through a number of these things. So if you haven't seen this movie,

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that's what I was going to say. If you haven't seen this movie, and you want to see this movie? Maybe watch and listen to this.

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Pause it.

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Yeah,

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go watch the movie. Come back and continue because there's going to be. And thank

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you for joining us.

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There's going to be spoilers in this, so we want to make sure that time. I want to make sure that you're doing it. That you're you're looking to do things. So Desiree,

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look down at the bottom of your screen, it says "spoiler alert. Spoiler alert! Spoiler alert!

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But it's such a great movie. We were crying and laughing and you know sad after, but happy and

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whatever. You were on fire in this relationship.

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Yeah, I was. I did. And then we wanted, like, because you and I both have issues with our siblings, right? Yeah. And this movie was about the love of two siblings, yeah, connection. So that that was made it a lot more personal for us. That was hard to kind of see through that to the movie, but um, but it was just it was just so so so so good. So I highly recommend it. One of the best movies. I said that's one of the best movies I think I've seen in a couple of years.

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Yeah, it was just really really good.

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So we're kind of gonna go through these things. How many do I got? I have 12 different things that I wanted to point out.

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12 too many.

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So Desiree's going to read what the what the specific thing is, the trope, or or how it does the trope differently, and I'll just kind of explain it a little bit more and and point out some of the details, and then Desiree will pop in with anything she wants to share. If

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I had access to my phone right now, I'd be looking up the definition of trope.

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Okay, so I can tell you what that is if you want to ask me.

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Well, is your answer going to be long drawn out, confusing, doesn't make sense, and makes me fall asleep by the end?

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No, it's going to be simple. So a trope.

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What does a trope mean? It

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a trope is something that happens in a certain genre of movie or TV that always happens. So in a horror movie, when they hear something and they go and look for it, what do they not do? They do not turn the lights on. No, they always leave the lights on. They

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always they never look around where they are. They just go and they start going out without fully looking. I don't think.

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Yeah. So that's a trope. A trope would be every horror movie the people go looking for what they become

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elected in a genre.

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Exactly.

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That would have been an answer. Well,

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that's why you are here to make it simple for people.

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Might I suggest that you go on to the [www](http://www.theworldwideweb.com).

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theworldwideweb.com

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and tell us what trophy is. And once you find out if my answer is better, which I know you will.

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It's the things we expect to do. Simple six words.

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Okay. Anyway, so yes, that's what we're talking about. So you have here originality isn't necessarily creating something nobody has seen before, but rather I added those words. Yeah, it's creating a brand new take.

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Right, so a really easy way to understand that is look at Oceans Eight,

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if you remember.

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So Oceans 1112, 13 was about the crew of thieves robbing stuff, right? All the guys, Brad Pitt, everybody, right?

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You had me at Brad Pitt,

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right? Oceans Eight was all winning, so that was the thing. It's like here's let's go right. I remember

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this now. Yeah,

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and make all the thieves women. That's the idea of taking something familiar that we've seen and giving it a new take. That's an example. Okay. Okay. Yeah.

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So number one, we have 12 things, like we said. So number one, and I want to mention as well that these will be listed in the show notes.

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They will,

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so that you'll have now to reference that, write your own notes. So here you have that the movie opens with a love story, but the love story isn't romantic,

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right? So that

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makes it unique.

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It does because a lot of romantic comedies they open with the guy and the girl.

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Yes, and I can tell you the love story. Remember, if you don't want to know about the movie, hit pause now, and come back. But it's a love story between her and her sister.

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Yeah, exactly. And just the premise of the movie. If you're not going to go watch the movie because you don't want to, and you're just going to listen podcast

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because you're lame.

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It's about these two sisters. They they grow up, and and one has cystic fibrosis. No.

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Yes. Is

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it cystic fibrosis?

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I believe so. So yeah, yes,

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yeah, yeah. And anyway, she passes away, and her sister is having a hard time with it because they were so close. So she calls her old number and leaves voicemails for her sister as part of her healing process. But what she doesn't know is that the phone company gave her number to someone else, and that guy is getting these voicemails, and he's just really enjoying them. And and that's that's the premise of the movie.

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That's the premise. Okay.

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And speaking of that, that really screwed me out because if she called her voicemail, would there not be a new recording of the guy's voice at his voicemail, or you know, like did her sister not have a greeting? I

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don't think she did. I think it was just please leave a message after the tone.

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They never they never gave us that. They don't. I was always that part. That is

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not information unique necessarily.

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But I, but me, I did because I was like, "Well, this is kind of dumb because why wouldn't you have recorded? Because

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then the whole movie would have been made no sense.

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No, but I did when the movie. I did no matter sitting there and thinking that. That's why I brought it up. Well, anyway,

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brain is screwed.

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Moving beyond that, that yes, it this is a love story. It's a love story. It still is a romantic love story between a man and a woman, but it starts off with the core of it, which is the romantic relationship, not the two siblings, not the romantic relationship, the relationship.

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Love. Now you say here the lesson out of that is: what if the central love story of a rong pong isn't actually romance?

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Yeah,

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but a love story about two sisters

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and loss and two

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brothers of a mama and a dad, a

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girl and her horse, whatever it might be, whatever it is,

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and having it be not necessarily romance in the sense that we know romance to be. Yeah,

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yeah, and and like a lot of movies have something going on with the character they're dealing with, but the thing is, with this movie, is it it took so much of the focus, and it was the heart of the movie. If that wasn't there, and the way they did it just wouldn't have been as good. So that's the unexpected twist off the start.

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Okay, so number two, we have it uses an unusual opening mocktache to build an entire relationship. Yep, and I do remember this because we had like how the one sister couldn't leave the house. Essentially, the other was basically going out and living on not only her her story and her life, but on behalf of her sister. She her sister Isabel, the one that was sick, Isabel.

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Yeah, Isabel.

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Isabel was then living vicariously through her sister. Right. This is the my first kiss. This is my dance competition.

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Yeah, and and and it was brilliant how it ended too, because at the end of it, it was New Year's Eve, and they were older now. They were teenagers, and the one girl I can't remember her name, the main character name. Anyway, so she was like, "Oh, I'm going off for two years.

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Interesting. Wait, pause for a second.

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Yeah,

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interesting that you don't remember the main girl's name, and that you remember

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Isabel.

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Yeah,

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yeah. Well, I mean, it's in the title.

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Yeah. Anyway,

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anyways, um, so so she goes off to New Year's, and her sister's all the the the sick one is up on the stairs, and she's like, "Oh, my sister didn't even think of me. She just left. And it's like, "Okay, so that's the movie. This is what the movie's going to be. It's about them disconnecting, something happening, and then a bad argument. Da da da. But it wasn't at just before midnight. She was like, "Oh my gosh, what am I doing here? I'm so stupid. And then she rushes home and jumps on the couch with her sister and family. Yeah. So I was like, "Oh, okay. So it just

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Priority

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amplified who she cared about.

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Yeah, and you knew what this story was. Yeah, and just

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like an op, right? It gives us this backstory montage, and then when it starts, you're like, okay, now I know what this is about.

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So the lesson in that is that a montage can do much more than

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just kind of like compressing, making time.

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Right. Yeah. So you have it can establish. Charactered history, reoccurring behavior, emotional states. Yeah,

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it just kind of sets up because by the end of that thing, you're like, oh my gosh, like she loves her sister so much. They love each other. Yeah, they are everything, right? They're just the best friend. It's so clever because they call each other brother, which was again another spark of originality in the movie. So yeah, so that that that's something to to remember when, if you're trying to write your own thing that has a familiar take,

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you know how people are like, "Oh, that person is my person, or "That person completes me. That's these the essence. They were soulmates.

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They were everything. Yeah.

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Yeah. Okay. So number three, we have the tragedy happens early rather than becoming a third act twist. So the tragedy isn't the big surprise because we find out that Isabel dies, and then when we're as we're watching, we're watching really rooting for Jill. That was her name.

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Okay,

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to see where her life takes her and how she deals with the like the the loss. Yep, and grief. Yes, over the the death of her sister.

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Yeah, and normally it's like some writers will just be like, okay, I'm gonna I'm gonna send you on her journey. She's gonna distance herself from her sister, and then like as she's supposed to be at something, her sister dies, and then that pushes you into the final act. That's kind of like the cliché kind of tropey thing to do. They just do it off the start, and they just hit her with a brick wall, and it's so it just pulls you right in. Yeah. So really interesting way to twist that around. So

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that's the

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lesson there.

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Well, and the least lesson pulls the

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lesson. Yes.

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The lesson is if a story can become emotionally interesting by revealing the like the a

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big secret big secret

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tragedy earlier than you would in your typical,

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yeah, and that's really important for today because audiences, like all the big actors and stuff, are talking about how everything's changed in movies now. You can't just have everything

waiting on the big twists. You have to have twists happening in 510, 15 minutes, or audiences are going to just tune out because most people are watching stuff at home. So important to do things new and different and early. Yeah.

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Okay. So number four we have is that the romantic premise is built around one side communication, which makes sense and it's different. We don't typically see that in movies, right? Yep. And it all starts with her intense personal message for her dad's sister, her message is

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yeah. It's built on her leaving those. That's how we get to know her. That's how we get to know what she's going through. And we, it's that dramatic irony of the audience knows that this guy is getting the voicemails and he doesn't stop it immediately. He starts to listen and he gets intrigued by her. So she's living her life, just going through everything.

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The guy that has the new phone number is Wes is his name.

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Yes,

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and he's the one that's getting all of these voice messages. I and Jill probably is like thinking she's just leading them for.

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She does. It's a complete invasion of her privacy, right? And so, so it's it's interesting because it makes us kind of not like him a bit. We're like, dude, like this is really personal, intimate stuff. You shouldn't be listening to this. Like, stop. It's like a

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diary, or like when you go to counseling or something, and they're like, "I think you should try journaling. It would be like journaling your thoughts, your whole soul, and then having someone read it. Like in high school, like I read your diary, and it was like,

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or it's even like going on a date with someone, and you don't really know them, and you show up, and that person you didn't know just stalked all of your online stuff, your socials, and suddenly they start telling you what they like, and it's all based on what you've said you like, right? Like it's kind of it's kind of dirty, right? And so that makes it a little bit different, and yeah, a little bit muddy. And then that's what's original about it is we're like, well, this guy isn't perfect. He's not that, you know, like he's making mistakes. So the lesson from that one is what is

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that the same storytelling? The way you tell story through your script over and over again, the same storytelling creates comedy, intimacy, suspense for romance, traction, but also an ethical problem.

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Yeah. So as an audience, we get to start to understand why these two are kind of perfect for each other. Why she's going to be just exactly what he means. Yeah, he's going to be what comes into her life and has her move in a different direction. But we know that there is some bad stuff going on. Like I said, like he knows things he shouldn't. So whenever he tells her, it's going to be bad, right? So that that's the different thing. That's the the unique aspect of it. So that's a good tool to use.

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Okay, and so that's good that you mentioned that the whole purpose of this episode of the podcast is finding or looking for those tools that you can use and incorporate in your own. Yeah, right. How

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can you take something that you've you you know was there, and and even if you like if you're if you are doing like a retake on something, like oh, we're going to do a gender swap of this or that. This is these are the kind of things you can no. You don't want to just do it beat for beat the same as it was done. You want to find well what can I do that's actually different but follows the same type of line.

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Right.

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So

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Scott, we have 11, not 12. Because here we have number five.

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Yes. Oh yes, I know. You will

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watch number two. You'll see 11. Okay. So number five.

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This one's important. This is huge. This one

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we have that the male lead arrives unusually late, and when we talk them unusually late, like you're like there's no more characters coming in this story. That's it. They're done, and it's more than 45 minutes, right? More than it was about

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45 minutes into the movie that he did. Then

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he shows up, and you're like, "Whoa, who's this dude?"

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Yeah. First couple times you see him are like, "How does he connect to this in any way? And yeah, then he gets the voicemail. But yeah, they take a long time. That's why it's it's a rom com, but it's more than that. It's different because the lead is usually in the first five or 10 minutes. Yeah. And 45 minutes-that's a long time, but it works. Normally, it doesn't work because you're like, "Well, now I don't have enough time to even get to know this person."

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Yes, and they can't get her.

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But we know so much about her and what she needs in her life and what she wants and how you know that it's just like, "Okay, I can see how he's right for her. So

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yeah, you know what I really like is that even though Isabel dies, we still get to learn more about her.

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Yeah, she's through the whole movie, and so

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they didn't. It's not like they. It was like her sister tearing on her memory in a way. Yeah, Isabel lives on through her sister, and you still get glimpses of who she is, and you know she's not and a clever

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voice. And yeah, yeah, exactly. That was a great, great option.

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So, and the lesson there is a relationship can develop through anticipation, observation, and separate character experiences, rather than constant scenes together. And we learned that with the back and forward, when they hadn't even met, and she was leaving the voicemail, he was receiving the voicemail. Yeah, yeah,

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his own story. He was talking to his friends, and how is he going to do this? What kind of guy he is? How many relationships he's been in? All the things that we need to know that she's going to be able to question or challenge in him, right? So you don't always have to have your two characters together to have your audience falling in love with the idea of them falling in love, and that's what you want to have happening in a romantic comedy,

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or really wanting to root for each of the characters, yeah, before they come together. Is is having that connection already with them.

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Yeah, exactly.

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So the lesson here,

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we already went over the lesson.

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We're good with that. Yeah, Kate,

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you just said that. So number number six would then be the first kiss moment.

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Yeah, it isn't particularly glamorous, and I remember this. Yeah, was the scene on the bus when they were on the tour. Yep, and they were wearing their cheesy shirts. Yeah, and

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cheesy hats,

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yeah. And then he stood up to take over.

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Yeah, and he got kicked off the bus because the guy who was telling the jokes, he was scared, so he ran away. So he picked up the mic to not be a waste of time. Started telling jokes, and the bus driver picked him off. So she said, "Get off! And then they have this little embrace, and but it wasn't like rulemat. It was just kind of a little awkward, even, and normally you just don't see that. It's such a buildup, and then it's like, oh my gosh, that's the most perfect kiss I think I've ever seen. Right? I

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remember our first kiss. I do. I'm so sweet. It was really bad and awkward.

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No, it wasn't.

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Too low.

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You're too low. Yeah, I know. That's what that's what makes this fashion, though, because it wasn't perfect. No, Desiree's in a chair. I was standing up, and I don't know. We were, we were, yeah. You got, you had gotten into bed, and I was just kind of sitting there on the edge of your bed because you just wanted a little more autonomy and and okay. Then you

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came, then you pushed me down, yeah, and kissed me, but you were like way too. And then

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Desiree says, "You're too low. Like, oh, sorry, and I had to kind of shimmy myself.

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Did it all raw,

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yeah. But hey, we're here, so obviously something worked.

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Something worked. That was 2000. No, that was 99.

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Yeah, 19 nine. Long time ago. Wow, just olded ourselves there.

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Did you see what I sent you? That it was like 1980 to 1920.

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to 2026 is as far as 1984 from 1930 or something. I was just like, I was like, why? I just don't see time to say anything. Yeah,

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so weird, you guys. I think it's because we went from 19 to 20 in the process of that.

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Yeah, crazy. That means that

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we are old.

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Yeah. Okay. Oh, so number seven is the romantic lead, right?

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Okay, the romantic male lead isn't always going to be effortlessly perfect.

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Yeah, yeah, and that's the thing we see whether it's the guy or the girl's point of view as the leading character, and the other one's the romantic interest. They're always perfect. They're always like, oh, you know, they're, you know, she's living this perfect life, and she's super rich, and she's all this, and he's like, and he's like, oh, he's mr. Handsome, and everything's good. This is different. This guy's a mess, right? He has money, he has success, he's you know is doing his thing, but he has so many issues that are holding him back from being happy. He makes a lot of mistakes. He's living a mistake by holding this back from her and being kind of a creep. So, but it's kind of endearing because he has friends that really care about him, and he wants to be successful, and he wants to tell her the truth. So it's that even line of we're like, well, he's going to make her a better. She's going to make him a better person,

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right?

24:50

Yeah, yeah. So, so the lesson in that.

24:53

Oh, okay. Lesson means that charming or attractive doesn't always mean that you're trustworthy.

25:00

Yeah, yeah, it and it it doesn't also yeah it doesn't mean that she's just gonna fall in love with you, right? Like you, it's not a given. No, they don't have to be pretty or beautiful or or handsome or like chiseled. Like you'll see a lot of leading men now that are just like not really like me and Asher went and saw the other mommy last night, and the husband, the leading husband. So Jessica Chastain is the is the mom right? Movie star beautiful, and this guy was Jade Deplas, and he's just kind of like, I don't know, like a four, like a five or a six, like they just don't match. But it's like, why do they have to? Why does he have to be the super handsome guy?

25:35

Who says right? They have to.

25:36

Yeah. So you're seeing a lot more of that, but that's also unexpected. You're not. It's not every guy is Matthew McConaughey or Brad Pitt or like, and who

25:43

came up with this system of numbering too?

25:46

I don't know.

25:46

It's stupid, but like, I you're

25:48

a 10 and I'm like a four, so I'm huge.

25:52

Good, right? I'm glad you said 10. Yeah, but what I'm thinking like about, and I'm bad for this if I'm out with a friend or something or email with you, I'll I'll say she doesn't match him. Yeah, he doesn't match,

26:04

right? Yeah. Why?

26:05

Like, why do we have that?

26:07

I don't know. That's just how society is, right? Like usually, and it's we talked about that the other night. The older you get, like if you're 30, you start. If you're in your 20s, you're attracted to people in your 20s. If you're in your 30s, suddenly people in your 30s seem more attractive. You're in your 40s. It's like that's just scientific humanity. Yes, if

26:23

you're in your 60s and you're attracted to 15, call the one 800 help.

26:28

Yeah, yeah, just go to prison, just volunteer. Yeah, it's just part of part of being human. But yeah, so number eight

26:35

is the thoughtful dinner. Thoughtful dinner,

26:38

like there's always like a moment. Yeah, there's always a moment in Rocky where they get sit down and have a cookie. So he cooks for her, she cooks something like that, right? That's the classic trophy.

26:45

We have the thoughtful dinner increases guilt instead of simply increasing romance.

26:51

Yeah.

26:51

So instead of building the relationship, it actually is a moment when you question if they're going to stay together, even, and they've just started something new, and that happens a lot of times where something's thrown in, and you're like, "Oh, are they going to stay together? Like the snowstorm in a Hallmark movie.

27:08

Yeah, how are they? Oh, the storm.

27:09

So you're never going to connect. Yeah,

27:11

but it's I. It's the most memorable scene in the movie, and I think it's the most important one. And just for background, she asks him what his favorite food was or whatever because she's a cook, she's a chef, and he talks about how there was this chicken pot pie his mom made, and he can never find the recipe, but he remembers it, and so she makes him this chicken pot pie. And at first, I was like, "Oh no! Like that's a pretty big kind of invasion of something to try and say, "Hey, I know your mom's recipe is important to you. Here, try this one. So it's kind of a big thing for her. But we, when she put it on the table, even before he tasted it, he just he just like almost like broke inside, not in a bad way, but it just like totally overwhelmed him. And then she was like, "Well, crap! Like

27:52

I didn't like that.

27:53

No, but it was it was real.

27:55

It was. I didn't think that it needed to be done.

27:58

No, but then after that scene, they're sitting on the couch watching TV, and then he confesses to her that he's been listening to her voicemails, but she's asleep. So if that didn't happen, because that just all of a sudden made him feel so guilty, it had to happen because he needed. There's something needed to happen that made him go, "Well, this woman, this is awful with what I'm doing. Yeah, I have to tell her. And then he tells her, and she's asleep, and it doesn't talk. So that was a really, really important scene that was unexpected to normally be like, "Oh my gosh, you made my mom's chin pop pie. I love you. You know, like it was. That's what made it so different. Is that he kind of broke, and it kind of made a separation between them. So again, you're taking a classic trope of, "Oh, I can't believe you made my favorite favorite meal. This is great, and made it different. So

28:40

yeah, so lesson is that the romantic scenes sometimes there's just not happiness in romance. Sometimes there's guilt, sometimes there's sadness, sometimes there's sorrow, depending on what

28:52

it is. Yeah, even though it wasn't like a oh they they they kissed and hugged and got together, like it was still such a romantic scene because of what she did and how he felt, right, and and the closeness that was suddenly there. So, and it

29:04

wasn't so on the nose either. It wasn't

29:07

very different. So, okay, next one we have is number nine. The anticipated sex scene becomes an interrupted confession. Yeah,

29:15

which I just talked about, right? We're thinking after dinner they're going to get together. No, because she falls asleep, but because he confesses, and then he just takes her, carries her to bed, puts a blanket on her, sleeps on the couch.

29:25

So then the lesson is that the emotional obstacle is more important than the physical attraction.

29:32

Definitely, yeah. I mean, that's the thing. This is important. This is the post that you always put on your laptop. Is emotion never underestimate the power of emotion with your audience. It's doing things that makes your audience feel for these characters, fall in love with these characters, and hope for these characters. You can feel you only feel that if you feel the emotion of the characters, and that sequence you really made us feel it.

29:54

Okay, so number 10, the major secret is revealed through a simple physical. Action,

30:00

yeah. So a lot of times, the big secret is always the biggest climactic point. It's like, oh my gosh, like you know, this person says this or this is this. No, I'm admitting it, and it right. This one was so simple. They're at a wedding. He, she's cold. He gives Wes gives Jill his jacket.

30:18

Very expected.

30:19

Yeah, right. Is expected.

30:21

Okay,

30:21

that's the trope, right? Give the girl your jack because she's cold. Then he has to head off and get drinks. And as soon as she he leaves, you can tell she's fallen in love with him after his big speech he gave to the bride and groom. So she has to go call Isabel's voicemail and tell her. So he she goes out, she pulls her phone out, she calls Isabel, and the phone in a jacket starts ringing.

30:41

That was a brilliant. It

30:43

was so smart. So then she pulls it out, and and they didn't have to explain anything. She didn't have to question him. She was just like, "This is why he knows everything. This is why he's the perfect guy. How dare he? And then he sees that she's upset, and she goes. So and then they have the big confrontation. It was just, it was something so small, and that actually then leads to the most original choice in this whole in this whole.

31:05

Yeah. So in that though, the reveal with the audience, like you said, they immediately understand. That's good. They don't need to see anything else. They don't see

31:16

no, because we've seen it all, right? But what happens from there? And I don't have this as a tip, but this is what one of the things I pointed out. But this is what was really, really great about this is the climax wasn't about the romance. Getting how am I going to win her back, and how is she going to win him? Like it wasn't. It was then about her how I've been so distracted. I'm not doing what I'm supposed to be doing for me. I have to be successful because my sister would have

wanted me to. Right, and it's about her trying to learn that her sister didn't want her to be successful. Her sister wanted her to live the greatest life she ever could because she wouldn't have an opportunity to do so, and that's what makes the whole climax of the movie. Most of it is about Jill and her job and overcoming the sexism in the workplace and starting this food truck and failing and like it was so much like 90% Jill and 10% Wes had just kind of moving around.

32:02

Yeah.

32:02

Rather than in classic rom com like this, it's going to be balanced between both of them, right? What's my big romantic gesture going to be? So it's just so original, and and then he and then so then it sets up.

32:13

It was almost like if you read it without too much emotion, it was almost understated,

32:19

very much so,

32:19

right? Like it wasn't this big, like fireworks,

32:22

and it trusted the audience to just feel it

32:24

and figure it out.

32:25

Yeah, and and the like the the classic trope in rom com is one person finds out. Oh my gosh, they're going to be at the they're they're they're jumping on a plane. They're getting on that plane. I have to get to the airport. Chase to the airport. Oh my gosh, I missed her. No way. And then she turns and she's there, right? Like that's the classic thing. This one was something similar to that. I'm gonna be at this taco place if you want to be there. And then he goes there and she's there. But that's not the end of the movie. She's just there, and he says his says his thing, and then they get kicked out, and then it moves on to the future. Like it wasn't big, right? Right. The big part was the ending, and that's number 11.

33:01

Number 11 is the ending returns to the opening. So then the movie ends with Jill and Wes leaving separate messages for Isabel.

33:11

Yeah. So she's got her food truck. They're at this concert thing, and he's you know obviously they're together. It's been a little time, so he's like, "I'll be right back. Yeah,

33:19

you can tell though at that moment, too, that they that they were like, we can let we can let her go.

33:25

Yeah,

33:25

for Jill, she could let it go. Yeah, and same thing for Wes in his own way. I'm gonna just let this be now. This is good. Say our goodbyes and move on and

33:36

move on. And and again, the the class like the expected thing is that she's gonna call Isabel, and she's gonna say, you know what? I don't think I need to leave voicemails anymore. I think I'm done, and that would be it. But instead of just that, they have him call Isabel. So they're both leaving Isabel a message, and they're just saying what they feel about each other. And then the song

33:56

that was beautiful, right away, was

33:57

brilliant. Stop

33:58

writing. I

33:59

was crying. I was like, but then they they they they bring it back with the Robins

34:04

song,

34:04

the Robin song exactly. The

34:06

way it starts is the same song at the end.

34:08

Yeah, the montage of her and her sister and how important that was.

34:10

Except it's now her last,

34:12

right? And he says, "I want to be with your sister. I want your I want your blessing because I know how important you are. Yeah, which is like crazy leading this voice for the last thing, and he's like, "If you just give me a sign, that's awesome. And then the Robin song comes on, and Jill gets excited and run out and dance, and it's just, and and it ends with them together. But more importantly, I don't know if you remember this. She then sees her sister, like the image of her sister when they were little dancing to this song, and that was the last thing that we see, and it was like, that's right. This isn't really a love story about the two of them. It's more about her and her healing. That again, so original.

34:48

Yeah, right. It was great. Yeah, the lesson there with that was a satisfying ending can transform the emotional meaning of an opening scene rather than simply reverse the protaping of. Fortunes, yeah.

35:01

So it's it's more about just kind of making sure you're capturing that emotion that you're also just giving us something we don't expect. Like I said, I didn't expect him to call Isabelle. I was like, holy crap, that was so smart, right? But what makes this movie, and this is the thing that no matter what you try to do, if you're going to rehash something or do a new take on something or do something completely original. It's always going to be that the characters and the dialog, especially in like a remake of something, it's always going to be the characters and their dialog that makes it yours that nobody else can do, right? Because no one's going to write the same dialog, no one's going to build the same characters.

35:36

And your goal, I think, at the end of things is just to make it feel fresh and brand new, and like something we've never seen before. Even though it resonates with us, and it's that feeling of oh, comfort almost right. Yeah. But then making it your own.

35:51

Yeah, and like brilliantly said, I don't even have to say anything else about that. Just watch this movie and study the dialog alone. Just even these voice messages they left for each other. How they talked. They called each other lad. You know, I miss you, my lad. And it's like normally people like no, I don't. I'm like I never would have thought to have two brothers call each other sister or two sisters call each other brother. No, it was just so unique. And and Isabel was such a like she was like a force for us to be reckoned with

36:18

having our sibling issues and stuff. It's like to think that there are siblings like that too. It's just kind of like it kind of blows your mind in a bit. Thinking, are there really people out there who have these relationships? And for those of you that do, you are so fortunate and so lucky that you have honored.

36:36

Yeah,

36:37

yeah. So overall, I thought it was a beautiful movie. It was so well done. Yeah, there were so many bits and pieces, and then it came together in the end perfectly.

36:45

And it was so good. And and there's one line of dialog in this whole movie that just defines the movie and defines what we're talking about. Why this movie is different is when Wes was like, "I'm, I, I, I did everything I could to try and be the the man that you need, and I I don't think I can, and she's just like you're so stupid. Like this whole me leaving voicemails, all these things you heard. It's not about me needing a man; it's about needing my sister. And it's just like

37:13

holy cow, Scott! Look, I just

37:15

teared up there, but it was just so powerful because it's like it's like, dude, like that's what she's needing right now. This is for healing, and you stole it from her. So

37:22

use this as a tissue.

37:24

Do that thing they always do a 90 day old girls. You are going to cut your eyeball.

37:28

Of their eyes, you are going to cut your eyeball with it. Paper cut your you paper cut your eyeball.

37:34

You sure can. Cardboard's the worst.

37:36

You've had your eyeball paper cut.

37:38

No, but I am sure it would be bad.

37:40

If anybody's out there, if

37:41

you buy a horror movie and you want to slice someone's eyeball with some cards, holy cow, that'd be

37:45

torturous to pry your eyes open and just repeatedly slice.

37:49

That's awful, but awesome. Anyways, on that note, we're gonna just take a pause here, listen about one of our services that we have, and we'll be right back with our question and answer period.

38:01

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 `rewrite15` during checkout for the rewrite proposal to get 15% off.

38:44

Okay, we are back. We are back. I want to mention that if you want your questions answered, you can submit them to hello@scriptreaderpro.com. Subject line questions for podcasts, for example. Yep, and we would love to answer them,

39:01

or like subjects. Like if there's things you want us to talk about, yeah, want me to kind of talk endlessly about screenwriting nonsense, or tell me specifically what? Tell us what you want us to hear. If there's a movie,

39:10

a movie that you want us to analyze, like you just did it this way,

39:13

that's a great idea.

39:14

You know, everybody has a favorite movie. You have some of your characters here. He's going to go afterward finish her. You're gonna go eat your lunch in your Indiana Jones lunch pail. Do

you guys remember the lunch pails from the '80s and '70s? Love them. Did they happen in the '60s? I wonder.

39:31

Oh, but this one's so old too. Like all the other ones that I have, I have a whole bunch, but they're all like new, like made new.

39:37

You wonder if this has this. I

39:39

know. Like what could be

39:40

full of spirits. Probably

39:41

some kid of my age that that had that because that would have been my

39:44

yeah. You should show show how it looks. How it's so

39:46

well. Yeah, it's it's all totally like

39:49

rusted, totally

39:50

vintaged out. You know,

39:52

the back corner here is all rusty. Yeah,

39:54

and see, it's got like the wear, and it's got this like really old style clip. You have to kind of pull up on it to. To pop the lid open rather than like a snap. Oh,

40:02

really? You pull up?

40:03

Yeah. Anyways, yeah. I'm such a nerd. So, anyways, nerd questions and answers. Okay. So we

40:09

have had these submitted already. First question comes from Brandon. Branda. Branda in Nashville, Tennessee.

40:17

Nice. I'm saying that.

40:20

Okay, Brandon in Nashville, Tennessee says, "Is there a particular movie trope you think deserves to be retired completely, or can even the most overused cliché become interesting again if a writer approaches it differently?"

40:36

Okay, yeah, for me, and that's funny because I just said this to our daughter last night after the other the other mommy movies. So this is so this is the trope that I absolutely I absolutely hate in horror movies now. So here, pretend this is like a wall. What trope?

40:49

What are you looking at?

40:49

Just wait. Just look at this. Pretend this here is like a wall or like a the edge of a bathtub. This is what you see in every horror movie that has that. Every supernatural movie. It all of a sudden you see this. Right, like 100 times, and it happened in the movie like 100 times. I'm like, okay, enough with the fingers. Yes, they're creepy fingers coming around, but like, do it differently. I don't know if you remember, but we saw a preview for this one movie. I can't remember what it's called. But all of a sudden, they had this tree, and all of a sudden, there was this hand around the tree, and another one. You're like, "Oh my gosh, I'm behind the tree! And then there was another hand, and another, and another. And I'm like, "I am not seeing that. That's unique and different. That's yeah. So retire the trope of like, and like, I don't know if like a ghost or something is just going to take their time. Who does that putting all their fingers down, and then the other one? No, you're just like, "Hello. Just put your hand down. So yeah, that for me, that's the trope that can go. If you ever read one of my scripts that has that in it, feel free to slap me.

41:47

Yeah,

41:47

come up and give me a throat punch and be like, you know what that's for.

41:50

You know what it's for. Hey, I was singing a song. Join that something. You could be scary and be like,

42:01

no, that's too. I don't know how scary that is.

42:04

Question two comes from Marcus from Seattle, Washington. Marcus says, "When you're writing a screenplay, how do you know if you're actually doing something original or just putting a slightly different spin on a story that's already been told 100 times? Which is exactly what we talked about today.

42:20

Yeah, and I mean, you know, I don't know. Like, okay, it's hard to know if you haven't seen everything, right? But if you're writing TV shows or writing movies, you're likely like a cinephile or a television file. Like, what's a cinephile? A cinema who loves and absorbs everything about something about movies, right? So, like me, for example, I've seen like every movie ever. I worked in a well, pretty much every movie I've seen. I've I've worked in a video store since I was 16 years old. Movie theaters-that's the only jobs I've ever had. So, anyways, I've seen pretty much everything. So, I I kind of know what if I'm if I'm doing something, whether it's been done. Not everyone's gonna have that. Not that I'm not they know everything, but

43:02

he sounds so. But I'm saying some

43:04

people like, and you'll see that like a lot of times would be like I'll talk to a writer. I'm like, oh, so how many? You know, like how long you wanted to do this, and how you watch a lot of movies? No, I'm not really a movie fan. I just thought I could write a screenplay. It's like, well, then if you're if you don't know enough about what's been done, how can you know you're being original, Right, you you might run into something like, well, that's been done before. Um, you'll hear, oh, well, that's derivative of what we saw before. So it it's it's hard to know. That's why it's important to have people read your stuff, even very early friends and whole services. They'll tell you this is too much like this.

43:36

Right,

43:36

right. That's how long. Right, right.

43:39

Question three. I love when movies have characters who aren't necessarily good people, but are still impossible not to root for. How do you write something? How do you write someone who makes questionable decisions without losing the audience? And that is from Beth from Manchester, England. Hey, you know, with this one here, the first thing I thought about was I'm looking down.

44:04

Oh yeah,

44:05

because those guys, dad dunk, bad

44:07

guys, but they're not good. Love producers like you guys are love

44:11

to eat them. Yeah,

44:12

like you wanted Darren to to be able to be himself and to come out as gay and not, you know, like and you wanted Jay to find a family, wanted Pope. Wanted Pope to be normal. They're like Pope. Like just stop being Pope. Yeah, they're just yeah. So the question is, how do you write someone who makes the decision by losing him? Make him so freaking interesting. And even like if you're gonna make them messy,

44:33

fully

44:34

make them messy,

44:35

but make them messy differently than what we see.

44:37

Yeah, like just yeah, like Pope. For example, if you haven't watched Animal Kingdom, first of all, watch the whole thing from beginning to end. It's amazing. But Pope is so-he is just a bad human being because of the. But he's bad because of how his mother raised him. So you feel bad for him,

44:51

right?

44:52

So you have to give them something that makes us understand, and that it's not their fault. And you know, like there's a good person under there. That's how you can keep the. It's harder in a movie because you only have so much time, right?

45:04

Question number four is from Tyler from Chalbury, Alberta. Oh, nice! Canada.

45:12

Nice.

45:13

What's the biggest mistake you see writers make in the first 10 pages of a screenplay, and is it really true that readers can tell that quickly whether a script is worth reading. You would know this because you're a reader.

45:25

Yeah. For me, for me, I know if a script is worth reading on the first page. The first, usually the first couple sentences, like the first scene. First of all, how it's laid out. Yeah. If it's improper, and format isn't hard. It's not hard, which makes me shake my head all the time. When someone doesn't have a script in proper format, proper margins, you're just like, well, this is not going to be good because they don't even know how to write a script, right? So you lose them immediately. But by the end of the first page, you'll know if you're engaged, if the if it's cinematic, if it's coming to life in your brain, you know, if the if the voices are unique, if it sounds like talking, like real people talking rather than written language. You know within within one page if it's content or not. But sometimes it'll start off really good, and then you get to 10 pages. For me, the biggest mistake writers make is is by 10 pages, I still don't know what movie it is. I should know if I'm in a horror movie, if it's a dark comedy. If like I should know by the end of 10 pages, what my movie is and where it's going, and it

46:23

somewhat of where it's going.

46:25

Well, there's some feel of it. Yeah, like you're. I I need to know, and I need to. I need to definitely feel something about these characters. If I don't know anything about them yet, just because they're moving through the motions, by the end of 10 pages, it's like okay. So if they haven't done anything in the first 10 pages, how the hell are they going to do anything in the rest? You basically lose confidence. The writer is going to take you where you and follow

46:44

through

46:44

and do it well.

46:45

Yeah,

46:45

and it's it's different. Like obviously, service like ours, right? You're paying us to give you notes. We're going to read the whole thing, whether we want to or not, whether we find it good, because we have to help you understand how it's coming across and then give you suggestions. But you submit to a manager or a production company, and 345, pages in, they're just like, "Well, this is awful because they don't know what they're doing. They're going to stop. Like, if it gets good on page 28, yeah, doesn't matter if the first 10 aren't good,

47:13
right?

47:13
They're putting it down. So that's the biggest mistake: is they take way too long to get it going, or they just haven't done it as they're supposed to.

47:20
Right, makes sense.

47:21
Yeah.

47:22
Hey, guess what?

47:23
What's that?

47:24
This episode is

47:25
done. Nice,

47:25
and it also means I can go tape off this itchy sweater.

47:28
Oh, is it itchy? Looks itchy.

47:30
I need to start thinking of this as I age because the older I wanted to do this the whole time. Rip this neckline off. I wanted to just rip

47:40
it. It looks itchy. Like it looks like it is

47:43

itchy. It looks

47:43

like that jute that you do your crafting with.

47:46

Itchy. It's very sparkly.

47:48

It's pretty. You look great, man. It's a beautiful color on you.

47:51

It's very itchy. But you

47:52

look like a scratching post. It

47:54

is. I mean, as I age, you guys, I have very little patience for people. Never mind clothing, and I should not have to wear something like this that is causing this much trauma.

48:07

I know. And at the beginning, you're like, start. You need to go change your shirt. I'm like, why? She's like, because there's a stain on your. No, that's

48:12

dumb. I know. I'm like, yeah, I know. Because

48:14

I just I eat bubble gum. That's my fuel, and like gumballs. And I guess one like fell out of my mouth when I was having an app, but I don't. I fly down everywhere. But when I was in the washer, anyways, I'm like, no, it's comfortable. I don't care. I'm too old. I'm too old. I know we're on podcast, but you can't see the detail that there's something there now. Well, now they know, but they didn't before.

48:35

Anyways, I hope that this clip makes the Instagram.

48:37

Well, yeah, that would be great if it did. That'd be awesome.

48:40

Talking about me wanting to like choke myself up. Anyway, you guys, if you enjoyed this episode of the Script Reader Pro podcast, I would encourage you to subscribe to our podcast.

48:51

If you're watching it on YouTube, subscribe to our YouTube channel. Give us a like, give us a comment. Yep, give us likes everywhere. If you liked what you if you like, like, like, like. If we educated you a little bit, if we entertained you a little bit, that's what we're hoping for. A lot of this stuff people talk about all the time on podcasts. I try my best to give it a different take. Hey, kind of

49:09

like what we just talked about.

49:10

Exactly. I like to be a little more original in other familiar things people have said.

49:15

What? It's almost like we did the same full

49:17

circle as

49:18

Moody did.

49:19

Full circle. That was the whole point, so I could say that that's how my mind works.

49:23

We would love if you shared it and gave us really good reviews. Yeah, and submit your questions or ideas for future episodes to hello@scriptreaderpro.com.

49:33

Check out our website scriptreaderpro.com.

49:37

yeah yeah or just [scriptreaderpro](http://scriptreaderpro.com) I don't think you have to put that anymore. [Http colon forward slash forward slash www](http://colon.forwardslash.www). Yeah, check us out. We have a lot of services. We've revamped our our services and our site, so take a look at it. Basically, we do everything that a writer could ever want or need. And if we don't have something there that you want, just email us and say, "Hey, can you do this for me? We'll. Probably do it. So check that out because we are all about helping writers craft wonder one page at a time. And I know it's the end. And don't do the fingers. Bye.