

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005

Congratulations! You are to be congratulated, as FOLLOW THE SIGNS has placed in the Final Round of our current spec screenplay evaluation process.

I am pleased to let you know that your submission did make the Top 100 list. Your accomplishments are impressive given the sheer quantity and quality of the submissions received. 1,232!

During the current competition, our focus was on the strength of premise and story, as well as entertainment value.

The Final Placement for FOLLOW THE SIGNS is number 39-100.

On behalf of Red Inkworks I thank you for giving us a chance to read your material. We look forward to reviewing more of your work in the very near future.

Larry Myles  
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October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005

FOLLOW THE SIGNS

Notes: FOLLOW THE SIGNS

The premise of this story is engaging and ranks high in entertainment value and imagination. The premise and developed story are the key strengths of FOLLOW THE SIGNS.

There are a few areas that would benefit from your attention. But I must stress that one of the most important qualities of a spec script is the quality and marketability of the story. Your story really does shine.

The characters are unique, believable and do their part by involving the reader in a strong and compelling story. The writer has also delivered us into the world of the unique and interesting characters showing us their needs, goals, fears, and desires. The goals presented are both visible and tangible.

Cast Design. The writer understands the essential importance of the protagonist creating the rest of the cast. The cast enjoys a successful relationship with the main protagonist each in their own

way, helping to sketch out the dimensions of the protagonist's complex character. Well done.

The pace of this story when applied to the format of a spec script does not work. It will work once the bloated and wordy phrases are trimmed from the scene setups and action descriptions. Also needing work - narration! Remember to show us the story, rather than tell us the story. Once accomplished, the writer will be able free the momentum trapped within this excellent story. It is important for the writer to have faith in both the entertaining story, and the strong characters.

One aspect that greatly assists the potential of the momentum is the writer's ability to enter most scenes late and depart early, as well as adhering to dialogue that is lean, to the point - and character-unique. Seriously consider getting tough on the action descriptions to maximize the potentially brisk pacing of the story. (Examples to follow)

The strength of the writer's voice is evident, but in a (slightly) undisciplined manner that tends to get in the way of the telling of the story - at least in the descriptions and setups.

Besides using wordy and flowery expressions - the writer is guilty of micro-direction. Remember: **Leave room for the actor - omit constant description of the character's behavior, nuances of gesture, tones of voice, etc.**

As well, NO CAMERA ANGLES!

The dialogue works to the advantage of story and characters. The writer succeeds in telling the story in the visual - while making use of economic and plausible dialogue. The dialogue contains character-unique voices, memorable lines, as well as being delivered through interesting characters.

Specific Notes.

Please remember: **Your descriptions are often graceful - but they belong in a novel, not a spec script. Brief, succinct, visual description is the key to a good screenplay. Anything else is considered wordy, bloated - and destructive to the pace of the visual story.**

(In essence, think quick pencil sketch as opposed to a full blown oil painting)

Page 1. Brevity. Consider:

**A quiet street. A DRIVER leans against a long white limousine, parked in front of a large Victorian house. The driver impatiently checks his watch.**

Page 1. Brevity. Consider:

**Several unorganized women are getting ready for a wedding. A pregnant, half-dressed woman runs hysterically from room to room.**

**SAMANTHA FERRIS (9) and her NANA sit in a quiet corner of the living room. NANA is tying the back of Samantha's frilly, taffeta bridesmaid's dress.**

Page 1. Narration and over-use of writer's "voice". Consider:

**Samantha waves her arms up and down.**

Page 2. Brevity, character reference. Consider:

**They are interrupted by BETTY FERRIS (age). She is dressed, but her hair is not done. She drops off a cute LITTLE GIRL (age), wearing the identical dress as Samantha's.**

No problem referring to Samantha as "Sam" in dialogue. But in action descriptions or scene setups, refer to her as "Samantha".

Page 3. Brevity. Consider:

**The inquisitive Little Girl pulls out the bow on the back of Samantha's dress.**

Page 3. Brevity. Consider:

**A PRIEST stand before an attractive young couple. They gaze lovingly into each other's eyes.**

Pages 3-4. Two incredibly long passages of narrated information. Use a combination of dialogue and short action descriptions to give us only what we need to get out of this scene and into the reception hall. Again, your phrases are beautifully turned " but are of no value in a spec script.

Page 31. When creating a spec script, a rule of thumb " one page equals one minute of screen time. With this in mind, we cannot have Samantha standing around for "a few minutes" while the Salesgirl flirts with a male customer. Not unless of course, you wish to include dialogue and action for these characters!

Other random examples of narration:

Page 23. When letting us know that Rebecca is having a "heated discussion", there is no need to also include that she is noticeably

upset. Also, think about your character □ is really walking around the entire house trying to get dressed?

Page 35. An entire story is being told here that has nothing at all to do with the main story. A case of narration that is not only wordy, and slows down the pace of the story □ but meanders right out of the main plot. The dialogue of the salesgirl works to the advantage of the story and sets up Samantha beautifully □ we just do not need it described (again) in the action description. Consider:

**The Salesgirl, gestures toward his ring finger.**

**The man becomes uncomfortable.**

Really, that is ALL we need to move forward. As well, we do not need Samantha's motives (coming to his rescue) narrated to us. Have faith in your (fine) characters and your strong dialogue.

Important examples that if applied to the entire script would pick up and enhance the pace, adding true momentum to the entire story. The writer MUST trim the wordy expressions and avoid micro-direction and narration.

Although this spec script would benefit greatly from additional work, FOLLOW THE SIGNS has advanced to the next round of the evaluation process □ based almost entirely on the strength of the storyline, the compelling characters and the exciting action.

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