



Script Coverage

SHORT FILM

Dhrishti - by, [redacted]



REVIEWED BY



WGA

OPENING THOUGHTS

Comparable to culture-clash films such as **My Big Fat Greek Wedding**, or especially, **The Big Sick**, the script's driving conflict worked very well, but its sad, realistic but somewhat hopeful ending was a unique deviation from these other feel good stories and had quite a strong emotional impact. However, a number of issues, namely structural and pacing choices, really bogged things down and kept the story from reaching its full potential.

CHARACTER

The characters are interesting and their balance comes out once the conflict is introduced, but it takes so long to get to know them that at first, they seem very one-dimensional and almost too perfect. Dhrishti is this perfect, successful, beautiful, intelligent woman, and it's unfortunate to say, but she only becomes interesting once it's revealed that her cancer has returned. Her reaction to it; i.e. her decision to let it run its course and not spend the last few months of her life bedridden, is a really compelling turn and garners philosophical examination on this universal dilemma that many people have had to face and even more dwell. But there's no foreshadowing or hint about her character that this is the way she would react. You should consider building it up more evenly, and try to get the audience to understand why it makes sense for her character to do something like that. Michael also seems a little too perfect. It would be more realistic if he clashed, if even a little bit, more with Dhrishti and her family and friends, especially once the conflict kicks in. But even before there could have been some fallback at the fact that he makes her parents cancel her wedding. They seem to accept it with almost no issue. It would have been more interesting to see him work harder to get their approval. Also, his time courting Dhrishti felt rushed. It didn't feel as though their chemistry developed properly. He is introduced as already being in love with her, but why? And then boom, they go on a date, and then boom again they're getting married in no time. This was a missed opportunity to set up their conflict in the future, once the cancer returns.

PLOT

The plot itself is quite good. One problem however, is when you are describing simple actions and feelings, you tend to describe them to directly instead of showing the audience through the characters actions. Take a description like "He is feeling bad about having missed out on so many day(s), not being with her. Dhrishti, completely understands what he must have been through." how is something like that supposed to be conveyed visually? Or, "Dhrishti is done with the call and sees them leave. She wonders what's going on. Her attention is towards them." On screen, when this becomes a movie, how is the audience going to see that she is wondering what's going on? This is something that's more the actor and director's responsibility than it is for the writer. In general it seems like you pay too much attention to the camera movement and POV, and while it's nice that you have such a clear vision in your head, your main goal as the writer should be to tell a story about characters and not direct a camera. So for the next draft, take good stock of all these little moments where you are describing things to a reader and try to rethink and rewrite them as showing things to a viewing audience.

About the bigger elements in the plot, things mostly worked except for one moment in the end that didn't settle right. The fact that the conversation she has to decide to let Michael back into her life is with "herself" in angel form felt a little anticlimactic. She has so much friends and family who love her and there with her the entire script, why can't one of them be the ones who convinces her? It would make a lot more sense.

STRUCTURE

The main thing that keeps the script bogged down is that you have far too many superfluous moments and scenes that don't really add much to the story. It would be worth consider to trim things down anywhere you can and get to the important information as fast as possible. The intro and its style made no sense, because that Vlog format is never revisited anywhere else in the story. You could introduce everyone much faster and get the audience to the more exciting and engaging moments, like watching, watching Dhrishti kick ass at her job, far sooner. That scene felt like a much better introduction of who she was as a character than simply having her walk around the house and introduce everyone and say how much she loves them.

Although it's an important moment, the flashback depicting Dhrishti's first cancer goes on for way too long. It's 18 pages, which means 18 minutes of screentime that's being used to convey information that could be told to the audience in a much more distilled manner. Why do you need scenes like scenes 34 and 35, that show the parents talking to the principal? What does it do to advance the rest of the story, or even the flashback itself? There doesn't seem to be anything lost by just jumping directly to the parents hearing the bad news from the doctor.

This is isn't the only time in the script where scenes like this pop up. Take scene 80, for example. Why does the audience need to go through Dhrishti's parents calling her and then waiting for her to call back? It's just something that can be trimmed, and if this script does ever become a film, it's moments like these that any editor would certainly push to cut. They might feel realistic, or since this is a true story, this may have been exactly what happened, but in terms of the flow and retaining your audience's engagement, the script would do better if it got to the point quicker.

For the next draft, it would be a good idea go in deep and look for everything you can take out that isn't essential to the story you're trying to tell. It will hurt at first, because it's never nice to get rid of the things you've written and spent time on, but in the end it will make the script much, much stronger. On that same note, you should also do a pass of spelling/grammar errors because there were more than a few.

Dialogue

The issue with the dialogue is that a lot of characters sounded the same. It makes sense for Dhrishti and her family, because they're all related and live with each other it's perfectly plausible that they would sound similar. But take a character like Michael, who's supposed to be completely different but says thing like, "I am sorry, I showed up here like a madman, unannounced, but if I did not carry out this madness today, I would have regretted having not tried for the rest of my life." Young New York finance guys don't sound like that. He's trying to be polite and all but he sounds like a British nobleman professing his love in the 19th century, and it just doesn't feel realistic. Try and see if you can make his voice a little distinct or idiosyncratic. The same goes for some of the minor characters, like Dhrishti's boss or some of the doctors. They all have kind of the same rhythm, vocabulary and cadence and it should be a little more diverse.

Concept

The concept is really strong, and you bring a refreshing element to it with the way things end. Because of the overall tone, and Dhrishti's optimistic attitude it's very unexpected, and therefore hits in a very potent and emotional way. Even I was expecting some kind of development towards the end where a doctor mentions an experimental treatment or something along the lines of Michael having to donate his bone marrow to save her, but this ending is far more human, far more realistic and it's one of the strongest moments of the script.

Final Thoughts

There is a good story here. You have two different characters who meet and fall in love and then face a terrible conflict that raises eternally relevant philosophical questions about happiness and suffering and to top it all off, a beautiful, meaningful ending. But in the simplest of terms, the script is too long. There are too many unnecessary things that clutter and get in the way of the strong parts of your story, and you can afford to cut them out.