

THE BLACK LIST EVALUATIONS of *RAIN DOGS* by ROBERT BRUINEWOU

EVALUATION #1

Overall Rating 6/10

Premise 6/10
Plot 6/10
Character 3/10
Dialogue 6/10
Setting 9/10

Era

Present

Locations

rural Australia, forests, houses, roads, waterfall

Budget

Blockbuster

Genre

Family, Family Adventure, Horror, Monsters

Logline

An estranged father, his ex and their 10-year-old daughter struggle to escape from a secluded valley infested with vicious, otherworldly – and invisible – monsters that somehow only the young girl can see.

Strengths

Humorous moments add levity & entertainment to this action flick. Standout dialogue: the funny “Max is my friend...her”; the frightening “Like, even if...darker”; the evocative “To Burning Man...photos”; the tense “for posterity...thing”; the clever, “Checking...vampires. // The action sequences & Wokker encounters are very well executed & choreographed for the most part, successfully tense & frightening; they’re also varied in setting & situation, never redundant, including the boulders falling in the Cutting, hiding in the garage, setting the Wokkers on fire in the “castle,” & the epic waterfall background. // Dan & Casey’s dynamic is extremely fun to watch, for his unease around her, her intelligence & sass & love of fire, & their love for one another are endearing. Her smart use of the rake

EVALUATION #2

Overall Rating 5/10

Premise 5/10
Plot 5/10
Character 5/10
Dialogue 6/10
Setting 6/10

Era

Present day

Locations

Australia

Budget

Low

Genre

Family, Family Adventure, Horror, Sci-Fi Horror

Logline

A family living on a farm in Australia deals with a vicious attack brought on by mysterious creatures.

Strengths

RAIN DOGS is a thought-provoking and generally engaging read that succeeds in gradually earning the interest of the reader and keeping them in anticipation of what's to come over the course of the script. Simply put, the script is a classic creature-feature that builds suspense well. The backdrop of the Australian farmland adds to the atmospheric tension as the setting comes to life in a meaningful way and brings the reader deeper into the story. The dialogue and character relationships feel organic, especially for its genre. For example, the scenes between Dan and Casey convey the awkwardness of a grown man who has no clue how to talk to a child. Furthermore, there is a visual nature to the writer's style that provides a cinematic feel to the script for the majority of its scenes.

EVALUATION #3

Overall Rating 7/10

Premise 9/10
Plot 8/10
Character 6/10
Dialogue 4/10
Setting 8/10

Era

Contemporary

Locations

Australia

Budget

Medium

Genre

Horror, Alien Invasion, Monsters, Sci-Fi Horror, Sci-Fi & Fantasy, Sci-Fi Disaster Films

Logline

A tech savvy father tries to connect with his daughter on a rural Australian farmland, however things go wrong when strange creatures appear, and prey on humans.

Strengths

A gripping sci-fi horror, in the vein of ATTACK THE BLOCK, FEAST, and perhaps a bit of THE WIND, this script has thrilling action with wonderful character themes of maturation, abandonment and survival. The writer layers the themes against the simplistic, minimal location script, with opportunity for beautiful visuals and empowering moments. A familiar, high-concept premise which is a commodity for anyone pitching it up the development ladder.

#1 – *continued*

to secure the door ingratiates her to the reader from the get-go. // The mystery of Dan & Mo's past is intriguing, especially with: "You were wrong about me...about you, too"; but waiting until the final scenes to reveal the meaning behind this is much too late, for then it's easy to skip over any emotional resonance their split had on most of the plot of the film. // "I thought you were cool...insane" is a seamless way to show Dan & Mo's disconnect, their differing worldviews perhaps contributing to their breakup. Such moments are never over-wrought or heavy-handed.

Weaknesses

Dan & Mo's philosophical conversation on 43 is fascinating, but b/c this idea is never returned to in script, it feels unnecessary. Waxing poetic about a big idea in the middle of a crisis distractingly suggests it has more significance than it does: maybe the Workers aren't real? Similarly, "Her Chinese ancestors..." is interesting but doesn't play into her choices, so weave it into her story so that it has meaning. // Logic holes abound; namely, the unknown origin of the Wokkers: why now, why Australia, and why does the news take so long to report on them? Also, 82's Wokker nightmare is cool but it's unclear how the shared element of the nightmare will be visualized onscreen. Also, it's unclear who can hear the Wokkers' brain noises. Also, "You can "see" what the Wokkers see?" is not evident until Dan says this; clarify the mechanics of what it is she sees, and through how many Wokkers. And all of the exposition in the break room scene on 94 is confounding, for it's unclear how they can possibly know all of it. // Other unclear moments include: "Mo can see their faces...dangerous" – why, do they look sick?; 49: Who is Sasha to them?; "I don't think we can do it tonight" (35) – to what is Mo

#2 – *continued***Weaknesses**

While there's much to like about RAIN DOGS, there's room to further refine the script as there are several weaknesses that hold the script back from reaching its full potential. For example, the action scenes are a bit jumbled, partially because the creatures' invisibility powers are unclear. The number of action scenes should be reduced to make them more impactful as the writer must be mindful to keep the budget as low as possible so that the project has the best chance to move forward instead of merely existing as a sample. The setup should establish Dan's relationship to Casey earlier and more explicitly. The disconnect between the two characters is apparent, but it's not exactly clear why. Mo should make her first appearance earlier because her late entry into the story is jarring.

#3 – *continued***Weaknesses**

The script's biggest opportunity for the next draft is to get in scenes later and out of scenes earlier. While there is a bit of redundancy with dialogue and action, those hurdles could be avoided by infusing more subtext (a glance can be more powerful than a monologue), and also a reduction of information (both to the audience and among characters) is a commodity in screenwriting as well. Not everything or everyone needs to be explained via "on-the-nose" dialogue. Sometimes jewelry or wardrobe explains more about the characters than them spewing their biography. This also gives actors an opportunity to add their own signature onto the ethos of the character. The uneven pacing needs to be distilled and character moments (and dialogue and action) can be consolidated to reduce redundancy, and also character moments can unfold during action (ie: writing action to enhance character – such as a character who has a fear of heights might have to endure a foot chase on a rooftop or cliff ledge). Tightening the story is the key to making this a more fluid script, one that really pops with a development reader.

#1 – continued

referring?; 53: whatever they're doing with the fence is unclear; as is the inverted fruit bowl usage; Clarify how Mo's seeming death is a trick

Prospects

Numerous emotional/character threads are set up without proper development or payoff, making the final act disappointing. There's enough character development set up to create full arcs for each of the characters, but they never materialize. Without emotional stakes for the family members, their choices fall flat – the film won't grab audiences. Not only does the ending fail to explain the Wokker mythology, it never clarifies what Dan wanted from reuniting with his daughter, what he's left behind, what he was missing as a father prior. There's a "so what?" quality to this story. Dan's inexperience parenting Casey is more of an interesting detail than a story brick; when he yells at her for "blubbering," expand upon its consequences or causes. When she says he's "Scared and selfish," for example, include a moment in the end where she looks at him like he's a selfless hero. Also, Mo's obsession with eco-protection: how does it inform her choices when fighting Wokkers? Does this mean anything when it comes to her choice of Jill over Dan? Does environmental degradation speak to the Wokkers' origin? // The unique concept & imagery of these monsters will frighten & surprise moviegoers, and their exciting action scenes are ripe for the family-targeted summer blockbuster market. Translating Australianisms to American lingo is smart.

#2 – continued

Prospects

RAIN DOGS is a solid work-in-progress with the potential to be more so long as the writer deftly executes the rewrites required to give the project the most substantial urgency going forward. With the best version of the script in place, the writer should look to target genre-focused production companies in hopes of making a project viable for the festivals as well as the streaming services. Beyond a strong ensemble cast, the project will demand a visionary director to help further elevate the script and help it stand out within a crowded genre. In addition to its prospects as a film, this should also help generate meetings with executives for the purpose of discussing open writing assignments as well as conversations with literary managers regarding representation.

#3 – continued

Prospects

Overall, the premise and plot is very beautifully reminiscent of TREMORS and FEAST, and there's nothing wrong with buying a ticket to a roller-coaster: that's the foundation of cinema. The script is a high-octane thrill ride, which is very well done, with nuanced characters. Less is more in scripts like this, both from a page count and scene count – sometimes the quietest moments are also the loudest. Tightening the script, and strengthening the dialogue by reducing its "on-the-nose" style is imperative. The next draft of this script which addresses these issues has the potential to rise above other, and attract talent or producers.