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Week 2 Assignment (Quiz Write-ups)

The screenplay idea I've chosen is this:

A bullied high school teenager seeks revenge through magical powers
that allow him to transform into anyone he wants.

The quiz assignment calls for me to watch 12 films and compare them to my screenplay idea in a one page essay. The three questions for each film are:

A. How does the film differ from your vision for your film? How is it similar?
B. Why and how does the film work, or why and how does the film fail?
C. Can you relate to the characters? If yes, which ones and why? If no, why not? What was it about what they said, how they look, how they behave, and how they were filmed that helped you form your opinion about them?

For the Chapter Assignment in the book also calls for me to watch 12 films and compare them to mine. The questions I should address for those films are:

D. Who is the protagonist?
E. What is the conflict that drives the narrative?
F. What is the tone of the film? (What is the genre/feel of the film?)
G. What is the theme of the film?
H. Are the characters relatable? Why and why not?
I. What can you take away from this film that might benefit you as ayou write your story?

The list of films I've chosen that are similar are as follows. I've only chosen six and will allow my student advisor to choose the rest. They were chosen because they are some combinations of the following film genres: horror, slasher, monster, whodunit, hidden/stolen identity, supernatural, high school, and/or revenge.

1. The Terminator (horror, monster, stolen)
2. Scream (high school slasher, whodunit)
3. Halloween (high school monster horror)
4. Clue (who dunnit)
5. Chronicles (high school revenge, supernatural)
6. Carrie (high school revenge, supernatural)

I have chosen to answer all 9 questions for each film in one answer as part of my write up for each film.

1. TERMINATOR

A. How does the film differ from your vision for your film? How is it similar?

Terminator is about a murderous machine that is hunting the mother of the leader of a human rebellion against machine overloads in the future. It's also about an average girl who "can't even balance her checkbook" thrown into an extraordinary situation to survive a machine killer. At its core it's a survival film similar to most slasher/killer films. The stakes are huge: the future survival of mankind, not to mention the life or death of the female protagonist. My film focuses on an anti-hero who

B. Why and how does the film work, or why and how does the film fail?

The film works because the story is innovative and yet universally understood. It is a core emotion film: scare people with the fear of death. It also touches on themes of man-vs-nature and the relentlessness and precision of machines vs the delicate fallible nature of the human mother. It's universally argued that the film is a complete success. Some may not like the film, but it may only be due to the choice genre, violence, and dark tone.

C. Can you relate to the characters? If yes, which ones and why? If no, why not? What was it about what they said, how they look, how they behave, and how they were filmed that helped you form your opinion about them?

Yes, we can relate to Sarah Connor and Kyle Reese (the man sent back in time). This is started in Sarah's first introduction as a horrible waiter who gets humiliated and treated horribly. It's continued in every scene thereafter with more and more misfortunate events: her date bails on her, she finds out other people with her name are being killed, she's being followed, the police station puts her on hold, her roommate doesn't pick up her phone call, she's attacked by the Terminator (saved by Kyle Reese), she runs from the terminator (without any reason as to why she's being hunted), and more. These are all things that happen to her in which she doesn't deserve. And therefore we can relate to her because we also would feel horrified if our normal day was interrupted in such an epic way. Furthermore, we've seen the impending doom awaiting her through the introduction of the Terminator and Kyle Reese. I think a pivotal scene in which we really get to know the humanity of Sarah Connor is in a conversation with Kyle Reese in which Sarah expresses her self-doubt and lack of qualifications to be the future leader of the resistance. She hears about what she ends up being able to accomplish. And in this conversation, we get to touch on several themes of fate vs destiny and believing in yourself and being given a sense of purpose and the potential for humans to be great no matter where they start. It is Kyle Reese telling her she's capable of doing amazing things and Sarah's slow transition into believing that maybe she is capable that makes her relatable. And it's her ability to defeat the Terminator in the face of extreme odds that builds her into a hero that we love and respect. I can learn from this film by making the female lead not only relatable, but unfairly penalized throughout to build empathy. And it's her struggle to understand why and to survive that makes us step into her shoes and follow her journey to victory.

D. Who is the protagonist?

The protagonist is defined as the character who propels the story forward. Their actions and choices set the story in motion. I would argue it's Kyle Reese since he's the one who fought to get sent back in time,

struggles to find Sarah before the terminator then waits for the Terminator to reveals itself, then saves Sarah, breaks her out of jail, forces her to head to her mom's house in big bear, and helps her escape to the machine factory at the end of the movie. The lead is Sarah Connor. She is the target of both the Terminator and Kyle Reese and is the human character the audience is expected to relate to. This is similar to my film in that we are introduced to the killer and he ends up setting the whole film in motion but it's the female lead that is forced to bring the killer to justice. She is fated to be the hero whether she likes it or not.

E. What is the conflict that drives the narrative?
Killing Sarah Connor. It's a survival movie that ends when either the Terminator or Sarah Connor dies.

F. What is the tone of the film? (What is the genre/feel of the film?)
It's dark, gritty, and serious. The film was more expensive because Cameron chose to film almost exclusively at night. It was supposed to be a nightmare. It's a horror film so it must be filmed at night.

G. What is the theme of the film?
Fate vs free-will, surviving, perfection vs imperfection.

H. Are the characters relatable? Why and why not?
see Answer C.

I. What can you take away from this film that might benefit you as you write your story?
To create a relatable lead, put them in great peril without a deserving reason why they're being hunted other that it is their fate. Focus on universal themes. If it's a monster movie, the film is a survival film so the struggle is to kill or be killed. Film at night if you're in horror mode. Daytime scenes should be kept for moments of perceived safety.

2. SCREAM (HIGH SCHOOL SLASHER, WHODUNIT)

A. How does the film differ from your vision for your film? How is it similar?
Scream is about high school kids who seek revenge on Sidney for crimes that her mother committed, not her. So she's being penalized for something she didn't do. This is similar to my movie in that the monster of my movie (the shapeshifter) is a high school student seeking revenge on his classmates for both things they've done (for everyone who dies) or for seemingly no reason at all (for the protagonist). F most of Scream, people are being killed and it's not clear why (that's scary!). It's only at the very end that it comes to light as to why. And the motive is very real and understandable, but it's not the fault of our lead, so it's still unfair and scary. I think it's similar to my film because the shapeshifter knows his victims and how to play them on each other.

B. Why and how does the film work, or why and how does the film fail?
It works because it is an entertaining whodunit with the very real threat of death. You never know who the killer is throughout the whole movie, but you get the inkling on who it might be throughout. The killer is a guy in mask as opposed to some supernatural power, so it's more human and potential motives are called into question. There's also a murder every few scenes which keeps the stakes high and the suspect list smaller. It was also unique in that it played off of the fact that everyone has heard about horror movies.

C. Can you relate to the characters? If yes, which ones and why? If no, why not? What was it about what they said, how they look, how they behave, and how they were filmed that helped you form your opinion about them?
The characters were relatable mostly because they were high school stereotypes as well as movie geeks. Plus everyone was out to have fun, except Sidney who was dark and moody and everyone else was trying to make her have fun. Sidney however showed the most heart out of them all. The recent deaths triggered the memory of her mother's murder a year earlier. She carried baggage and was being place in peril seemingly for no reason and we felt it.

D. Who is the protagonist?
Sidney. The film follows her story and jumps to other mostly only to create or knock-off suspects.

E. What is the conflict that drives the narrative?
Surviving the killer. Answering the question of why the murders happened and who did it?

F. What is the tone of the film? (What is the genre/feel of the film?)
The tone of the film was light and fun while being sinister and shocking.

G. What is the theme of the film?
Trust nobody. Everybody's a suspect!

H. Are the characters relatable? Why and why not?
see Answer C.

I. What can you take away from this film that might benefit you as you write your story?

The female lead is the perceived protagonist even though the murderers are driving the story. The female lead should be relatable and giving her a past that she struggles with can help and making her the victim for no apparent reason also helps. There are several false flag suspects who

3. Halloween (high school monster horror)

A. How does the film differ from your vision for your film? How is it similar?

B. Why and how does the film work, or why and how does the film fail?

C. Can you relate to the characters? If yes, which ones and why? If no, why not? What was it about what they said, how they look, how they behave, and how they were filmed that helped you form your opinion about them?

D. Who is the protagonist?

E. What is the conflict that drives the narrative?

F. What is the tone of the film? (What is the genre/feel of the film?)

G. What is the theme of the film?

H. Are the characters relatable? Why and why not?

I. What can you take away from this film that might benefit you as you write your story?

4. Clue (who dunnit)

A. How does the film differ from your vision for your film? How is it similar?

B. Why and how does the film work, or why and how does the film fail?

C. Can you relate to the characters? If yes, which ones and why? If no, why not? What was it about what they said, how they look, how they behave, and how they were filmed that helped you form your opinion about them?

D. Who is the protagonist?

E. What is the conflict that drives the narrative?

F. What is the tone of the film? (What is the genre/feel of the film?)

G. What is the theme of the film?

H. Are the characters relatable? Why and why not?

I. What can you take away from this film that might benefit you as you write your story?

5. Chronicles (high school revenge, supernatural)

A. How does the film differ from your vision for your film? How is it similar?

B. Why and how does the film work, or why and how does the film fail?

C. Can you relate to the characters? If yes, which ones and why? If no, why not? What was it about what they said, how they look, how they behave, and how they were filmed that helped you form your opinion about them?

D. Who is the protagonist?

E. What is the conflict that drives the narrative?

F. What is the tone of the film? (What is the genre/feel of the film?)

G. What is the theme of the film?

H. Are the characters relatable? Why and why not?

I. What can you take away from this film that might benefit you as you write your story?

6. Carrie (high school revenge, supernatural)

A. How does the film differ from your vision for your film? How is it similar?

B. Why and how does the film work, or why and how does the film fail?

C. Can you relate to the characters? If yes, which ones and why? If no, why not? What was it about what they said, how they look, how they behave, and how they were filmed that helped you form your opinion about them?

D. Who is the protagonist?

E. What is the conflict that drives the narrative?

F. What is the tone of the film? (What is the genre/feel of the film?)

G. What is the theme of the film?

H. Are the characters relatable? Why and why not?

I. What can you take away from this film that might benefit you as you write your story?