

ALL SOULS DAY – The Golden Script Review

Dia de Los Muertos is ripe for filmmakers and artists. The Mexican culture celebrates the dead during the course of three days, and even though it's done in other cultures worldwide, filmmakers are impressed by how fantastic and genuine this idea is. As a result, the celebration is tackled in various genres, from animation to comedy and horror.

The atmosphere in the feature-length script *All Souls Day*, signed by Stephen John Beyer, is undoubtedly palpable. The beginning insinuates the unsettledness, and the first time we see the protagonist driving to camp Forest Green, we sense that something will happen on the next turn.

All Souls Day is reminiscent of the seventies and eighties slasher tropes with added flavors. It reminds of the times when horror films were classier and knew how to blend artistry with entertainment. Following Alice, a young woman who has premonitions ever since she touched the Ouija board, *All Souls Day* takes us on an exciting journey full of surprises and rich with context and backstory.

The usage of tropes are evident, and it's challenging to improvise new styles in a genre in which the primary target group is the pre-existing audience. However, although *All Souls Day* is heavily reliant on tropes and similarities, it delivers some stylistic choices during the fast-cut sequences. These sequences usually come up when the killer approaches his next victim; film language and visual grammar are encouraged in favor of offering artistic nuances. This is helped with foreshadowed props that serve as dramaturgical elements, such as the fire poker that becomes crucial for the character's death.

The narrative is not entirely interested in the graphic and explicit images. Even when parts deal with violence, the gore is hidden, and the auteur augments the creative choices. Moreover, these sequences form a composition that relies on contrasts –characters versus nature, the individual (Alice) versus the collective (the episodic characters whose deaths go unnoticed), and premonitions versus reality.

Suddenly, it becomes more difficult for Alice to separate reality from imagination, and this is where the storyline starts to question the non-linearity and realism. It doesn't confine the classic approach, but it slowly adopts postmodernism and surrealism. As a fundamental part of the surrealist movement, dreams are considered the most powerful narrative tool. In *All Souls Day*, dreams are elevated into premonitions.

The writer foreshadows the twist that would come as a surprise in the end. We realize that Alice's destiny is carved in stone from the moment she tells what happened to her cousin Alyssa. Although, this time, Alice's touch of reality would mark her inevitable downfall in the course of the holiday.

The episodic characters like Frank and Alfred are valuable because they increase the tension and explain the history of the place. Alfred is a natural storyteller who has perhaps told this story many times before, but as great storytellers often do, he adds more components to make it more exciting. Alice is the story's heroine, and although she comes as unidimensional, the story gives information on her later. After passing the midpoint, Alice becomes more and more relatable, and her anxiety and fears materialize when she falls down the rabbit hole. On the other hand, the male and female friends are all alike, but then again, the story isn't interested in giving them more complex arcs.

The ending is unexpected, and this is something that would positively surprise horror fans. Alice's transformation reaches the point of no return in the climax, and the story leaves some of the things unexplained.

The terrifying thing about the living dead is that they refuse to stay dead. William Wilkenson, the story's villain, after cannibalizing his friends, refused to pass on. He is forever indebted to the living, and his soulless body would forever haunt the place.

Poets are interested in the metaphysical, and they often ask the same question – is death itself more absurd, or the inability to see it for what it is. The characters in *All Souls Day* discuss and demystify death, but it's only when they are faced with it that they realize that death comes in many empty, ambiguous forms.

All Souls Day is rich with stories of tradition, cultures and religion told within the course of the three days in the year dedicated to celebrating the dead. *All Souls Day* is an entertaining story that keeps us attached.