

Night Terrors Feedback

Personal Opinion

I think the concept you have for this script is really eerie and uncomfortable - no one likes the idea of someone invading their mind. It's great! At the moment, however, the stakes don't feel very high for your characters and the threat doesn't feel real or imminent and so all the tension that will really help this story work, isn't there. Hopefully this feedback will help you get a little closer to what you're looking for.

Dialogue & Characters

All of the dialogue is steered towards exposition and story development which is making your characters feel unbelievable. We don't know anything about what Elizabeth or Ashton's lives are like and have the feeling that they exist only to serve the story that they find themselves in, rather than being people that this weird and scary set of events are happening to.

I would suggest fleshing out these people for yourself a little more. You can find a set of questions to ask yourself about each character and even if those details don't make it into the script itself, it will give you a rounder idea of who each person is and how they might truthfully react in each situation.

I also think your characters could benefit from having different vocabularies and thought patterns. At the moment everyone sounds like they have a very similar voice to each other and it might be useful to think about how one person might say a phrase in a very different way to another person. What has been their background and childhood that has made them speak the way they are? What is their internal tempo at this moment that makes them speak staccato or in really long thoughts?

Story & Structure

I don't know if you have a time limit or an amount of time you are aiming for but at the moment the script is about half an hour long. However, not much happens in that time. There are many ways you could get a lot of the same information told to us in your scenes in a much quick and more succinct way. For example, instead of having to tell the audience what Elizabeth is drawing at the start of the script you could show her waking up from a dream in a flustered state, then immediately reaching for her notebook and drawing. We then could find out why she's drawing in the conversation between her and Ashton. Have a think about other ways you could truncate things, whether the information being said is important and could be cut or if there's a way you could show the audience something rather than telling them.

I think a useful exercise to do would be to do a timeline of the script in terms of the actions people do - this can't include things people tell each other but can include things that people do to each other (e.g. Elizabeth interrogates Dr Taffetts about dreams). That way you could plot the journey the story takes and identify areas where not much actual 'doing' is taking place.

Your story is also with a lot of questions unanswered - this is of course a choice in itself and a powerful one - but you want to make sure these are the correct questions rather than being unsatisfying and a wasted journey for an audience. As it stands it feels like we don't understand anything that has happened. Here are the questions I was left with and hopefully this will help you to decide what you do or don't need to explain:

**Who was the killer?
Has he killed before - were the other
incidences of people seeing a face in a dream
the same thing?**

**How has he managed to appear in people's
dreams?
Why is he trying to kill seemingly random
people?
Why does she always wake up at 3am?**

Spelling, Grammar and Other Notes

Page 1 - "Staffs are getting busy shuffling..." should read "Library staff are busy shuffling..."

Page 1 - "Few people are..." should read "A few people are..."

Page 1 - "ASHTON MASON is at the..." should read "ASHTON MASON is in the..."

Page 1 - ASHTON: "The hell you're doing here this early? I thought Art class is tomorrow's." should read "The hell you doing here this early? I thought art class was tomorrow."

Page 2 - If Ashton hasn't seen her in a while, why is most interested in what Elizabeth's drawing before catching up or telling her about the most recent gossip. Could this scene start in the middle of the conversation?

Page 3 - "Ahston's eyes." should read "Ashton's eyes".

Page 3 - "...her notebook out of the bad..." should read "... her notebook out of the bag..."

Page 5 - Why doesn't Ashton or Elizabeth think it's just a face her mind has made up? I think that would be most people's first thought.

Page 5 (bottom of) - What doesn't Elizabeth blame him for? The line didn't make logical sense to me as she isn't reacting to anything there.

Page 6 - Elizabeth: "Nothing. He never do anything." should read "Nothing. He never does anything."

Page 6 - Elizabeth: "...Tho other night, too." should read "...The other night, too."

Page 7 - Ashton: "No, no, it's not like that. But, honey, it could be like a **déjà vu**". Like you see him for the first time but your brain tell you that you have seen him many times before?" should read

"No, no, it's not like that. But, honey, it could be like **déjà vu**". Like you're seeing him for the first time but your brain is telling you that you have seen him many times before?"

Page 7 - Either use ECU or extreme close up after the first mention for the rest of the script. We don't need both every time. The same goes with POV.

Page 7 - Ashton: "...what I dream about last night?" should read "...what I dreamt about last night?"

Page 10 (bottom of) - Why would it have anything to do with the dreams? These two things wouldn't be logically linked in your audiences mind - can you make the connection through something else happening?

Page 11 - Elizabeth: "You think that's what happen?" should read "You think that's what's happened?"

Page 11 - Elizabeth: "Then why I keep seeing that man?" should read "Then why do I keep seeing that man?"

Page 12 - "stays and finish her latte." Should read "stays and finishes her latte."

Page 12 - "...Typical place for student. She takes a shower, puts on her pajama..." should read "... Typical place for a student. She takes a shower, puts on her pyjamas..."

Page 14 Elizabeth: "This is the four-fucking-time this week..." should read "This is the fourth-fucking-time this week..."

Page 17 - Is 'rare occurrence of obsession' a medical term? This is not how a good therapist would take a session. They work with you to change your point of view to how you want it to be, rather than state what's objectively wrong with you. It's not like a GP visit, more like an advice conversation with a friend you trust.