



Winds of Transition

Analysis

Analyst: T. Dimos

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Screenplay Title: Winds of Transition

Author: Sil Brook

Genre: Drama

Page Count: 125 pages

Minimum Budget Range: High Budget: >\$10M

Setting/Period: London, United Kingdom/Early 20th century

Category: Feature

Logline: Set against the British suffrage movement, a family struggles with notions of duty, love and belonging.

When a script is presented for analysis, the reviewer's primary responsibility to the writer is to present objective commentary as honestly as possible. All that follows is intended to be illustrative, instructive, and helpful in guiding the writer along a professional path. "Criticism" is not intended as "critical," but as indicative of the realities of the current professional standards extant throughout the film industry. This script has been reviewed in accordance with those standards. None of what follows is about anything other than the material itself as it compares to scripts currently in the marketplace being assessed for investment, casting, and production.

Analysis:

Structure/Plot:

The project follows a traditional 3-act structure in depicting the conflict of the family set during the time of the British suffrage movement in the early 20th century. The piece has the feel of period dramas and productions such as *The King's Speech*, starring Colin Firth and Geoffrey Rush; Whit Stillman's *Love & Friendship*, starring Kate Beckinsale and Chloe Sevigny as well as Oliver Parker's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, based on the play of Oscar Wilde, and starring Colin Firth, Rupert Everett and Reese Witherspoon. The narrative flows in a manner that reaches the culmination in an engaging manner that works cohesively. At the same time, the piece may be more compelling by making the forbidden love story between Lyta and Richard the focal point, rather than something as a subplot to the over-arching depiction of how women received the right to vote in Great Britain. Although it is certainly an important moment in history and a laudable aim to portray the moment in time, the human drama between Lyta and Richard captivates the audience most effectively.

Character:

The most compelling characters in the piece are Lyta and Richard, buttressed by the meddling and malevolence of Sinclair. We want to see Lyta and Richard together from a romantic point-of-view, even though we feel great sympathy for Colin when Lyta breaks-off their relationship. The underhanded dealings of Sinclair work well in raising the stakes and tension between his brother and Lyta in driving the conflict forward in the screenplay. Conceivably, Lyta could be re-crafted with a more diabolical edge as seen in Kate Beckinsale's "Lady Susan Vernon", whereby she simply doesn't let events happen to her; but, rather actively schemes and manipulates in a delicious manner for the audience to enjoy as she seeks to overcome Sinclair in realizing a relationship with Richard. In fact, her motives may not even have to be entirely pure or altruistic but more base in terms of pure social-climbing or perceived material gain.

Dialogue:

The dialogue is well-crafted and easy-to-follow in moving the action along in the project. It captures well British language and tone, setting the atmosphere of the period piece. The words of each character come off as unique to them in filling-in more of the dimensions of their persona for the audience.

Pacing:

The script is easy to read and progressed logically with the flow of events depicted in the screenplay. We have a strong sense of where the action is taking us in terms of women receiving the right to vote in Great Britain, but are engaged in seeing how it will actually occur. And, in fact, are more intrigued by the human drama playing out between the characters regarding their sentimental lives than the historical and political significance of the issue explored.

Tone:

The language of the writing is consistent with the nature of the narrative and the supporting characters. The piece feels like a strong period piece, while also demonstrating universal human vulnerabilities and complexities that transcend the time period and place portrayed.

Conflict:

The central conflict of the work is apparent for the audience, as we watch women receive the right to vote in Great Britain. Yet, as mentioned above, this conflict captivate our attention as profoundly as the tumult between the characters over their romantic lives and who they will form unions.

Emotional Investment:

The audience invests emotionally most poignantly around the tension between Richard, Lyta and Sinclair. The outcome of the suffrage effort is anticipated by the audience, whereas the dialogue and depiction of the strife between the forbidden nature of Richard and Lyta's attraction is the most gripping element to the piece. The exchange between Sinclair and Lyta on pages 54-55 engage the audience in a more profound way. In that moment, one could imagine, for example, Prince William as Sinclair attempting to dissuade Megan Markle as Lyta from believing she could be with Prince Harry as Richard. Conceivably, this exchange could be introduced earlier in the action to hook the audience more resolutely sooner on in the feature.

Market Potential/Concept:

This piece possesses strong potential as a period piece in the vein of *The King's Speech*, *Love & Friendship*, *Gosford Park* and *Downton Abbey*. The project captures the time period, class implications as well as universal human vulnerabilities that will prove attractive to producers and a broad audience.

Theme:

Thematically, the piece explores notions of class, love, duty and honor within the British social class system in a recognizable but fresh way. The script grapples with these ideas in a manner that combines elements of British theater literature such as Oscar Wilde and Jane Austen with the cinematic feel of *The King's Speech* and *Gosford Park*.

Strengths:

- Strong period piece approach that is recognizable for the audience with proven success
- Blends human love stories with an overarching historical social movement

Weaknesses:

- Focus of narrative on the social movement rather than the more compelling human drama

Final Comments:

Conceivably, the piece may operate optimally as *The King's Speech* meets *Love & Friendship*. To realize this dynamic, it may be more gripping to make the tension between Lyta, Richard and his brother Sinclair the focus of the piece with the battle for women's suffrage merely the backdrop, much in the way World War II and the growing threat of Hitler and Nazi Germany operate in the background to Colin Firth's "King George VI" working to overcome his speech impediment in *The King's Speech*. Further, a more aggressive and contentious love triangle could be depicted between Richard and Colin over Lyta with Sinclair still meddling to stop the union. Further, making Lyta less passive in the action and more cunning and diabolical may work to engage the audience more fully and entertain them in a devilish way in the vein of Kate Beckinsale in *Love & Friendship*. Finally, along these lines, embellishing some of the action and characters from dramatic or theatrical purposes, as seen in Netflix's *The Crown*, may work to captivate the imagination of the audience in unpredictable ways. In other words, exercising more poetic license in rendering a historical moment may prove more gripping, even it is not entirely factually accurate. Looking at how James Cameron depicted the sinking of the "Titanic" ocean liner in the film *Titanic* may serve as a model as well in engendering greater emotional resonance and depth within a historical context.