



SCRIPT FEEDBACK “Nico’s Way”

Direction ★★★★★

Script ★★★★★

Cinematography ★★★★★

Editing ★★★★★

Sound ★★★★★

Acting ★★★★★

JUDGE FEEDBACK

One of the most compelling aspects of Nico’s Way is its use of black and white, which gives the film a somber, suspended tone that aligns well with the protagonist’s inner turmoil and the peripheral Roman setting. At times, the cinematography manages to convey with formal rigor and expressive depth the harshness of the urban landscape and the existential claustrophobia that permeates the story. The dialogues, too, stand out for their authenticity: they effectively express a sense of inescapable fate, of lives entangled in crime from birth, where characters seem to move without any real possibility of escape. These are the moments when the film reaches its most resonant emotional depths, touching on themes of inherited identity and the struggle to break free from it.

That said, *Nico's Way* struggles to find a truly original voice, particularly in its writing. The film moves within a familiar representation of Roman criminality that feels overused and outdated. The dynamics between characters, the dialogue, and certain narrative choices appear to echo clichés extensively explored in works like *Romanzo Criminale* and other depictions of the Italian underworld. Lines such as “Er Tony Montana de Nomentana” risk veering into unintentional parody, weakening the believability of both setting and characters. Despite having strong dramatic potential — namely the tension between belonging and personal freedom, between family loyalty and self-determination — the story remains mostly on the surface. It lacks a strong narrative arc that would allow Nico's character to evolve or make his decision to stay in Rome feel truly necessary beyond a vague sense of family duty.

The film also suffers from a lack of narrative clarity. The criminal context — which serves as the story's backdrop — remains vague and underdeveloped. It's unclear what operation or illicit dynamic Nico is involved in, or what the core intentions and conflicts of the supporting characters are. This lack of definition isn't counterbalanced by deliberate ambiguity or narrative clues to be pieced together: instead, viewers are left without enough information to engage with the story on a deeper level. As a result, the film's dramatic tension falters and its emotional potential remains underutilized.

Nonetheless, *Nico's Way* reveals a genuine expressive urgency and a desire to grapple with weighty themes such as family, identity, and the hope of changing one's path. The Roman setting — still underexplored in a grounded, realistic way in contemporary cinema — stands out as a strength. With a more defined script and a more personal directorial perspective, this backdrop could serve as the foundation for a truly compelling narrative. The director displays a clear visual sensibility and a sincere interest in character development, which could greatly benefit future work. Another notable strength lies in the performances of the lead actors, particularly David Mastinu and Matteo Bossoletti. Both

portray their roles with subtlety and credibility, avoiding exaggeration or caricature. Their interpretations give weight to the characters' inner conflicts through silence, hesitation, and glances rather than overt gestures, reinforcing the film's emotional core. With more refined writing and a greater detachment from existing genre tropes, Nico's Way has the potential to grow into a more distinctive voice within the Italian independent cinema landscape.