

REVIEW

Era

Present Day

Budgets

Low

Locations

Arizona

Genre

Dramatic Comedy

Logline:

An optimistic Army veteran and a crotchety Navy veteran rival over who will raise the flag every morning at their retirement home, and ultimately form an unlikely friendship over their complicated past.

Strengths

James and Lou each have strong personalities that feel naturally contradictory without seeming contrived to fit the story, and their rivalry and antics are creative and entertaining. The plot offers interesting subplots with engaging setups and payoffs that make each of the supporting characters dimensional and endearing as well (ex. Clinton overcoming his fear of water when he eventually falls in the lake; Cross's romance with Laura, which inspires the men to start dancing, etc.). There are a number of humorous scenes that effectively exploit the comedy of the premise through comical scenarios and funny dialogue (ex. "Lou and James circle each other a few moments more, getting visibly tired from all the posing and posturing. Finally, they both grow too tired to keep up the pretense." and "'What time is seventeen hundred?' ... 'I don't know. Five, I think.' ... 'Great! What's paintball?'").

Weaknesses

Act 1 creates a strong setup, and Act 3 brings the story to an emotionally moving conclusion, but Act 2 could escalate the conflict in more substantial ways than a light-hearted prank war. The pranks between Lou and James feel forced, and don't make sense in the context of Lou moving to the retirement home to ultimately reconcile with James (ex. their competition to raise the flag feels more organic than the pet store pranks). The rivalry between them would be stronger if it involved more believable motivations and emotional stakes rather than Lou intentionally provoking James to set up the game of capture the flag with the ultimate intention of reconciliation. There are many moments where the dialogue foreshadows future plot points, but instead of causing anticipation about what will happen, it tends to suggest what will actually happen, which takes away the surprise and dramatic suspense (ex. when we see Lou talking with Jenny, it's clear that they're both in on something, and the plot would be more unpredictable if the lead-up was more subtle so the ultimate reveal is truly unexpected). The overall plot could be stronger if the story set up a naturally dramatic situation that built up to James' and Lou's ultimate friendship through more organic conflict and drama.

Prospects:

The script has a light-hearted and witty tone, and offers a great comedic exploration of the two veterans' story of reconciliation. The concept creates an engaging dynamic by forcing two opposite characters together, but the premise could have a stronger dramatic situation that allows their rivalry to develop more naturally in order to create a truly surprising dramatic arc (ex. At a retirement home, a crotchety Army veteran sparks a rivalry with an equally grouchy Navy veteran, who he recognizes to be the man that crippled him for life in combat. He's determined to make his life hell to pay for the mistake that ruined his life, but when he receives a letter from the man's wife, it changes both of their outlooks on life, etc.). The broad, silly comedy works well, but the script would benefit from a rewrite to make the characters' motivations more believable, and to develop the conflict more organically and subtly. The story's heartwarming and emotionally moving arc will make this script very marketable, and with a mild rewrite, the script has a lot of potential to be a commercially viable dramatic comedy that would appeal to audiences over age 40.

Pages

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