

SYNOPSIS:

In the Scottish Highlands, FARMER's care for their animals and their fields. MALEFICENT, 15, quickly identifies herself as someone who is not afraid of anyone and will not be bullied, but tends to be one herself. The Faerie KING KINLOCH and QUEEN ULLA arrive, and possession of Faeries arrive to greet them. Maleficent disrespects the Queen by flying higher than her. Later the Queen demonstrates her rightful position as Queen, by stepping on a low flat stone, the stone purrs. Ulla reports the wonderful relationship they have with the humans and how they are impressed with the magic of the Faery people.

The Queen sees STEFAN, 15, decides to embarrass him because he is the child of Kinloch and a human woman. Maleficent, unwilling to allow the humiliation to continue she challenges the Royals as the King publically disavows him. She confronts them, and the Queen punishes her with a set of horns on her head.

One-day three pixies, THISTLEWIT, FLITTLE, and KNOTGRASS bully Stefan. Maleficent, unwilling to allow their attacks to continue follows them until they go to where Queen Ulla sits. Ulla accuses Maleficent of murdering her mother and blames who she is because of her father, the mysterious Red Cap.

Stefan and Maleficent become friends as they spend more and more time together. Maleficent uses her magic to heal a dead tree.

Maleficent has grown into a beautiful woman, and Stefan is now a handsome man.

The Queen dies, and Maleficent's horns fall off. Now there is a need for a new Queen, and the Faerie's begin to fight over who will step on the Queen's Stone, but the stone growls at everyone who tries.

Maleficent and Stefan decide to go to the human world so he can see what life is like there, in that world. Maleficent learns that the humans are not as great as everyone thinks and confronts them for their plans to control her people. Stefan decides to stay, and Maleficent returns home to let the Faeries know what is going on. No one believes her, so she decides to take the throne, makes herself Queen, and creates five creatures as guards. Determined to protect her people, Maleficent places a barrier between the Moors and the human kingdom so no one can come in or leave.

When King Henry realizes that all of the Faery people are missing, he tries to deal with the situation but fails. Stefan understands the situation the kingdom faces without the faeries is grave and negotiates for the hand of the Kings daughter in exchange for the death of Maleficent. The King agrees.

Stefan returns to the Moors and finds Maleficent, who accepts him with open arms. She has no reason to think that he would betray her. When they are alone together, he cannot

bring himself to kill her, so he takes her wings instead. He returns with the wings and admits he could not kill her, but the next best thing is that the Faeries will not follow her because she is wingless. King Henry is not happy that Stefan did not kill Maleficent but goes through with his promise to allow him to have his daughter's hand in marriage.

When Maleficent realizes the betrayal of Stefan, she becomes withdrawn. She has little or no interaction with anyone. Over time, she grows in strength.

Maleficent saves a RAVEN from some farmers who are trying to kill him by turning him into a man, DIAVAL.

King Henry is angry with Stefan because the Faeries have not returned. In his anger, he inhales a butterfly and Stefan lets him die. Diaval witnesses the event and reports it back to Maleficent.

Kinloch attempts to retake the throne while Maleficent's guards are sleeping, but he is not successful.

Diaval learns that Stefan and Leah have had a child and notifies Maleficent who decides to show up at the christening. Maleficent arrives at the castle and gives the child, AURORA a gift. She will die on her sixteenth birthday when she pricks her finger on a spinning wheel.

Stefan in a panic orders all of the spinning wheels destroyed and sends Aurora off with the three pixies, Thistlewit, Knotgrass, and Flittle to raise and keep her safe. The Pixies have no idea how to tend to the needs of a baby, so Diaval and Maleficent become the child's protector.

Maleficent learns that Aurora is the true Queen of the Moors when she steps on the Queen's Stone.

Just before Aurora turns sixteen, she meets Phillip while she is in the meadow.

Over the years that follow, Maleficent follows Aurora as she grows. Aurora soon believes Maleficent is her Faery Godmother. Maleficent grows to love the child, regrets the curse, and takes it away.

Maleficent discovers the pixies took Aurora to the kingdom and goes after her.

Stefan is angry at the pixies and locks Aurora in her room for her safety. This does not stop Aurora, who is drawn to the only spinning wheel left in the kingdom and falls into a deep sleep anyway. Stefan goes to Aurora's room only to find she is missing and begins searching for her.

Diaval tells Maleficent that the pixies gave Aurora a curse when they said; she would not die, but sleep. Maleficent worries that Aurora will sleep forever because true love does not exist.

The pixies try to find someone to kiss her, but nothing works.

Maleficent makes her way into the castle and finds the girl sleeping while the pixies are searching. She promises her that she will do whatever she can to protect her until the curse is broken and kisses her on the forehead. At that moment, the spell is broken, and Aurora wakes up.

As they try to go home, back to the Moors, Stefan confronts Maleficent with an iron net. It is a trap. Maleficent is now weak from the iron and struggles to escape, but cannot. Maleficent changes Diaval into different creatures to help with the fight. He removes the iron net, and Stefan attacks her with an iron sword.

Aurora comes to Maleficent's rescue when she discovers her wings locked in an iron case. As soon as they are free, they find her. The wings reunite with Maleficent, and she bursts into the air to fight. Maleficent tells Stefan she will not kill him for Aurora's sake, but when he tries to kill her they struggle, and he falls to his death.

After the fight, Maleficent tries to tell Aurora that she is a Feary, but the wings on her back reveal the truth before she can.

Aurora and Maleficent return to the Moors.

Aurora takes her place as the rightful Queen.

COMMENTS:

The script starts out slow with too much information to lay out Maleficent's "ordinary world," her personality, and backstory. In a novel, these first few pages might be the prolog, but in the script, it delays the action and introduction of the protagonist. Maleficent doesn't appear on screen until the middle of page two. Unfortunately, this delay in action could cause the reader to lose focus and miss an exceptional storyline.

When characters are speaking, it should be clear who it is. However, the dialogue doesn't feel unique. Comments made by Stephen and by Maleficent could be interchangeable.

A script is different compared to a novel because the reader cannot "see" into the mind of the character. While certainly cliché, show, don't tell is necessary for a visual medium. For example, on page sixty-four, the line reads, "They're both thinking of Aurora." What does this look like?

Multiple incidents occur as challenges to Maleficent. For example, on page eight, Maleficent offends the Fairy Queen and ends up with a large set of black horns on her

head as punishment. Then on page twenty-two, Maleficent discovers King Henry want to take advantage of the fairy people. It isn't until page thirty-eight the inciting incident occurs. This is twenty-seven pages past the recommended page ten to sixteen of a one hundred and nine-page script.

Over the next ten pages, Maleficent is not a strong protagonist. She doesn't respond to the loss except as a victim of her circumstances. It isn't until the birth of Aurora, Stephen's daughter, that Maleficent becomes proactive. She comes across as a bully when she curses the child, instead of the hero we hope she will be. This is the first glimpse we see as to the hurt Stephen inflicted and Maleficent's opportunity for some sort of character arc.

Stephen's character has potential, but we do not see why he desires the throne. Unfortunately, as a villain, he is more of a "bad guy" placeholder with no dimension. I recommend delving more into who he is and why he seeks the power, so much he is willing to sacrifice someone who loves him and never wanted him to be someone else. Betrayal comes at a price, not only for the victim but also by the betrayer. I always like to look at each character, big and small and remind myself he or she is the star of the life they live. In the mind of the betrayer, warrior, hero, or friend the reasons make since. So it is important to remember this when he or she is given the opportunity to share. A few scenes provide a window into who Maleficent is; such as the interaction with the Rowan tree on page thirteen, shows her ability to love something other than herself. Her willingness to heal it, even at great cost to herself is beautiful. The best ones are as her heart begins to open to Aurora.

In summary, the script starts out slow and takes a while to begin to get to the heart of the issue, overcoming betrayal and learning to love again. Once this happens, Maleficent begins to blossom as the protagonist of her story. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen for Stephen. In my professional opinion, if more time screen time established who Maleficent and Stephen are as individuals and to each other, the script will move forward more effectively than the current draft.

PROJECT: (RECOMMEND, CONSIDER, OR PASS) CONSIDER

WRITER: (RECOMMEND, CONSIDER, OR PASS) CONSIDER