

SYNOPSIS:

In the Scottish Highlands, FARMER's care for their animals and their fields. MALEFICENT, 15, identifies herself as someone who is not afraid of anyone and will not be bullied, but tends to be one herself. The FAIRY KING KINLOCH and QUEEN ULLA arrive, and possession of Fairies 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 King Henry and the humans. She tells them how impressed they are with the magic of the Fairy people.

The Queen sees STEFAN, 15, and embarrasses him because he is the child of Kinloch and a human woman. Maleficent, unwilling to allow the humiliation to continue, challenges the Royals as the King publically disavows him. She confronts the Queen who 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 her father, Red Cap, for who she is.

Stefan and Maleficent become friends as they spend more and more time together.

Maleficent shows her ability for compassion when she uses her magic to heal a dead tree.

Maleficent grows 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 Fairies 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 only using the Fairy people for their magic. She confronts them when she hears about their plans to control her people, but Stefan decides to stay. Maleficent returns home and tries to let the Fairies know what is going on. When no one believes her, she decides to take makes herself Queen.

She 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 Fairy people are missing, he tries to deal with the situation but fails. Stefan negotiates for the hand of the King's daughter in exchange for the death of Maleficent. The King agrees.

Stefan returns to the Moors and finds Maleficent, who accepts him because she has no reason to think that he would betray her.

They spend the day together, but after he drugs her to sleep, he cannot bring himself to kill her, and 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 Fairies 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 heals and 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 Fairies 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.

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

Diaval learns that Stefan and Leah have a child and tells Maleficent. Maleficent goes to the christening to give the child, AURORA a gift. She will die on her sixteenth birthday when she pricks her finger on a spinning wheel. After she leaves, one of the fairies changes the curse from death to a deep sleep.

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 and it purrs.

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

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

The Pixies take Aurora to the kingdom. When Maleficent finds out, she goes after her.

Stefan is angry at the Pixies and locks Aurora in her room for her safety, but this does not stop the curse. Aurora is led to the only spinning wheel left in the kingdom and falls into a deep sleep. Stefan goes to Aurora's room only to find she is missing and begins searching for her.

Diaval tells Maleficent about the curse the Pixies gave Aurora. 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. They even bring in Prince Phillip, but he is unable to wake her.

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 traps Maleficent with an iron net. 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 Fairy, 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 does not 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 whom it is. However, the dialogue does not feel unique. Some 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, do not tell is necessary for a visual medium. For example, on page sixty-four, the line reads, "They're both thinking of Aurora." The action line must show what the characters are doing to show they are "thinking of Aurora."

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 is not until page thirty-eight the inciting incident occurs 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 does not respond to the loss except as a victim of her circumstances. It is not 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. However, this is the first glimpse the audience has to see Maleficent doing something, even if it is evil. Stephen's character has potential, but we do not understand why he desires the throne. Unfortunately, as a villain, he is more of a "bad guy" placeholder with no dimension. It would be helpful if the writer showed more of who is. Perhaps this would explain his desire for power so much that he is willing to sacrifice someone who loves him for who he is. Betrayal comes at a price, not only for the victim but also by the betrayer. It is also important to look at each character, big and small as the star of the life they live. In the mind of the betrayer, warrior, hero, or friend the reasons will start to make sense. 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 does not 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