

ASSASSIN GRAM – The Golden Script Feedback

Concept: Very Good

ASSASSIN GRAM is an action-driven comedy in which an out of work actor and an easy-going telegram deliverer are mistaken for professional killers, following a wrong place wrong time incident, in which a Japanese mafia boss is assassinated, leading the two hapless men to go on the run with a kidnapped girl, the Japanese mafia, the police and the real assassin in pursuit. Essentially a comedy of errors, this screenplay is fast-paced, at times very funny and has some terrific character dynamics, making it an entertaining romp with some terrific action set pieces and, rare in comedies such as this, a genuinely well thought out plot, that delivers enough tension that, coupled with the main characters' natural likeability, gives a very palpable sense of peril.

Storyline: Very Good

The main plot revolves around a Chemical Lab business that has been bought over by Japanese businessmen who have ties to the mafia, which in turn forces the original owners to put out a hit on the boss, Mr. Kurosaki. Into this plot comes our two main characters, Trey, a happy go lucky singing telegram, and Aaron, a struggling actor who meets Trey through a series of circumstances that lead Trey to get Aaron a job working with him. Sent to do an assassin gram at the offices of Kurosaki, in which they do a routine in which they appear to be there to kill the client, before springing a surprise song on them, things get out of hand when they show up at the exact same time as Dyson, the actual assassin hired to take out the businessman. One well-timed bullet later, and both Trey and Aaron are on the run, chief suspects in the murder, taking his very young wife Mariko with them, with both Dyson, the cops and the mafia also in pursuit. In over their heads, and then some, Trey and Aaron have only so much time to come up with a plan to clear their names and bring the guilty to justice before they themselves are caught or killed or both. The screenplay is brilliantly paced, and the dynamic between Aaron and Trey is superb, carrying the script all the way to its satisfying climax.

Characters: Excellent

Both Aaron and Trey are superb creations, the odd couple aesthetic married to an action scenario only making them more likeable, the more over their heads they get. Reminiscent of the dynamics in films such as Midnight Run, their back and forth is priceless, and the character development is surprisingly subtle for a story that includes a vomit gag. Elsewhere, the character of Dyson is both great fun but given just the right level of threat. Of the other secondary characters, the taxi driver Jaideep is a great recurring element.

Dialogue: Excellent

The dialogue is excellent throughout, with some extremely funny rapport between any character that comes into contact with Trey, who is given the lions share of the one-liners, while Aaron's natural awkwardness and neurotic behaviour is reflected beautifully in his speech ticks and mannerisms.

Commerciality: Very Good

This is a buddy comedy, at heart, with an action aesthetic as its heartbeat and should be of great appeal to the mass market audience if given a big enough push at the right time. Sold on the humour alone, it should find its audience easily, although it is a market that can be overwhelmed with similar material, so try to keep as much distinctive style as you can when rewriting.

Originality: Very Good

The characters and indeed the story are hardly original, but it is the approach and the sheer sense of fun in the tone of the script that makes it stand out, not to mention the fact that it doesn't lose either its momentum or its plot at any point.

Complexity: Very Good

Mistaken identity, friendship, romance, loneliness, ambition, violence and desperation all vie for a place within this screenplay's busy structure. That the story has enough space to accommodate all of these elements is highly commendable.

Production Value: Excellent

This is a screenplay written by somebody who loves this type of movie. And yet, it is also clearly written by someone who knows how the genre works and what it needs to succeed. If you were to strip out the jokes, the plot still works, which is a sign of confidence in your storytelling. Where it flounders a little is in the second act, when the pace tries to take a breather in order to give Aaron and Mariko a sub-plot romance that doesn't quite convince. That said, there is definitely room to make it work in order to give the characters a happy ending that will satisfy both them and the audience without resorting to unnecessary sentiment. This is a screenplay that should appeal to both comedy producers as well as action producers and, because of its scale and set pieces, will need access to larger budgets. With the right cast attached, this could be a delight.