



Hellion – In-Depth Critique

Category	Score
Concept	4 / 5
Storyline	3.5 / 5
Characters	3.5 / 5
Dialogue	3.5 / 5
Commerciality	4 / 5
Originality	3 / 5
Complexity	3.5 / 5
Production Value	3.5 / 5
Extra Category	Score
Pacing	3.5 / 5
Grammar	4.5 / 5
Formatting	3 / 5

SYNOPSIS

HELLION thrums with the rhythms of the genre that it is deeply rooted in, taking a high concept and shaping a human story around its spectacle in a way that allows for a connection between man and machine that, while familiar, also manages to find fresh material amidst the tone and atmosphere. Set in the future, this feature film screenplay follows the character of Robb, who is tasked with retrieving an android known as a Hellion to the sect of people who wish of her kind but going by the name of Evelyn.

Evelyn is a pleasure droid who is wanted by a corporation that secretly wishes to use her as an experimental prototype of a new type of combat machine, the thought being that pleasure models could be utilized as spies in order to get close to their targets. However, Robb, who is still grieving from a tragedy in his past, in which his partner Cate was killed, finds himself slowly falling for Evelyn, and vice versa, creating a conflict of interest, just as the corporation, under the watchful, twisted eye of a man named Oswald, unleashes all its mechanoid powers to try and retrieve her so that she can be reprogrammed. Thus begins a chase through this tech driven world, a spectacle of car chases, fights and humans versus machines interfacing that is both thrilling but has a genuinely intriguing heart at its center.

COMMENT ON THE IDEA

At once a hybrid of Blade Runner, Ex-Machina and I, Robot, this screenplay wears its influences on its sleeve, creating a future not a million miles from the dystopian hellscape of Robocop, but with an almost quasi-religious element to it, particularly in the first act, as it sets up a world in which machines are both a necessity, but also frowned upon. The very use of the word Hellion has connotations that give a sense of the place humans have had to take in order for the tech industry to control everything, and there is a sense of timing to this story that resonates, particularly as we are rapidly entering the generation that will see A.I. dominate, in whatever shape or form it may end up doing so.

To that end, the narrative explores many of its themes well, taking time to craft a human story within a mechanical environment, and the relationships between all the characters ring true, albeit more so for the protagonists, as the antagonists are given the lion's share of scenery to chew on. That's not to say that they are one dimensional villains, but rather that we have seen this sort of megalomaniacal corporate driven evil before, and they are broadly drawn in order to create a juxtaposition between machines and humans, in which robotics often feels like the preferable company to keep.

This is part of the screenplay's charm, the way it creates such a shift in power, and it has some important things to say about the nature of humanity, using the robotic Evelyn as the conduit for its philosophical intentions. As a character states at one point when referring to a copy of the Evelyn character, "She is perfect", and this, as it turns out, is the issue. Perfection is the flaw, as flaws are what make us human, relatable and, importantly, given the capacity to be loved.

STORY AND SCRIPT OVERVIEW

Looking at the screenplay from a structural point of view, this follows the classic three act narrative and is, for the most part, a simple chase movie, weaving in and out of a more emotionally driven burgeoning love story. There are sub-plots that revolve around the antagonists, their plans for Evelyn, as well as the protagonists, including Robb's best friend Kitty, who plays a large part in upping the stakes and driving Robb forward at the point at which he loses all hope. The screenplay also manages to explore its elements with a no nonsense approach, meaning that there are deep philosophical themes at play here, such as what is the true nature of love, what does it mean to be human, and what are we willing to sacrifice? It is a study in grief, at least as far as the character of Robb is concerned, as he is in mourning for his lost partner, Cate, and it is interesting that his last link to her, Markus, has become an antagonist, allowing the years that have passed to twist him and change him, just as the mechanics of his body have been reshaped and remoulded to accommodate robotics.

The notion of hybrid bodies, mechanoid bonding and the use of robotics to aid in a medical capacity lead to a nice sense of never quite knowing who you can trust, as nearly every human has some sort of robotic replacement, while the tech companies attempt to find newer and more elaborate ways to turn a profit, although, within this plot, the companies are moving into combat positions, and are attempting to reshape the future of all droids, to have the capacity to be able to wreak havoc at a simple command, a trait that would, in turn, give the company's total control over humanity, a plot element that feels deeply relevant to the times we live in now.

While we are dealing in a world of neo-noir, there is less action, perhaps, than one might expect, with their potential to really embrace the 'on the run' element in the way that, say, *Minority Report* managed to balance its suspense and spectacle. While the second act contains spectacular car chase, aided by the threat of a pair of psychotic robot twins, there is perhaps an argument to be made that a handful of more action sequences could create a bridge between scenes in which the tone is expected to shift, and it could certainly help to raise the stakes.

The comparison with *Minority Report* is also apt, perhaps, in that it is a superb study of how to craft an emotionally driven story arc for the main character, something that is attempted with Robb but never quite seems to land. Also worth noting is that the romance that drives the main character of Robb feels, perhaps, a little less plausible than it should, and lacks a certain amount of emotional and dramatic punch because of this. The relationship between him and Evelyn is never given enough time to simply let them be together, as the machinations of the plot keep them moving for a large amount of the time, so this may be something worth looking at in a future draft, as the narrative certainly gets every other element right.

CHARACTERS

You have written characters that really feel alive within this somewhat foreign environment. So often in fantasy and science fiction, the characters are our window into the worlds being created, and as such, if the characters are badly developed, the

world doesn't register. This has to do with relatability, a crucial ingredient in any story, but an absolute must within fantasy, as the more relatable we find a character, the more we are willing to go with them, as they root the story in a grounded sense of reality, meaning that you can then take your narrative anywhere, no matter how far-fetched or spectacular. It is important to note that your main protagonist fits a classic hero mould, the tragic, lonely figure who learns to value life and love again through his experiences within the story.

Robb is stuck in the place that grief has left him in, unable to drag himself out of depression, until Evelyn comes along and gives him a glimpse of a future that is far less bleak, while Evelyn is arguably an even more interesting character, as she is constantly evolving, and is given the element of choice, a particularly human trait, that ends up being her defining moment within the story, in the third act, when she has to choose between morality and programming.

Elsewhere, the secondary characters are certainly vivid and memorable, and while the protagonists allow for warmth and a sense of family to shine through in a bleak environment, the antagonists are shown as the flip side of this, dark and twisted, perhaps even perverted, although one would like to see a little more depth to Oswald, as there is an almost Dr. Frankenstein element to his persona that never quite gets a chance to shine.

DIALOGUES

The sheer amount of dialogue used in certain scenes can affect the pacing. It is not that the dialogue is badly written (on the contrary, it is very good indeed and manages to allow for large chunks of exposition that never feel forced or trite but rather feed off the scenes and situations in a way that allows for it to feel less like a delivery dump of information, and more like character development), but that the dialogue needs to be polished, to allow for a better sense of drive and momentum within the story.

That said, you also manage to give us a good sense of personality through how each character interacts in conversation, which serves the story well in keeping each of the (particularly secondary) characters distinct, while the language used is kept contemporary, a canny move, as so often science fiction can attempt to approximate a new sense of rhythm as to how people might talk in the future, it usually ends up detaching the audience from the reality of the world you are crafting.

POSITIONING OF THE IDEA

With one foot in the future and one firmly rooted in our contemporary world, HELLION is a curiously elegant screenplay that explores its themes well, albeit with perhaps less emotion than it is attempting to elicit.

Carefully calibrated to be both existential, but also entertaining, it perhaps lacks a few more set pieces to amp up both the sense of threat and the stakes for the characters but also to capitalize on this brash, vivid future world that you have created. While there are familiarities with other works, this screenplay wears its influences on its

sleeve, along with its heart, and there is arguably a tighter version of the narrative to be gained from some rewriting.

PACING, GRAMMAR & FORMATTING

The pace is well measured, although one gets the sense that certain scenes are slightly overwritten, with conversations that outstay their welcome. While the script's formatting is generally well done, there are a few minor inconsistencies like inconsistent scene headings that could be polished. Grammar is clean, making it an easy read, but a bit more attention to formatting details would enhance the overall presentation.