



KAT MONTAGU

THE
DREADED
CURSE

SCREENPLAY
FORMATTING
FOR FILM & TELEVISION

Bookseller Review Copy · Not for sale

Praise for *The Dreaded Curse*

In less than the time it takes to read an hour-long script, Kat Montagu will show you, in an entertaining manner, how to master script and screenplay formatting. How do you suggest a new shot without annoying the director? What's the difference between ellipses and a double dash in dialogue? How have parentheticals evolved? When and how often do you use them? What do CAPITALIZED WORDS mean in an action line? How do you make actors emphasize the words you want them to emphasize? (Spoiler alert — the answer has nothing to do with italics.) Most importantly, there's a sexy ghost!

HART HANSON (*Bones*)

This genius learn-as-you-laugh guide teaches you script formatting in a way that's pain-free, memorable, and logical. In my nearly 30-year career, I have had to learn formatting on the street, copying the examples I happened to come across, and this would've been a great help to me. In fact, even now, reading it makes certain things clear that I've never fully understood. I highly recommend this book!

JANE ESPENSON (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Battlestar Galactica*)

Kat Montagu has made the absolutely essential craft of formatting scripts correctly a joy to know: *The Dreaded Curse* is clear, concise, AND entertaining. Comprehensive and easy to use, I've recommended the original edition to countless students, teachers, film story editors, and to my fellow writing mentors. This expanded edition is now a Must-Have for scripted showrunners in Comedy or Drama, TV staffers, and script coordinators, too. Think of it as a silver bullet for every time-sucking format debate and unnecessary format corrections from your teams, as well as a trustworthy style guide when working with material outside your usual expertise. An excellent tool.

KAREN WALTON (*Ginger Snaps*, *Queer as Folk*, *Orphan Black*)

Kat has crafted an elegant way to make the importance of screenplay formatting not only informative but also entertaining. A must-have resource for all new screenwriters.

SIMON BARRY (*Continuum*, *Warrior Nun*)

Kat Montagu's primer on scriptwriting format is a lot of fun, extremely useful, and quite indispensable. Not only is reading this book a refresher course for any seasoned writer, but I learned a few things I'd always wondered about, like when to use ellipses versus double dashes and how to maximize the impact of an action sequence on the page. With formatting instructions cleverly written into a charming narrative, this ingenious guide should be a must-have for every student entering film school.

MARIA JACQUEMETTON (*Mad Men*, *The Romanoffs*)

While the dogmatic demands of screenplay formatting might be the most tedious to cover in any lecture, Kat Montagu has, in a very clever style, provided a clear and entertaining solution for writers on any level. I will be offering it as an additional reference to both my screenwriting and production majors.

RICK PARKS (*Ever After*, *Sliders*; Professor, USC)

It's a perfect reference for new screenwriters. I will definitely recommend it to my students.

GRANT ROSENBERG (*The Outer Limits*, *Poltergeist: The Legacy*, *Lost Girl*; Professor, University of California, Davis)

I highly recommend it for all aspiring and established screenwriters. Have already zipped through this entertaining breeze of a read.

ANGELA HECK (*Soul of the Sea*;
Managing Director, Whistler Film Festival)

I just did a table read with my students in 2nd year. It was a HIT!

INGRID VENINGER (*Porcupine Lake*;
Founder of pUNK Films; Assistant Professor, York University)

Two thumbs up! Honestly, most writers I know could pick up their page game by a meaningful percentage after ten minutes with this book. Great examples of best practices on the page in areas like writing montages — stuff that can trip me up to this day. I will definitely refer back to it for my own stuff and gladly recommend it to writers I mentor and come across along the way.

NOEL BAKER (*Hard Core Logo*;
Screenwriter-in-Residence, Canadian Film Centre)

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THREE OCEAN PRESS

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Three Ocean Press
8168 Riel Place
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778.321.0636
info@threeoceanpress.com
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To Rob and Lydia

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Contents

Introduction	xiii
Feature-Length Film	1
title page.....	3
script.....	5
Multi-Cam Sitcom.....	25
title page.....	27
cast list.....	29
set list.....	31
script.....	33
Single-Cam Half-Hour	51
title page.....	53
cast list.....	55
set list.....	57
script.....	59
One-Hour Drama.....	63
title page.....	65
cast list.....	67
set list.....	69
script.....	71
Index	79
About the Author	83

Introduction

A screenwriter and story editor herself, Kat needed a simple up-to-date format guide in the Hollywood style, so she wrote this one. After many requests from students and former students that she publish this guide, here it is.

Kat designed *The Dreaded Curse* to be fun to read, but more importantly to contain every element you might need to format your modern feature film screenplay or TV pilot script correctly.

Formatting styles do change over time, so read recent scripts and keep your eyes open for new editions. This copy may have minor changes from previous versions, but is consistent enough to allow the use of differing copies in a table read.

FEATURE-LENGTH FILM

THE DREADED CURSE
FEATURE-LENGTH FILM

by

Kat Montagu

First Draft

(Any draft that no one has
optioned yet is a FIRST DRAFT,
no matter how many versions
you've written)

Based on...
(Source material and author)

(The producer needs to acquire
the rights and you shouldn't
infringe on someone else's
copyright or commit plagiarism)

Inspired by
For a Few Days More
by
Greg Beal
1996

yourname@youreemail.com

Feature-Length Film

FADE IN:

INT. HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

An old-fashioned, dark red dining room features a large oak table, carved chairs, candles, and mirrors.

HAZEL (24), an intense witch in a black dress, and ROSETTA (22), her cute hipster sister, CLINK their wine glasses and drink.

Before them sits a beautiful meal, perfectly cooked.

Hazel pours herself another glass of wine.

HAZEL

Could you tell me what you've learned at film school about formatting screenplays? I have a great idea for a horror film.

ROSETTA

Is it about witches?

HAZEL

No way. No one believes in witches and vampires are over. No. It's called Zombie Romance.

ROSETTA

Okay, some stuff I remember: Screenplays are always in present tense. The first time you introduce a character in description, you CAPITALIZE the name, indicate the age, and give a very brief description.

Rosetta serves the food.

Hazel takes a large gulp of her wine.

HAZEL

What about fonts?

The Dreaded Curse

2.

ROSETTA

Screenplay font should look like
typewriter font, so Courier 12.

(scrolls though her
phone)

I have an awesome handout. I think
I emailed it to myself:

Rosetta shows Hazel an email from rosetta@witch.cov.
No subject line, simple text: Formatting Handout.

ROSETTA

Oh. There's no attachment.

HAZEL

(pulls out a wand)

Don't worry. I'll put a spell on
you to remember it in detail and
tell it to me.

(waves her wand)

Remember, remember, the 5th of
November.

Hazel hits Rosetta with her wand. There is a flash of
light and a BANG. A puff of smoke lingers.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Okay. Margins?

ROSETTA

Around 1.5 inches or 3.8 cm.

Hazel hears CREAKING NOISES and lifts her head.

HAZEL

When someone's about to speak?

ROSETTA

Put the character's name about
3.5 inches or 9 cm from the left
margin, in caps.

HAZEL

Dialogue margins?

ROSETTA

2.5 inches or 6.3 cm on each side, leaving 3.5 inches or 9 cm for each line of dialogue. You could set Word up to do all of this using Format - Style - New, but screenwriting software does it so much better.

HAZEL

What if there's a page break?

ROSETTA

You can split long chunks of dialogue across a page break. To add a page break in the middle of a chunk of dialogue, add (MORE) centered at the bottom, to show that the dialogue will continue, then (CONT'D) next to the character name to show that the dialogue started on the page before. No need for CONTINUED at the top and bottom of every page.

HAZEL

And what about action-description paragraphs?

ROSETTA

Keep each scene heading with at least one line of action that follows. Screenwriting software protects against "widows and orphans" so screenplays never have characters separated from their dialogue or scene headings separated from their action.

HAZEL

Can I use bold or italics for emphasis?

The Dreaded Curse

4.

ROSETTA

No.

A loud CREAK comes from the hallway.

Hazel grabs her phone, jumps up, and opens the door.

Rosetta looks mournfully at her meal, then follows her.

The door SLAMS shut behind Rosetta.

INT. HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Hazel glances up and down the hallway. A loud THUNK comes from the dining room they just left.

HAZEL

(scared)

Yeah, yeah. This has been
bothering me ever since--

A BANG interrupts Hazel.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

That's why I invited...

Hazel trails off, listening.

ROSETTA

Notice the double dash-- shows an
interruption and the ellipsis...
shows a character choosing to
stop talking mid-sentence.

HAZEL

That's good to know. What
happens if both of us
talk at the same time or
if our dialogue overlaps?

ROSETTA

Grab the dialogue
couplet, and click
Format - Dual Dialogue.
In Word, use Format -
Columns.

Another CREAK and a HOWL from the dining room.
Hazel SCREAMS and races for the exit.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)
CAPITALIZE all sounds in your
action paragraphs. Don't panic.
I'm sure it's just your cat.

Rosetta tries to follow her outside.

Something invisible stops her at the doorway.

Her smile vanishes.

INT./EXT. HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

Rosetta BANGS her fists against the invisible barrier.

Hazel sees Rosetta struggling at the door.

Rosetta pulls her wand out of her left boot.

ROSETTA
(calling)
Look at that very last scene
heading -- otherwise known as a
slug line -- above you.
(beat)
Scene headings are always CAPPED,
like this: INT. or EXT. then a
location, then space, dash,
space, then DAY or NIGHT.
Recently, some Hollywood
screenwriters have also started
bolding their scene headings.
(beat)
Occasionally people use INT./EXT.
for a back-and-forth scene, but
only if there must be one camera
inside and one outside with back-
and-forth shots.

Rosetta points her wand at the door.

Hazel sees sparks FIZZLE around the doorframe.

EXT. HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT

Rosetta bursts through the door, PANTING. She returns her wand to her left boot.

Hazel hugs her.

HAZEL

You made it!

Fog starts to drift towards them from the open doorway. It seems ominous.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

Fog, like snow or rain or raining frogs, is a practical effect (sometimes written as SFX for Special Effects). Anything computer-generated is VFX or CGI, but, as always, write what you want to see on screen then start a new paragraph when you imagine a new shot.

HAZEL

I'm scared.

ROSETTA

I could tell you about parentheses?

HAZEL

(sarcastically)

Oh joy.

Hazel pulls Rosetta towards her green VW Beetle.

Rosetta rushes around to the passenger side.

Hazel presses the button on the fob. BEEP.

Rosetta gets in.

ROSETTA

For decades, writers told actors
how to say their lines using
parentheticals.

(quietly, sadly,
angrily)

Now that's only necessary if it's
not obvious.

(sarcastically or
ironically)

Now writers use them most often
for brief actions by the
character who is talking.

HAZEL

Can you just shut up about
screenplay formatting now,
please?

ROSETTA

Not until I finish. You cast a
spell on me to remember,
remember?

HAZEL

Oh god. Really?

ROSETTA

Really. Parentheticals belong
between the character's name and
their dialogue, indented about
half an inch more than the
dialogue. With most screenwriting
software, write the character
name, then hit Return, then Tab.

The fog starts to take the shape of a figure. Scary.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

Just don't overdo it. No more
than one or two parentheticals
per page.

Both sisters strap on seat belts. Hazel STARTS the
engine.

The Beetle ROARS down the driveway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

On the highway, the Beetle merges with existing traffic. They veer across into oncoming traffic.

A black van is headed straight for them. The van is boxed in by two other vehicles.

The Beetle seems doomed.

PRE-LAP: HEARTBEAT speeds up.

ROSETTA (PRE-LAP) (V.O.)
Watch out!

INT. VW BEETLE - NIGHT

Rosetta clutches the dash.

Hazel spots an opening and drives back onto the correct side of the road.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)
A pre-lap like that gives a snippet of sound or dialogue from the next scene.

(beat)
Feature film writers rarely use CUT TO: between scenes anymore, because a new scene heading implies a cut. But some writers use DISSOLVE TO: on the righthand margin, between two scenes which take place in the same location, to indicate the passage of time.

Hazel stares into the rearview mirror.

Rosetta peers around to look.

The ominous fog is still following them. A car drives right through it. BEEPING its horn.

HAZEL

Could it be--?

ROSETTA

Take the next left. We don't want to describe the entire journey in real time, so let me show you how to write a montage.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - NIGHT

MONTAGE:

- The Beetle jumps a small bridge.
- The Beetle swerves around a tight corner.
- The Beetle floats across a small river.
- The Beetle travels past a pub, leaking water.
- The Beetle passes a sign. "Abandoned Air Field."

END MONTAGE

ROSETTA (V.O.)

A montage is linked by theme. "A couple falls in love" or "A boxer gets back into shape." You can even use stock footage. A chase scene with no dialogue could be a good montage. So could a series of juxtaposed actions over a month.

EXT. AIRFIELD - NIGHT

FAST ENERGETIC MUSIC begins.

This is an old airfield, once perhaps used by the military, but covered with grass and moss now.

There are no lights in the tower.

The Beetle swerves all over the place, trying to lose the patch of fog that follows.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- The Beetle comes to a halt.
- Rosetta pulls out two brooms.
- Hazel puts on lipgloss.
- Rosetta pulls a pair of goggles down.
- Hazel and Rosetta stand astride their brooms.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

ROSETTA (V.O.)

In contrast, a series of shots takes place in the same place, over a short period -- one evening, perhaps -- but lets you link shots to abbreviate that time. So the highlights of a game, a school prom, or a fight scene.

EXT. 500 FEET UP - NIGHT

Hazel and Rosetta fly on broomsticks.

Behind them, unseen, a cloud in the shape of a man shadows them.

HAZEL

Some birthday this is.

ROSETTA

For the audience to see the date, it needs to look like this:

SUPER:

January 23, YEAR

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

Still, we got away from that
ghost at last. He won't look for
us here.

Hazel glances back and sees the Ghost flying behind
them.

HAZEL

Oh my god. There he is. Look.
Let's lose him in that cloud
cover.

ROSETTA

Okay. Check out this action
scene.

EXT. CLOUDS - NIGHT

Rosetta and Hazel race alongside a storm cloud.

SUDDENLY --

the Ghost whips around the corner of a nearby cloud --
-- racing quickly towards them.

Rosetta speeds up and --

-- loops the loop.

Hazel plunges downward --

-- into a small fluffy white cloud

The Ghost can't decide -- he hesitates -- the storm
cloud overtakes him and everything goes dark.

THUNDER CLAPS

Then lightning strikes -- Hazel and Rosetta double back
together again and look for --

-- The Ghost --

-- The Ghost emerges from the storm cloud just as
THUNDER CLAPS --

-- and lightning strikes him.

Rather than damaging him, the lightning makes --

THE GHOST (26) more visible, a real person now, and
surprisingly handsome.

Hazel sees this and hesitates --

-- slowing down on her broom.

Rosetta looks back to see what's keeping Hazel.

The additional weight of a corporeal body weighs down
the Ghost. He starts to sink, and looks scared.

Hazel flies below him and lets him land safely on the
back of her broomstick.

He clutches her desperately, terrified.

Rosetta looks furious.

EXT. ABANDONED AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Hazel gently sets the broom down on the airstrip.
The Ghost staggers, then falls down and passes out.

Rosetta makes a steeper descent and a snazzier landing,
whipping her broom out from under her and holding it up
in front of her like a fighting staff.

Hazel stands in front of the Ghost, as if to defend
him.

ROSETTA

That's one way to do an action scene.
William Goldman, who wrote *The Princess
Bride*, initiated that fragmented style
to keep the one-minute-per-page ratio
even when there isn't any dialogue to
spread things out.

(MORE)

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

Lots of fragmented sentences and paragraph breaks.

Hazel looks at the corporeal Ghost with great tenderness.

He is still passed out.

Hazel turns back to Rosetta and pouts, looking for sympathy.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

Keep regular action-description short too. 3-4 lines per paragraph, max. Feature film writers don't get to talk about camera angles or shots, because it drives feature directors crazy (although TV writers do it all the time), so just describe briefly what the audience will see on screen. If you want to imply a new shot, start a new paragraph.

HAZEL

Stop trying to distract me.

ROSETTA

Who says I'm trying? You know he's no good.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Hazel and Rosetta throw dirt into a shallow grave, looking grimly satisfied.

ROSETTA (V.O.)

That's why we killed him in the first place. Number your pages, starting with your second page, in the top right corner.

BACK TO SCENE:

EXT. ABANDONED AIRFIELD - NIGHT

Rosetta appeals to Hazel.

ROSETTA

BACK TO SCENE: or END FLASHBACK.
both help to make the end of a
flashback clearer.

(beat)

Come on. Let me finish him off
this time?

HAZEL

Maybe he's changed.

She steps aside to reveal his body, but...

He's gone.

Rosetta shoots Hazel an I-told-you-so look.

Hazel's phone RINGS.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

Hello?

(beat)

Oh, hello. Where'd you go?

(flattered)

You're welcome.

ROSETTA

Perfect. That's how you format a
one-sided phone call.

(beat)

If we wanna hear what he says
too, we use (O.S.) and (filtered)
for the dialogue of the person
off screen.

HAZEL

Okay, okay.

GHOST (O.S.)

(filtered)

Are you letting Rosetta listen in?

HAZEL

Yeah. So?

GHOST (O.S.)

(filtered)

No, it's fine. But if you want the audience to see both people having a phone conversation, you need INTERCUT WITH: between scenes.

HAZEL

Not you too.

ROSETTA

He must have been there when you put the spell on me.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. ABANDONED AIRFIELD PARKING - NIGHT

With the green Beetle behind him, the Ghost talks on his cellphone in the parking lot.

Hazel talks into her phone on the airfield.

GHOST

INTERCUT WITH: is useful when you want the director to film both sides of a phone conversation and the editor to cut back and forth between them. It's handy that you don't have to keep writing new scene headings once you've established both of them. You can skip (O.S.) and (filtered) too.

(then)

My phone works again and I'm willing to bet my keys do too.

HAZEL

What are you doing?

The Dreaded Curse

16.

He opens the car and gets in, putting the phone on speaker in the cup holder. He opens the window so we still see him from outside.

GHOST

This car always was full of crap.

He pauses to throw a few things out of the open window: a lipstick, a handbag, a pair of sunglasses.

Hazel puffs across the airfield, still holding her broom.

The Ghost rolls his eyes and helps himself to a mint from the glove compartment, then starts the ENGINE.

Hazel starts to run toward the parking lot.

Rosetta gets onto her broom in a casual side-saddle pose and flies after her, just a few feet from the ground.

HAZEL

(panting)

Hey? What's that noise? I'll be right there. Just wait for me. I thought you were going to haunt me?

He starts the ENGINE.

GHOST

That was only when I was ghostly and had nothing better to do.

He grins, ends the call, then drives off.

The last we see of him is a hand casually waving out of the open car window.

BEEP BEEP.

EXT. ABANDONED AIRFIELD - DAWN

Hazel stops running, then looks back at Rosetta gloomily.

Rosetta catches up.

HAZEL

Don't say I told you so.

ROSETTA

That scene heading said DAWN.
Filmmakers prefer DAY or NIGHT,
but writers occasionally write
MORNING, AFTERNOON, SUNRISE,
SUNSET, DAWN, or DUSK.

(beat)

Sunrises and sunsets are
expensive, so only use them as
backdrops for your actors if you
have a good story-based reason,
like a vampire dying at dawn or
an ex-con with a dusk curfew.

HAZEL

(angry)

Is there anything feature writers
CAN'T put in a scene heading?

ROSETTA

CONTINUOUS, LATER, MOMENTS LATER,
and SAME. TV writers use them,
but it's best that feature
writers don't, because feature
filmmakers really do need to know
whether it's DAY or NIGHT.

(beat)

Did he take the car?

HAZEL

I don't want to talk about it.

Rosetta puts her arm around Hazel.

ROSETTA

Come on, let's fly back to your
house before people start waking
up and notice us.

They get onto their brooms.

INT. HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

Hazel walks slowly into the dining room. She sits down at the table and starts filling two plates from all of the cold dishes.

Hazel pours herself and Rosetta fresh glasses of wine.

ROSETTA (O.S.)
Just washing my hands.

Rosetta enters and sits. They both cut their first bite of the cold food.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)
Just two more things, Hazel.

Hazel pauses, the bite on its way to her mouth.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)
No scene numbers. We only add
scene numbers to shooting scripts
in pre-production.

HAZEL
And the last thing?

ROSETTA
Ah... structure.
(beat)
Feature scripts often have three
acts (approx. 27, 55, and 25 pages).
These aren't marked out on the page.
You'll know an act break when you see
one because either the protagonist
embarks on a quest or there's a
massive reversal. A short scene may
show the new ordinary world after the
climax.
(beat)
Thrillers often have five acts
and action films have as many as
seven (act one stays the same,
then you divide up the rest).

Hazel puts down her fork.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

But feature-length TV movie of the week (M.O.W.) scripts -- Xmas, mysteries, or thrillers -- have act breaks marked on the pages. Capped, centered, and underlined. Like this:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

A typical M.O.W. looks like this:

ACT ONE (25 pages)

ACT TWO (13 pages)

ACT THREE (10 pages)

ACT FOUR (11 pages)

ACT FIVE (9 pages)

ACT SIX (9 pages)

ACT SEVEN (10 pages)

ACT EIGHT (9 pages)

ACT NINE (9 pages)

TOTAL 105 pages

(beat)

The act breaks are commercial breaks, so they need cliffhangers.

HAZEL

(angry)

Do you expect me to remember any of that?

ROSETTA

No. Sorry. I'll shut up now.

Hazel sits in front of the cold roast dinner, silently.

HAZEL (V.O.)

It was at that moment that I started to plot my revenge.

FADE OUT.

MULTI-CAM SITCOM

Executive Producer: Kat Montagu
Executive Producer: Someone Fantastic

THE DREADED CURSE
SCREENPLAY FORMATTING
MULTI-CAM SITCOM

(Multi-Cam Sitcoms have logo-titles)
(For the pilot script, use bolded caps)

"Pilot"
(Episode title is lowercase
and in quotation marks)

Written by

Kat Montagu

(Revisions go on the right margin with a
color and the date, most recent draft first)

PINK REVISION PAGES 06/19/2X
BLUE REVISION PAGES 06/13/2X
SHOOTING DRAFT 06/12/2X
PRODUCTION DRAFT 06/02/2X
REVISED TABLE DRAFT 06/27/2X
TABLE DRAFT 05/20/2X
NETWORK DRAFT 05/31/2X

Network draft 04/03/202X

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Multi-Cam Sitcom

CAST LIST

HAZEL
ROSETTA
GHOST
DINER OWNER
YOGA BEAUTY
PORTUGUESE GRANDMA
COOK (VOICE ONLY)

SET LIST

INTERIORS

HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE DINING ROOM
LOS ANGELES MOTEL ROOM
LOS ANGELES DINER
VENICE BEACH BUNGALOW
 LIVING ROOM
 BATHROOM

EXTERIORS

LOS ANGELES MOTEL ROOM
VENICE CANAL BUNGALOW
LOS ANGELES DINER

Multi-Cam Sitcom

COLD OPEN

INT. HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT
(ROSETTA, HAZEL)

INTENSE HAZEL (24) AND HIPSTER ROSETTA (22) SIT WITH
THE MESSY REMAINS OF A MEAL.

HAZEL
So I'm clearly going to have to
follow him to Los Angeles.

HAZEL PULLS HER LAPTOP OUT OF HER BAG AND STARTS
LOOKING FOR FLIGHTS. HER KEYBOARD CLICKS.

ROSETTA
How is that your take-away from
this conversation? He was a
terrible boyfriend. (BEAT) In
multi-cam sitcoms, because
action-descriptions are in caps,
underlining makes SOUNDS or
EMPHASIS or the first intro of a
new character's NAME stand out.
Good for dialogue emphasis too.

HAZEL IGNORES HER, TYPES RAPIDLY, THEN PRESSES ENTER.

HAZEL
Good. Two tickets, first thing
tomorrow. Dibs on the window
seat. Maybe we could take in a
live sitcom taping?

ROSETTA

That sounds fun. Add a scene header from page 2 on. Click Document, then Header and Footer.

HAZEL

Like the one at the top of this page?

ROSETTA

Yes. They contain more info than a feature header: **Series Title** in bold, then "Episode Name" in quotations, then numerical date, then page number.

HAZEL

Hey! Why are we still talking about screenplay formatting?

ROSETTA

I'm still under your spell to teach you about formatting and we haven't covered television yet.

HAZEL

You're kidding!

Multi-Cam Sitcom

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

3.

ROSETTA

I wish I were. (BEAT) Multi-cam
sitcom scripts don't need FADE
IN: at the start. You do need to
capitalize and underline scene
headings, though.

ROSETTA FINISHES HER WINE.

HAZEL

(GLOOMY) I still love him, you
know.

ROSETTA

What? Seriously? What is wrong
with you? (HUFFS) Multi-cam
sitcom parentheticals are most
often on the same line as the
dialogue in CAPITALS.

ROSETTA CROSSES TO FETCH A NEW BOTTLE OF WINE.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

The two of you were like TV
sitcom characters: Sam and Diane,
Rachel and Ross, Sheldon and Amy.

HAZEL

All of those characters broke up.

ROSETTA

Exactly!

The Dreaded Curse

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

4.

HAZEL

Right, right. I know you're
right.

ROSETTA

Multi-cam sitcom dialogue is
double-spaced, which changes the
ratio. For an episode that's 22
minutes long -- a TV half-hour --
the page count will be 44 pages
or more. Some multi-cam sitcoms
use single-space dialogue, but
their scripts can still be 33
pages long.

HAZEL JUMPS UP.

HAZEL

That's it! We'd better pack.

ROSETTA

Okay, but please don't try to get
him back.

HAZEL

(LYING) Of course not. I just
want my car. I love that car.

ROSETTA

Right. I do too.

Multi-Cam Sitcom

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

5.

ROSETTA JUMPS UP TOO AND CROSSES TO THE DOOR.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

You have to write the act breaks

where the commercial breaks go.

These act breaks are capped,

centered, underlined, and often

also bolded. A typical sitcom has

COLD OPEN (2-3 pages)

ACT ONE (8-10 pages)

ACT TWO (13-14 pages)

ACT THREE (11-12 pages)

TAG (1 page)

But those page numbers can vary.

(BEAT) Let's toast to our trip to

Los Angeles... and to true love!

THEY CLINK THEIR GLASSES AND DRINK, THEN IT SINKS IN.

ROSETTA

Wait! What?

OFF ROSETTA.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIGN - DAY

THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN. (STOCK FOOTAGE.)

EXT. LOS ANGELES MOTEL - DAY

The motel is classic LA, with a pool and palm trees.

INT. LOS ANGELES MOTEL ROOM - DAY
(ROSETTA, HAZEL)

ROSETTA CHOOSES THE BED NEAR THE WINDOW, PUTS HER
SUITCASE ON IT, AND CROSSES TO ENTER THE BATHROOM.

HAZEL ENTERS.

ROSETTA (O.C.)

An off-screen character like
myself is off-camera (O.C.). You
probably noticed the Hollywood
Sign and the Los Angeles Motel
establishing shots before this
scene and -- way back at the
start of this script -- the list
of locations immediately after
the title page. Multi-cam sitcoms
are filmed on standing sets with
5-8 locations, so they rarely
shoot exteriors.

Multi-Cam Sitcom

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X 7.

HAZEL SWAPS HER SUITCASE FOR ROSETTA'S, SITS DOWN, AND LOOKS OUT OF THE WINDOW.

ROSETTA ENTERS.

ROSETTA
Hey! I picked that bed.

HAZEL LIES DOWN ON IT, CHILDISHLY WRIGGLING.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
What, this bed?

ROSETTA
(SHRUGS) Single-space your
action-description. No more than
four lines in a paragraph but
usually less. Many multi-cam
sitcom writers CAPITALIZE all of
their action-description as I
have here, but others don't.

HAZEL SITS ON THE OTHER BED.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Okay. Margins?

ROSETTA
Same as a feature film script.

HAZEL
(YAWNS) Okay, thanks. Good night.

HAZEL PUTS IN HER EARBUDS AND WATCHES TV ON HER PHONE.

ROSETTA ROLLS HER EYES.

The Dreaded Curse

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

8.

EXT. LOS ANGELES DINER - DAY

THE STREET IS BUSY. (STOCK FOOTAGE.)

INT. LOS ANGELES DINER - DAY

(ROSETTA, HAZEL, DINER OWNER, YOGA BEAUTY, COOK)

Hazel drinks coffee and looks at a map on her phone.
A text from Rosetta: 'WHERE ARE YOU?'

Hazel texts back: 'DINER'

ROSETTA ENTERS AND SMILES AT THE HANDSOME DINER OWNER
(30) FOR COFFEE. HE IGNORES HER.

SHE'S ANNOYED AND TURNS TO HAZEL.

ROSETTA

Have you noticed yet that the
names of all the characters who
will appear in a scene are capped
in brackets beneath the scene
heading with one space in front
of them?

HAZEL

Whatever! (LOOKS AT THE MAP) I
think he's staying near here. He
has a friend in the Venice Canal
District.

ROSETTA

Really? Near Venice Beach?

HAZEL

Yeah. She's a television writer.

He's always wanted to write for
television.

ROSETTA

Is she the one? You know? The
other woman?

HAZEL SHRUGS.

THE HANDSOME DINER OWNER CROSSES WITH A COFFEE POT BUT
ONLY HAS EYES FOR HAZEL. HE POURS HER SOME COFFEE.

DINER OWNER

(TO HAZEL) Can I help you, miss?

ROSETTA

Coffee, please?

DINER OWNER

(TO HAZEL) How about something
for breakfast?

ROSETTA

Thanks. Just the coffee for now.

DINER OWNER WALKS AWAY WITHOUT GIVING ROSETTA COFFEE.

ROSETTA

Wait! (TURNS TO HAZEL) What's
wrong with him?

HAZEL DRINKS HER COFFEE WITH RELISH.

HAZEL

Don't know. He makes great
coffee, though.

The Dreaded Curse

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

10.

ROSETTA

(CALLS) Hello. Coffee, please?

DINER OWNER IGNORES HER AND CHATS TO YOGA BEAUTY (30).

YOGA BEAUTY

Egg white omelet, to go please?

DINER OWNER

Coming right up.

HE JOTS IT DOWN ON HIS PAD, RIPS OFF THE PAGE, PUSHES IT THROUGH THE PASS-THROUGH, AND GIVES YOGA BEAUTY COFFEE.

ROSETTA

UNDERLINE AND CAPITALIZE each new

character the first time you

introduce them in action. (BEAT)

May I have a sip of your coffee?

HAZEL

Why don't we just order

breakfast, then you can have your

own? (CALLS OVER TO DINER OWNER)

Two specials, please, and two

coffees.

DINER OWNER NODS, SCRIBBLES DOWN THE ORDER, COMES OVER WITH HIS COFFEE POT, AND FILLS THEM BOTH UP.

ROSETTA

(UNGRATEFUL) Thanks.

DINER OWNER

(TO HAZEL) You're welcome.

Multi-Cam Sitcom

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

11.

WITH A RAISED BROW, THE DINER OWNER WALKS AWAY.

ROSETTA

When you're around, I might as
well be invisible.

HAZEL SHRUGS APOLOGETICALLY.

THE YOGA BEAUTY STRETCHES -- SUPER-FLEXIBLE -- BUT THE
DINER OWNER STILL LOOKS AT HAZEL.

COOK (O.C.)

Egg white omelet to go.

THE DINER OWNER HANDS YOGA BEAUTY THE FOOD. SHE EXITS.

EXT. VENICE CANAL BUNGALOW - NIGHT

(HAZEL, ROSETTA, PORTUGUESE GRANDMA)

HAZEL GLANCES AROUND, CONSULTING HER PHONE.

HAZEL

I think this is the one.

ROSETTA

That's what you said about the
last four houses.

HAZEL KNOCKS. A PORTUGUESE GRANDMA (75) EMERGES FROM
THE BUNGALOW CARRYING A SHOPPING BASKET.

PORTUGUESE GRANDMA

(HOW CAN I HELP YOU?) Como posso

ajudá-lo?

HAZEL

(TO ROSETTA) Have I forgotten how
to speak Spanish?

The Dreaded Curse

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

12.

ROSETTA

That's Portuguese. (BEAT) As well as using parentheticals for tone or small pieces of action while talking, in a sitcom script you can use them to direct a line to a specific person or to translate.

Rosetta smiles at the Portuguese Grandma.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

(WE'RE LOOKING FOR A HANDSOME

GHOSTLY MAN?) Umm ... Estamos

procurando por um belo homem ...

fantasmagórico?

PORTUGUESE GRANDMA

I speak English. He's out. You

can wait inside, if you like.

HAZEL

Yes, please.

PORTUGUESE GRANDMA WHIPS OUT HER CELLPHONE, AND TAKES THEIR PHOTO.

PORTUGUESE GRANDMA

In case you steal something!

THE PORTUGUESE GRANDMA CROSSES AND LEAVES.

ROSETTA

How rude!

HAZEL AND ROSETTA ENTER.

INT. BUNGALOW LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

(ROSETTA, HAZEL, GHOST)

THE BUNGALOW IS BRIGHT AND HAS VIEWS OF THE CANAL.

ROSETTA

Did you notice that it says

CONTINUOUS in that scene heading?

Once TV writers establish whether

it's DAY or NIGHT, they often use

CONTINUOUS, LATER, MOMENTS LATER,

or SAME for subsequent scenes.

HAZEL

I did notice that. But you hate

it so much in features.

ROSETTA

When in Burbank, do what the

Burbankians do.

HAZEL

Is it Burbankians or Burbankers?

ROSETTA

No idea. Let's face it, every

television sitcom series is

formatted a little bit

differently.

The Dreaded Curse

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

14.

ROSETTA SHOWS HAZEL HER CELLPHONE.

ROSETTA

Why not read some recent

teleplays online?

THE GHOST (26) MAKES A SUDDEN AND DRAMATIC ENTRANCE,
DRESSED NOW IN COOL LOS ANGELES CLOTHES AND AVIATORS.

GHOST

Can I help you... ladies?

HAZEL

What? It's me, Hazel. My hair's

grown a bit but surely...

HE SHRUGS.

ROSETTA

(TOUGH) We want the car back.

GHOST

(TO ROSETTA) Too late. I sold it.

HE POPS HIS CUFFS TO REVEAL A FANCY WATCH.
WHEN THE GIRLS STARE BLANKLY, HE LOOKS ANNOYED.

GHOST

You know, like George Clooney's.

HAZEL

You mean, you sold my car to buy

a watch like George Clooney's?

GHOST

Gotta look like a Burbanker.

HAZEL NUDGES ROSETTA.

HAZEL

See! Burbanker!

ROSETTA

(TO HAZEL) Whatever. He's like a

walking courtroom TV episode.

Let's call the police.

HAZEL

(TO ROSETTA) And tell them what?

That ghost stole my car?

ROSETTA

I'm willing to bet he couldn't

break out of a jail cell anymore.

ROSETTA PINCHES THE GHOST.

ROSETTA

Feels pretty solid to me.

GHOST

(FLIRTY) Thanks.

ROSETTA

It wasn't a compliment, you

idiot.

HE POUTS AND FLEXES HIS BICEPS.

GHOST

Oh no? Check out this gun show.

ROSETTA ROLLS HER EYES.

The Dreaded Curse

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X

16.

GHOST

(TO ROSETTA) Maybe I was
romancing the wrong sister?

HAZEL

Hey! Why are you paying so much
attention to her?

GHOST

(FINALLY TURNS TO HAZEL) Ha! I
know what you did to me, you
witch!

ROSETTA ZAPS HIM WITH HER WAND, FREEZING HIM WHERE HE
STANDS. ONLY HIS EYES CAN MOVE.

ROSETTA

What's he talking about?

HAZEL

Who knows!

ROSETTA ACCEPTS THIS. ROSETTA TAKES THE WATCH OFF HIS
WRIST, PULLS HIS WALLET OUT (WITH A GROSS EXPRESSION AS
SHE ACCIDENTALLY TOUCHES HIS BUTT), AND FINDS THE
RECEIPT FOR THE WATCH.

ROSETTA

We're going to return this and
buy back your car.

HAZEL

(looks at the Ghost)
We can't just leave him like
this.

Multi-Cam Sitcom

Dreaded Curse "Sitcom Pilot" 05/31/202X 17.

ROSETTA ASSESSES HIM, PLACES HIS HANDS IN A CHEESY TWO THUMBS UP, PULLS HIS PANTS DOWN TO REVEAL RED SPEEDOS, AND ASSESSES HIM AGAIN.

ROSETTA

Better.

ROSETTA EXITS.

HAZEL FOLLOWS HER OUT.

HAZEL (O.C.)

Tell me that's gonna wear off.

ROSETTA (O.C.)

Sure it will -- the moment

Grandma gets home.

ONLY THE GHOST'S EYES MOVE AS HE LOOKS DOWN DESPERATELY.

EXT. VENICE BEACH BUNGALOW - DAY

HAZEL AND ROSETTA HIDE BEHIND A SHRUB AND WATCH THROUGH THE WINDOW AS --

INT. VENICE BEACH BUNGALOW - DAY

PORTUGUESE GRANDMA ENTERS.

PORTUGUESE GRANDMA

(HOLY SHIT!) Puta que pariu!

THE GHOST UNFREEZES FROM HIS EMBARRASSING FONZIE POSE.

PORTUGUESE GRANDMA CHASES HIM OUT OF THE BUNGALOW WITH THE BROOM AS HE TRIES IN VAIN TO PULL HIS PANTS UP, THEN TRIPS OVER THEM.

WE CAN SEE AND HEAR HAZEL AND ROSETTA LAUGHING.

END OF SHOW

SINGLE-CAM HALF-HOUR

Executive Producer: Kat Montagu
Executive Producer: Someone Fantastic

**THE DREADED CURSE
SCREENPLAY FORMATTING
SINGLE-CAM HALF-HOUR**

(Single-Cam Half-Hour shows have logo-titles)
(For the pilot script, use bolded caps)

"Pilot"
or
EP #118: "Fun Time"

Written by

Kat Montagu

Directed by

Someone Fabulous

(Revisions go on the right
margin with color and date)
BLUE REVISION PAGES 06/13/2X
PINK REVISION PAGES 06/18/2X
YELLOW REVISION PAGES 06/19/2X

PROD. #: 1ATM2X
STORY #: E06784

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Single-Cam Half-Hour

DREADED CURSE

EPISODE #101

Many single-cam half-hour shows don't have cast lists or set lists, but if you do plan to add them, this is how.

CAST LIST

HAZEL.....	Name of Actor
ROSETTA.....	Name of Actor
GHOST.....	Name of Actor
DINER OWNER.....	Name of Actor
YOGA BEAUTY.....	Name of Actor
PORTUGUESE GRANDMA.....	Name of Actor
HEMSWORTH.....	Name of Actor
OLD LADY.....	Name of Actor

Single-Cam Half-Hour

DREADED CURSE

EPISODE #101

SET LIST

Here are two ways of formatting the set list for a single-cam half-hour show:

1)

INTERIORS

LOS ANGELES MOTEL ROOM

LOS ANGELES DINER

VENICE BEACH BUNGALOW

*LIVING ROOM

*BATHROOM

EXTERIORS

VENICE BOARDWALK PARKING

VENICE BEACH

LOS ANGELES DINER

2)

<u>INTERIORS</u>	<u>EXTERIORS</u>
LOS ANGELES MOTEL ROOM	VENICE BOARDWALK PARKING
LOS ANGELES DINER	VENICE BEACH
VENICE BEACH BUNGALOW	LOS ANGELES DINER
- LIVING ROOM	
- BATHROOM	

Single-Cam Half-Hour

COLD OPEN

EXT. LOS ANGELES DINER - DAY

HAZEL, 24, tightly-wound in a floaty black dress with new highlights, and ROSETTA, 22, a relaxed hipster in an activist tee, arrive at the diner in Hazel's beloved GREEN VW BEETLE.

Rosetta pats the dashboard.

HAZEL

I can't believe we got my car back.

Rosetta takes a large gulp from her water bottle.

HAZEL (CON'D)

Wait! Isn't that a Hemsworth?

Rosetta turns to look as...

HEMSWORTH walks by in the golden glow of stardom.

Rosetta spit-takes right into the crotch of Hemsworth's linen pants. Looks like he wet himself.

Rosetta's so embarrassed.

HAZEL

Wait. That was a classic spit-take and nobody laughed!

ROSETTA

Single-camera half-hour shows aren't filmed in front of a live audience, and they don't have laugh tracks.

HAZEL

Oh.

Hemsworth looks furious, but ignores Rosetta, notices Hazel, and winks at her.

ROSETTA

What the hell!

But it's too late, they turn the corner.

The Dreaded Curse

Dreaded Curse - #203 - Yellow Rev. Draft - 10/13/2X 2.

Hemsworth shrugs and adjusts his wet crotch, just as --

AN OLD LADY (70s) walks by and looks disapprovingly.

Hemsworth winks at her too.

She preens.

EXT. VENICE BOARDWALK PARKING - DAY

The green Beetle zooms up.

ROSETTA

Cute guys never notice me anymore.
Have I lost my mojo?

HAZEL

(shrugs and avoids her eyes)
How come we're shooting in exterior
locations?

ROSETTA

Single-cam half-hour series often use
real-world filming locations.

(looks back)

That was my only chance to meet a
Hemsworth and he didn't even see me...
even though I spit water on him.

HAZEL

Oh, Rosetta. All that really matters
is revenge.

ROSETTA

What? No! Now we have the car back,
let's take a vacation.

HAZEL

A vacation? Really?

Rosetta shrugs.

HAZEL (CONT'D)

He broke my heart. For that, he must
suffer.

Single-Cam Half-Hour

Dreaded Curse - #203 - Yellow Rev. Draft - 10/13/2X

3.

ROSETTA

We embarrassed him. Isn't that enough?

(beat)

I'm not sure he's capable of real suffering, anyway.

HAZEL

I can fix that... Maybe.

(distracted)

Wait a second. I thought this was supposed to be a half-hour show. Why isn't it funnier?

ROSETTA

Single-camera shows can be comedy-dramas.

HAZEL

Well, it's pretty light on the comedy. To be totally honest, I prefer a one-hour dramatic format.

ROSETTA

I can do something about that. Before we go, remember that because dialogue in a single-cam half-hour show is single-spaced, the ratio's different. So 32 to 37 pages for a 22-minute episode. A typical episode structure:

(beat)

COLD OPEN (4 pages)

ACT ONE (9 pages)

ACT TWO (6-9 pages)

ACT THREE (7-9 pages)

Single-cam scripts either end with:

ACT FOUR (2-5 pages)

or with a **TAG** (1 page)

SMASH TO TITLES:

DREADED CURSE

END OF COLD OPEN

ONE-HOUR DRAMA

EXEC. PRODUCER: NAME
EXEC. PRODUCER: NAME
CO-EXEC. PRODUCER: NAME
CO-EXEC. PRODUCER: NAME
PRODUCED BY: NAME
PRODUCER: NAME
CO-PRODUCER: NAME

THE DREADED CURSE
SCREENPLAY FORMATTING
ONE-HOUR DRAMA
(logo later)

"Pilot"

Story by
Kat Montagu

Screenplay by
Kat Montagu

REVISED WRITERS DRAFT - 5/30/2X
WHITE PRODUCTION DRAFT - 5/30/2X
BLUE DRAFT - 6/07/2X
PINK DRAFT - 6/12/2X
YELLOW DRAFT - 6/14/2X
GREEN DRAFT - 6/17/2X
GOLDENROD DRAFT - 6/24/2X
BUFF DRAFT - 6/30/2X
SALMON DRAFT - 7/01/2X
CHERRY DRAFT - 7/07/2X
TAN DRAFT - 7/14/2X
2nd BLUE DRAFT - 7/29/2X
2nd PINK DRAFT - 7/30/2X

(Note: Some productions include revised page numbers too.
Like this: 5/30/2X - White Prod. Draft - pgs. 16-36)

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One-Hour Drama

THE DREADED CURSE

"Pilot"

CAST LIST

HAZEL
ROSETTA
GHOST

DINER OWNER

CHUNKY COP
CHATTY COP

(Separate cast into bunches:

Series regulars

Recurring characters

Episodic characters)

One-Hour Drama

THE DREADED CURSE

"Pilot"

SET LIST

INTERIORS:

HAUNTED MANOR HOUSE

- DINING ROOM

LOS ANGELES MOTEL ROOM

LOS ANGELES DINER

VENICE BEACH BUNGALOW

- LIVING ROOM
- BATHROOM

EXTERIORS:

LOS ANGELES MOTEL

VENICE CANAL BUNGALOW

LOS ANGELES DINER

VENICE BEACH STREET

(There are many subtly different ways to arrange title pages, draft revisions, cast lists, and set lists. One important thing to remember is that most TV writers are also producers, so by choosing the number of characters and the number of locations, you're controlling the budget.)

(Many TV writers know how many guest stars per episode and how many Interior and Exterior shots they can afford. A large-budget superhero show might have 20 interiors mostly reused over multiple episodes and 15 exteriors in a single episode. A lower-budget dramatic show might have 8 interiors and 15 exteriors.)

One-Hour Drama

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT) 1.

TEASER

FADE IN:

1. EXT. VENICE BEACH STREET - DAY 1.

HAZEL and ROSETTA walk along the sidewalk, both wearing cute Los Angeles outfits. Hazel has California highlights in her hair.

HAZEL

There's a header on this first page.

ROSETTA

Some one-hour drama writers do that. Others start them on the second page.

(beat)

Hey, what are we doing here?

HAZEL

We're here for revenge, remember?

ROSETTA

Right, but we already got the car back, and it's not worth much, anyway. There was one online for two grand.

HAZEL

It's not about the car.

Camera tilts up to find a palm tree.

HAZEL (O.C.)

I thought we weren't allowed to mention cameras or shots?

On Hazel and Rosetta again.

ROSETTA

In TV scripts we are, especially one-hour dramas. Remember the showrunner (credited as the Executive Producer) is also the head writer.

(CONTINUED)

The Dreaded Curse

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT) 2.

1. CONTINUED: (2) 1.

HAZEL

Hey! What's the deal with those
continueds?

ROSETTA

TV writers often use them to show that
the scene goes onto the next page. The
(2) shows how many pages there have
been in this scene so far.

(beat)

Right. Look, there he is!

On a bench across the street sits the Ghost.

Just as Hazel and Rosetta move to cross the road and
confront him, a police car arrives, SIRENS BLARING.

2. EXT. BENCH - CONTINUOUS 2.

CHUNKY COP (40) and his partner CHATTY COP (23) leap
out of their squad car. They confront the Ghost.
Chunky Cop cuffs him.

CHUNKY COP

You have the right to remain silent.
Anything you say can and will be used
against you in a court of law. You
have the right to an attorney...

GHOST

But what are you arresting me for?

CHATTY COP

The murder of an innocent grandmother.

CHUNKY COP

Shush! We're the ones asking
questions.

GHOST

But she was alive when I saw her this
morning.

(CONTINUED)

One-Hour Drama

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT) 3.

2. CONTINUED: (2) 2.

Chunky Cop puts his hand on the Ghost's head and ducks him into the back seat of the police car.

3. EXT. VENICE BEACH STREET - CONTINUOUS 3.

Across the street, Hazel glances at Rosetta.

ROSETTA

We're not helping him. Revenge,
remember --

HAZEL

Hey! I didn't interrupt you. Shouldn't
that be an ellipsis?

ROSETTA

Television writers use double dashes
all the time, for fragmented
sentences, or instead of periods at
the end of sentences, usually with a
leading space --

HAZEL

(thinks)

Look, you can do what you want, but I
have to help him --

ROSETTA

(gives up)

Alright. Where do we start?

HAZEL

Let's start with you showing me a
superhero show action paragraph.

Hazel races down the CROWDED street -- dragging her
SISTER with her -- COLLIDING with PEDESTRIANS --

(CONTINUED)

The Dreaded Curse

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT) 4.

3. CONTINUED: (2) 3.

ROSETTA

Hold on!

Rosetta trips over someone's large RUNNING SHOE -- and
SPRAWLS on the sidewalk --

Hazel reluctantly stops and turns --

The DINER OWNER ignores Rosetta and addresses Hazel.

DINER OWNER

(to Hazel)

Hey, it's you again. Your hair looks
nice. What's going on?

Hazel helps Rosetta up.

ROSETTA

Hazel's ex just got arrested for
murder!

DINER OWNER

(to Hazel)

I'm so sorry. What can I do to help?

HAZEL

We should probably go and bail him
out. Do you have any money?

DINER OWNER

(to Hazel)

Sure. There's an ATM on the next
corner.

ROSETTA

(to the Diner Owner)

Excuse us for just a second.

The Diner Owner doesn't look at Rosetta.

(CONTINUED)

One-Hour Drama

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT) 5.

3. CONTINUED: (3) 3.

HAZEL

We just need a moment.

DINER OWNER

Sure thing.

They take a few steps away from him. While they talk, he waits, patiently.

ROSETTA

(whispers)

Why is a total stranger offering to bail out your ex-boyfriend, Hazel? What have you done?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

4. EXT. VENICE BEACH STREET - DAY 4.

Rosetta looks furious.

HAZEL

(reluctant whisper)

I might have done a teeny-tiny spell.

A CUTE GUY (24) walks past them -- WINKS at Hazel and completely ignores Rosetta.

ROSETTA

Is that why men ignore me when you're around?

HAZEL

Why do you always have to be the center of attention? Hey, tell me about how to format a one-hour television episode!

(CONTINUED)

The Dreaded Curse

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT)

6.

4. CONTINUED: (2)

4.

ROSETTA

Okay.

(beat)

One-Hour Television Episode:

TEASER (2 pages - some skip teasers)

ACT ONE (8-13 pages)

ACT TWO (9-12 pages)

ACT THREE (10-13 pages)

ACT FOUR (8-13 pages)

ACT FIVE (6-13 pages)

ACT SIX (10-14 pages)

Some writers skip Act Six and instead:

TAG/STING (1 page)

Total 55-65 pages

(beat)

You'll need a cliffhanger at the end
of each of these acts.

HAZEL

What about Video On Demand streamers?

ROSETTA

Many VOD shows don't have act breaks
written in unless they're also airing
on a terrestrial network, but they
still have inherent unwritten act
breaks like feature scripts.

Rosetta shakes her head.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

(loud now)

Hey!!!

(realizes)

You're manipulating me using magic. Is
this what you did to your ex?

(CONTINUED)

One-Hour Drama

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT) 7.

4. CONTINUED: (3) 4.

HAZEL

(pouts)

He wasn't paying enough attention
to me.

ROSETTA

Did he even cheat on you, the way
you said?

HAZEL

(lying)

Maybe.

ROSETTA

You're the worst!

Rosetta pulls out her wand and points it at Hazel.

ROSETTA (CONT'D)

Undo.

A spark emits from the end of Rosetta's wand -- it
circles Hazel and undoes every trace of magic.

Immediately, Hazel's cute Los Angeles outfit turns
back into her original black dress. The highlights
vanish from her hair.

A few feet away, the Diner Owner shakes his head in
disbelief and exits.

HAZEL

Great. Now what'll I do?

ROSETTA

You'll bail him out yourself, then you
and I will figure out who really
killed that sweet old grandma and
bring them to justice.

(CONTINUED)

The Dreaded Curse

DREADED CURSE "Pilot" - 7/30/2X (2ND PINK DRAFT) 8.

4. CONTINUED: (4) 4.

Hazel looks very grumpy. They head back to the car.

HAZEL

Aren't you going to tell me how to end
a one-hour television script?

ROSETTA

No! You can figure it out for
yourself!

HAZEL

Really?

Rosetta stomps ahead.

Hazel discreetly pulls her wand out of her bag, and
mouths these words MOS (without sound).

HAZEL

(silently)
Remember, remember, the 5th of--

ROSETTA

(turns and catches her)
Hazel!

Hazel smiles guiltily, busted.

END OF SHOW

Index

(use grey page numbers for navigation)

Act breaks		one-hour	71
feature	22		
M.O.W.s	23	Character	5
sitcom	37	Characters in scene	35
single-cam	61		
one-hour	75, 76	CGI	10
Action-description		Cliffhangers	23
feature	7, 10		
sitcom	33, 39	Cold open	
one-hour	73	sitcom	33, 37
		single-cam	57, 59, 61
Action paragraphs		Comedy	61
feature	14, 15, 16		
sitcom	32	Contents	xi
one-hour	73		
Afternoon	9	Continued	71, 72
Back to scene	17	Continuous	45, 72
Bold	9, 34, 37, 53	Copyright	
Camera angles	17, 71	feature	3
		sitcom	27
		single-cam	53
		one-hour	65
Cast list		Crosses	37
sitcom	29		
single-cam	56	Cut to	12
one-hour	67		
Character intros		Dawn	9
feature	5		
sitcom	33	Day	9
single-cam	59		

Dialogue		Flashback	17-18
feature	6, 7, 11, 12		
sitcom	33, 35, 36	Font	6
single-cam	61		
one-hour	71	Header	
		sitcom	34
Directed by	53		
		Interruptions	8, 73
Dissolve to	12		
		Int.	9
Double dashes	73		
		Intercut with	19-20
Draft	3		
		Italics	7
Dual dialogue	8		
		Languages	43
Dusk	9		
		Laugh track	59
Ellipsis (trailing off)	8, 73		
		Live audience	59
Email	6		
		Locations, standing set	
End of show	49, 78	sitcoms	38
Episode title/name	27, 34	Logo titles	27, 53, 65
Establishing shot	38	Margins	5, 6, 32
Ext.	9	Montage	12
Exterior locations	38, 60, 69	Morning	9
Fade in	5, 35, 71	MOS (no sound)	78
Fade out	23	Movie of the week	23
Filtered	18, 19	M.O.W.	23

Night	9	Rights	3
O.S.	18-21	Scene headings	
		feature	7, 8, 12, 18, 19, 21
O.C.	36, 42, 52	sitcom	33, 45
Page break	6	Scene numbers	22
Paragraph breaks	16	Series of shots	14
Parentheticals		Set list	
feature	10	sitcom	31
sitcom	28, 37	single-cam	56
		one-hour	69
Phone calls			
one-sided	17	SFX	10
hear two sides	17	Shots	14, 17, 38, 69, 71
intercut	18		
		Slug lines	9
Practical effects	9		
		Sounds	
Prelap	11	feature	9, 12
		sitcom	33, 78
Producers	51		
		Standing sets	38
Props			
sitcom	35, 39, 41	Stock footage	13, 38
Ratio		Structure	
feature	15	feature	22, 23
sitcom	30	sitcom	37
		single-cam	61
		one-hour	76
Revision pages			
sitcom	23		
single-cam	43	Sunrise	21
one-hour	49		
		Sunset	21

Superhero action	73
Superimpose	14
Tag	37, 61
Teaser	71, 76
Tense, present	5
Teleplays	46
Text	40
Title pages	
feature	3
sitcom	27, 38
single-cam	53
one-hour	65
TV movie	23
Underlining	33
Unnamed character	72
VFX (visual effects)	10
V.O.	17, 23
VOD streamers	76
Voiceover	17, 23
Widows & orphans	7
William Goldman	16

About the Author



Kat Montagu is a writer, a story editor, and a full-time screenwriting instructor at Vancouver Film School. She has a BFA and an MFA in Creative Writing and has also taught at the University of British Columbia and Emily Carr University of Art & Design.

Born in the UK, Kat lives in Vancouver, Canada with her husband Rob Wenzek, their daughter Lydia, and their terriers Astro and Oscar.

