

Two sample synopses

GLADIATOR

Maximus, our hero, is a successful Roman General, who, after ten years of faithful service, is approached in secret by the aging Emperor to be his successor. Before his decision is made, the Emperor's jealous son, Commodus, kills his father and takes his crown. Maximus refuses to acknowledge him publicly and is ordered to be taken away and killed. Escaping, Maximus returns to his family home, only to find the new emperor has exacted his revenge and brutally murdered his wife and son.

Weak and temporarily broken in spirit, Maximus is taken into slavery and made to perform as a gladiator. Through a series of battles, culminating in *The Coliseum*, he proves not only his fighting skills but also his courage, fairness and loyalty to what is right. These qualities make him well-liked amongst his fellow gladiators and he earns the love and support of the Roman people. Recognising the degeneration of Rome under Commodus' rule, elders of the Senate attempt to facilitate Maximus' escape to lead an opposing army on Rome, but the plot is foiled, despite the intervention of the love interest in the form of Commodus' sister.

In his final battle, Maximus faces the evil Emperor in one-to-one combat, which he wins to tremendous applause. In death we see him reunited with his wife and son. This is the story of a man who retains his integrity against tremendous odds; the story of the true hero set against the backdrop of Ancient Rome.

THE SIXTH SENSE

Bruce Willis stars as an eminent child therapist, happily married with a fulfilled life and a brighter future. One evening a very disturbed young man, who was a former client, breaks into his house and shoots Bruce and then himself.

One year later, Bruce is making contact with his newest client, a young boy of 10, who is disturbed. Bruce wins his trust and eventually the child tells him that he sees dead people. This is verified through action in the screenplay and serves to show the building relationship between the child and Bruce. And then we have the shocking realisation that Bruce is dead, that he is known only to his 'client' and now he has helped the child, he can rest in peace. Suddenly we realise we really only connect with those two characters and although this is Bruce's story we are watching him through the eyes of the child.

This is a redemptive screenplay: the character that was violently and prematurely killed has laid his own ghost to rest and helped a child in the process. The screenplay lends something fresh and original to the horror genre, by having a realistic narrative.