

THE FASCINATION OF SUPERHEROES:

How do you tell a superhero story?

Samuele Rossi tells us all about his superhero movie *Glassboy*.

The film is centered on Pino, an eleven-year-old boy who suffers from a rare disease that makes his body extremely fragile: he is like a "glass boy", who could be broken to pieces by even the slightest of blows. Because of the disease he cannot even go outside. Instead he has to stay at home, where he spends day after day on his bedroom balcony, spying down through binoculars on the children of his own age playing happily in the town square.

All this makes Pino a sad and lonely boy who feels different from others. But his passion for superheroes will help him discover his true qualities and find his place in the world, alongside the other children.

The transformation starts first and foremost with his own imagination and creativity, which allow him to make his own superhero costume using a red helmet and a flowing cape, with knee and elbow pads...

This movie for kids is a story of fragility: every one of us has our own fears and weaknesses, but we can all live a wonderful life. Above all: to be a superhero you don't have to pretend you're something you're not, but trust in what you are.

Samuele continues the tutorial with a more detailed explanation of how he created and wrote his superhero. We have to start by asking ourselves, what makes a superhero? A superhero is a human being with a special power, who is willing to use it for other people in order to make the world a better place. Some superheroes can fly, others – like Thor – possess an object that gives them fantastic powers... In our case, though, we can draw on our own personal qualities.

Or we can think of the difficulties that we face, the fears that we carry inside: how can these be transformed into superpowers, when we turn into superheroes? One example is Batman: his character is haunted by the fear generated by the loss of his parents, but when he puts on his costume, he can turn that fear into a driving force to tackle his enemies.

Now it's our turn!

Taking our cue from this valuable expert advice, we can begin our own story about superheroes.

Every film – long before the sound and motion picture stage – starts with a screenplay.

The **screenplay** gives written form to a story concept that will eventually be filmed. We have to pick the subject for our story – in other words establish the central idea we want to get across, and then give shape to our ideas by setting out a beginning, a central development section, and an ending. Another vital step in writing a screenplay is to identify the characters and describe the actions they will perform, which involves imagining and writing their dialogues, too.

Writing a screenplay is a job that takes a lot of imagination and attention to detail, both of which will make a huge difference in telling our story. The better we describe what we have in mind at the screenplay stage of our story, the simpler it will be when it comes to filming it.

Here are a few tips which will be very helpful in this crucial part of the process of creating your short film.

As you write your story, bear in mind that the next stage will be to turn it into a film, which will consist of a series of shots. The **shot** is the picture that is framed by the camera. Inside each shot there will be the characters in the story, their actions and dialogues. As

you think up your story and the shots that you will take, don't forget the setting: will it be inside a room, or outside? A real place or an imaginary one? Are there any particular features that characterize the setting, or make it unique?

To help you picture all this, you might find it useful to create a **storyboard**, which is a visual representation, rather like a comic strip, of the series of individual shots and of the scenes that these will make up.

Here's a practical example:

- In the first shot – or frame of the storyboard – you could present the main character of the story and the setting.
- The second shot could be about the main character's fragility, their fears, or about the qualities that will allow them to become a superhero.
- The third shot could tell us about the transformation: the creation of a mask, a costume.
- The fourth shot might, for example, show the superhero's special powers and how these enable him or her to overcome their fears.
- The short could end with a final scene in which we see how happy the main character is, and how the transformation has changed their world for the better.

Now let your imagination run wild, put your pen to paper and draw on all your superpowers to write a fantastic screenplay!

Have fun and see you for the next episode!

P.S. if you like, send us your screenplay and/or storyboard, we'll be delighted to check your work and give you a little bit of extra advice!
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