

Review of Sentient UK version 1 (Dec 31 2019)

Teaser.

Good dramatic start. Quickly sets up questions over the relationships we see. We don't have any idea WHY Jack is doing what he is doing but as the red storm takes over from his actions it does not seem to matter. Provides an early summary of Marley's flaws and 'hero' potential. Switch to "Nuclear site" gives clue to bigger problems ahead.

ACT 1

Our 'hero' has survived.

Switch to nuclear site... "terrorists maybe.." – we suppose it could be but suspect not?

Back to Marley...

[Halfway down page 13. Grammatical error – doesn't really matter as it is not dialogue! – but should be "neither vehicle *is* going anywhere fast"]

Page 14 – I had assumed "Dillon" is a boy of 14. ... but "...as Dillon cleans her teeth" – I assume Dillon is not cleaning Marley's teeth, that would be odd!? Becomes clear that Dillon is name of a girl a paragraph later...

[So I looked it up... "The name Dillon is a boy's name of Irish origin meaning "loyal". Different origin from the Welsh Dylan, but increasingly used as a variant spelling to honor Bob Dylan or Dylan Thomas" – also... "The name Dillon is a girl's name of Irish origin meaning "loyal". With both the Dillon and Dylan spellings, usage of this gender-neutral name runs about ten to one boys to girls. But Dylan is used about 20 times as often as Dillon for both genders."]

I think the flashbacks in the shop (page 18) **should** work OK – just not 100% sure as I read them?

Also, I am not sure about "Marley **bolts** for the door" The evidence so far suggests she is in tight control, even if worried by what is happening. She is protecting her younger (slightly disturbed?) sister, so would be pushing ALL doubts to the back of her mind to be reviewed later and being 'strong' as the protector (I suspect!?) – such doubts may flood back later when or if they become "safer". Her acquisition of the belt and the useful tools suggest consideration of potential problems and 'leadership qualities'.

Flashback at the docs does work (page 19).

ACT 2

The action sequence of the bus works well as an indicator of widespread disruption in a countryside setting. Also adds to the set of problems Marley and Dillon are having to cope with.

The words "creepo central" halfway down page 24 are unnecessary and just seem naively odd!

"Marley sets off, one arm around Bock, guiding him. Dillon, with a last look at the lake, follows on."

This seems wrong – I think Marley would give the guidance task to Dillon and get them to "stay close"...

I like the `list` of accidents etc. as an indication of a big problem becoming noticeably bigger as more of the population have clearly been transformed to ash. However there seems to be a `continuity glitch`. My reading of Jack's original arrival at the family home made me think it was evening – but the pile of walking sticks and backpacks suggest more the middle of the day, if a walking club was out and about?

Cat-food on the pavement in town – nice touch for English audience of animal lovers!

Hospital and ambulance – page 30

Marley's answer to the girl Imogen from the ambulance... "Dead, do you understand me" strikes me as over the top – the sort of thing you might say if you were on the verge of "losing it" which I think she is definitely not.

Then we meet Piers. Sadly, I don't like him (probably not meant to!) but the main reason is that he is rather too much of a caricature, rather than a character.

The arrival of Gavin in the Jaguar fits in with the self-centred nature of Gavin and Piers, but also seems a bit casual in the face of impending doom additional to the actual doom they have all already faced. I feel the need for more convincing that these particular humans would react this way.

ACT 3

Catching up with Fitz makes an interesting change of pace. Fitz is also close to a caricature but adds a strand of humour which lightens the doom even though with dark humour. The reinforcement about vehicles not working is useful to strengthen our understanding of what is going on, as is the knowledge that all of Fitz's previous `mates` are dead too. Question is whether Fitz actually dies (or will he reappear?)

Page 43 – I hope we will get additional background to boost the knowledge Rahul has done as much as he can but is failing to contain the meltdown.... (Sizzling radioactive rods in the nuclear reactor; bursting steam pipes, etc...?)

Again, I like the hope that Sam may still be alive – we need some optimism by now.

ACT 4

Page 45

"Uh-oh Religious nutter alert" adds nothing to the script – delete.

On the other hand, I like the introduction of Imogen as quick-thinking group saviour.

When Marley and group get to the quayside, I am not sure why there is only one boat? If the population has been killed off in the huge numbers suggested, then, depending where we are now if there is one sailing dinghy there should be more (*except that now I have checked on Google Earth – if it is Ravenscale or Haverigg – neither of these places have many boats around!!*)

Underground bunker has potential for future story.

Marley at the quayside (p 50) "QUENTIN (40s), a man whose pleasure is to disagree no matter what, and HARRIET (30s), materfamilias and the voice of reason." – not sure you need these descriptors

within the script, maybe as a set of notes to accompany, let us find out what they are like from their comments and actions.

Walking across Morecombe Bay works as an idea.

Getting established in the bunker is OK

The intrusion of a brief scene back at Marley`s house needs **more info** to be meaningful, or can be left out for now. (same applies to crashed bus site a little while later – p54)

Across Morecombe Bay.... I am not sure, but I do not think that they would be “out of sight of the shore” at anytime during the crossing. They are on the flat and the shore would not be far enough away to be invisible because of earth`s curvature. (*I could be wrong – but think it unlikely – unless you are relying on the mist?*)

Nice touch that the breach at Sellafield seems to have been avoided.

ACT 5

The tension of arriving at the plane crash as the tide is turning works well – but left me a bit puzzled that the survivors are all “walking wounded” – presume there must also be some more badly injured folk between the walkers and the dead?

Intrigued by the tattoo issue...?

The tension of the final run to dry land followed by the arrival of “Jack” makes a decent “cliff-hanger”

FINAL OVERALL COMMENTS - 3 STARS

I was thinking for a while that it would end up as 4 stars, but finally decided on only three

Overall it seems to hang together as a reasonably believable `plot`, but as you will have picked up from the comments along the way, there are some uncomfortable disconnects for me. Some may be repaired fairly easily, some will be more difficult (*the absence of badly wounded passengers on the plane for example*)

As far as the people are concerned, I am least comfortable with Piers, especially as he seems to be shaping up to become a more important character. By and large, however, Marley seems believable as the main protagonist.

