Writing samples
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CITY OF ORPHANS

City of Orphans is a feature screenplay set in a war-torn city following a small group of survivors as they navigate the ruins. This excerpt introduces the unnamed Boy protagonist as he encounters a group of adults who take him and another child under their protection. The story explores themes of found family, sacrifice, and hope amid destruction.

EXT. BOMBED OUT CITY - DAY

The streets are filled with rubble.

A BOY with sad grey eyes walks through the street, humming.

He kneels at the side of the street, and picks up a dusty pack of bubblegum. He wipes the grime off its face and pockets it.

REINER
Kid.

The boy looks up, and sees a copper-haired man in a dirty suit kneeling behind what used to be the corner of a building.

REINER (cont'd)
(motioning)
Save me a piece, eh? Come on.

The boy takes a step back.

GUNFIRE sprays along the pile of rubble behind the boy. He panics and runs around the corner.

Reiner picks up the boy and runs with him down an alleyway.

INT. CRAMPED CELLAR - NIGHT

A bomb SHOCK sways and jitters a small light hanging inside the stale cellar, which is coated in a layer of creme white dust.

The boy chews bubble gum while sitting on a wine barrel.

A bit of dust shaken from the cellar ceiling falls on the boys head and shoulders.

He coughs and then swallows the bubble gum.

He takes out the whole pack, then swallows another piece of bubble gum, then another.

Another bomb SHOCK shakes dust on him, then the light jitters one last time, and goes OUT.

GUNFIRE and SHOUTS erupt outside.

EXT. DESTROYED HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

SILENCE

The boy creaks the cellar doors open, and ash covered debris falls onto the floor beyond.

He is quite covered in quite a lot of ash.

SALLY (O.S.)
This one doesn’t look burnt too bad.

The boy pulls the cellar doors back shut.

INT. CRAMPED CELLAR - DAY

Light creaks through into the cellar.

The boy looks through the crack.

TRAVIS (O.S.)
Kitchen’s gone.

SVEN, wearing clothes from a dirt-caked western, and IRA, a short woman of grand fashion, walk into view.

SVEN (O.S.)
Cellar!

IRA (O.S.)
Wait.

Ira tugs Sven into another room.

The boy searches through the crack as he hears the indistinct chatter of three or four people from beyond the cellar door.

The chatter stops. Then TRAVIS, a bony-faced man with wild hair, points a revolver at the cellar door.

TRAVIS (O.S.)
(shouting)
Come out or we’ll shoot.

The boy crawls back into the darkness of the cellar.

SALLY (O.S.)
Travis!

TRAVIS
Do it.

The cellar door flings open, and standing there is Travis pointing a gun.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
It’s a kid!

SVEN
What?

TRAVIS
(holstering)
Hey it’s okay, we’re just freeloaders.

SVEN
You got any food?

INT. DESTROYED HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Sven blows a bubblegum bubble, which pops.

He spies a bomber plane through a large hole in the ceiling.

INT. DESTROYED HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

SALLY, a rustic woman with a broad nose and short hair, sits on her hands on the third step of a blown-up staircase. Ira stands on the fourth, nervously surveying the hole where there should’ve been a fifth and sixth.

SALLY
Our chances might be better here.

IRA
What about your kid.

SALLY
What?

IRA
When your bo was arguing with the shelter guards to let you in he was screaming you were pregnant.

SALLY
Dammit Travis.

IRA
Are you not?

SALLY
No.

IRA
Well, we won’t have that choice if we don’t get out of here.

SALLY
Maybe.

IRA
Sally, if we don’t leave tonight we’re going to miss it.

INT. DESTROYED HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Everyone rests in a lazy slump except Sven, whose boots creak as he paces the dusty foyer.

TRAVIS

Are you from here?

The boy nods.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
Do you know where your parents are?

The boy nods.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
Is it nearby?

The boy nods.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
Should we take you to them?

The boy looks at Travis’s gun. Travis follows his eyes. They’re dead.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
You ever shoot a gun?

The boy looks at Travis in silence.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
This one’s not loaded. It’s never been loaded actually. I don’t even know how to shoot it, not smart anyway.

SVEN
You say we could all fit in that there cellar, kid?

The boy looks to Travis and shrugs.

TRAVIS
He doesn’t know.

SVEN
What’s your name kid?

The boy looks at his shoes.

TRAVIS
He doesn’t know that either, hey how about we play a game Sven, all three of us?

SVEN
Those bombers are circling. Unless you’re thinking human tetris, we might want to start looking for better shelter.

A small girl’s loud CRYING comes from outside.

EXT. BOMBED OUT CITY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Travis opens the door, and sees a dirt-covered young GIRL with a burnt, bald scalp standing in the rubble of the building across the street.

TRAVIS
Hey!

The girl continues CRYING loudly.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
Hey hey! It’s okay, it’s okay!

Continues.

INT. DESTROYED HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The girl continues to moan in pain while Ira uses tweezers to pluck little bits of debris lodged in the girl’s eyebrow.

INT. DESTROYED HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

The girl’s moans are muffled through the walls. Travis and Sally stand nooked in a corner, real intimate.

TRAVIS
I can’t go Sally.

SALLY
Your seasickness can't be that bad. Its only a few days boat ride.

TRAVIS
It’s the kids. What happens when we show up with two extras. Those damn smugglers will toss them overboard.

Travis peaks through the door out into the foyer. The boy is sitting on a couch with pillows over his ears. He makes eye contact with Travis.

SALLY
It’s gonna be a city of orphans Trav. These kids aren't our job.

TRAVIS
You know I don't think that way.

SALLY
Your mom’s gonna be pissed. And, maybe me too.

TRAVIS
I know. I’m sorry Sally. I’m really sorry.

SALLY
Yeah, well, you gotta be dad. But if you do this, I don’t know if we’ll have a chance at it together.

TRAVIS
Maybe not.

Travis puts his hand over Sally’s stomach. Sally tugs it away and hugs him.

INT. DESTROYED HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

SILENCE

The girl, now wrapped in bandages, holds her ears in her hands, pushing them around as she looks around and opens her mouth wide.

She looks at Ira and Sven talking, but she and we can hear nothing.

She looks at the boy, who is staring from across the room.

The boy looks at her and the world has sound; The girl makes TONES, newly deaf. We enter mid-conversation:

IRA
Sven, you're going to die, and I'm just not going to cry about it. Why in a million years go to the front?

SVEN
Those last folks saw pamphlets downtown. They said we're winning. We're winning Ira.

IRA
Yeah so what.

SVEN
I figure I ought to get 'em back, for Sammy.

IRA
Yeah well Sammy ain't your girlfriend-- I'm pregnant.

SVEN
You ain't shit.

EXT. BOMBED OUT TOWN CENTER - NIGHT

Lit by a burning building across the street, the four adults and two children scurry along the wall, and stop at the corner.

In the town center, there are three paths, one blocked by rubble.

SVEN
This is it.

Ira shakes the boy's hand.

IRA
It’s been nice meeting you little sir.

Travis and Ira hug.

TRAVIS
Listen Ira, she can take care of herself, but you ought to keep Sally safe, alright?

IRA
I’ll keep her in her life jacket.

Sally and Sven hug.

SALLY
I hope you find your brother okay.

SVEN
Oh I bet he’s crushing ‘em under his boot.

Travis kneels down to the girl.

TRAVIS
(touching his ears)
Can you hear now?

The girl shakes her head.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
(signing in hand language)
Do you know sign?

The girl stares blankly.

He stands and holds her hand. GUNFIRE rings out a distance away. Everyone crouches and looks astute. The girl’s eyes widen and she looks at their faces in fear.

SILENCE

The boy holds Ira’s hand, and she grabs Sven’s arm.

IRA
(to Sven)
Riviera, May 3rd, 2pm.

SVEN
Riviera, May 3rd, 2pm.

IRA
You better be there damn it. You know I won’t wait.

SVEN
I know hun.

Sally and Travis cling to one another out of fear, and love.

SALLY
Trav.

Sven takes the girl’s hand from Travis. Travis faces Sally and looks into her eyes.

SALLY (cont'd)
I’m gone.

TRAVIS
I’ll get you. I’ll get them safe and then I’ll get you.

Travis reaches in his pocket and takes out a shiny black button.

TRAVIS (cont'd)
It fell off my jacket.

He hands it to her. She bites her lip.

SALLY
You’re always falling apart.

They smile.

Qareen - Episode 1 Boss Encounter

Qareen is an adventure game set in an arabesque dystopian future where the last remnants of humanity live under the control of a theocracy of psychedelic angels. This excerpt showcases a pivotal boss encounter where the protagonist Sherene confronts the angel Qaabid. The script demonstrates how gameplay and narrative can be integrated to create emotional impact.

INT. QAABID'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Azaiza works at a darkly tinted, circular mirror suspended in mid-air. A saturnine owl-like creature in the vaug style is reflected in the mirror, as if shrouded in a black fog.

OWL
...organized for thirteen years in-

AZAIZA
Sherene? I-I thought you were.

SHERENE
Azaiza- Let me use the mirror.

AZAIZA
O-of course.

She steps aside.

OWL
Is there an inquiry?

SHERENE
Tell me about Faqqua.

OWL
That will require authorization.

Sherene and BU6A exchange a glance. BU6A spinflips, PULSING energy into the mirror. The owl GLITCHES emotionlessly.

.....

OWL (cont'd)
Project Faqqua is an operation to infiltrate the North organization.

SHERENE
And the liaison?

OWL
Hashim Said, role unknown. Surveillance in Al-Hutamaat is ongoing.

AZAIZA
The North!?

SHERENE
What do you know about him?

OWL
Discussions of a powerful new weapon system were intercepted twelve-

The mirror SHATTERS into a million pieces.

The immense form of Qaabid RISES from beyond the terrace, bassy pulses EMANATING. Qareen RISES beside him.

Sherene, BU6A and Azaiza take a step back, **caught.**

AZAIZA
Qaabid!

Qaabid's hum BRIGHTENS INTO A ROAR, his energy rings FLAMING and CIRCLING FIERCLY. Sherene and Qareen lock eyes, then:

QAABID
You should've stayed in the dust.

From Qaabid's energy HURLS a gemstone **BOULDER.**

Azaiza TACKLES us out of the way. We SLAM into the ground.

As Qaabid charges up, BU6A SPIN-FLIPS, energy FORMING into a concealing hedge of tall vaug grasses around the ring.

AZAIZA
(whispering)
Move!

We sneak through the tall grasses around the ring.

QAABID
So you have learned the truth.

Another boulder HURLS through an empty patch of grass, CRASHING LOUDLY. Qaabid is firing blind.

QAABID (cont'd)
But do you know why?

Another boulder CRASHES.

QAABID (cont'd)
In the past, everyone dreamt of a kingdom reserved only for themselves.

A boulder CRASHES within *feet* of the group.

QAABID (cont'd)
Each person felt princely; And thought everyone else a usurper. You never could have known peace.

QAABID (cont'd)
So we took all your bloody crowns, and we *shattered them*.
...
Now there *is* true peace, because *all belongs to Al-Haala*.

Two boulders CRASH in front of and behind us.

QAABID (cont'd)
There you are.

Qaabid's immense form HOVERS CLOSE, his energy ROARING.

The jig is up. Sherene stands to face him.

SHERENE
I know we're flawed, but domination is not peace. Build a community where *everyone is lifted up,* and tell them the truth! *That's* how you build trust, *that* builds peace.

Qaabid's bulk of swirling horns HOVERS EVEN CLOSER.

...

Everyone holds their breath for Qaabid to speak, then:

QAABID
That will never happen.
...
We are organized.
We are willing to kill.
We live forever.

Everyone hangs in silent tension.

AZAIZA
P-people will find out on their own.

Qaabid turns slightly to face Azaiza.

QAABID
Then they will fall to their knees,
or *they will die*.
...
What will you do?

A boulder-sized gem hovers into place, ready to launch.

Azaiza hesitates, SHIVERS with mortal fear, then KNEELS.

Sherene looks away from her, hurt.

QAABID (cont'd)
A little fear is all I need...

Qaabid SPARKS a mysterious energy INTO Azaiza:

Her fearful shivering INTENSIFIES INTO MANIA, and she TRANSFORMS into a hyena-esque ghoul, a frightened beast.

Sherene steps back in shock!

QAABID (cont'd)
Amazing how easily terror turns you
into beasts.

A portal CRACKS open above the platform, wind BLASTING Sherene to the floor. The ghoul STRIKES at nothing.

Qaabid ASCENDS into the portal, and just before he disappears within, he says:

QAABID (cont'd)
Shred her apart.

As it CRACKS shut, the ghoul that once was Azaiza emits a SCREAM OF TERROR that GROWS INTO A ROAR. It CHARGES us.

Dodging, we TUMBLE into the base of the bowl. The ghoul FALLS with us, YELPING in terror. This will be our arena.

BU6A flies to us.

SHERENE
Can you turn her!?

BU6A
It would kill her! Should I?

SHERENE
No!

In a mix of stealth and high-action evasion, Sherene narrowly avoids death at the ghoul's claws several times.

BU6A
I'm going to do it!

SHERENE
No!

The ghoul CLAWS Sherene, she SCREAMS, FALLS to the ground.

The ghoul RAISES its claw for the final blow, but then branches SPROUT from its body - its violent shivering freezes in place as its body TRANSFORMS into wood.

SHERENE (cont'd)
Azaiza!

The ghoul that once was Azaiza is now a towering olive tree.

BLOOD DRIPS from Sherene's wound, but she stands. She STUMBLES, righting herself, approaching the tree.

BU6A
I didn't know what to do! I'm sorry!
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

BU6A groans in grief, leaning toward sobs.

SHERENE
BU6A...

Sherene STARES into Azaiza's eyes, now only a pattern of knotted wood. She TURNS away.

She CLENCHES her fists, tears pooling in her eyes. They FALL like beads of shining silver. BU6A lands on her shoulder.

SHERENE (cont'd)
This isn't about the truth anymore...
We're nothing but beasts to them.
BU6A...

Sherene SOBS. They embrace in a deep shared sorrow.

FADE OUT

THE HEAP

The Heap is a feature screenplay set on a trash processing station in deep space. When a catastrophic accident destroys part of the station, a small crew must navigate the dangerous debris field to reach safety. This excerpt follows workers Rhea and Trevor as they discover the disaster and attempt to survive increasingly desperate odds.

EXT. GARBAGE HILL - DAY

We see nothing but garbage: All that is worthless as far as the eye can see. The sky is a weak yellow color, almost black - this is some alien moon.

As we track along, we hear flames CRACKLING and see bits of flaming trash: far-flung debris from:

A massive shrieking firestorm - hell-like - tens of square miles of garbage ablaze. The flames are yellowish, toxic, lighting up huge pillars of black smoke.

From behind the pillars we see an object falling from space, breaking up into a million small fireballs.

The cluster strikes in the distance, FLASHING. The shockwave races toward us silently, then BLOWS out the firestorm.

A new firestorm has begun where the fireball landed in the distance.

We look up into the yellow-black sky, and center on another falling space object

CUT TO:

EXT. GARBAGE PLANET - SPACE

The falling space object is a gigantic cluster of compacted garbage: a **TRASHTEROID** if you will.

It starts to burn at the edge of the atmosphere, but we leave it behind.

We enter a montage of sweeping bird's eyes across the planet's many landscapes:

<u>BEGIN OPENING TITLES</u>

Each region has the signs of yuck: Spotted blackish browns and toxic clouds coat regions that look like mold, burnt hair or dirty white snow. But from space, the land is beautiful: those sweeping and intricate vistas have the sublime of massive scale and the grace of sheening sunlight.

They're like an endless supply of Jackson Pollock paintings: beauty emerging from chaotic filth.

TITLE CARD - **THE HEAP**

END OPENING TITLES

EXT. SPACE

Before us is the trash processing station **MARKED DIFFERENCE.**

It's massive, yet dwarfed by the partially constructed TRASHTEROID at its end. Looming over both is the 10km long series of accelerator rings that extend from the station.

The greenish gas giant **23 VOLANS B** looms gargantuan behind, while the tiny yellow moon known as **THE HEAP** hangs nearby.

INT. TRASHTEROID

We are inside the trashteroid. It's like a cubist blastoma, chunks of compacted trash slotted together like bricks.

Thick cables hang through the open interior. Along these transit industrial **TRAWLERS**, each one bigger than a house, hauling yet larger trash cubes to the edges of the trashteroid.

We come close on a trawler decorated with red flames on brown. On it's side is etched the moniker: **The Flaming Turd.**

INT. FLAMING TURD CABIN - CONTINUOUS

TREVOR and RHEA sit in the trawler cabin. Their space suits look cheap, uncomfortable, dirty.

Rhea pulls off her space helmet and takes a deep breath.

TREVOR
Bro what are you doing we're going to be there in like 4 minutes.

RHEA
I hate this fucking suit. Spandex was a fucking stupid idea.

TREVOR
Yo, you can complain when you grow some balls alright. When you know how it feels to have your junk squeezed back up into your body cavity.

RHEA
Fucking gross man.

TREVOR
No, you know what's gross. This fucking trash.

RHEA
Yeah fuck this trash.

TREVOR
Fuck this trash!

Rhea sighs, and attaches her helmet back on. Beat.

TREVOR (OVER COMMS)
Why you even here Rhea?

Rhea sighs even harder.

TREVOR
Come on-

RHEA
Nope. Nope. No backstory for the trash man. Where I come from? I formed from the garbage. Fuck this trash...

INT. DOCKING BAY

About sixty DOCK WORKERS cram the bay, shouting in protest:

DOCK WORKERS
FUCK THIS TRASH! FUCK THIS TRASH! FUCK THIS TRASH!

They surround a large vessel, a scuffed metal container. Its side opens, dumping thousands of pounds of dirty diapers.

The DOCK WORKERS boo and guffaw. The crowd is heating up.

A TATTED WORKER is strutting across the bay with violent intent toward a locked crane control booth.

TATTED WORKER
Fuck this fucking ass shit.

The Tatted Worker smashes the window, pulls the door open, and slaps a lever sideways.

A several-ton industrial clamp servos at incredible speed across the bay, striking into the large vessel's upper half.

The impact is immensely energetic, explosively ejecting high-speed shrapnel into the crowd.

The clamp breaks loose from its gantry. Its momentum carries it right into the wall of the docking bay, bashing open a 2 meter hole to open space.

The crowd is engulfed in the tornado of explosive decompression.