
Page Count:	133	Genre:	Drama/Romance/War
		Format:	Feature Screenplay
		Location:	Casablanca, Morocco
		Time Period:	World War II

Logline

In World War II Casablanca, a cynical American nightclub owner must choose between rekindling his past love and helping her fugitive husband escape the Nazis, leading him to confront his own cynicism and make a life-altering sacrifice.

Summary

In the midst of World War II, American expatriate Rick Blaine runs a nightclub in Casablanca, a hub for refugees seeking escape to America. When his former lover Ilsa arrives with her husband, resistance leader Victor Laszlo, Rick is torn between helping them escape and his unresolved feelings for Ilsa. As tensions rise with the arrival of Nazi Major Strasser, Rick must navigate a web of political intrigue, personal sacrifice, and moral dilemmas to decide the fate of those he cares about.

Synopsis

During World War II, Casablanca becomes a vital transit point for refugees fleeing Europe to reach the Americas. Rick, an American expatriate, owns Rick's Café Américain, a hotspot for a diverse clientele, including refugees, thieves, and officials. Cynical and detached, Rick claims neutrality in the conflict raging around him.

One evening, Ugarte, a small-time crook, entrusts Rick with letters of transit stolen from murdered German couriers. These letters allow free passage and are highly coveted. Shortly after, Ugarte is arrested in Rick's café, leaving the letters hidden in Sam's piano.

That night, Rick is stunned when Ilsa, a woman from his past in Paris, walks into his café with her husband, Victor Laszlo. Laszlo is a renowned leader of the Resistance, seeking escape from the Nazis pursuing him. Rick's bitterness towards Ilsa surfaces as he avoids her attempts to talk.

Meanwhile, Major Strasser arrives in Casablanca to prevent Laszlo's escape. He pressures Captain Renault to find a way to detain him. Laszlo and Ilsa attempt to secure exit visas but are denied due to Laszlo's status. They learn that Rick may have the letters of transit.

During a tense evening at the café, German officers begin singing patriotic songs. In defiance, Laszlo leads the band and patrons in singing "La Marseillaise," overwhelming the Germans. An infuriated Strasser orders Renault to close the café.

Later, Ilsa confronts Rick alone, begging for the letters. When he refuses, she threatens him with a gun but cannot shoot. She confesses her love and explains that when they met in Paris, she believed her husband was dead. Upon discovering he was alive, she left Rick without explanation.

Moved by her honesty, Rick decides to help. He agrees to assist Ilsa and Laszlo in escaping. Rick concocts a plan, misleading Renault into thinking he will betray Laszlo. At the airport, Rick surprises everyone by ensuring Ilsa boards the plane with her husband.

As Major Strasser arrives to stop them, Rick shoots him to protect their escape. Renault, impressed by Rick's actions, covers for him when the police arrive, telling them to "round up the usual suspects." As the plane disappears into the night, Rick and Renault walk away together, hinting at a new beginning and alliance.

Rick's selfless act signifies his transformation from a jaded cynic to a man willing to sacrifice his happiness for a greater cause.

Evaluation

The script presents a compelling narrative set in Casablanca during World War II, centered around Rick's Café Americain as a hub of diverse characters, intrigue, and emotional depth (Scene 12). The inclusion of a complex lead character, Rick, who is torn between personal desires and greater goods, offers a strong emotional arc (Scenes 23 and 53). The script features a blend of romance, political tension, and moral dilemmas, which creates a rich tapestry of conflict and character development (Scenes 21 and 49). The narrative's focus on refugees' desperation to escape and the moral choices faced by individuals in a time of war adds depth and universality to the story (Scenes 3 and 9). The interplay between Rick, Ilsa, and Laszlo provides a poignant love triangle that drives the emotional core of the script (Scenes 53 and 66). The script's structure, moving between past and present through flashbacks, enriches the character backgrounds and motivations (Scenes 23 to 29). Overall, the script offers a multifaceted story that could appeal to audiences seeking a blend of romance, drama, and historical context.

Market Potential

The script has strong market potential due to its combination of romance, drama, and wartime intrigue. The central love triangle between Rick, Ilsa, and Laszlo offers a powerful emotional hook that resonates throughout the story (Scenes 53 and 66). The setting in war-torn Casablanca provides a backdrop of high stakes and political tension, appealing to audiences interested in historical dramas (Scenes 1 and 11). The themes of sacrifice, moral ambiguity, and personal versus greater good explored through Rick's character development enhance the script's depth (Scenes 23 and 71). The inclusion of suspenseful moments, such as the tension during Ugarte's arrest (Scene 20) and the climactic airport scene (Scene 73), adds to its commercial appeal. The script's exploration of universal themes amid a dramatic historical context positions it well for a wide audience.

Production Feasibility

The production requires recreating 1940s Casablanca and Paris, necessitating period-accurate sets, costumes, and props (Scenes 12 and 24). Scenes involving large crowds and police roundups, such as the dramatic chase and shooting in the streets (Scene 3) and the passionate singing of 'La Marseillaise' in Rick's Café (Scene 49), will require significant coordination and extras. The script includes action sequences, such as Ugarte's attempted escape and arrest within the café (Scene 20), and a tense shootout resulting in Strasser's death at the airport (Scene 73). The presence of an airplane in multiple scenes, including the fog-shrouded airport departure (Scene 70), adds complexity to production logistics. Flashback scenes set in Paris (Scenes 23 to 29) introduce additional locations and period settings that may impact scheduling and budget.

Talent Opportunities

The role of Rick offers a rich opportunity for a leading actor to portray a complex character with a significant emotional journey, from a cynical nightclub owner to someone who makes a profound personal sacrifice (Scenes 23 and 71). Ilsa's character provides a strong female lead torn between love and duty, which could attract top actresses interested in nuanced, emotionally driven roles (Scenes 53 and 54). Laszlo's portrayal as a committed resistance leader allows for a strong supporting role that embodies courage and moral fortitude (Scenes 33 and 51). The dynamic between Rick and Renault offers opportunities for actors to explore witty and morally ambiguous relationships (Scenes 16 and 61). The script's dramatic and romantic elements provide fertile ground for directors adept at handling complex narratives with emotional depth.

Recommendations

To optimize production feasibility, consider consolidating some of the crowd scenes or simplifying locations to reduce logistical complexity and costs, such as combining scenes that depict police roundups (Scenes 3 and 6). Streamlining the number of settings in Paris during the flashbacks could also aid in budget management (Scenes 24 to 28). Enhancing the emotional stakes in the central love triangle by further developing the interactions between Rick, Ilsa, and Laszlo could increase the script's appeal to audiences seeking deep emotional narratives (Scenes 53 and 66). Emphasizing the themes of sacrifice and moral choices may resonate strongly

with viewers and provide a compelling marketing hook. Adjusting scenes with significant production demands, like the foggy airport departure (Scene 70), to be more manageable could help in controlling costs without sacrificing narrative impact.

Characters

Name	Details	Description
RICK	Role: Lead Lines: 328 Scenes: 37 Gender: Male Age: 40 Race/Ethnicity: White	Rick is an American expatriate who owns a nightclub in Casablanca. He is a cynical and worldly man with a mysterious past, having fought for causes before but now claims to only look out for himself. Despite his jaded exterior, he harbors deep feelings, especially for Ilsa, a woman from his past. Throughout the film, Rick is forced to confront his feelings and decide between personal happiness and greater goods.
ILSA	Role: Lead Lines: 136 Scenes: 25 Gender: Female Age: 30 Race/Ethnicity: White	Ilsa is a beautiful and enigmatic woman whose past love affair with Rick drives much of the narrative. Torn between loyalty to her husband Victor Laszlo, a leader in the resistance, and her rekindled feelings for Rick, Ilsa's actions are driven by love and duty. She is caring, intelligent, and embodies the emotional heart of the story.
RENAULT	Role: Strong Support Lines: 173 Scenes: 20 Gender: Male Age: 45 Race/Ethnicity: White	Captain Louis Renault is the French Prefect of Police in Casablanca. He is charming yet morally flexible, aligning himself with whoever holds power. An opportunist, Renault enjoys the amenities his position affords him and offers a mix of wit and cynicism. However, underneath his often corrupt demeanor, he possesses an unexpected sense of loyalty.
LASZLO	Role: Strong Support Lines: 126 Scenes: 22 Gender: Male Age: 40 Race/Ethnicity: White	Victor Laszlo is a charismatic and influential resistance leader against the Nazis. His dedication to his cause is unwavering, and he remains courageous despite being pursued across the world. His relationship with Ilsa is marked by deep respect and partnership, though his primary focus is on his political mission.
STRASSER	Role: Support Lines: 73 Scenes: 10 Gender: Male Age: 45* Race/Ethnicity: White	Major Strasser is a German officer stationed in Casablanca during World War II. Tasked with ensuring political compliance, he is determined to capture Resistance leader Victor Laszlo. Strasser embodies the ruthless efficiency of the Nazi regime, showcasing an unwavering commitment to his mission. He comes across as calculated, yet he underestimates the resilience of those around him.
FERRARI	Role: Support Lines: 38 Scenes: 4 Gender: Male Age: 55* Race/Ethnicity: White	The owner of the competing bar, The Blue Parrot, Ferrari is an influential figure within Casablanca's black market. Known for his shrewdness, he represents the more memorable 'entrepreneurs' of the time, navigating political alliances to maintain his business. Despite his morally ambiguous dealings, a calculating charm infuses all his interactions.
SAM	Role: Support Lines: 34 Scenes: 9 Gender: Male Age: 45* Race/Ethnicity: Black or African American	Sam is a seasoned pianist who works at Rick's Café in Casablanca. Known for playing the piano and his memorable rendition of 'As Time Goes By,' he possesses a warm and friendly demeanor. Sam is a loyal friend to Rick, offering companionship and music that underscore the emotional undercurrents of the café's patrons. His presence in the film adds a layer of nostalgia and emotional resonance.

Name	Details	Description
CARL	Role: Support Lines: 30 Scenes: 11 Gender: Male Age: 45 Race/Ethnicity: White	Carl is a jovial German refugee and a loyal waiter at Rick's Café. Known for his humorous demeanor, Carl is helpful and dedicated, always ensuring the smooth operation of the café. Though a background character, his presence adds an element of warmth and humor to the story, illustrating the diverse community in Casablanca.
UGARTE	Role: Support Lines: 26 Scenes: 3 Gender: Male Age: 40-47 Race/Ethnicity: White/European*	Ugarte is a small-time crook, a dealer in illegal exit visas. Despite his criminal activities, he tries to maintain a facade of friendliness and trustworthiness. His arrest is one of the catalysts of the story, underscoring the dangers and desperation in Casablanca.
ANNINA	Role: Support Lines: 23 Scenes: 6 Gender: Female Age: 22* Race/Ethnicity: White	Annina is a young, attractive refugee from Bulgaria, struggling to secure safe passage to America with her husband. Her innocence and naivety are tempered by the desperation of their situation, as they navigate the perilous landscape of occupied Casablanca. Annina's determination to protect her husband emphasizes her courage amidst adversity.
YVONNE	Role: Support Lines: 14 Scenes: 4 Gender: Female Age: 25* Race/Ethnicity: White	Yvonne is a young, beautiful French woman struggling with emotional turmoil in Casablanca. Her interactions with Rick reveal past romantic connections, and her attempt to navigate her feelings amidst the chaos around her often leads her into the company of German officers, adding layers to her character's complexity.
BERGER	Role: Cameo Lines: 14 Scenes: 1 Gender: Male Age: 54 Race/Ethnicity: White	A seasoned underground operative, deftly passing information under the guise of everyday interactions.
EUROPEAN	Role: Cameo Lines: 11 Scenes: 3 Gender: Male Age: 50* Race/Ethnicity: White	A quick-to-disappear character who provides an air of intrigue and risk with his antics. Though not deeply explored, he is a reminder of the precarious situations many faced during this era.

*Values for age, race, and ethnicity that are not explicitly stated in the script are inferred.

Themes

Love and Sacrifice	Explores the complexities of love and the sacrifices made for the greater good, as seen in Rick's decisions.
Moral Ambiguity	Characters navigate a morally complex world, making difficult choices that challenge their values and beliefs.
Resistance and Courage	Highlights the courage required to resist oppression and fight for freedom, embodied by Victor Laszlo.

Redemption	Rick's journey from a self-serving cynic to a selfless hero seeking redemption for past actions.
The Impact of War	Depicts the personal and societal upheaval caused by war, influencing characters' lives and decisions.

Writing Style

Structure: The narrative is well-structured, with a clear beginning, middle, and end, effectively building tension and emotional stakes.

Pacing: The pacing maintains a steady rhythm, balancing moments of tension with quieter, character-driven scenes.

Dialogue: The dialogue is sharp and memorable, capturing the wit and emotional complexity of the characters.

Formatting: The script is professionally formatted, with clear scene descriptions and character actions.

Conflict: The script effectively weaves personal and political conflicts, creating a rich tapestry of tension and drama.

Character Development: Characters are well-developed, with clear motivations and arcs, particularly Rick's journey from cynicism to selflessness.

Tone: The tone balances romance and drama, with an undercurrent of tension reflective of the wartime setting.

Directors

Desired Qualities

- Ability to balance intimate character moments with larger historical context
- Skill in directing ensemble casts and complex narratives
- Talent for capturing emotional depth and moral complexity

Examples

Director	Reason
Steven Spielberg	Known for his ability to blend historical events with personal stories, as seen in 'Schindler's List'.
Joe Wright	Renowned for his work on period dramas with strong emotional cores, like 'Atonement'.
Mira Nair	Her films often explore cultural and personal conflicts, similar to the themes in this script.
Fernando Meirelles	Known for his ability to handle complex narratives and character-driven stories, as in 'The Constant Gardener'.
Ritesh Batra	His work often focuses on intimate human stories set against broader backdrops, as seen in 'The Lunchbox'.

Comparable Titles

A romantic drama set against the backdrop of war, reminiscent of classic tales of love and sacrifice.

The English Patient	A wartime romance with themes of love, betrayal, and redemption, similar to the emotional depth in this script.
Gone with the Wind	A historical romance set during a tumultuous period, focusing on complex relationships and personal growth.
The Pianist	A story of survival and resistance during World War II, highlighting the personal struggles amidst the larger conflict.
Out of Africa	A sweeping romance set in a foreign land, exploring themes of love, loss, and cultural conflict.
The African Queen	A wartime adventure with a focus on unlikely alliances and personal transformation, echoing the script's themes of love and sacrifice.