THE SCRIPT READER

CHEAT SHEET CHECKLIST

PREMISE

TITLE:
- ☐ The title is misleading
- ☐ The title may cause offence

THEME:
- ☐ The overall theme or message is unclear
- ☐ There are too many themes
- ☐ Theme isn't reflected in the subplots
- ☐ The theme doesn't get resolved

ORIGINALITY:
- ☐ It's too similar to other produced material
- ☐ It's so unconventional, it's confusing
- ☐ The story is based on the writers boring life
- ☐ The story is a boring fact-based adaptation

LENGTH:
- ☐ The script is too long or too short
- ☐ Bad formatting has altered the page count
- ☐ Altering the page count will add desirability

BELIEVABILITY:
- ☐ Characters make implausible decisions
- ☐ There are noticeable plot holes

GENRE:
- ☐ Genre is unclear
- ☐ It doesn't add anything new to the genre
- ☐ There aren't enough genre conventions

TONE:
- ☐ The tone isn't immediately clear
- ☐ Tone isn't strong enough
- ☐ Tone is inconsistent

MEDIUM:
- ☐ It doesn't fit the chosen format
- ☐ The concept doesn't have legs

MARKETABILITY:
- ☐ It only has niche appeal
- ☐ It won't appeal to its target audience
- ☐ It's trying to please too many people
- ☐ It lacks international appeal
- ☐ There's a lack of diversity

BUDGET:
- ☐ There are too many characters
- ☐ There are too many locations
- ☐ The writer sites copyrighted material

STRUCTURE

OPENING SEQUENCES:
- ☐ There's no hook
- ☐ The MC isn't in the first scene
- ☐ There's too much setup

STORY BEATS:
- ☐ The premise is unclear during the first act
- ☐ Turning points aren't clear on the page
- ☐ There's a weak point of no return
- ☐ The end hook is weak

SUBPLOTS:
- ☐ There's a distinct lack of subplots
- ☐ There are too many subplots
- ☐ Subplots aren't linked to the central story
- ☐ Subplots don't merge during the final act

SETUPS & PAYOFFS:
- ☐ Setups aren't paid off
- ☐ Payoffs aren't setup properly
- ☐ Setups are too obvious

SCENE STRUCTURE:
- ☐ The plot doesn't move forward
- ☐ Scenes repeat needless information
- ☐ Scenes have no conflict
- ☐ Scenes are too long

NARRATIVE DEVICES:
- ☐ Flashbacks are used unnecessarily
- ☐ Montages don't advance the plot
- ☐ Info is revealed in the wrong order
- ☐ The writer hasn't used the 'rule of three'

CHARACTER

CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS:
- ☐ Physical appearances are too detailed
- ☐ Vital information is missing
- ☐ Action isn't revealing character
- ☐ Gender isn't immediately clear
- ☐ Character names are confusing
- ☐ Major characters haven't been named
- ☐ Characters are numbered instead of named

STAKES:
- ☐ There are no clear stakes
- ☐ The stakes aren't big enough
- ☐ The stakes don't increase throughout

CHARACTER ARC:
- ☐ The MC hasn't changed by the end
- ☐ Character arcs aren't believable
- ☐ The MC doesn't have enough actor bait

ANTAGONISTIC FORCE:
- ☐ There is no antagonistic character
- ☐ The antagonist isn't developed enough
- ☐ The antagonist lacks enough screen time
- ☐ The antagonist is a weak rival

GOALS:
- ☐ The MC has no clear goal
- ☐ The MC's goal isn't interesting enough
- ☐ The MC's motivations are unclear

FLAWS, WEAKNESSES, AND LIMITATIONS:
- ☐ The MC is too perfect
- ☐ The major flaw isn't tied to the central plot
- ☐ The MC's flaw doesn't become a strength

ROOT-ABILITY:
- ☐ The MC is too unlikable
- ☐ Characters are one-dimensional
- ☐ The cast lacks diversity
- ☐ It's unclear whose story it is
- ☐ Characters aren't emotionally engaging

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS:
- ☐ Secondary characters overshadow the MC
- ☐ Minor characters get more screen time
- ☐ Minor characters don't serve a purpose
- ☐ Secondary characters are one-dimensional

PASSIVE CHARACTERS:
- ☐ The MC isn't solving their own problems
- ☐ The MC doesn't drive change

DIALOGUE

EXPOSITION:
- ☐ There's too much dialogue
- ☐ Dialogue is too on-the-nose
- ☐ There's too much filler dialogue
- ☐ There's too much Q&A dialogue
- ☐ Dialogue repeats info we already know
- ☐ Wording is repetitive
- ☐ There's too much technical jargon

VOICE:
- ☐ Characters sound too alike
- ☐ Dialects and accents are overused
- ☐ Dialogue isn't realistic

PACE

DRAMATIC MOMENTUM:
- ☐ There are noticeable lulls in the story
- ☐ There are no 'catch your breath' moments
- ☐ Repetition of info hampers the pace
- ☐ There's a lack of white space on the page

THE SCRIPT READER

READABILITY

TITLE PAGE:
- [ ] There is no title page
- [ ] Contact details are missing
- [ ] The title page has unnecessary elements

PARENTHETICALS:
- [ ] Parentheticals are used unnecessarily
- [ ] Parentheticals are used too often

SCENE DESCRIPTION:
- [ ] Writing is novelistic
- [ ] Genre isn't reflected in the tone
- [ ] Orphans need to be cut
- [ ] Sentence structure is poor
- [ ] Dialogue is written in scene description
- [ ] There's too much scene description
- [ ] Scene description repeats information
- [ ] Vital info is missing or in the wrong order
- [ ] Actors are being over directed
- [ ] There's too much detail

FORMATTING:
- [ ] Standard industry layout is incorrect
- [ ] There are too many formatting errors
- [ ] Scene headings are confusing

PRESENTATION:
- [ ] There are huge paragraphs of text
- [ ] The script hasn't been proofread
- [ ] Scene headings are too long
- [ ] Bold or caps have been overused
- [ ] Exposition is confusing
- [ ] Character names are inconsistent
- [ ] There are 'unfilmables'
- [ ] The script needs more polish

OVER DIRECTING:
- [ ] There's too many camera directions
- [ ] There are unnecessary shot transitions

VISUALS:
- [ ] The writer is telling, not showing