Reader Comments:

by Mic

Standard Coverage Report

Type of Material: Short film script
Number of Pages: 18
Submitted By: WRITER
Submitted To: Mic
Coverage Date: 9/8/24

Title: SCRIPT TITLE
Author: WRITER
Circa: Present
Location: Small town
Genre: Drama

LOGLINE: When his son runs away to avoid his abuse, a father must change his ways in order to bring him home.

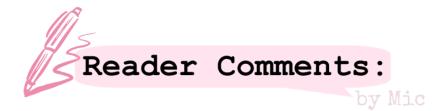|	Excellent	Good	Fair	Needs Work
Idea		x		
Story		x		
Characters			x	
Dialogue				x
Marketability		x		

Budget	
High	
Medium	x
Low	x

COMMENTS:

████████ features a strong thematic core that explores generational trauma, the cycle of abuse, and the weight of parental expectations. CHARACTER 1's emotional journey is well developed; we see his character transform from a disciplinarian blinded by his need to push his son toward success to a man filled with regret and seeking redemption. The script's exploration of trauma and abuse is compelling, offering a narrative that many audience members may resonate with, making this story highly impactful.

The script is at its strongest when it delves into CHARACTER 1's internal conflict and the consequences of his actions. The flashbacks that reveal his own abusive upbringing add depth to his character and give the audience a clear understanding of why he behaves the way he does. However, the script suffers from a few structural issues that hinder its overall impact.

The pacing in the first few pages could be tighter. In particular, it felt like, plot-wise, CHARACTER 2 could've run away after the first incident of abuse, instead of returning to school, failing again, then running away. After we see CHARACTER 1's actions the first time, we can already understand why CHARACTER 2 would want to run away, and since this is the inciting incident, it would be beneficial to ensure it happens as soon as possible so the story can truly begin sooner.

Another concern is it was unclear for the first 8 or so pages which character was the protagonist. The point of view often shifts between CHARACTER 2, CHARACTER 1, and CHARACTER 3, making it difficult to pinpoint whose story will be driving the narrative. While CHARACTER 1 clearly had the most room for change/growth of the three, he isn't fully established as the protagonist until around halfway into the story when he starts searching for CHARACTER 2 and is faced with multiple obstacles that directly challenge his flaw. By clarifying earlier on that CHARACTER 1 is the central character, the narrative will feel more cohesive and emotionally engaging from the start. Removing the scenes where CHARACTER 2 goes back to school and fails again can help resolve this by streamlining the narrative.

A couple elements of the plot raised some questions that weren't quite answered by the end. For example, when CHARACTER 1 sees the sign CHARACTER 2's classmates made for him, it seems strange that the teachers and other school faculty members didn't report CHARACTER 2 missing to the police, especially since the other students clearly know he's missing. This also brought the timeline of events into question – at this point, it seemed like CHARACTER 2 was only missing for a day, but if the students had enough time to be worried about him to the point where they made a big sign, he clearly had been missing for a while. There could be firmer answers to these plot points.

Lastly, the action description and dialogue both tend to contain more words than necessary to establish the main point. Many scene descriptions over-explain what the audience can already infer, making the script read much longer than the story actually is. For example, the opening scenes describe the settings and characters in great detail, but most of the information doesn't end up contributing to the plot or theme in a significant way. Similarly, the dialogue often has characters reiterating the same ideas in different ways – especially during arguments between CHARACTER 1 and CHARACTER 3. Simplifying these exchanges, and the action description, would help make the script more concise and effective throughout.

Overall, ████████ is an emotionally charged script with a strong message about the importance of breaking generational cycles of abuse. CHARACTER 1's journey to realizing his wrongdoings and making the first steps to break the cycle of abuse is powerful and has the potential to resonate deeply with audiences. With a few structural and narrative adjustments, this script could become an even more compelling story than it already is.