



3Rd Annual ScreenCraft Screenwriting Fellowship Evaluation

Author: Deborah Allen	Genre: COA Drama/Period	Date: 2.25.16	Score: 115/150
Title: Leonard Cohen Saved My Life			Reader: PM
Logline/ Synopsis: A precociously bright and sensitive fifteen-year-old goes has a life-changing experience when she is sent from suburban Nor Cal to a high-priced 'reform school', where she becomes the subject of abuse at the hands of a trusted faculty member...			

POINT	SCORE	FEEDBACK
Premise	8	LEONARD COHEN SAVED MY LIFE is a sometimes familiar but evocative, visually charged and engaging period/COA drama that merits further consideration.
Characterization	8	
Conflict	8	
Structure	8	The premise and tone of this piece could be described as DEAD POETS SOCIETY meets EASY RIDER (or even the classic ZABRISKIE POINT at certain junctures). Despite the fact that she's drawn rather heavily on these and other similarly themed genre films, the author adds enough in the way of fresh and interesting elements and an engaging period sensibility to make the concept work.
Dialogue	8	
Pacing	8	
Theme	8	
Tone	8	
Story/Plot Points	8	
Catharsis	7	
Voice/Originality	7	
Commercial Appeal	7	
Current Market Potential	7	
Casting Potential	8	The storyline of this screenplay has a solid plot and the pacing/structure are decent if a bit uneven at times. To her credit, the author here wastes no time in setting up her story by painting a convincing VALLEY OF THE DOLLS-ish Nor Cal suburban milieu in which the main character (and several of her school pals as well) quickly begin to chafe under their MAD MEN parents who just 'don't get it'. The narrative, however, takes a sharp turn early in the second act when this seemingly bright but emotionally troubled girl is abruptly packed off to a 'reform school' (which seems more like the cloistered ivy covered academy from SCHOOL TIES than anything else) where she ends up becoming the victim of a sexually abusive faculty member (who is portrayed as a priest or a minister, in a beat that is a little confusing to the audience.)
Format	7	
TOTAL POINTS	115/150	
		By the third act, the story arc completes itself when the girl and her boyfriend reunite after a harrowing experience with the law that forever sears her and makes her realize that she is not in Kansas anymore (so to speak). There are a few issues in the second and third acts that the author might want to think about addressing (and they are important ones), such as the denouement in which the troubled girl and her father have what feels like an instant emotional reconnection after what apparently has been months if not years of alienation.



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		<p>It seems a bit contrived and this is something that could have been executed more optimally in the screenplay. Also, the self-mutilation scenes are a little jarring and the audience never quite understands what is driving this girl to do this (particularly as there were no obvious instances of sexual abuse prior to her arrival at the 'reform school'.) A little more backstory could easily take care of this (was she molested before?) and maybe lead the audience to understand precisely what is driving this strange behavior.</p> <p>Overall, however, there are very strong elements here—particularly the main characters and the cool 1960s look and feel—which make this piece warrant further consideration.</p>
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