



Entry Type: Classic Notes (WeScreenplay)

Synopsis Included: Yes

Notes Date: July 27th, 2021

Analyst: TMHSR

Ranking: 98th Percentile

BLUE EIGHTEEN

Drama

Feature

111 Pages

by Michael Meyers

TOP 1%

OVERALL IMPRESSION

TOP 1%

CHARACTERS

TOP 1%

DIALOGUE

RATING

RECOMMEND

PLACED IN THE TOP 2%

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SYNOPSIS

Andre loses everything in the aftermath of the death of his young son, Peter, after he caused a car crash while looking at a naked photo of a woman who is not his wife. One night, he hears a dog barking incessantly at 12:18AM, to the point that he feels compelled to get up and investigate the distress. He discovers Beth overdosing in her apartment and saves her life. When Beth finally awakes from a coma, she lashes out at him for stopping her suicide attempt. While taking care of Beth's dog, Bailey, and watching over Beth's apartment while she is in the hospital, Andre discovers that she was scheduled to take a trip to Cedar Rapids, South Dakota for her daughter's wedding. After being shunned by Beth multiple times, Andre shows up to her apartment to offer a gun so she can finish the job that he interrupted, as well as Ding Dongs as a plan B. Beth reveals that she has been shunned by her family, including her daughter Alyssa, who chooses a life of luxury and easiness with her grandmother's clan over Beth. Andre convinces her to go to the wedding uninvited. Beth agrees but with the caveat that Andre will join her. On road, Andre reveals to Beth that he actually killed his son in an accident, when he had previously lied earlier to her saying it was leukemia. Beth almost leaves him, but he convinces her to give him one more chance. While sightseeing, Beth reveals to Andre that she was raped repeatedly by her grandfather as a child, and Beth's mom, Ruth, knew about it the whole time but did nothing because Howard provided for her and carried a prestigious name. Meanwhile, during wedding preparations, Alyssa shows signs of regret that her mother is not there after some of Ruth's friends make fun of Beth. Alyssa's uncle/Beth's cousin, Cal, who is close with Beth, questions Alyssa for not inviting her yet still inviting her dad. Beth blows up her grandfather's grave, and when she returns to the campsite with where Andre stayed, he stands up and she realizes that he was faking being crippled for sympathy. He claims it is his power, like Beth's beauty is her power. Beth bails on him for lying again. He calls her from the campsite claiming that he is in front of a train and tells her that he will be going to hunt her grandfather in hell. The phone freezes as the train is imminent, and when Beth rushes to the campground to find him, he appears on the side of the road alive, faking the suicide. Beth leaves him in the dust. The next day, Beth crashes Alyssa's wedding, and reveals to the entire congregation that she was raped by Howard and Ruth let it happen. Cal backs her up by revealing that he was also molested by Howard during a routine physical. And then the organist tells a story of Howard preying on her. Beth drags Ruth out of the church, and Alyssa tells Beth that she wants her to stay for the wedding. Beth sees Andre in the crowd. A lawyer approaches Ruth and Carter, Beth's dad, after the wedding telling them he can help with the imminent legal issues they will be facing. Alyssa and Beth have a past-due heart-to-heart at the church landing. Alyssa and her new husband go on their honeymoon, while Andre and Beth trek toward Colorado to visit Andre's brother, who he was seen avoiding at the beginning of the story in a clear dodge from facing the reality of his son's death.

OPENING THOUGHTS

Blue Eighteen is absolutely dripping with charisma, originality, and wit. It deals with heavy, devastating subject matter with grace but also humor. These characters are perfectly crafted and written in a way that could not be duplicated by anyone else.

CHARACTERS

The script owes a great deal of its success to these beautifully illustrated characters, the most pertinent of course being Andre and Beth. You can legitimately sense Andre's charm radiating off the page. And Beth is so perfectly jaded and broken yet also often speaks with a sarcastic and hilarious tone. Their sweet/bitter dynamic clashes perfectly and evolves organically as more is revealed about the two. The script makes them earn their need for each other. It unveils Beth's disturbing childhood and abusive marriage in flashbacks throughout the script, and even the quieter scenes simply contrasting young Beth to the suicidal woman she became break your heart in a more stoic way, e.g. the flashback on p. 86 showing the moment she likely got pregnant with Alyssa.

It does seem like the script's focus moves away from Andre a bit, even on their road trip. It might be more impactful if we also get to see dark flashbacks or moments of happiness from Andre's perspective, maybe showing him struggling with the weight of it all more ostensibly than we see on their trip, similar to Beth. That would provide a nice counter force moving parallel with Beth.

The secondary characters are also painted with depth. Ruth, for example, is wicked but her perspective is shown as a social climber who makes an immoral choice to follow money instead of protect her daughter. Rather than simply making her some Machiavellian type of rape enabler who just allows it to happen for no reason, the script presents her point of view and lets the audience form their own opinion about her dastardly decisions.

PLOT

The plot is expertly mapped out, establishing both of the central characters' tragic circumstances immediately and then having them collide shortly after introducing them. The plot ebbs and flows with ever-budding suspense, combining the journey to the wedding and the obstacles that come with that (their arguments, run ins with the the police, etc.) in tandem with surprising revelations about

Andre and Beth via flashbacks, while Alyssa begins to question her anger toward her mother as her wedding rapidly approaches.

Some of the sequences on the road with Andre and Beth do wade toward repetitive waters. The sequence with Shotgun et al at Deadwood is certainly a very cute scene but it takes up almost three pages and does nothing to drive the plot forward. It probably needs to at least be trimmed down if it is going to remain in the script. Otherwise, it distracts the audience from the central plot and diffuses tension. The cop sequence also drags, even though it does not have much of an overall impact on the story. It is well-written and suspenseful, but ultimately may not be necessary, unless it is altered to be more connective with the end result of the script. It also may not be necessary to waste page space on the sequence where Beth watches teenagers at the lake by introducing a named character, Janet, who never appears again in the script and simply jumps into the water. You can probably just have Beth be watching the kids without that longer sequence and have the same effect.

It seems like there should be a stronger catalyst to Alyssa's shift toward questioning whether it was a mistake to shun Beth from the wedding. As it stands, Ruth's friends make fun of Beth and that kicks off her inner struggle. It feels like something more intimate would be more appropriate to set that thread in motion - maybe, for example, a memory that is sparked but Alyssa suddenly sees the relationship she has with Beth in a different light, and that Beth was trying to protect her.

There is a thread about Beth learning how to shoot a gun, and there is talk of a plan to use that gun when she gets to the wedding, but that never comes into play and it is a bit confusing what the plan was to begin with. It did not seem like she ever had any intention of shooting Ruth or anyone else, so it is confusing what that sequence is about. Providing some clarity will be very helpful, or it could be cut entirely since it does not pay off in the end.

Andre's fabricated suicide seems out of place. It is not quite clear what his intent was in doing this. He proclaimed that since he had nothing to live for, he was going to go hunt Howard in hell so Beth did not have to, which would have made sense within the context of the story, but then the rug is taken out from under that when it is revealed that he faked his suicide. And it does not change anything - Beth is still upset with him and drives off, and he still shows up to the wedding (while having no impact on the events in the wedding) before the two drive off together in the end. So what did this fake suicide accomplish? It seems like there could be a useful purpose for it here, but as is it seems like a device to raise stakes and tension when it does not happen organically. It also feels like there needs to be more of a conversation about Andre's deceptive tactics. Between lying about being crippled and faking his own death, it seems like he needs to earn his trust back more before Beth continues on this journey with him.

STRUCTURE

Most of the scenes do not drag and make their point concisely but poignantly. Very tight writing. I know it is tempting to include the most intense sequences as quickly as possible, but it might be beneficial to hold off on showing the graphic rape sequence that currently kicks off the story. It would add a lot of suspense and dramatic tension to wait to include a direct revelation of Howard's perverse actions until p. 73 when she unveils this truth to Andre. That way, the audience will remain curious as to why Beth is so disturbed and what exactly happened in her past that was so damaging. And since so much tension will be built up to that point, it will be a heavy hitting moment. As is, the tension is diffused immediately since we know exactly what happened to Beth from the beginning.

DIALOGUE

The dialogue may be the strongest aspect of the script, which is saying something. The only slight issue may be the fact that Beth and Andre tend to talk in circles about their circumstances (Andre has nothing to live for, Beth's family hates her and she has no one, etc). Otherwise, the dialogue is snappy yet poignant, balancing flair and subtext deftly. A perfect example of that is a line like this, which is true to Andre's voice while also providing further depth to his character and driving the scene forward: "Well honey I wish your body did it for me but my spinal cord was cut so now the only hard thing I got is my luck." You could put a blindfold on me and read each line and I could tell you which character uttered it, which is a testament to how strong the voices are here. And they are also unique - no one else could write this dialogue quite like you, which highlights the overall singular voice that the script is written with.

CONCEPT

Individually, nothing here is particularly original (rape victims dealing with trauma, guilt-stricken survivors of car crashes, suicidal protagonists, crashed weddings with monologues to the congregation, etc). However, when mashed together and placed within the context of a road trip movie - combined with the very unique voice and perspective in which it is written - it all comes together feeling fresher than it probably should. That is a testament to your talent as a writer, as the

uniqueness of the script lies mostly in your brilliant execution.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This is potent, heartbreaking, yet quite entertaining material - a perfect cocktail of emotions - the reason movies exist! You have done some very fine work here. There are of course some adjustments that could be made for housekeeping purposes or to build a sturdier foundation, but overall this embodies everything you want in a script. I look forward to seeing what all your voice has in store for the world!

BLUE EIGHTEEN

VIRTUALLY PERFECT
98th - 100th Percentile

Overall
Impression
100th Percentile

Plot
98th Percentile

Characters
99th Percentile

Dialogue
99th Percentile

EXCELLENT
85th - 97th Percentile

Structure
96th Percentile

GOOD
50th - 84th Percentile

Concept
73rd Percentile

IMPROVE
0th - 49th Percentile

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RATING

RECOMMEND

PLACED IN THE TOP 2%

ABOUT STORY ANALYST TMHSR

The reader has worked for The BlueCat Screenplay Competition, The Script Joint, and YouGoFar Productions. They also have experience in Production and Casting, previously working on "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," "Billions," "The Many Saints of Newark," Steven Spielberg's "West Side Story," "Succession," and "Tick.. Tick... Boom!"

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