



Entry Type: Classic Notes (WeScreenplay)

Synopsis Included: No

Notes Date: March 11th, 2023

Analyst: VKV6

Ranking: 66th Percentile

RASCAL

Thriller

Feature

111 Pages

by Esmarelda VillaLobos

TOP 16%
CONCEPT

TOP 18%
STRUCTURE

RATING

PASS

PLACED IN THE TOP 34%

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OPENING THOUGHTS

"Rascal" is a compelling story that significantly stands out with its originality, whether when it comes to its setting, unique scenarios, or the authentic characters we have not quite seen on the screen before. As a result, the premise covers new narrative ground before its successful predecessors and the current competitors within the category that delve into similar subject matters. Although the work is not past its development stage yet and there are technical delivery drawbacks that can be addressed to offer us a more focused and dramatic experience.

CHARACTERS

When it comes to the cast, the ensemble is not extremely complex, but the characters still resonate because they are given the necessary traits to come to life on the page and to exhibit dimensionality as we recognise more sides to their personas. This includes Rascal's aspirations with music and her plans with Marley, the latter's trouble with drugs, as well as Danny's own battles with addiction and how he lost his family's farm. As a result, these aspects within their designs offer them ground to perform dramatically and portray human emotion realistically, especially as our heroine goes through each stage of the process of grief. In fact, this is an excellent creative choice that significantly humanises her and makes the character very relatable. All the while, she is also an active protagonist that pushes the story forward and initiates the action actively, whether by investigating her friend's death, seeking a way out of the brothel, or getting her revenge in the very end. Overall, the heroes of the story are pushed to their limits, and they significantly benefit the story.

In contrast, Roger is heavily underdeveloped, to the point where he comes across as a mere plot device solely present to generate conflict so the story can take place. To avoid this, we can find out more about him, so we can put his persona into perspective. Why does he kill women? What happened in his past that led him to who he is today? Why does he decide to kill Marley right before the party he cares about so much? Generally, in order to make his drive believable rather than forced upon him, we need to be able to get to know him. Backstories are very effective in this regard, as they can portray how the past shaped his identity and how it dictates his actions in the present. For example, what if he has a hatred for women, and specifically prostitutes, because his mother was one, and he never knew her, as his father raised him while running the brothel? There are many opportunities present of this nature, especially due to the setting, and one should be exploited to help him resemble a more complex and realistic individual.

Similarly, we need to find out why the sheriff is willing to help him even though he does not get absolutely anything out of the entire ordeal. What if Roger blackmails him? Anything to help us track his thought process will prevent his actions from being illogical.

PLOT

Continuing directly from above, the sudden reveal that Roger did actually kill Marley and that the sheriff is helping him comes across as fabricated just so the story is facilitated with a climax and our heroine's chances of survival decrease in a staged fashion. Meanwhile, we also question the authenticity of the scenario as our suspension of disbelief is not successfully provoked in advance to see any of this as plausible. Instead, when Marley's body is picked up, there can be a secret or suspicious exchange between Roger and the sheriff to foreshadow the outcome of their relationship in the end and to plant in our heads that there is more to these characters than meets the eye.

In fact, the same approach needs to be applied to Marley's actual death, even if we are not explicitly shown who kills her and whether she is killed by someone at all. If this is considered, we will not be pulled out of our immersive state suddenly when we find out she has died, as her death will be set up. Also, this will generate suspense, as we have seen how much she means to our heroine and what plans they have when it comes to their escape, which will make us anticipate seeing Rascal's response to this even more as well as look forward to seeing whether she adequately adapts to escape now that she is alone. Consequently, even the development of the conflict will be steadily rising rather than drastic and abrupt, as the potential beats leading to Marley's death will help the story gain momentum and build tension.

Aside from that, a few other areas of the story need to be reviewed as well since the plot struggles to progress in an organic fashion. This includes the moments when Rascal finds the folder with the missing women in it and how she stumbles upon a gun and a big amount of cash, exactly what she needs to survive and potentially kickstart a better life for herself. This is because the discoveries of each of these elements, whether a prop or a clue, are all based on luck as she trashes about in the locked suite or simply stumbles upon an item in a forgotten attic. Consequently, this fails to resonate as it seems as if the setting is adapting to serve the cast when it should be the other way around if the characters' successes and failures are to be seen as deserved by them in the eyes of the audience.

Therefore, to avoid all of this convenience, what if there is simply a safe in this locked suite, and our heroine remembers about it from her previous conversation with Marley, and she manages to find a

way to open the safe, and that is where she discovers the money and the gun, left there by Roger? On this note, why does she not even try to open the door using brute force with a heavy item found in the room or simply the gun to shoot the lock? It just seems strange and illogical she is willing to set the room on fire and potentially suffocate before anyone finds her rather than at least attempt to open the door.

STRUCTURE

From a structural standpoint, the classic three-act paradigm is applied, which is an excellent creative choice for a premise of this nature, genre, and complexity. Due to this, all of the turning points are present and timed correctly to offer us a focused and dynamic experience while the characters face the necessary obstacles to remain active and keep us entertained. Although, the sequence in the locked suite that is intercut with the party can be shorter in order not to pause the plot from its progression to the point where it loses its momentum. Also, during this sequence, there are many cuts to Hector's point of view, suggesting he will serve a purpose in the story as his relationship dynamic with Roger changes from friendly to unfriendly. However, this fails to be the case, and the character disappears from the narrative, resulting in a setup without a payoff. On this note, where do all of the prostitutes that live in the brothel go after the fire? It just seems strange how that many people just disappear, even though Rascal emphasises one of the benefits of her job and why she and Marley chose it is because they live there rent-free. Otherwise, the sequence where Roger just dances and drinks while Danny is held hostage can be shorter, too, since the story lingers on the same ideas, nothing new is happening, and this alters our engagement.

DIALOGUE

The dialogue is expertly handled as not a single line is on the nose since the characters rely on context, subtext, and body language to deliver information implicitly rather than to state their thoughts and feelings on the page directly. The interactions also have a sense of realism because each character has a distinctive voice stemming from their various uses of language, verbal habits, and ways of expressing themselves. Although, there are many instances where both Rascal and Roger talk to themselves, narrating, which is a hard practice to portray as organic both on the page and on the screen, as we do not really do this in real life.

CONCEPT

The story will definitely satisfy the expectations the fans of the genre have with the way the conventions of the category are explored, offering us something familiar yet different. The way humour and drama are used in unison to enhance each other's effect through contrast is a strong example in this regard. Meanwhile, the awareness raised of sex work, trafficking, and drug addiction also gives the story substance and makes it more than entertainment, as this is a commentary on real-life issues that are not discussed on the screen nearly enough. Therefore, the story can make a change while offering a very thought-provoking experience to the audience.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In summary, the story is more than auspicious, and it successfully exhibits the writer's storytelling skills and unique voice. However, although headed in the right direction, its entire potential is not exploited yet.

RASCAL

VIRTUALLY PERFECT
98th - 100th Percentile

EXCELLENT
85th - 97th Percentile

GOOD
50th - 84th Percentile

IMPROVE
0th - 49th Percentile

-

-

Overall
Impression
62nd Percentile

Plot
42nd Percentile

Concept
84th Percentile

Structure
82nd Percentile

Characters
62nd Percentile

Dialogue
73rd Percentile

RATING

PASS

PLACED IN THE TOP 34%

ABOUT STORY ANALYST VKV6

The analyst has experience in writing coverage on screenplays and literary material. Employment includes several production companies, consultancy websites, independent producers, and editorial credits on feature and short films.

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