

Sample Coverage

TITLE: It's About Bobby Collum	SETTING: Texas, 1989
AUTHOR(S): M Hickey	
WRITER REP:	PERIOD:
STUDIO: N/A	FORM: (Feature Film , TV Series, Short, Doc)
PRODUCER: N/A	BUDGET: (Low, Med, High)
PURPOSE:	DRAFT DATE: 1/21/16
ELEMENTS ATTACHED: N/A	COVERAGE DATE: 1/27/16
EXEC REQUESTING: Eric Nicholls	COVERAGE BY: Rebecca Ben-David

GENRE:

PRIMARY: (Thriller, Sci-fi, **Drama**, Action)

SECONDARY: Coming-of-Age

LEAD CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS:

EMILY MOURNER: 13, freshman, new girl; shy, insecure, on the cusp of womanhood, bright for her age, older sister; Emily struggles to adjust to beginning high school in a new town, distance with her mother, discomfort with her step-father, burgeoning romantic interest, peer pressure, and bullying.

BOBBY COLLUM: 16-17, popular, good-looking, basketball star; kind-hearted but conforming; underlying problems with violent alcoholic father lead to carefully concealed depression, and ultimately, suicide.

TANYA TORRES: 14, confident, carefree, plucky; Queens, New York transplant, but well-adjusted - Emily's first friend and foil

MARY MOURNER: 38, Emily's mother; graduate student or taking night classes of some kind; dealing with failing second marriage while trying to support her children

STELLA MOURNER: 9, Emily's sister, cute, sweet, and innocent; more stubborn and outspoken than Emily; very attached to the family maltese, Sabrina

LOGLINE: A shy girl struggles to unearth her potential while navigating the muddy waters of high school, boys, and family tension.

SYNOPSIS:

The year is 1989. Shy, brainy EMILY MOURNER begins her freshman year of high school in a new town near the Texas Gulf Coast. Within moments of entering the school, Emily encounters senior BOBBY COLLUM, and becomes instantly infatuated. However, her insecurities and girlish frame combined with her “New Girl” status quickly make her a target for teasing from boys and dismissal from more popular girls. In hopes of getting closer to Bobby, Emily takes the school’s gym coach up on an offer to practice basketball with the guys. Still, she is largely met with ridicule and evasion from her peers, and has no opportunity to interact with her crush. Her chance comes later when Bobby offers her a ride home in his truck; Bobby tries to encourage her, but Emily is too hesitant to capitalize on the moment. Soon after, she discovers Bobby is already dating another upperclassman, KIM. A fellow out-of-towner, saucy New Yorker TANYA TORRES, befriends her in the cafeteria, and introduces her to a more wild lifestyle including cigarettes and weed, underage drinking, sexually-charged high school parties, and a casual regard for authority.

Meanwhile, Emily must also combat issues at home: namely, her stepfather THOMAS CORRIGAN’s violent and controlling behavior, and the growing distance from her mother, MARY MOURNER, as they each privately struggle to carve out their own forms of independence and define themselves outside the household. Emily’s younger sister, STELLA is a source of sisterly affection, but more often than not, exasperation for Emily. Silently united against their stepfather, they endure his temper while Mary takes night classes to escape her crumbling second marriage. As Emily’s friendship with Tanya develops, she learns that Bobby also has problems at home thanks to his violent drunk of a father.

Emily reaches menarche, but feels ashamed and embarrassed, and does her best to hide it from her family and peers. When Tanya coaxes her into sneaking out one night for a bonfire party on the beach, Emily tentatively agrees, hoping to forget her troubles for a few hours. Slightly drunk, she enjoys herself for a time, but her mood plummets when she sees Bobby and Kim leaving the party together. When Tanya slips off with another guy, Emily finds herself alone with an older boy from another school, STEVEN JERNIGAN. With the remaining party-goers all seemingly paired off, Steven and Emily kiss. Emily becomes upset and uncomfortable, but Steven guides her away from the others and tries to rape her. The police arrive just in time, and Emily is escorted home.

The next morning, the news breaks that Bobby has committed suicide in front of the school. Emily and the rest of the town mourn his death. Following this tragic event, Mary makes up her mind, and announces to Emily and Stella that she is divorcing Thomas. Slowly, life resumes. With Bobby gone, Emily almost quits the basketball team, but decides to continue at the coach’s urging, this time for herself.

COMMENTS:

This could have been a story about getting free. Unfortunately, the script misses the bar. There was opportunity to achieve this through clearer emphasis of the mother-daughter relationship, more positive depiction of female friendship(s), and better follow-through on the romantic subplot. Instead, Emily's budding friendships remain stunted, her relationship with her mother lacks depth and feels thinly resolved, and the death of her would-be love interest has little significance, perhaps because their connection was rather poorly developed beyond a weak affinity in the form of violent/abusive father figures.

While the plot does have some flow, connective tissue from scene to scene is thin. The gaps created as a result can only be filled with uncertainty as to the purpose and necessity of many story elements. This is perhaps best exemplified during the third act, where Emily sneaks out of her bedroom to attend a high school party. Emily's near-sexual encounter with a college boy is very problematic, a clear example of the perpetuation of rape culture (pedophilia, the sexualization of underage girls, issues with consent) but additionally because it reinforces misogynistic ideals like the stigmatization of the menstrual cycle. There is no follow-up as to how this experience psychologically affects the protagonist; we are not shown through her dialogue or subsequent behavior any kind of reaction, positive or negative. In fact, it remains entirely unaddressed by the narrative as we jump straight into the reveal of Bobby's suicide. At best, the inclusion of this scene could signify internalization issues common among pre-teen, adolescent girls as well as adult women, but there is no textual evidence to substantiate such speculation.

The story is set in small town Ingleside, TX, near the Gulf Coast. A quick Google search reveals that Ingleside is a predominantly white, lower-middle class area, which the script reflects. Basic research demonstrates that port/coastal cities in the area are somewhat more ethnically diverse, with higher Hispanic, Asian American, and African American demographics respectively, compared to that of Caucasians. In that way, the choice of setting seems rather exclusionary, as there is obvious opportunity for better minority representation and cultural inclusivity, not to mention cause to make the setting more of a character itself. While themes like homogeneity and conformity are present to a degree in the script, they are not explored in more depth beyond the general tie to small-town suburbia. Whether by ignorance or intention, where diversity and cultural iconography are concerned, the setting and characters are severely lacking. In the right hands, this could potentially translate more powerfully on screen, but as the current draft stands, it seems unlikely.

Ultimately, the lack of clarity in developing the characters or relevant themes sours a potentially successful story with some commercial value. The characters feel like silhouettes of who they're meant to be. The cliché elements make the "twist" feel somewhat melodramatic or hollow, combined with the lack of exploration into adolescent mental health. the take-away remains unclear.

Other Notes:

- Too many supporting characters that do not serve to advance the story - cut or combine
- Story events feel largely disconnected; motivation for each progressive scene is not always clear
- The protagonist is almost entirely passive throughout the narrative - if she undergoes a transformation by the end of the story, it is too vague to confidently identify
- At the base level, there are errors in spelling and formatting; the author also ignores standard guidelines for writing action by using internal narration and discussing the character wants and passing emotions - this choice feels arbitrary and amateurish, rather than intentionally designed to provide a more enriched tonal experience

	Excellent			Good			Fair			Poor		
Premise							X					
Plot								X				
Characters						X						
Dialogue							X					
Setting						X						
		Recommend				Consider				Pass		
Script/Book										X		
Writer									X			
		High				Medium				Low		
Budget								X				