

TITLE: Seize The Initiative!
GENRE: Romantic Comedy
WRITER: Yoram Bauman

OVERALL

Seize The Initiative! presents a unique backdrop for the rom-com genre. The meet-cute here is entertaining. These pages have good energy and it's easy to connect with these well-crafted characters and the overall story.

The conflict could come around a little sooner. As the focus of this story is on Grace and Saul, the recommendation here is to consider how to establish tension sooner in their relationship. A little more exploration in this regard would also add a nice touch of depth to how these two break apart and then come back together.

One way to help in this regard would be to keep an eye out for scenes that read as being a bit long-winded. There are a number of moments when scenes hit the 5, 6 or even 10-minute mark. The thought here is that a few of these interactions could be condensed a bit so as to allow for a more fluid read and presentation.

There are a few technical issues with scene headings. Generally speaking, most of the headings feature a great deal of detail that is simply not needed at the moment. A "less is more" approach is recommended.

CONCEPT

As a concept, there's a lot to appreciate when it comes to how this story is presented. That's because the backdrop here puts a focus on the current political environment and that can get touchy and even bothersome in the hands of a writer who might be a little too politically motivated. That's not the case here.

Grace's comedy routine puts it out into an amusing perspective. While this routine does sting the middle ground a bit with some less than kind labels, the point here is that this story tries not to swing far left or far right. It capably identifies the winners and losers across the board. The right has its agenda, and the left has its counter and while it too often comes across as a big boiling mess the message here is that this is America and we are all allowed our voice, no matter how messy it can become. To the point, this script humanizes the voter, the agendas and the people who stand in support or opposition.

While the backdrop is about political petitioning, the story does a good job of keeping a focus on the emerging relationship between Grace and Saul. This is a lively and entertaining thread. The

energy between the two is palpable as they each take up the cause and petition for their signatures. There's a clear sense of competition between them but these two also work so well in tandem.

That's a nice win here. Yes, they do have their clash as Grace is forced to question the true nature of their relationship but it's clear that they care for one another. Their early and late scenes read as being wonderfully personal and very relatable.

Another fun idea is that Saul freely admits that he's in it to meet the ladies. Yes, he does suggest an interest in the climate issues he presents but he's not afraid to be genuinely honest about his motives. This is because it works. Saul is a recruiter for the cause. It's just that the "cause" is not always consistent in his mind and heart. This makes for a lively plot point.

It also keeps the reader guessing. As Grace stumbles in on Saul's training, she realizes that Saul might not be true of heart. It will also make a reader wonder what Saul's motives really are when it comes to Grace. This adds a nice layer of tension to the drama.

The setting is very well established and by way of a number of locations and even characters. For example, Lance reads well as the displaced Washingtonian who is trying to come to grips with life in the Mormon State. While this is a love story, it also reads as a bit of an homage to Utah and its world full of colorful characters and culture.

STRUCTURE

The structure stands well on the page. These acts capably support one another. The pages are light so the pacing of the read is quite good. For the most part, the scenes transition very well.

As mentioned, there are two thoughts here that could likely benefit from a little more attention. To start with, the real conflict that surfaces between Grace and Saul comes around a bit late in the script. Grace's realization about Saul's possible motives surface on page 50.

The recommendation here is to consider how to bring this moment to the page a little sooner. Up until this moment, these two are still stuck in their honeymoon phase. Everything works well for both characters. Life is good for a nice stretch of this story. So, consider how to get to this moment sooner or, at least, create a moment that plants a true seed of doubt for Grace. That way, when she does walk in at the wrong time, the seed of the conflict is already rooted. Just "What if...?" this a bit and see where it might lead.

There are a number of scenes that read as being a bit long-winded. For the most part, a 5- or 6-page scene here and there is fine but the recommendation is to keep things tight so that the scenes are more fluid and easier to appreciate. This didn't seem to be too much of an issue until the scene that ends on page 48.

This scene runs for more than 10 pages. Yes, a number of flashback scenes are peppered in and this helps to break things up visually. However, this scene is still solely focused on Grace and Nikki. They carry on for a good while as their voices become voice overs and then voices and voice overs again. The recommendation here is to consider how to condense both this scene and some of the flashbacks that are presented.

This being said, the introductory act is quite good. As this script gets underway, it's easy to appreciate who Saul is and who he is trying to be. He's a bit of a "climate player" but he also reads as a good man who is genuinely trying to make a difference. He's passionate and that passion helps to set the tone of the overall story.

That passion plays through late in the script as it is realized that he does genuinely love and care for Grace. He commits to an unusual but very entertaining habit. The lunch bag punchlines work very well and help to keep this light-hearted story in motion.

That's one reason why it is recommended to bring this personal conflict to the page sooner. This would allow an opportunity to more effectively explore Saul's personality and heart over the course of the second act. If these amusing lunch "puns" happen sooner it might have a larger impact over the course of the resolution. Maybe write in those moments when Saul commits to making the sandwiches and then quietly delivers them to her door while he knows she is away. Remember, this is a visual medium. Show, don't tell.

The script plays out very well in the end. Grace and Saul get back together. The sandwich puns keep coming. The seasonal scenes line up nicely and then the wedding brings it all to a happy end. Overall, it's a wonderfully cinematic close to this contemporary love story.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The characters are nicely developed. There is a nice sense of depth and personality that shines through each. It's easy to perceive and understand purpose, right on down to those tertiary characters who routinely question what it is that they're signing for Saul. It's a varied approach that serves the story well.

Saul is a nicely conflicted protagonist. While he freely admits that he volunteers because it's easy to meet women, he also reads as something of a romantic. This is evident even before he meets Grace. Saul has a good heart. He's simply found a way to connect with women who might share his interests.

Saul's approach to Grace makes for a nice and mostly unique meet cute. At once, it's easy to feel his attraction and the chemistry that quickly surfaces. While he has a slight history of being a

player, it's also clear that he has a need to connect. This is an inherent part of his character that surfaces easily and organically.

Grace makes for a solid love interest. She's smart and easily commits to the things or people that matter to her. This is what makes her character relatable and, more importantly, likable. Her sense of competition also plays well and adds depth to her overall character.

She's also a comedian. This is a fun choice. Her character doesn't appear on the stage until late in the script but this is one of the story's more memorable scenes. Grace isn't overly funny. She's simply smart and very able to control a crowd and make perfect sense of the "insensible". She demonstrates good energy and strong vibes.

Lance can be a bit of a scene stealer. He reads as the aging hippie who has a firm grasp on something like the true meaning of life. He is also not all that great at expressing what that meaning is. He talks in laughable circles and simply presents as a "salt of the earth" fellow with a good heart and kind voice.

What works for Lance here is that he's not caught up in the politics. He is only focused on his next beer and, God help him, the next Mariners game. It's a perfect cycle of joy and misery for this character as he steadily muddles through his upended life. Lance shines at times, especially as he tries to explain the difference between Seattle life and Salt Lake life. To the point, he makes for a solid comic relief.

Nikki also reads well as Grace's cautious "bestie". While she is merely in support, she has a nice arc. She's not at all a fan of Saul's from the start. She has a typical "wing woman" stance. However, she soon realizes that Saul's passion is multi-faceted and in all the right ways. Her winning scene happens as she realizes that Saul absolutely deserves a second chance. In this moment, it's easy to appreciate the nature of her turn around and what it means for her to admit it.

PAGE VOICE

The voice stands well on the page. There is a nice balance of the personal, professional and the political. This story doesn't go overboard on any of the elements but keeps it smart and keeps it simple.

The scene headings often get a little more involved than need be. As an example, there is a tendency to place exact addresses in a heading. It's not unusual to find a heading that reads, "MAIN STREET NEAR 200 S, SLC".

Try to keep a heading neutral and less specific. It's perfectly fine to write EXT. STREET and then maybe provide details in the direction below. However, keep in mind that this script, if purchased,

will not likely be shot at those specific addresses. So, keep it simple, basic so that readers are more able to appreciate and visualize where these characters are.

There is also a slight tendency to use the “we” perspective in direction. As an example, on the opening page it reads, “we see the snowy Wasatch Mountains” and “We see---and drive down into---a LAYER OF POLLUTION.” On page 15, “We hear the BAND warming up.” There is no “we” in this story. When the “we” is avoided, it offers an opportunity to tighten direction.

On page 45 there is a direction in parenthesis in the dialogue that reads, “hoity-toity motion, reciting a line from one of her comedy routines.” The thought here is that, as of this moment, the reader has not been exposed to one of Grace’s comedy routines. As a result, this direction feels a bit out of place.

SUMMARY

Seize the Initiative! makes for a compelling read. The call to political action is quietly but effectively presented and with a well-balanced tone. The characters have good depth and purpose. The setting is very well established and sustained by way of a number of mentioned landmarks and cultural references. This story sets up and resolves very well.

Moving forward, the suggestion is that the conflict between Grace and Saul could step up just a little sooner. This would allow for the opportunity to truly explore Saul’s character and his need to make things right with Grace. A number of early scenes feel a bit long-winded. A more concise approach to character interactions might make for a more fluid read. That being said, Seize the Initiative presents solid plotting with colorful, relatable characters. It’s easy to see how this story could resonate with a general audience.