



Entry Type: Classic Notes (WeScreenplay)

Synopsis Included: No

Notes Date: October 1st, 2020

Analyst: SWS09

Ranking: 92nd Percentile

FIRST DROP OF RAIN

Drama

Feature

120 Pages

by James Brosnahan

TOP 5%
STRUCTURE

TOP 7%
CHARACTERS

TOP 7%
PLOT

RATING
CONSIDER
PLACED IN THE TOP 8%

Percentiles are based on historical data of scores given out by this analyst.

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OPENING THOUGHTS

Great work on this rewrite! I love the additional characters and storylines, especially in terms of Mrs. Evans as a fellow aspiring female novelist and how Hannah has turned into Frances's sister. This feature is evolving into a more elaborate story with heightened stakes, deeper character relationships and arcs, and a multi-faceted thematic concept. I think it is a very strong writing sample and producible project and, as such, have very specific notes regarding the romantic aspects of the main storyline in terms of Miles and Frances, and Frances and Hugh, as well as further clarifying and emphasizing certain secondary storylines throughout the script.

CHARACTERS

I love how the writer has expanded upon the main characters' storylines and points of view especially in terms of Charles and Frances's sister Hannah. Charles and Frances's relationship feels is much stronger and complex and their reconciliation that much satisfying. Likewise, how Frances uses her sister as a sounding board for her relationship with Miles effectively tracks her emotional journey especially as she begins to realize with her sister's advice that she might not want to marry Miles after all. However, there are aspects of Miles and Frances's developing romance that feel slightly underdeveloped especially in the middle of the script where we slightly lose this storyline. As such, I would recommend adding one or two more story beats to their relationship. Specifically, I think we need to see how Frances's attitude towards Richardson's "Pamela" plays out in her own romance. Frances states she could never kiss a man who didn't ask her permission nor marry one whose courting involved unwelcome advances but I think this needs to be emphasized in her relationship with Miles and juxtaposed in her budding romance with Hugh. For example, Miles tries to kiss her not once but twice before informing her he's going to seek Charles's blessing to marry her. How does she feel about this? An added scene between this sequence and when Miles shows up unannounced on her doorstep on page eighty-nine where Frances confesses her doubts to Hannah that the romance isn't how she imagined it (quite literally in her book) or references how she feels in the next scene with Hannah before or after their tea with Mrs. Evans can act as an emotional transition from Frances's excitement to her trepidation. Likewise, I love the moment where Hugh asks if he can kiss Frances at the end but I think Hugh needs to further demonstrate in an added beat or two how his attitude towards Frances is in line with her idea of a respectful, equal romance. Moreover, I think their secretive sewing/reading sessions lack a romantic spark so that, when they begin throwing balls of linen at each other on page one hundred and one, it's clear they're flirting with each other and secretly have feelings

for one another. The relationships among the three should look something like a crossed x: Frances is besotted with Miles but increasingly realizes he's not who she thought he was as she's spending more and more time with Hugh and developing feelings for him rather than her fiancé.

PLOT

I really like how the plot has been developed to include Mrs. Evans' storyline in terms of her own mission to publish a novel as well as how the public at first believes that she's the likely candidate to have written *Evelina* rather than Frances. This is not only great drama that heightens the stakes but it further informs Frances's own journey to declare herself the author as well as the power of female support and camaraderie; I absolutely love how Mrs. Evans decides to support the anonymous author of *Evelina* rather than take credit for her work. I also really like the added storyline of Frances learning how to write in a "man's hand" in order to give her novel a better opportunity of being published. However, I do think the writer can be slightly more visually descriptive in terms of how the "ladies hand" and the more rounded style of penmanship differs especially when Frances's style of writing is first introduced on page six. Is it that the Italian "ladies hand" penmanship is what we would consider cursive while the "round hand" is perhaps closer to print? This should be clarified with further visual description or comparison so that the historical style is put into context for a modern reader. I also wondered if women were not allowed in libraries and why this might be so which is easily clarified in a line of dialogue to provide more historical context. Moreover, because Charles is so opposed to Frances writing for work or having an occupation outside of trying to find a suitable husband, I think it's important to emphasize why he would allow her to take in sewing. Is this not considered to be a real job by men of the time or is Charles so desperate for a means of income he'll allow Frances to continue taking on sewing jobs in order to finance her entrance into society where she'll hopefully find a wealthy husband? Most importantly, Hugh's attitude towards Frances's writing is a little inconsistent and unclear. From how he reacted to Frances on page forty-seven with publishing advice for her "literary lady friend," I thought he knew she was writing a book and suspected she authored "*Evelina*" when he brings it over to her house so that she can read it aloud to him. I know this vein was explored in earlier drafts so this might be a widow storyline so to speak. I think the hint of him believing she's asking for a "literary lady friend" should be removed if the writer intends that Hugh is completely oblivious to the fact that Frances is writing a novel or authored "*Evelina*," and would carefully track his attitude throughout to make sure it's consistently clear he really knows nothing about her novel.

STRUCTURE

I think the story structure is really strong; it flows well and it feels like the main conflict and supporting storylines are fully serviced. Even though there's been pages added to the script since I last read it, it doesn't feel like there is any wasted space or are unnecessary scenes. In terms of how the scenes are actually formatted, I would recommend that the writer fully slug each scene heading. Rather than "IN SEWING ROOM" or "IN STAIRCASE," written out like "INT. BURNEY FAMILY HOME - SEWING ROOM" using transitions such as "CONTINUOUS" or "SAME TIME" to denote scenes that are intercut or flow from one moment to the next. In addition to formatting, I noticed that on page fifty-four Charles comes home after Frances when he's already excused himself for the night during the ball several scenes previously. To stay consistent to the story's timeline, perhaps Frances can hear him coming up the stairs and quickly hides his manuscript before he can catch her in the act. Most importantly, I think the passages Frances is reading aloud from/writing for "Evelina" should more closely mirror that of her own emotional journey in order to earn not only how the book sets itself apart but also more fully track Frances's feelings throughout especially towards Miles and Hugh. Adding one or two more moments where Frances bears her soul into writing "Evelina" and we hear aloud her thoughts as they come alive upon the page as she struggles with understanding her own feelings would function effectively to further develop her character arc.

DIALOGUE

In every draft I read, the dialogue shines brightly as an example of effective, clearly articulated storytelling using historically accurate parlance. In this draft, the dialogue maintains this standard while also enhancing aspects of the story's theme that have been developed through the rewrite such Charles's "upside down" manner of helping/hindering Frances. However, there are some confusing moments in the script where Frances is reading aloud and it is scripted as being "MOS" such as on pages one, sixty-three, and sixty-six. I'm not sure what the writer means by this term because it's usually used to intimate that a specific shot will not contain any sound; "motor only shot," meaning only action with no synched audio track. I'm not sure if the writer intends for Frances's dialogue to be heard via voice over rather than spoken by her character in the scene itself or if there is another intention I'm not familiar with but I would recommend clarifying this either way. As Frances seems to be reading aloud to Hugh in the scene on pages sixty-three, sixty-four, and sixty-six, I think it could merely be scripted as her dialogue rather than needing to include a voice over.

CONCEPT

This rewrite has further strengthened the writer's original conceit especially because the main character is now named for the historical figure she's based upon. This version of the script really reminds me of the most recent iteration of "Emma." in the subject matter as well as the dialogue and character dynamics. I love how both "Emma." and "First Drop of Rain" are set in a specific time period and location but don't portray female characters in a way that feels outdated or sexist; even Frances's father Charles is only trying to protect her from getting hurt or not being able to support herself financially rather than truly believing she has no talent. I especially like the "power of permission" theme that permeates Frances's journey but I believe this can be further emphasized in connection to her two love interests, Miles and Hugh, in order to better earn Frances's increasing doubts about her romance with Miles, her romantic feelings for Hugh, and Miles's attitude towards Frances at the end of the script when she reveals she's an author.

FINAL THOUGHTS

With every draft, this feature script is becoming a tighter and more interesting read. After considering my notes and implementing those the writer finds helpful, I think this script is very close to a final pass. Keep up the great work! I'm always happy to read again.

FIRST DROP OF RAIN

VIRTUALLY PERFECT
98th - 100th Percentile

EXCELLENT
85th - 97th Percentile

GOOD
50th - 84th Percentile

IMPROVE
0th - 49th Percentile

-	Plot 93rd Percentile	-	-
-	Concept 89th Percentile	-	-
-	Structure 95th Percentile	-	-
-	Dialogue 92nd Percentile	-	-
-	Characters 93rd Percentile	-	-

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