

Title: **MAY**

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Genre: **COMEDY/DRAMA**

Synopsis:

A lonely housewife puts up with her miserable bank job over the course of the years 1978-1981, before a brief shining moment redirects her course.

Overview:

This is a very funny, charming script. May is mostly comedic in its relatable workplace frustration that reflects a melancholy, empty home life, and it deftly navigates the back and forth between those two tones. It also uses a time-jump structure that brings the story a dose of the surreal, almost trapping the main character in her own unfulfilling purgatory, until a brief moment of triumph/recognition breaks her out of it, allowing her to more directly confront her problems at work and at home.

As is, the script is mostly there, its ideas, conflict, and humor well established and paid off later. Most of the work that needs doing involves structural adjustments that will be less confusing to an audience and additions that will make the drama and conflicts clearer and more satisfying, particularly the ending. But this is a strong work that is sure to make an entertaining, crowd-pleasing short.

Characters:

May: May is our central character, a 30-something woman working as a paper-pusher at a bank. Her work is underappreciated and undervalued, being asked to cover a position that it's implied is below her in order for her arrogant, douchey boss to carry on his affairs over lunch. At the film's start, she tries to be polite and agreeable with him, but over the course of the film becomes contemptuous and flippant, at first hesitantly then flagrantly flaunting his stringent sucker policy at the drive-thru window. It's clear that she is well-liked by others, as the women that pull through the window during her coverage are happy to see her and chit-chat, but it is not an appreciation that is reflected in her environment, wearing down any sense of polite decorum over the course of the film.

May is also very lonely. We never see or hear her husband, her only correspondence with him being the notes that they share back and forth on the kitchen counter. At first the notes are playful, conversational, romantic. But over time they become more direct and unfeeling, before disappearing altogether. The distance exacerbates the frustrations May feels at work; even her home doesn't offer comfort because of her husband's absence. One noteless night leaves May to sense that he is having an affair, which hurts her dearly. When she turns out to be the star of the commercial, this gives her the validation and sense of worth she has been missing from her daily life, and allows her to confront her husband, even if only indirectly because he isn't there.

Randall: The only other named character of significance, Randall is a vain, arrogant, and cruel boss, demonstrated by his obsession with a silly sucker policy, which he repeatedly insists May follow even when he lets the various employees he's sleeping with have some leeway with it. His slick, self-absorbed nature is undermined by the film when it comes time to shoot the commercial, demonstrated by his lack of talent and the final product focusing on May, who he's only berated and treated like a prop beforehand.

Themes & Conflict:

The building and alleviation of May's loneliness and miserable work experience are what drive the film's narrative; she needs some kind of validation in her life. The time-jump structure, along with the similarity of every day we actually see, hammers home the drudgery of being stuck in a time loop, or a purgatory with no meaning or escape. She is forced to repeatedly forgo her lunch break to do a lonely, solitary job, and on top of that required to adhere to a policy that threatens to put tension between her and the customers, the only people in the film to actually show her some kindness and decency. Her husband is altogether absent from the picture, at first his presence felt through some playful notes, but then disappearing as May comes home to an increasingly empty house and no messages. Even the funny, charming first scene of notes has a sense of distance to it, and that distance only grows over the course of the film. She concludes that he is cheating on her, but there's not much evidence for that beyond his absence and the lack of a note. May is finally able to break out of her purgatory when she receives the validation she needs; she is the focus of the commercial her bank shot, the one that Randall and his latest floozy Sarah were supposed to star in. This gives her the ability to confront her husband's lack of presence, and by using the bowl of suckers that has been the key source of tension with Randall at work. I do feel as though the ending needs to be a little more clever/poetic with how it addresses May's confrontation of the husband.

Recommendations:

- Stick to a consistent pattern of where to deploy the title cards denoting the year/time. It's a little different in every scene and it runs the risk of being jarring, abrupt, or confusing for the audience. The first one comes too late in the sequence, making it more confusing when the next one comes so shortly after; you need to put it in the audience's mind as early as possible that this is how the film is going to behave. The third one hits it just right where it should be, I feel.
- The sucker policy is the concrete point of tension for May's general work experience, and there could be some more work done to more dramatically demonstrate the stakes of whether she abides by the policy or not. For example: what happens when she refuses a customer a sucker? Maybe have that happen first, and that will reinforce why she doesn't continue to abide by the policy later. Small-talk with the customers is the only source of warmth she has in the film, and the risk of losing that by withholding suckers is a strong motivation. Plus it provides opportunity for more comedy.
- In line with the previous point, think about what Randall is willing to do to May if she continues to ignore his instructions regarding the suckers and how you can demonstrate that. It'll heighten

the tension at her job and further explain the contempt and frustration she feels toward him. This doesn't have to be brought up immediately, but perhaps in the 1979 or 1980 sequence.

- In the 1980 section of the film, May has a realization that her husband is having an affair. It's not stated outright, but her reaction says it all. However, there's no evidence that the audience gets to see that this is what's happening, and some may not pick up on what she's thinking. I'd suggest finding a way to show some evidence of this visibly if you're wanting to stick with this plotting; an absent, apathetic husband is enough of a bad thing on its own, after all.
- You specifically asked for some suggestions on the ending, and I agree that it needs some work. I'd suggest using some more specific reincorporation for the ending; just having her write "suck it" on a note with the bowl of suckers seems too pat and unsatisfying. A common refrain in her notes up to that point has been "Supper's in the fridge." You could have her leave that note in some form, perhaps with the bowl of suckers stuck in the fridge. My suggestion, if you're sticking with the infidelity route: have her leave the bowl of suckers on the porch; she goes inside and comes back with a note that she sticks on the door, reading "Supper's on the porch. Suck on it." And she goes inside and locks the door. This reincorporates the suckers that were how she got her validation at work – and now at home - the notes that have been her only communication with her husband up to this point, and more visually/dramatically pays off as a response to her husband cheating on her in having her kick him out of the house.