

My Best Screenplay so Far

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A couple is getting ready to leave for the airport. Lawrence is 28, he is rather tall and skinny. Grace is 25, she has an elegant and fit body and long blond hair.

GRACE

Have we got everything?

LAWRENCE

I think so. Oh wait, I almost forgot...

He takes a screenplay off his desk and stores it in one of the bags.

GRACE

You're taking your screenplay? You are not going to work while we are at my grandparents', are you?

LAWRENCE

Of course I am! I have to finish it before we get back. I want to keep working on it until it's perfect.

GRACE

But honey my family... They really don't like people in the movie business.

LAWRENCE

Grace, we've talked about this. I don't think it's a good idea to go on hiding your dream of becoming an actor. You're so talented! And I have to become a great screenwriter, that's my dream!

Grace makes a face and Lawrence takes her in his arms.

LAWRENCE

Everything will be fine, I promise. We'll tell them everything. Isn't Thanksgiving the perfect occasion for that?

GRACE

I don't know... you are going to meet them for the first time. I think for now making sure they like you is

complicated enough...

LAWRENCE

OK then, I promise to work discreetly.
Now, we really have to get going and
catch that plane to Texas.

They pick up their bags.

2 INT. DAY - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE

2

Grace and Lawrence go inside the house carrying their luggage. Grace's mother, Katherine, and her grandmother, Maria, greet them. Maria looks Mexican and has a strong Spanish accent. Katherine's hair is lighter and she speaks English with an American accent. They both seem a bit anxious as Grace introduces Lawrence.

GRACE

This is my boyfriend Lawrence.
Lawrence: this is my mother Katherine.
(she turns to Maria)
Maria, my grandmother.

LAWRENCE

It is very nice to meet you both!

They remain silent. Grace looks around.

GRACE

Where is.. ?

Johnny, Grace's 20 years-old brother, joins the group timidly.

GRACE

Here's Johnny!
(she turns to Lawrence and
whispers)
My little brother is a little bit shy.

3 INT. EVENING. THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

3

Grace, Johnny and Lawrence set the table for dinner. They talk lively. Grace is wearing a red sweater.

GRACE

Lawrence, could you get the plates in
the kitchen?

LAWRENCE

Of course.

He leaves.

4 INT. EVENING. THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN 4

Lawrence comes running into the kitchen and hits Katherine who drops her plate. They both get down on their knees.

LAWRENCE

I am so sorry... Please let me...

KATHERINE

Oh, it's all right.

They look at each other. Time seems to stop. Just like in a romantic movie they seem to have a romantic moment. Lawrence clears his throat.

LAWRENCE

I... came for the plates.

KATHERINE

In the top drawer. So... You and my daughter?

LAWRENCE

Pretty much.

KATHERINE

Well I guess you are handsome enough.
(she puts her hand on his cheek)
I don't think it will work out though.

She leaves the kitchen.

5 INT. EVENING. THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM 5

They are all gathered around the table for the Thanksgiving dinner Katherine prepared. One of the chairs is empty.

JOHNNY

Where is grandpa?

They all turn to Maria.

MARIA

(with a strong Spanish accent)
Why are you looking at me? Why should
I know where he is? He is probably

playing poker with his friends.

The door opens with a bang and a man who can only be the grandfather appears. He points an inquisitive finger to Maria. He has a strong Spanish accent as well.

PEDRO

I am not out playing poker! She tried to poison me. She thought I was dead but I am not!

Lawrence is shocked. Maria is also startled, although she looks more angry than surprised. Subtitles appear under her face with the words "gasps in Spanish". Lawrence sees it.

LAWRENCE

Grace! Did you see that? Did you see?

GRACE

Shush.

PEDRO

I did not die because she got the wrong man and poisoned my twin brother Carlos instead!

MARIA

Impossible! Carlos died two years ago in the car accident that was meant to kill you!

Johnny covers his face with his hands. Grace seems desperate, her sweater is now blue. Katherine gets up.

KATHERINE

Stop it!! We have a guest!

PEDRO

(He turns to Lawrence)
Oh... Forgive us. I did not realize.
Who are you?

GRACE

My boyfriend Lawrence. I told you about him months ago. Can't you all make an effort and welcome him...
normally?

There is an awkward silence. Lawrence looks at Grace and notices her sweater is different.

LAWRENCE
Did you change clothes?

GRACE
What? Oh my God.

Her family gives her a look of disapproval. She turns to Johnny.

GRACE
(whispering)
Continuity error... It's the stress.

PEDRO
(sitting down)
So... What do you do for a living,
young man?

Lawrence takes a deep breath. Grace grabs his arm, but he gently pushes her hand away.

LAWRENCE
I'm a screenplay writer.

They all gasp, much more shocked then when Pedro came in.

LAWRENCE
As a matter of fact, I am currently
working on what I believe to be my
best screenplay so far. For a big
producer back in Hollywood.

KATHERINE
Hollywood?
(she looks at Grace)
Are you living in Hollywood?

GRACE
I can explain...

MARIA
Explain? Grace this is very serious!

GRACE
I'm old enough to do what I want!

PEDRO
It's too dangerous!

Johnny gets under the table, panicked.

JOHNNY

Stop screaming, stop screaming!

They all calm down and get back on their seats.

GRACE

I told you Lawrence, you should not have told them.

LAWRENCE

Well, I think you are wrong.
(he gets up and takes Grace's hand
in his)

I can assure you that I am a hard worker and I'll make a good living from my screenplays. You have no reason to worry about Grace's happiness. What's more, I think you should know that she is a very talented actor.

MARIA

Her? Acting? You mean as in going to a set and playing somebody else's part?

LAWRENCE

Well... yes. As a matter of fact, there is a chance she'll be cast to play the leading part in the film.

KATHERINE

Grace, is this true?

PEDRO

This is too much for one evening. I think I will go to bed.

JOHNNY

But we haven't eaten yet!

PEDRO

Good night.

Pedro gets up. Katherine and her mother also leave the table.

6 INT. NIGHT - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - GRACE'S BEDROOM

6

Lawrence and Grace are in bed. Grace is lying on her side with her eyes closed ready to sleep. Lawrence is lying with his hands behind his head.

LAWRENCE

Grace, what was that that went on between your grandparents at dinner?

GRACE

Hum, what was what?

LAWRENCE

Did your grandmother really try to kill your grandfather? I mean if it's true it's horrible... although it almost seems as if it was... staged.

GRACE

Well yeah, something like that. They like pretending.

LAWRENCE

But what about the subtitles? And your sweater?

GRACE

Honey, I'm tired. Let's just go to sleep, OK?

LAWRENCE

I can't sleep... I think I'll work on my screenplay. Where can I go to work?

GRACE

Go wherever you want, just let me sleep!

7 INT. NIGHT. THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

7

Lawrence is working on his laptop in the kitchen. Johnny walks in. He didn't notice Lawrence's presence at first and screams when he sees him.

LAWRENCE

Are you alright there buddy?

JOHNNY

You scared the hell out of me! What are you doing in the kitchen in the middle of the night?

LAWRENCE

I couldn't sleep so I'm working on my screenplay. What about you?

JOHNNY

I... Obviously couldn't sleep either.
 (He takes ice cream out of the
 freezer)
 Do you want some?

Lawrence shakes his head.

LAWRENCE

Johnny, what do you do for a living?

JOHNNY

I'm still in college. Why?

LAWRENCE

Nothing, I'm interested in you that's
 all. This is a nice house. It's really
 big! Do your grandparents sleep in the
 same room?

JOHNNY

Of course!

There is a moment of silence. Johnny starts eating his ice
 cream while Lawrence keeps writing on his laptop.

JOHNNY

What's your screenplay about?

He gets behind Lawrence. Lawrence closes the laptop with an
 abrupt gesture.

LAWRENCE

Don't look! I... I'll let you read it
 later if you want but I really don't
 like people reading my stuff before
 it's... finished.

JOHNNY

Sorry.

Johnny leaves the room with his ice cream.

8 INT. LATE AFTERNOON - BAR

8

Lawrence and Grace are seated at a table having drinks. There
 is disco music playing. They are surrounded by people
 dancing.

GRACE

I love this place! I used to come here

all the time with my friends and dance
all night!

LAWRENCE

Why don't we dance now?

Grace turns pale.

LAWRENCE

What is it? Don't you want to dance?
You just said you used to dance here
all the time. Is it that you don't
want to dance with me?

GRACE

Don't say that! It's more
complicated...

LAWRENCE

How?

She bursts into tears.

GRACE

There is something you don't know... I
feel so bad... I lied to you from the
beginning.

LAWRENCE

What are you talking about?

GRACE

(she gets up and flips her chair
over)

My family had warned me not to get
involved with anyone. People like us
we can't mix with other people. My
father was different and now Johnny is
all mixed up!

(she takes a dignified pose)

I'm going to show you something.

Grace walks over to the bar's old jukebox and selects a song. Silence fills the bar. Everyone stops what they are doing to look at her. The lights go dim and a more cinematographic light invades the screen. The music to "Girls just want to have fun" starts playing and the camera follows Grace as she starts singing. Grace reaches the center of the dance floor and she starts dancing. Everyone in the bar join her and they all dance in a perfectly timed choreography. Lawrence looks at her, both surprised and admiring.

Grace runs to the door of the bar and opens it. Everyone follows her and they keep dancing. Others join them in the street. Grace looks at the camera while she sings and dances.

At the end of the song they all stop dancing at the same time. Grace blows a kiss to the camera.

9 EXT. LATE AFTERNOON - STREET

9

Lawrence and Grace are walking back to the house.

GRACE

I'm a character, Lawrence. A character in the flesh from a musical. It's... my genre. Do you see what I'm talking about? I never learned to sing or dance, it's all natural to me.

LAWRENCE

I can't believe this...

GRACE

My grandparents used to be tremendously popular telenovela characters in Mexico, but they decided to run away. And then, as my mom was growing up, they could tell she was a lot like them but softer. With my grandparents it's all about the drama.

LAWRENCE

Well, that explains last night! But wait, why aren't you "telenovela"?

GRACE

My mom married someone "normal" and it messed things up a little bit. In the end I guess I'm not doing too bad. At least I know why I am the way I am. Johnny was always hard to figure out. When he was little, he seemed to be a comedy character and couldn't help making puns and jokes. A couple of years back he thought he was a character in a Western and he carried a gun everywhere...

10 INT. DAY - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

10

Lawrence is sitting on a sofa, working on his laptop. Katherine walks in and, after making sure they are alone,

locks the doors. She sits next to Lawrence.

KATHERINE

Is there anything you wish to tell me?

Lawrence pretends not to hear her.

KATHERINE

Oh come on! I know.

LAWRENCE

You know... what?

KATHERINE

If you were half the man you pretend to be, you wouldn't lie about who you are!

LAWRENCE

I... I don't know what you are talking about!

Katherine gets up. She is about to open the door.

LAWRENCE

wait! I... I didn't have a choice. I never wanted to...

KATHERINE

I give you until dinner time to tell your secret to my daughter. Or I'll tell her myself at dinner, in front of everyone!

11 INT. DAY - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - STUDY

11

Lawrence is printing what appears to be a few pages from his screenplay. He seems nervous. When the pages are printed, he takes them in his hands. He looks at his watch and waits.

Suddenly, a high-pitched scream is heard in the house.

12 INT. DAY - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE -KITCHEN

12

Lawrence comes running into the kitchen. Katherine is lying on the floor. Grace is crouching next to her, crying. Around her, her grandparents and her brother look very stricken.

LAWRENCE

What happened? I heard a scream.

MARIA

It was Grace. She found...

Lawrence sees Katherine's body on the floor.

LAWRENCE

Is she...? Call an ambulance!

PEDRO

It's too late!

Johnny starts crying, Grace gets up and takes him in her arms.

MARIA

(to Lawrence)

Could you give us a moment?

Lawrence nods and leaves the kitchen.

MARIA

(whispering)

Look what I found in Katherine's room.

She takes a piece of paper out of her pocket.

GRACE

What does it mean?

MARIA

It means your boyfriend was fired from Hollywood three months ago.

GRACE

But... He's working so hard on that new screenplay.

13 INT. EVENING. THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

13

Pedro, Maria, Johnny, Grace and Lawrence are having dinner in silence. Everyone looks sad and suspicious. After a while, Lawrence clears his throat.

LAWRENCE

I have decided to go back to Hollywood earlier. I think you need... some time to yourselves. I'm really sorry for your loss.

Maria looks at him frowning.

JOHNNY

Thank you, Lawrence.

PEDRO

When will you leave?

LAWRENCE

There is a flight tomorrow morning. I already booked my seat.

14 INT. NIGHT - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - GRACE'S BEDROOM 14

It is the middle of the night. The only light in the room is the moonbeam coming in through the window. Grace is alone in her bed. She is moving in her sleep. Her hand is looking for Lawrence's body. Not finding him wakes her up.

GRACE

Lawrence? Lawrence?

She gets up, puts her dressing gown on and leaves the room.

15 INT. NIGHT - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - CORRIDOR 15

Grace is walking in the corridor. It is dark except for the light coming from the study where the sound of a printer can be heard.

16 INT. NIGHT - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - STUDY 16

Grace comes into the study. Lawrence, who is now printing his screenplay entirely, is startled.

LAWRENCE

Grace! What are you doing here?

GRACE

What are you doing here in the middle of the night? Are you working on your screenplay? Using our printer. My mother just died, have you got no decency?

LAWRENCE

Go back to bed, Grace. You are still in shock; you need to rest.

She sits down on a chair. The printer stops. Lawrence hurriedly takes the screenplay.

GRACE

Why didn't you tell me, Lawrence? That you were fired.

LAWRENCE

I... I...

GRACE

(She points to the screenplay in his hands)

What is this screenplay if it's not for Hollywood?

LAWRENCE

I've been working with some friends... It's going to be a low budget film but I'm sure it will be great.

GRACE

Will I be in it?

LAWRENCE

Of course, baby, you are!

GRACE

Let me read it then! Maybe it will help me fall asleep.

LAWRENCE

No! I still need to make some changes. Come on, let's take you back to bed.

Lawrence takes Grace by the hand and they leave the room after turning off the light. As they are walking in the corridor they stop: a loud noise is heard coming from the kitchen, as if somebody were cutting wood with a chain saw.

17 INT. NIGHT. THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

17

Lawrence and Grace come into the kitchen and find Johnny dressed as Leatherface from *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. Grace screams and hides behind Lawrence. When he sees them, Johnny stops the chain saw. But then he starts it again and walks towards them laughing.

Lawrence and Grace run away.

18 INT. NIGHT - THE CASTRO'S HOUSE - STUDY

18

Lawrence and Grace are back in the study. Lawrence locks the door.

GRACE

Wait! What about my grandparents? We have to go get them!

LAWRENCE

Don't worry!

Lawrence walks over to the table. He opens his laptop and starts writing. A few seconds later a single page of a script comes out of the printer. Lawrence grabs it.

GRACE

What are you doing?

Johnny has followed them and he is now behind the door. He starts kicking it.

LAWRENCE

What do you think I'm doing? The script I just wrote says "Lawrence pulls a gun out of his pocket".

Johnny kicks the door open. Lawrence pulls a gun out of his pocket and points it to Johnny. Grace screams. Johnny turns off the chain saw, suddenly very worried about the gun Lawrence is holding.

GRACE

What are you talking about? Call the cops!

Lawrence's hand is slightly shaking while he points the gun at Johnny.

LAWRENCE

There is no time for that. I'll shoot him!

JOHNNY

Don't! I'm sorry. I'll leave you two alone.

Johnny, who now appears to be very calm, leaves the room.

19 INT. MORNING - AIRPORT

19

Lawrence and Grace are at the check-in counter. Lawrence's bag is on the counter. While he is talking with the airline employee, Grace opens the bag and pulls out the screenplay.

GRACE
I'll wait for you over there.

LAWRENCE
What? Yeah, sure.

After checking-in, Lawrence walks over to Grace. She is half-way through the screenplay. When she sees Lawrence, she throws it at him.

GRACE
(screaming and crying)
How could you? How could you? This is us! It's our house! You described us! You killed my mom! And what was all that stuff about my grandparents dying in their sleep?

LAWRENCE
Grace please. Don't make a scene!

GRACE
You murderer!

Lawrence violently grabs her by the wrists.

LAWRENCE
I had no choice! I was fired, I have no money. The people from Televisa hired me.

GRACE
What people?

LAWRENCE
Your grandparents caused a lot of trouble by leaving Mexico. Televisa doesn't like having two of their characters running free. They hired me to kill them. Your mother discovered my secret, I had no choice but to kill her too!

GRACE
What about me? Did you turn Johnny into a horror movie character so he could kill me?

LAWRENCE
No, I would never do something like that! The Televisa people don't care

about you, or Johnny, actually. I didn't do anything to him. If you read the screenplay carefully, you can see he was supposed to be in bed last night...

GRACE

I never want to see you again!

LAWRENCE

(with a patronizing voice)
Honey, don't say that. You haven't finished reading the screenplay yet. Read the airport scene.

GRACE

(she starts reading the screenplay)
"Lawrence and Grace are at the check-in counter. Lawrence's bag is on the counter. While he is talking with the airline employee, Grace opens the bag and pulls out the screenplay."

LAWRENCE

Go on.

GRACE

It says we get into a fight. It says... everything we just said. And... It says: "Grace forgives Lawrence and they kiss". It doesn't make any sense!

LAWRENCE

Well, I *am* a terrible writer.

He grabs her by the waist and kisses her.

LAWRENCE

By the way, you are coming with me on the flight and we are going to Mexico!

20 INT. MORNING. PLANE

20

Lawrence and Grace are sitting next to each other, holding hands. She looks as if she had been drugged.

LAWRENCE

I'm so glad we made up.

GRACE

Hum...

The captain announces that the plane is ready for takeoff.

LAWRENCE

I'm sure you can start a great career in Mexico! We'll find work easily. I already started working on my Spanish. Here, listen: "un poco mas tequila, por favor"!

GRACE

My mom... My grandparents... You played me...

She starts to get agitated and the plane magazine she had on her lap falls under her seat. A man in the seat behind them hands them the magazine between their seats.

LAWRENCE

Thank you.

The man puts his head between the two seats. It's Johnny. Lawrence and Grace are astonished. Johnny's eyes are bulging.

JOHNNY

Heeeeere's Johnny!

Lawrence and Grace scream as the plane takes off.

THE END.