

REGULAR COVERAGE EXAMPLE



TITLE: Skin Deep
 AUTHOR: -----
 GENRE: Comedy
 ANALYST: -----
 PERIOD: Present
 LOCALE: USA
 SERVICE: Regular
 DATE: -----

LOGLINE: When a vain young woman witnesses a murder and decides to hide out in an isolated residential home for disabled people, she gains a new perspective and new friends.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Structure			X	
Plot/Story Line			X	
Character Development			X	
Dialogue			X	
First 20 Pages			X	

	Recommend	Consider	Pass
Script			X
Writer			X

SYNOPSIS:

Kate tries to talk her beauty-obsessed sister, Bianca, out of the bathroom, where she has locked herself for three hours. Inside the bathroom, Bianca sees her own face as a pig's face and tries to cover it up. Eventually, Kate gets Bianca out of the bathroom and takes her to a Church hall where they are looking for volunteers, as Kate is desperate to get Bianca a job. On the way Bianca dives into the Nail It van to have her nails touched up by Lulu.

At the Church Hall, Bianca fails to help and on the way home Kate and Bianca fight. Later, Bianca asks Kate if she will pay for her to have more plastic surgery. Kate reminds her that she is still paying off the last lot of plastic surgery and refuses to give Bianca any more money. They head to bed and distraught, Bianca searches for anything that will put her out of her misery – pills or knives. However, Kate has locked everything away, so Bianca takes Kate's car keys and drives to a bridge. On the bridge however, Bianca sees two thugs throw Lulu off of the bridge. Lulu's boss, Hickson, is also present. Bianca screams and the thugs spot her and head towards her. Hickson fires a gun at her, but Bianca escapes and drives away. Moments later, Hickson, and the thugs pursue her. Terrified, Bianca dives through red lights and having failed to find toll change, down a lonely street. Bianca gets out and tries to call Kate, but Kate is asleep. Bianca's car catches fire and she drops her cell phone before running into the forest. Soon she is covered in mud.

Kate awakens and realizes Bianca is in trouble. She calls her but the phone lies where Bianca dropped it unanswered. Kate calls Emmy, Bianca's doctor, who refuses to help.

Early the next morning, Bianca emerges from the forest and finds a residential home called Sunnyview. Here Bianca meets Chris who assumes that Bianca is Kelly, who he is expecting to start work at the residential home that day. When Bianca hears that there is also accommodation with the job and that Chris will pay her in cash, she grasps the opportunity and says that she is Kelly. Then she signs the paperwork and is shown the cottage where she will stay. Immediately, Bianca realizes there is no mirror in the bathroom. Chris asks her if she will manage and Bianca responds that she will "try." She then meets Meredith who is blind.

Meanwhile, Kate calls the police but gets no joy. Then she spots Pastor Brock talking to Hickson. She tells Brock that Bianca has disappeared.

Hickson gives her Bianca's lipstick that she dropped on the bridge, saying that they were found in a nearby street.

Back at Sunnyview, Bianca meets other disabled residents, many of whom are blind. She tries to call Kate but realizes it is no use and hangs up. Soon Bianca is managing all her jobs and getting on with all the Sunnyview residents. However, one day Chris and Meredith ask her to go into town with him, on the same day that Kate's burned out car is being towed away. In a clothes shop a sales assistant sees Bianca's nametag and comments that Kelly is her own name and that she had considered working at Sunnyview, a few months earlier. As Bianca leaves the shop, the sales assistant recognizes her from the posters that Kate had put up trying to track down her sister. The sales assistant calls Kate.

Back at Sunnyview, Meredith is not even mad about the trick Bianca played in getting Meredith to wear a red dress to the dance. Later, however, Bianca and Meredith fall out and Meredith suggests that Bianca is a coward for not opening up to her. However, after staring at her newly calloused hands, Bianca heads to the Sunnyview dance and dances with Chris.

The next day as Chris and Bianca clear up, Kate turns up at Sunnyview and tells Chris that Bianca is not Kelly. Chris is distraught saying this always happens when he finds someone great. Bianca is touched and says that she must explain to Meredith. In the distance the Nail It van approaches.

Bianca tells Meredith that she saw a murder, which is why she is in hiding and Meredith insists she tell the police. However, moments later Bianca is abducted by Hickson's thugs. They speed off in the Nail It van. Chris, Meredith, and the other residents give chase in the community van. Kate is touched to see how much they care about Bianca.

Meanwhile, in the Nail It van, Hickson gives a reluctant and bound Bianca a make over, saying she will be sold to a client. Bianca almost gives up, but then fights back and with the help of Chris and Meredith's cane-fighting ways, she escapes and Hickson is arrested.

Kate tells Bianca that she is happy that she can manage independently and Chris says he wants Bianca to continue working at Sunnyview, even though she is not really Kelly. Bianca and Chris kiss.

DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS

Premise:

The premise in *Skin Deep* is a vain young woman witnesses a murder and decides to hide out in an isolated home for disabled people. A few months without a mirror gives her a new perspective and new friends.

While this is a strong premise, which could drive a feature comedy powerfully forward, there are certain issues that need to be addressed by the writer. Firstly the script lacks a little credibility in places. For example, is the Nail It killer, Hickson, credible enough? Also, Bianca finds Sunnyview very quickly after having been lost in the forest for a night and is then offered a job. This reads as too convenient to the plot. While the characters are interesting, the writer must ensure that how they act is credible.

Secondly, consider the opening depiction of Bianca. In the opening scenes she seems to be in some kind of mental therapy as her vanity is well above normal. However, she very quickly adjusts to her plain life at Sunnyview. There is much more potential for comedy in this initial adjustment and it may be worth the writer watching films such as *Private Benjamin*, to look at how much comedy is mined in the fish out of water scenarios. There is real potential in this premise of a vain character stuck in a place without all of her beauty tools.

Thirdly, consider Bianca's goal. Is it to live on the farm in disguise as Kelly, so that the murderers do not find her? If so, then the antagonist needs to be more of a threat to her discovery throughout the script, rather than just in the first and third acts. If Bianca is in constant danger of being found and we see her acting to manage her anonymity while Hickson tries to find her, then there will be greater conflict and tension in the narrative. Finally, work through the script to ensure that the comedy is maximized throughout.

Skin Deep has an engaging comic premise, but the writer is awarded lower marks because of the issues highlighted above. The writer could consider making changes to this effect, so that the script reads with greater credibility.

The script touches upon several themes, including the ideas of self-obsession and image, which are fundamental to the character of Bianca. The script reads as 108 pages long which is a little long for this material. Consider if the story can be told in 100 pages.

First Twenty Pages:

The first twenty pages of a comedy script are essential in establishing the world, laws governing the world, the tone, and the premise of the narrative. Additionally the writer must introduce the characters in a compelling way, clearly establish their goals, and spark the on-going conflict between the characters. In addition it needs to be funny.

On the first page of *Skin Deep*, the writer, to their credit, introduces the protagonist, Bianca and quickly sets up her problem on page 2, when Bianca looks at herself in the bathroom mirror and sees her own face as a pig. The antagonist, Hickson, is then introduced on page 4. However, the writer could give further consideration to establishing the world that the characters inhabit.

The conflict between the protagonist and antagonist is clear by page 18, when Hickson tries to shoot Bianca.

Structure:

The three-act structure is evident here, but the writer needs to work through the script to ensure each act has enough credible conflict. Giving Hickson greater presence in act 2 of the screenplay may help maintain conflict and tension.

Act one – Kate refuses to pay for Bianca’s plastic surgery. Bianca sees Lulu get shot. She escapes into the forest and finds Sunnyview. Chris offers her a job as Kelly and she accepts.

Act two – Bianca begins work and is a hit with Meredith and other residents. Kate searches for Bianca. The real Kelly sees Bianca on a trip into town and calls Kate. Kate and Hickson show up at Sunnyview and Hickson abducts Bianca. He gives her a makeover and she loses hope.

Act three – Bianca spots the community van. She fights Hickson. Meredith and Chris help Bianca and Hickson is arrested. Chris asks her to stay at Sunnyview and they kiss.

Additional notes:

Revisit each scene to ensure that each scene is credible and there is clear conflict in it. Particularly consider Hickson, as he needs further development to ensure credibility.

Look at each scene and see if it is needed. If it is not needed, cut the scene from the script. Some scenes may not be needed or could be edited.

Edit the dialogue in the script, to give each utterance as much focus and comic impact as possible.

Consider whether the use of pig visions in the mirror is the best way to tell some aspects of the story.

Ensure the antagonist is present throughout the screenplay as currently Hickson largely disappears in Act 2.

Character and Dialogue:

In the main, the characters are interesting, however they need further development to ensure their actions read as credible. Bianca as the image-obsessed woman, who finds herself without a mirror to look in, is a potentially compelling character. However, the writer needs to further consider Bianca's depiction when she first joins Sunnyview, as there is considerable potential comedy in her situation. Also ensure she is depicted acting on a clearly defined goal.

The characters on the whole speak distinctly from one another. Edit any pieces of dialogue, which are overlong, to give each piece of dialogue maximum impact.

General Notes:

Skin Deep offers a compelling comic premise, with the idea of a vain woman stuck in an isolated residential home. The writer needs to focus on ensuring that the narrative is credible throughout. Reading other comedy feature scripts and considering the ways in which writers overcome narrative complications to create credible comic momentum, may help in the rewrite process.