

**THE BLACK LIST**

# WINDFALL

Evaluation

Overall	Premise	Plot	Character	Dialogue	Setting
8	8	8	7	7	8

Era	1937, 1977, 2010
Locations	Shanghai, San Francisco, urban; Southern California
Budget	Medium
Genre	Drama, Coming-of-Age, Family Drama, Period Drama
Logline	Told in distinct chapters spanning 1937 Shanghai, 1977 San Francisco and 2010 Southern California, the story of three generations of a Chinese-American family as its troubled, but gifted members confront the pain of their past and difficulties in becoming who they want to be.
Pages	115

## Strengths

The narrative's premise is bold, sweeping and develops timeless, universal themes on family and identity with a specificity, depth and nuance that is, in more than a few scenes, breathtaking, and consistently engages on a deeply emotional and psychological level. The 1937 Shanghai setting is rendered with unimpeachable authenticity and rich detail. The ending to the first chapter, where Jing plays Windfall and captivates the Japanese soldiers, only for Odaka to tragically alter the course of his family's history with the merciless line that seals Ahn's fate, "But, orders are orders" (38), will leave audiences speechless. The motif of the camera, the violin, Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, and Windfall all help convey the narrative's theme in a manner that is poetic and cinematic. The narrative's unconventional chapter structure and discipline to not over-tell the story and tie everything together reflects a mature, sensitive writer.

## Weaknesses

The narrative conveys a core aspect of its theme in the scene on page 19, where Ahn tells Jing, "All parents are the same. We give up the lives we have so that our children can have the lives they need... But... only a few people are lucky enough to choose who they want to be.". This crucial aspect of the theme may not resonate as powerfully if articulated so succinctly and delivered so neatly and early in the story in a manner that is rather on-the-nose. More subtlety, and more story that earns the theme's delivery is likely warranted. Jing's role in the second act may be too peripheral. Given that in this portion of the story he is a sort of ominous antagonist, he likely needs to be more present and his relationship with Emelia more developed. The second act break may also be too brief and ambiguous. The narrative may need to push past the current end point to the second chapter and give the audience more story. The third act climax, particularly from page 109-111, is tad melodramatic and on-the-nose.

## Prospects

WINDFALL is an excellent script with timeless, universal themes on identity and the pathology of family, some memorable moments that are deeply moving and richly cinematic, and a consistently high level of execution. This script has immediate merit as a writing sample and could have surprising commercial potential if developed as a prestige film designed to win awards, and if the right Chinese filmmakers/dealmakers can fall in love with the material and be attached.