

**183A Producing 1: Film and Television Development  
Summer Session A 2017**

<b>Title:</b> CLOUD 9	<b>Submitted to:</b> Alex Creswick, Silvio Amherst
<b>Date in:</b> 3/7/2017	<b>Submitted by:</b> Jenette Cooper
<b>Writer:</b> Kat Smith	<b>Reader:</b> Elias Gutierrez
<b>Genre:</b> Drama	<b>Budget:</b> \$2M or less
<b>Locale:</b> Coastal California	<b>Circa:</b> Present Day

**Logline:** A once successful and outspoken poet writer has now become a deadbeat of drinking and gambling with his marriage ending in a divorce. Yet, he starts to have strange visions which could alter himself and his marriage.

**Compare to:** *Spirited Away* and *The Fountain* with elements of *The Tree of Life*.

**Attachments:** Actor Bryan Cranston was attached to play as Titus.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise			X	
Storyline			X	
Characterizations			X	
Dialogue		X		
Plot/Structure			X	
Casting Potential			X	
Writer Recommendation:	Consider			
Project Recommendation:	Pass			

**SUMMARY:**

An eager audience watches a handsome, outspoken, and talented artist be interview by various people throughout the years about his style of writing and his atheist views. He is a famous poet writer that has won awards such as the Pulitzer, and is married to a beautiful wife MEGAN ODELL who is also a writer. His name is TITUS JACKSON. Several years has gone by, and the confident Titus is now drinking more, playing poker games, not motivated to write, and his marriage with Megan is stale who is considering a divorce.

Megan receives packages that was ordered to her, but one particular FedEx package catches the eye of Titus since it was from her literary agent ILENE. He opens it and is upset to find out that Megan was making a book of poems. After attending a poetry club, he bumps into his wife where he expresses his frustrations and insecurities at her for making her book. Megan has two friends, SYDNEY and DOUG, that support her decision, and she wonders where Titus is at the

moment as well as how happier she was with him earlier in their marriage. He is at a bar drinking in the afternoon and later playing poker. Still furious, he goes outside to take a walk where a train comes pass by him, and his character changes with having strange visions.

Megan finds Titus walking home in the wrong direction while acting a little different. She takes him back and heads for work while he is continuing to act strange. She comes back to find him naked talking about the visions he saw, the light, and God. Further along, he is acting more nicely towards Megan, stops drinking, and smoking. He is a totally changed man. Megan is weirded out by this, and she asks Sydney and Doug to all spend time together with him so he could slowly mold back to the way he once was. This fails as Titus angrily leaves their social affair since they ridicule his new characteristics, and walks out into the streets at night. He receives strange visions as he is walking out in the streets until he gets hit by a car.

He gets sent to the hospital, and DR. MANN tells him that he is suffering epilepsy and explains as to why he is experiencing his visions. He prescribes Titus medications for epilepsy, but Titus does not like what the doctor explained to him nor the prescriptions he has to take. Later, he receives another vision, but this time he is talking to a PRIEST who tells him to take his prescriptions. He takes the medications and it hardly works at all. Dr. Mann wonders about what is going on in Titus' head since he is fascinated on the human consciousness for some time. He asks Titus if he could perform tests like biologically imaging on his brain so the doctor could understand his condition.

Megan goes to the family room to find Titus tearing down a wall to create more spacious room, but while he is doing this he almost hits her. She gets worried about his epilepsy and asks Dr. Mann about the possibility of brain surgery on her husband. They tell Titus about the brain surgery, but he angrily rejects it. Megan experiences a slight vision in her peripheral, and asks Titus if she could experience what he sees. He drives her at an area which is densely foggy in the darkness of the night, and they get out of the car. They are somewhat in a possibility of a heaven-like place which is a forest, and Megan is amazed by what she is experiencing. She runs out in excitement as Titus chases after her while calling out her name which echoes through the trees.

Titus wakes up in the hospital, and he suffered a head injury whereas Megan dislocated her shoulder. Dr. Mann strongly advises to perform brain surgery to treat the epilepsy on Titus, but Megan is worried that she would lose the husband she has now fallen in love with. After the surgery, Titus returns to his old self where he smokes, plays poker, and is an atheist. Megan feels the loss of the new Titus which is now gone, but she opens the front door of the entry way to the house. Outside is the place full of clouds and a vast landscape. A place of paradise.

## **COMMENTS:**

A movie that is like *Spirited Away* and *The Fountain* for characters traveling to a spiritual land whereas in the same tone for its emotional grip where the characters do not want to leave the particular setting. It is also in the same vain as *The Tree of Life* for its religious and spiritual undertones as well as the visual aspects. It has great ideas which celebrates on not lessening one's belief on any particular religion or spirituality and the hardships of marriage, but it does come off as too heavy handed and forced. What this means is that we feel like we are constantly being reminded about its importance without any room for us to take a breath. This could detract any of the viewers for watching the film, and it could mean a loss of quality of the film as well as revenues from our clients.

The story is such that a famous poet writer by the name of Titus Jackson was once outspoken especially on his atheism, but years have gone by where he no longer writes and his marriage is failing. One night, he receives a vision where he starts to change as a person throughout the screenplay although he is diagnosed with epilepsy, and his wife tries to get him back to the person she fell in love with originally. The concept is not unique as it has been done a few times with spiritual or religious films where the main character does not believe in a higher existence until he/she is faced with a miracle that transforms his/her entire view. Why is it that the main character in this particular film receives a vision first instead of his wife? Is it because he was in such a low state that he receives this vision and changes as a person? This is something that needs to be addressed. There are a few backdrops of the concept and plot, but what makes up for it are the consequences that it brings where the main character could hurt others around him. This is an original concept that not a lot of film if this type bring.

The screenplay is engaging to read as it provides clear and direct descriptions about the settings at hand which would easily be filmed in any coastal locations in California. The visuals were easy and cinematic to see with special effects that are very simple yet interesting to read such as the clouds in 'paradise'. The tone fits well to the story as it is about the concepts of religion and spirituality. The dialogues are good as it keeps the scenes going and it brings interesting questions from the characters for us to ponder as well as to do performance. Yet, one of the problems is that it uses too many editing and cinematography terms in the action descriptions with some terms shorten down to abbreviations. This sometimes causes us to wonder if this leaves any room for filmmakers and cinematographers to have their own creativity when shooting the scenes. Describing the type of characters when introduced feels unnecessary such as the description of 'beautiful' female characters since that is more of the casting director's and filmmaker's to look for when finding actors and actresses. Lastly, describing very minor characters in a particular scene such as an African-American being bumped into and he gets mad, or a Mexican playing poker seems racist. We do not want to put only minorities into stereotypical roles as a Caucasian would equally be put in those scenes as well. Although the screenplay is engaging to read, there are a few issues which hold it back like the use of racial characters and action descriptions.

**Structure** The main dramatic tension in the screenplay is the main character's messages of the visions he sees as well as respecting one's belief which is being undermined by people around him such as his wife, friends, and a doctor. Yet, because the main character has good views on his messages, he puts a risk to himself and others around him. His wife dislocates her shoulder and he receives a head injury which provides a good tension to the story. It also provides an interesting idea on how far could he go, and the possibility that he is his own antagonist. It also provides a conflict of Man versus Self and Man versus Man, and combine this tension makes the screenplay interesting to see.

The main character is developed well in an interesting way where he goes from a character with very witty and pessimistic views to someone that is a complete opposite of caring and spiritual. He becomes like this until at various times we see him go too far with it by almost hitting his wife with an axe. He then changes back to his old self at the end of the script which is good yet sad to see. Dr. Mann is interesting to read as he comes off as someone that might be a stereotypical doctor that does not believe in faith, but in reality he does. His wife had some good moments in the screenplay of wanting her old lover back to wanting the new lover back with various times of her reminiscence, but she felt like she was not strong enough as a character since she gladly accepts the main character's any strange shift. It is as if she has no self-worth for herself unless that is the whole intention of this particular character. The other minor characters such as Sydney, Doug, and Ilene felt like they had no interesting qualities to them since it felt like they

are there for Titus or Megan to talk to. There were a few characters that are good, but the minor characters needed more energy to them.

Interestingly, the main character changes back to his old self instead of becoming the newer person that he was throughout the screenplay, and this is a very strong point. Three of the characters are good such as Titus, Megan, and Dr. Mann, but the minor characters do feel like they are placed there for the other characters to interact. The theme of the screenplay is such that one respects everyone's beliefs and the possibility of the unknown, but it comes off as too heavy handed. It has some Oscar potential in terms of the acting for the main character, but with all of the flaws as well as the good, the script is a pass.

## **CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:**

**TITUS** (Lead Male, mid 50s): A once profiled and well respected poet writer, he has now become a dead-end without releasing any poetry over the years. Outspoken with an attitude, he begins to have visions at one night which makes him change as a character completely. This comes at a cost where he could hurt others around him as well as himself.

**MEGAN** (Lead Female, early 60s): A writer as well as the wife to Titus, she wants to publish her own poetry book, but is afraid of how her husband would react. Even though Titus would change his character completely, she is submissive and cares for her husband even though she is considering divorce.

**DR. MANN** (Major Supporting Male, mid-50s): A calm physician who helps diagnose with Titus after an accident. He is fascinated with how the human mind works and also have his own spiritual beliefs. He wants to help out Titus and understand him although he does not seem that way at first.

**SYDNEY** (Major Supporting Female, 50s): A friend to both Titus and Megan, she helps out Megan with helpful advices.

**DOUG** (Major Supporting Male, 50s): Also a friend to both Titus and Megan and the husband to Sydney, he helps out Megan and Titus with advices although he can be aggressive.

**ILENE** (Major Supporting Female, 60s): A friend and editor to both Titus and Megan. She also helps out Megan with advices.

**BLACK GUY** (Minor Supporting Male, 20s-30s): A random individual that acts aggressive towards Titus who tries talking to him.

**POLICE OFFICER** (Minor Supporting Male, 30s-40s): Tells Titus to move along since he is causing a scene.

**WAITRESS** (Minor Supporting Female, 20s-30s): Serves food for Sydney, Doug, Megan, and Titus.

**INTERN** (Minor Supporting Male/Female, 20s-30s): Bandages Titus.

**HILDA** (Minor Supporting Female, 70s-80s): An elderly woman in the hospital that Titus talks to and helps out.

NURSE (Minor Supporting Male/Female, 20s-30s): A nurse that attends to Titus.

PRIEST (Minor Supporting Male, 50s-60s): He appears in a vision of Titus who tells him to take his prescription medications for his epilepsy.

FATHER (Minor Supporting Male, late 70s): The father to Titus.

DR. PATEL (Minor Supporting Male, 50s): Supervisor to Dr. Mann.