**XXX SCREENWRITING AND**

**TELEPLAY COMPETITION COVERAGE REPORT:**

**READER INITIALS: C. B.**

**TITLE OF SCREENPLAY:** No Second Prize

**TRACKING ID#:** 11

**ADVANCE DOESN’T ADVANCE**

**FEEDBACK FOR ENTRANT:**

**GENRE:**  Early ‘90 Sports Drama

**LOGLINE:** In 1991, a young Yugoslavian refugee turned controversial Australian tennis star must overcome self-doubt and an abusive relationship in order to try and win the Australian Open.

**THREE TO FIVE SENTENCE FEEDBACK:**

The script’s relationships and overall story arcs are outstanding. Themes of overcoming adversity and believing in yourself are inspiringly persistent throughout. However, the dialogue comes across as unnatural, and there are many typos, grammatical errors, and formatting errors throughout the script that undermine its strengths. Additionally, while the script’s overall pacing is strong, its actions are often left a little short and vague, which may leave the audience confused and frustrated.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

In 1991, talented young tennis player KALINA BOLIC (twelve) and her father EMIL (40’s) flee war-torn Yugoslavia to compete in Australia. Her father coaches her poorly and punishes her after each loss, but an Australian coach, CARMEN WATERS (50’s), sees Kalina’s pure talent being undermined by her father’s abuse and takes Kalina under her wing. Kalina flourishes but decides to play in the Australian Open in spite of Carmen’s doubts, firing her under Emil’s persuasion. At the open, Kalina plays famously skilled yet widely controversial tennis figure FREJA MILIC (18) and wins. Kalina is eventually eliminated from the event, and her father punishes her by making her sleep outside of their apartment. Freja takes pity on her, and they become close friends and rivals. Kalina works up the courage to escape her father, but due to his abuse has low self-esteem and loses motivation to play tennis. Through coordinated efforts, Milic and Carmen convince Kalina to play in the Australian open a second time, and she rediscovers her passion for tennis. However, she injures herself in the process. Kalina cuts her abusive father out of her life and competes against Freja for the Australian Open trophy. She loses but persists through her pain, recognizing her strength along the way.

SCREENPLAY ANALYSIS/COMMENTARY:

The opening is compelling; it concisely sets the scene for Emil’s character, his hatred for Croatians, and Kalina’s tragic past. The overall pacing of the story is decent, hitting every emotional moment right on the beat, maximizing catharsis, and progressing every single scene--every interaction propels the characters’ emotions, motivations, and overall plot. The use of several advanced screenplay techniques can be seen throughout, too. For example, Karina repeating her father’s training towards the end of the script demonstrates excellent use of setups and payoffs.

Characterization is alright. Many characters consistently act according to their own unique personalities, motivations and sets of beliefs. Due to this, even the more trivial tertiary characters feel realistic in their own right. There could be some more attention given to background characters though, as they may come across as a single-minded mob in situations where it comes to undermining Kamina. It may also help to focus more on Emil’s personal conflict at some points. Because he is seen in virtually every scene he is in to be domineering and manipulative, it may feel to the audience that he is more of a plot-driven character when in reality, it is his fear of abandonment that drives his actions (although perhaps simply having a skilled actor take up the role may solve this issue)--still, Karmina and Milic’s coping mechanisms and struggles are apparent and relatable, Carmen’s actions are sympathized with, and Emil’s past mostly explains his evil; and even Rebecca Fuller, who only shows up a few times throughout the whole script, is given room to grow and mature.

The dialogue could use some work. While it gets the point across, at times the lack of grammatical structure, proper punctuation, and modern speech patterns leaves much to be desired. Audiences may feel uncomfortable when listening to awkward phrases on many occasions, ruining immersion and enjoyment of the film. The writer may want to pay extra attention to missing articles, determiners, noun modifications, and types of punctuation that help potential audiences understand tone. This would also lower any chance that readers may be confused by a scene due to poor descriptions.

On the topic of description– the writer may see some benefit to using exaggeration, detail, and simplification as tools to make the story more clear and appealing to a broad audience. For example, while tennis players and enthusiasts might know what is and isn’t regulation height for a net, audience members (and development staff for studios looking to purchase scripts) who have never played tennis may not understand its significance. Little details can act as indicators so the audience can feel in the loop in these instances.

It is also essential in a script that every new visual be given its own line. Describing entire interactions, matches, and points in a single action paragraph may be vague and confusing to those who do not understand what “unforced errors” are; it can also muddle up the emotion and depth of certain events.

Additionally, since a script is roughly equal to one minute, by dedicating only a tiny fraction of a page, the writer is telling the reader that the scene takes up very little time and is unimportant. In some cases, this is good to do--the audience is not only there to watch tennis, they're also there for the story; however, for games that mirror important plot or character development, dedicating more time to the environment, the character's emotions in the scene, and indications of how the game is going give the story more depth. Later on in the script, there is much more importance given to the matches in this way, but earlier ones are spared very few lines despite their significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Overall, the story is very strong. Each character’s three-dimensionality helps to bring the well-timed story to life. The writer’s ability to portray powerful emotions and their sense of story shines through beautifully. Still, there is room for improvement in technical aspects, mainly in terms of proper grammar and formatting, but also where scene and action descriptions are concerned. The author might detail scoreboards changing and announcers narrating in more than one game, as the audience might not know what a drop shot is, that Kalina is nailing something, or that she is even winning. Putting a score up, writing where the ball ends, and describing certain actions and facial expressions throughout the script and in all scenarios can go a long way--essentially, spelling out in clear detail every part of every visual, and breaking up actions accordingly, would solidify the script greatly and tell the audience how to feel about certain events they may not fully grasp.