

SCREENPLAY: 107 pages

STORY ANALYST: Sophia Colby  
September 26, 2022

SEEKING A FRIEND FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

By  
Lorene Scafaria

TYPE: Romance, Drama, Dark Comedy

LOCALE & TIME: East Coast USA -- A Near Future

LOGLINE: With the world about to be destroyed by an asteroid in a few weeks, a mundane, sweet man sets out on a road trip to reunite with his high school sweetheart, only to discover that his lively travel companion was the one for him all along.

-----

Pulled over on the side of a road, DODGE (30s) and his wife LINDA (30s) listen anxiously to a radio broadcast describing how the final mission to save humanity from the asteroid about to collide with the planet has failed--everyone has four weeks left to live. Linda promptly bails on Dodge, running out of the car. She does not return.

Dodge at first tries to stick to his boring routine, going to his job at a life insurance agency as society crumbles around him in horrible and hilarious ways--Time magazine releases a "Best of Humanity Issue" featuring Jesus and Oprah, a TV news anchor simply remarks "we're fucked, Bob," Twitter no longer works because it is "over capacity"... Dodge also visits his mother in the hospital. She appears to be suffering from dementia. She reveals that Dodge never got over his high school girlfriend, Olivia.

Dodge attends a gathering at the house of his friends WARREN (30s) and DIANE (30s), who try to set him up with mutual friend KAREN (30s). But Dodge is opposed to getting to know someone new during his last month alive. The family-friendly house party quickly transforms into a wild rave with drinking, drugs, and friend ROACHE (30s) telling Dodge to take advantage of women's sexual standards currently being lower, all of which makes Dodge uncomfortable. Diane herself makes a pass at Dodge and gets rejected.

When Dodge returns to his apartment, he finds PENNY (30s, British) crying on the fire escape outside his window. He comforts her and invites her in. She explains that she just broke up with her boyfriend and intended on sleeping on the fire escape to avoid him. She feels guilty for missing the last plane to the UK, continuing her habit of giving her time to "the wrong" men instead of her family. A heavy sleeper, she rests on his couch for a long time. Assuming that Dodge and his wife Linda were roommates, Penny asks about Linda's boyfriend.

Dodge moves on from Linda, getting rid of her things. He goes to visit his mother once again, but all the patients in the hospital were euthanized by the remaining nurses. Crushed, Dodge overdoses on cough syrup and passes out in a public park. He comes to with a dog tied to him, which he takes home. There, he reads the mail that Penny gave him. There is a letter from Olivia saying that Dodge was the love of her life.

A sudden riot breaks out outside the apartment building. Dodge takes his new dog and helps Penny and her (ex-)boyfriend OWEN (20s) escape. Owen uses Penny as a human shield as they are running to her car; she leaves him behind.

Penny and Dodge successfully get into the countryside before her car breaks down. They decide to hitchhike the rest of the way. Dodge "knows someone with a plane" (his father), and promises to help Penny get back to her family if she can help him get to Olivia. Penny's outgoing and optimistic nature results in them getting picked up by a trucker.

The trucker eventually reveals that he paid for someone to kill him and is expecting Dodge to do so--then gets suddenly sniped through the windshield. Dodge and Penny bury the trucker and take his truck. They stop at an orgiastic TGI Friday's for some drinks and food. Buzzed, Dodge and Penny head back to the truck and have sex themselves. Penny insists it doesn't mean anything.

Cops arrest Penny and Dodge for speeding near Hartford, confiscating the truck. This leads Penny to ask her ex-boyfriend who lives in the area, SPECK (30s), for help. Speck is convinced he can ride out the asteroid in his tricked-out basement. Dodge is jealous watching Penny and Speck interact. Speck gives her one of his cars and they are back on the road again.

They arrive at Olivia's family's house, but no one is home. They flirt over some food and music and then find a letter with Olivia's new address. At her front door at last, Dodge leaves a note saying he now loves someone else. As he tells Penny this, their car abruptly veers off the road to a mass baptism taking place on the beach. They flirt on the beach for a while and then get the car back on the road.

Dodge and Penny arrive at Dodge's father FRANK's (late 60s) house in Providence. Frank will fly Penny to the UK as a favor to Dodge because he feels guilty about his parenting, but he can only carry one passenger. Penny doesn't want to go to the UK without Dodge. Dodge puts her on the plane when she is asleep and then goes home.

Penny shows up in Dodge's apartment building, having chosen not to leave him. They lay together, in love as the world ends.

## COMMENT:

This script has everything people go to the theater for--romance, drama, and comedy abound. But structurally, it needs work.

The script delivers a series of exciting adventures, but seems unsure what each of them mean. No overarching themes are represented in the forces of antagonism. Random snipers, police stops, and come-ons from friends have little to do with each other. An attempt to draw out a thesis wherein Dodge simply monologues for several paragraphs on page 97 about living in the moment is an overcompensation.

The third act conflict is arbitrary. Must the plane be able to carry only one of them? Must we learn this information on page 97 of 107? Why are we just now hashing out vague issues between Dodge and his father?

Dodge and Penny are never in any pressing danger or distress except during the riot scene. Until the world ends, we need a stronger grasp of the imminent stakes for the characters. The two also never come into conflict with each other. The "dark night of the soul" or "inmost cave" beat could be hit much harder and would round out an otherwise idealized relationship.

All this being said, the vignettes of society managing the incoming end of the world are striking, inventive, and very funny. The characters are likable, easy to grasp but with their own eccentricities, and they play off each other well. The premise is engaging and there are several visually striking moments and witty lines. Just cleaning up the last thirty minutes would do wonders.

## CONSIDER