

COVERAGE

TITLE: Promising Young Woman
AUTHOR: Emerald Fennell
GENRE: Thriller/Romance
ANALYST: Bernadette M Martinez
Period: Modern
Locale: Los Angeles, CA
DATE: December 19, 2020

LOGLINE: A woman traumatized by the gang rape and eventual death of her best friend, drops out of medical school to work at a coffee shop and devotes her life to showing “nice guys” how predatory they actually are until she is murdered carrying out a revenge plot against her friend’s rapist.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Plot	X			
Character	X			
Dialogue		X		
Structure		X		
Concept	X			

SYNOPSIS:

CASSANDRA feigns drunkenness at a nightclub until JEZ decides to get her home safely. He instead takes her to his apartment where he tries to have sex with her until she reveals she is completely sober. We see her stare down other predatory men on her way home and in the grocery store. Cassandra's parents are concerned about her behavior but walk on eggshells around her. CHRIS, an ex-classmate from med school, comes into the coffee shop where she works and pursues a romantic relationship with Cassandra. Instead, Cassandra terrifies NEIL for making sexual advances on her while he believed her to be drunk. When she reveals she is sober, she berates him and tells him he's a predator before leaving his apartment. Chris and Cassandra start dating, and he reveals he is still in touch with AL MONROE and ALLISON MCPHEE. Cassandra looks them up on social media and begins plotting her revenge. She meets with Allison and gets her drunk enough to admit she would still not believe a friend who came to her saying she was raped. Cassandra pays a young man to put her in a hotel bed to make her think something happened to her. Later that day, she picks up the med school dean's daughter and leaves her in a café before visiting the dean. She recounts NINA FISHER's story to her and when the dean is adamant about not ruining any young man's life over accusations, Cassandra says she's just dropped off her daughter in the same dorms and gives the dean her daughter's phone when she panics over her safety. When the dean admits that Cassandra is right, she reveals her daughter is actually in a diner waiting on a boy band that will never show. Chris catches her going home with another "nice guy" and Chris leaves her. Cassandra seeks out the attorney who harassed Nina into dropping the case and finds he's had a mental break and is genuinely remorseful for what he's done in his law career. Cassandra finds Chris to explain what she does. He meets her parents and they both profess their budding love for each other. Allison finds Cassandra to ask her about their lunch and the man. Cassandra tells her nothing happened, and Allison gives her an old phone with a video of Nina's rape that was sent around their class at the time. Cassandra watches it and sees Chris was there, cheering on Al as he repeatedly raped Nina. Cassandra confronts Chris, breaks up with him, and demands the address to Al's bachelor party under threat of making the video public. Cassandra goes to Al's bachelor party dressed as a stripper, drugs his friends, and gets him upstairs and handcuffed to the bed. She claims to be Nina Fisher, Al panics and realizes who Cassandra is. She opens a bag of medical tools and pulls out a scalpel. Al breaks one arm free and they fight, Al eventually smothering her with a pillow. JOE finds them the next morning and the two burn her body in the woods after the other guys leave. Police interview Cassandra's parents, her boss, and Chris, and ask about her mental stability. Chris says she was mentally unwell and agrees she may have hurt herself. He does not reveal he knew where she was. At Al's wedding, a mass text goes out to people's phones from Cassandra. She scheduled the video to send during the wedding. Al panics and Chris is terrified. The story ends.

ANALYSIS:

Plot

The plot is original and largely unpredictable. The real story of rape victims and their supporters and rapists isn't told and is exceptionally timely. It shows the actual fallout and mental repercussions on friends and family of the victim and the ease with which rapists are given every benefit, even with evidence of their crimes.

Characters

The main characters are believable and relatable. They highlight trauma, mental illness (depression), and societal double standards well.

Dialogue

The dialogue is strong, though it could use some work. There is a lot of swearing, which detracts from some of the story and messaging at times. There are a few places it drags a bit. Specifically, the coffee-shop scenes between Cassandra and Gail are somewhat expository and could be tightened up or used to give additional insight without monologuing. Overall, the dialogue is well-written.

Structure

The story is well-structured and moves smoothly from scene to scene. Some of the coffee-shop scenes are a bit repetitive as they rehash information the viewer already knows (after she gets the suitcase, when Cassandra and Gail are talking about the happy couple, when they are prepping for Cassandra's interview) and could use refining so we get more pushing the story forward instead of demonstrating the same character traits.

Concept

This is a unique concept in that it's not a damsel in distress story where the heroine overcomes an obstacle, and everything ends nicely. The romance has no happy ending and focuses on the dark reality of women's lives in the modern day. The protagonist dies but takes her targets down with her. This is likely to strongly resonate with women in the 17-35 age bracket.

Format/Grammar/Spelling

There are a few capitalization errors and a place where the dialogue tag seems to be incorrect, but it is well-written overall.

RECOMMENDATION:

STRONGLY CONSIDER