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WHEN HARRY MET SALLY

COVERAGE

TYPE OF MATERIAL: SP	TITLE: WHEN HARRY MET SALLY
NO. OF PAGES: 137	AUTHOR: Ephron, Reiner, Scheinman
NO. OF SCENES: N/A	CIRCA: PRESENT DAY
PUBLISHER/DATE: 1988	LOCATION: NEW YORK
SUBMITTED BY: N/A	GENRE: ROMANTIC COMEDY
SUBMITTED TO: FASC	ELEMENTS: N/A
ANALYST: MARION MCNAIR	DATE: 7/27/2012

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LOGLINE: A womanizing political consultant's attraction to a neurotic woman learns that the male/female relationship is more complex than he imagined.

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COMMENT SUMMARY: The premise of this romantic comedy is whether or not two people of the opposite sex can be close friends without the benefit of sex. This script will be successful because it is character-driven with strong internal as well as external emotional conflict. The audience will be completely invested to the end as the script explores the complexities of male/female relationships.

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EXCELLENT GOOD AVERAGE BELOW AVE. POOR

PLOT	X
(STRUCTURE)	
CHARACTERS	X
PREMISE	X
DIALOGUE	X

Recommendation: RECOMMEND

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## SYNOPSIS

HARRY BURNS (26), a womanizing law school graduate from the University of Chicago needs a ride to begin his new career in New York City. His girlfriend, AMADA's (20's) best friend, SALLY ALBRIGHT (21), an aspiring reporter is going to New York to attend Journalism school. They meet for the first time. After their introduction, Harry puts his belongings in the back of Sally's car and jumps in. Sally hands Harry a map outlining their break stops on the eighteen hour trip. Before long, Harry realizes Sally is somewhat neurotic.

Neither of them likes long pauses of silence so they strike up a conversation. Harry tells Sally that "Men and woman can't be friends because the sex part always gets in the way." This upsets Sally. Later, at a diner she accuses him of making a pass at her. Once they arrive in New York, they part on a sour note agreeing they will never be friends.

Five years later, they bump into each other at the airport. They both are going in the same direction, on the same plane. Harry and Sally resume their discussion about the male/female friendship. Although Harry is willing to make an exception to his rule, Sally rejects his offer to be his friend.

Another five years pass when they run into each other again at a bookstore. They meet up at a coffee shop where they discuss the failures of their past relationships. They agree to be platonic friends and begin having late-night phone conversations, dinners, and fun times together where they talk about their relationships with new partners.

At a New Years Eve party, Harry realizes he is attracted to Sally. She also realizes it, but instead of acknowledging the attraction they set each other up on dates. One night, during one of their long phone conversations, Sally cries and tells Harry that her ex, JOE, is getting engaged. Harry runs over to comfort her and they end up having sex.

The following weeks, Harry and Sally's relationship is strained. They attend the wedding of their mutual friends where their frustration comes to a head. At the reception, they argue over why Harry left without saying goodbye. Harry attempts to make amends, but Sally is not receptive to renewing their friendship.

Harry leaves countless messages on Sally's answering machine. She is still angry and will not call him back. After numerous attempts, Harry is surprised when Sally answers the telephone. Harry asked her to join him at a New Year's Eve party. Sally rebuffs his offer, telling him she doesn't want to be his consolation prize. She hangs up. Harry spends New Year's Eve lying in bed watching Dick Clark on television, and eating pistachio nuts. His mind drifts back to the previous New Year's Eve when he and Sally spent the night dancing and having fun. Harry decides he needs fresh air. He walks around town window shopping.

Sally and her friends, MARIE and JESS, are at a New Year's Eve party. She is dancing with a tall man who constantly dips her. She is irritated. She dances with another man who can't resist telling jokes. Sally decides to leave the party. In the meantime, Harry races down the street to catch a taxi. As Sally exits, she is startled to see Harry, who is coming towards her. He declares

his love for her. Believing Harry is absorbed in his loneliness, Sally walks off. Harry follows, reciting all the reasons why he wants her in his life. After a while, Sally turns to him and says, “I hate you, Harry,” and then begins to cry. Harry takes her in his arms. They kiss.

## COMMENTS

The premise of this romantic comedy is whether or not two people of the opposite sex can be close friends without the benefit of sex. The concept is interesting as we watch Harry, the womanizer, meander around his firm belief that men only want one thing from a woman, sex. Sally is offended and sets out to prove his theory wrong. “When Harry Met Sally” will be successful because it is character-driven with strong internal as well as external emotional conflict. The audience would be completely invested to the end as the script answers the question; Can men and women be close friends without sex?

While “When Harry Met Sally” does not follow a traditional three-act structure, the plot is well-written. The usage of the elderly couples stories are interesting and serves to show the diversities in relationships of various cultures proving that love is universal. Although the plot flows smoothly, the climax with Harry and Sally getting married felt forced and unrealistic.

The dual-protagonists, Harry and Sally, are compellingly developed, likable people. Harry is a proud womanizer, stating he once made a woman meow. Sally’s neurosis shines through as an obsessive-compulsive personality when she places a meal or drink order. “I want a Campari and soda, but here’s how I want it. I want the Campari in a glass with ice, and the soda on the side, but in a bottle...” As the plot progresses, we see Harry and Sally’s arcs change to well-defined mature adults.

The dialogue between Harry and Sally has a delightful bantering; especially the discussion at lunch when Sally fakes an orgasm claiming a man cannot tell the difference. The dialogue is original and refreshing. It keeps the plot interesting and moves the story forward, such as when Harry tells his friend, Jess, “Like the other night I made love to a woman and it was so incredible, I took her to a place that wasn’t human. She actually meowed.” The subtext flows smoothly, and clearly, expressing emotions of love, friendship, and relationships.

Overall, “When Harry Met Sally” has great potential as a romantic comedy because the audience can relate to it on a personal level. The characters are well-developed, engaging, and the dialogue is brilliant. However, there is not much in the way of suspense, twists or turns. Yet, the script is well-written and would be marketable to mostly a female audience.