

FILM SCRIPTS IN DEVELOPMENT

Painted Love Letters - feature film, drama (90 minutes)
Based on the Young Adult novel, Painted Love Letters, by Catherine Bateson (University of Queensland Press)

Received \$10,000 investment for script development from AFC
(Australian Film Commission, now Screen Australia)

I optioned the rights to the book, then both the book and screenplay rights were optioned by producer, Helen Lovelock, Green Island Films, for a year. Options expired.

Screenplay available for option but potential producer/s would need to also option the rights to the book which are available at the time of writing this.

LOGLINE:

Twelve year-old Chrissie Grainger's happy country life is thrown into turmoil when her family moves to Brisbane for her artist dad to have cancer treatment.

SYNOPSIS:

Who'd keep coffins in their shed? Chrissie Grainger's father, that's who. Twelve year-old Chrissie is used to her artist dad's unconventional ways, but this time his new line of work is very personal and dead serious. Dave Grainger is dying of lung cancer.

Chrissie, her dad and mum Rhetta have been living happily in a rambling house in rural Queensland. When Dave learns he's got advanced lung cancer, the Graingers move to Brisbane so he can have important treatment. But as the chemotherapy and radiotherapy sap his strength, it becomes obvious he's not going to win his battle. As Dave lies on the couch slowly dying, Chrissie can't do her art at her new school. No matter how hard she tries, it's like that part of her is dying too.

Not that Dave is bitter. He's got his mate, Bodhi, to knock up a couple of pine coffins - one for him now and the other for Rhetta in the future. He's going to paint them and might even put them in his exhibition . . . the last one he'll ever have.

Chrissie wants to tell grandmother, Ellen, in Sydney the news, but she's forbidden by Rhetta, who's got unresolved issues with her mother. As Rhetta loses herself in her job and tries not to let harsh reality sink in, it's left to Chrissie to face facts head on. She dutifully writes Dave's wishes in the funeral journal and even goes to church for the first time with her friend, Dee. Maybe praying might keep her dad in the land of the living.

Chrissie also secretly contacts Ellen and lets it all out, little realising the trouble she's stirring up when Ellen lands on their

doorstep.

Dave has painted love letters to Chrissie and Rhetta - not just the coffins but all of his works. And as a special gift to her dad, Chrissie creates a beautiful lino print using his memory as her inspiration - her own painted love letter to him. Dad might be gone physically, but Chrissie's learnt the most important lesson - even when someone dies, they can still be there with you in many ways.

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