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Call Me Golden: A Short Film

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Color Me Golden:
A Short Film

HONORS THESIS

Presented to the Pforzheimer Honors College at Pace University In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for University Honors

By Rachel Morgan Weiss
Digital Cinema and Filmmaking – major
Media, Communications, and Visual Arts - department

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Approved by:

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SYNOPSIS

COLOR ME GOLDEN

CHARLOTTE BRAWN is a freshman in college who struggles with an undiagnosed anxiety and depression. After CHARLOTTE and her best friend LILY from high school come to college together and LILY gets romantically involved with a boy, CHARLOTTE is left by herself to find out who she truly is in this modern coming-of-age short film. With the guidance and encouragement of her philosophy professor, she is able to learn more about her identity, resources and coping mechanisms and starts to branch out beyond her comfort zone.

****Cinematography based**** shift in tones from cool blue to warmer golden tones as the plot continues.

Character Sketch

CHARLOTTE BRAWN - A YOUNG ADULT WHO STRUGGLES WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY, KEEPS HER HEAD DOWN AND ONLY HAS A FEW FRIENDS. RAISED BY HER SINGLE MOTHER, SHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PRESSED TO BE THE BEST SHE COULD POSSIBLY BE ACADEMICALLY. CHARLOTTE IS REDUCED TO LEVEL ONE ONCE LILY GETS A BOYFRIEND AND HAS TO EXPLORE HERSELF AND FIND OUT WHO SHE TRULY IS BY TRYING NEW THINGS AND ATTEMPTING TO BRANCH OUT. SHE IS AN ENGLISH MAJOR WITH A FOCUS IN CREATIVE WRITING. SHE HOPES TO BECOME AN AUTHOR ONE DAY.

LILY YOUNG - CHARLOTTE'S HIGH SCHOOL BEST FRIEND, THE OTHER HALF OF A DYNAMIC DUO WHO NOW GO TO COLLEGE TOGETHER. LILY IS STUDYING COMPUTER SCIENCE. SHE DITCHES CHARLOTTE ONCE SHE GETS INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH JUSTIN, A GUY WHO IS IN ALL OF HER CLASSES. SHE SPENDS ALL HER FREE TIME WITH HIM, WORKING ON ASSIGNMENTS AMONG OTHER THINGS. LILY IS THE CATALYST FOR CHARLOTTE DEVELOPING HER IDENTITY.

JUSTIN HAN - LILY'S BOYFRIEND, COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR, LIVES DOWN THE HALL FROM LILY AND CHARLOTTE. HE IS SUPER INVOLVED ON CAMPUS AND SUGGESTS CLUBS AND EVENTS FOR CHARLOTTE TO ATTEND, ENCOURAGING HER TO MEET PEOPLE ON CAMPUS.

PROFESSOR SMITH - PHILOSOPHY CLASS WHERE CHARLOTTE BEGINS TO ASK HERSELF QUESTIONS AND THINK ABOUT TOPICS THAT WERE NOT PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED (I.E. SENSE OF SELF)

INT/EXT. SET LOCATIONS

-Townhouse 28 bedroom for CHARLOTTE'S room

-Miller classrooms for Philosophy, Math and History classes

-Miller hallway for transition shots

1 INT/EXT. SCENE ONE: FRIENDSHIP MONTAGE

1

Technicolor montage of of CHARLOTTE and LILY'S High School Graduation/Grad photos with white caps and gowns, to unpacking at freshman move-in, decorating their rooms together.

MORPH CUT TO:

2 INT. RESIDENCE HALL - AFTERNOON

2

A KNOCK on the door, LILY goes to open it. A boy stands awkwardly waiting.

JUSTIN

Hi... I'm Justin Han, I live down
the hall and just wanted to
introduce myself.

JUSTIN glances down the hall where his MOM gives him a thumbs up.

(Under his breath,
chuckling)

She did *not* enjoy her college
experience and doesn't want it to be
like that for me.

LILY

Oh gotcha, I think you're off to a
good start.

(Giggling)

I'm Lily, I actually don't live
here, but my friend, Charlotte,
does.

CHARLOTTE

Who are you talking to? And why are
you saying my name?

LILY

Well why don't you come here and see
for yourself!

CHARLOTTE makes her way out of the bedroom and hesitantly comes to the doorway to see JUSTIN.

REVERSE SHOT over JUSTIN's shoulder to see CHARLOTTE half hidden behind LILY.

JUSTIN
(Sensing her discomfort)
Hey, you must be Charlotte. I like
your tapestry, are you into
astronomy?

CHARLOTTE
You mean astrology...?

JUSTIN
(Chuckling)
Oh.. yeah that!

LILY
(Stomach growls)
I'm kinda hungry, wanna go check out
the caf and see what they have?
Justin you can come along too if you
want.

JUSTIN
(Turning on his heel)
Yeah, sure, let me just say bye to
my mom first!

CHARLOTTE
(Under her breath)
I guess he can come.

3 INT. CHARLOTTE'S ROOM - EVENING.

3

A cell phone RINGS on the desk. "Mom" flashes across the screen.

CHARLOTTE
Hey Ma... Yeah, it's going well for
my first day, I guess.
(Beat)
We made a friend, he lives down the
hall.
(Beat)
No Mom, he's not a potential
boyfriend. Not my type.
(Beat)
Maybe Lily's... I don't know..

(Beat)

It's only the first day. Classes haven't even started yet. It's only first semester so I'm taking gen ed classes, that's how the program works.

(Beat)

I know. I know that you think I'd be a great nurse, but I get queasy at just the thought of blood.

(Beat)

I'm going to... Oh. Okay. Love you too. I'll talk to you soon!

FADE TO BLACK.

4 BLACK SCREEN. FADE INTO INT. CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - MORNING. 4

ALARM is heard, inter cut blinks of BLACK, a hand reaches over to turn it off. CHARLOTTE bolts upright. First day jitters and outfit MONTAGE of trying on different clothes, pulling outfits off the hanger to ultimately go back to the first outfit she had on.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

This looks like I'm trying too hard... Not hard enough. Forget it, I'm not going. Wait, it's the first day, I can't *not* go. Okay, this is okay. I tried, but it doesn't necessarily look like I tried.

Match cut to: BEDROOM DOOR OPENING/CLASSROOM DOOR OPENING/possibly close up of door handle being turned

5 INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING. 5

PROFESSOR SMITH

Good morning! I'm Jaime Smith and you're in Philosophy 101. If you're supposed to be elsewhere, I suggest you get there quickly. Today we'll be doing an ice breaker so we can meet each other and get to know how their majors could influence their opinions on philosophy. For example, a psychology major is the science side of "what" may be, but philosophy could be the "why" of it. I'm going to pick a name at random from the roster to start and then we'll move around the room from

there. Please state your preferred name, major, hometown, and a fun fact..

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(Eyes closed)

Please don't be me, *please* don't be me.

PROFESSOR SMITH

How about... Charlotte Brawn.

CHARLOTTE

My name is Charlotte, my friends... friends call me Charlie, and...and I'm a nursing major.

(Pause)

What else? I'm...I'm from Springfield and...and I don't really have a fun fact.

STUDENTS in the room SNICKER.

PROFESSOR SMITH

Well it's nice to meet you Charlie from Springfield. Who's next?

EXTREME CLOSE UP: CHARLOTTE'S eyes flickering side to side

EXTREME CLOSE UP: CHARLOTTE'S hands fidgeting, pulling her fingers and picking at her nails

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

(Over lowered voices of other students)

God I sounded so stupid, I just embarrassed myself for the whole semester. No one in this class is going to talk to me because I'm such a loser. I'm never talking in this class again...

PROFESSOR SMITH

(Fades back in)

That about wraps it up for today, thanks for your participation. Be sure to get the textbook, 101 philosophies, they should have it in the bookstore!

STUDENTS start to pack up their bags and leave the room.
CHARLOTTE is still rattling on in her head.

PROFESSOR SMITH

I'm looking forward to see what you come up with this semester! See you next week.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks...?

CHARLOTTE exits the room as PROFESSOR puts away papers and laptop into her bag.

6 INT. HALLWAY - EARLY AFTERNOON

6

LILY comes running towards CHARLOTTE.

LILY

You'll never guess who's in all of my classes.

CHARLOTTE

Who..?

LILY

You gotta guess! How long have we been friends?

CHARLOTTE

Long enough for you to know that I hate guessing, can't you just tell me?

LILY

Fine. You ruin all the fun. Justin is the same major as me and he's in all of my classes. He asked me if I wanted to start a study group.

CHARLOTTE

A study group? It's the first week of classes, how much studying could you *possibly* have to do already?

LILY

Well I think if I'm going to have every class with him, we might as well work on the assignments together, it might make it a little easier. And he's kinda cute so I wouldn't mind spending more time with him.

CHARLOTTE

(Rolling her eyes)

Oh jeez, you can't be serious. I thought WE were going to study together, like old times?

LILY

Do I detect a little jealousy, Charlie? I'm sorry that you're an incredible writer and I suck at it so we couldn't have any of our classes together. That doesn't mean we can't still meet up and do work in the library together.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

I guess I'm... well... maybe a little envious...

7 INT. LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

7

Students fill the tables in the LIBRARY, MEDIUM SHOT of CHARLOTTE on one side of the table, LILY and JUSTIN on the other.

LILY

Can you explain this to me? I don't get what the professor is trying to say in the directions.

JUSTIN

(Leaning over towards

LILY. Sound fades out)

Yeah, basically all you have to do...

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

I don't know how they get any work done together because the tension between them is palpable. I feel like I'm third wheeling hardcore, but I couldn't say no to spending time with Lil... She's my best friend. Always has been, always will be.

LILY

(Fading in)

Earth to Charlie... Anybody home?
 You've been staring at your screen
 for a half hour and haven't touched
 anything.

CHARLOTTE
 What? Uh... yeah, I have a migraine,
 I-I think I'm gonna go.

LILY
 Are you sure? I might have Advil,
 let me check...
 (pulling out purse)
 It's gotta be in here somewhere

CHARLOTTE
 (Deliberately)
 No, really. It's fine. I'm fine.
 Good luck with the rest of your
 assignments.

8 EXT. STAIRS - DUSK

8

CHARLOTTE is walking back to her dorm in the dark with headphones in. The camera swings low to make the staircase seem to keep going on forever.

Her footsteps and the thumping of her backpack against her back is heard, along with the sound of the wind.

Lots of head space and nose room on the side / broken rule of thirds signify there's a lot going on in her head.

9 INT. CHARLOTTE'S ROOM - EVENING

9

Text from LILY "hope you're feeling better! xx" CHARLOTTE is sitting in bed and fires off a reply "not really but gonna try to get some work done in my room and head to bed." "have to be up early in the morning for class.. talk to you tomorrow" CHARLOTTE pulls out her laptop and notes for class, puts on a show - debating for a minute which one, preferably something mindless that just drones on for background noise.

10 INT. CHARLOTTE'S ROOM - MORNING

10

CHARLOTTE wakes with a start - her ALARM did not go off and she overslept for her 9:00AM.

11 INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

11

FOOTSTEPS echoing in an empty hallway, approaching the doorway.

****Lens Flares elucidate the idea that this is a dream****

PROFESSOR SMITH

Plato believes that the self is composed of three parts: the body, the mind and the soul...

CHARLOTTE rushes into the classroom and searches for an empty seat. There is one and it's all the way in the back on the opposite side of the room.

The body is the physical part that is concerned with the material world. The mind is focused on the heavenly realm of ideas and it's immortal. The soul is the force that gives us our identity.

CHARLOTTE (V.O.)

Thank God he didn't say anything to me, I honestly think I would have turned around and walked out.

PROFESSOR SMITH

Let's break it down. Of the three parts, which do you think is the most important?

STUDENTS hesitate to answer.

It's not a trick question, I'm just curious to see what you all think.

[Various ad lib of the students giving their opinions]

PROFESSOR SMITH

Charlotte, what about you? Which do you think is the most important?

CHARLOTTE

Well I guess...I guess the mind because it's the source of our consciousness and all of our decisions are made there.

PROFESSOR SMITH

Cool, cool. Okay so... if you've read the syllabus, you know that one of your assignments for the semester is where you're going to really unpack the concept of the self and argue which concept you believe is the best representation of yourself. That about wraps it up for today so I'll let you all out a little early. See you next week!

CHARLOTTE

Professor... could I talk to you for a minute? I just wanted to apologize for being late this morning. I promise it won't happen again, I..

PROFESSOR SMITH

Don't apologize, but I also wouldn't try to keep promises that you can't certainly keep, life tends to get in the way. However, you still came into class and that's all the matters. How is the semester going for you? You seem a little distracted.

CHARLOTTE

Well I guess it's okay I'm here, aren't I? Physically at least, but mentally I'm somewhere far, very far away. I just don't really know..

(Voice cracks as tears
well up in the corner of
her eyes)

I don't know what's wrong with me.

PROFESSOR SMITH

I don't want to put words in your mouth, but it seems like you've been burning the candle at both ends. You've made it this far and I think that's something to be proud of. One thing that helped me was writing. Just throwing all the thoughts or scribbles down to get them out of my head and onto a page, so there's at least some semblance of clarity. Maybe try that, it could help. My door is always open for office hours, or feel free to email me, but sometimes it helps to just have someone to listen so you can get it all of your chest. Unfortunately I

have a meeting to get to with my
department chair so I have to go.

CHARLOTTE just nods and thinks it over.

CHARLOTTE

Thank you for that... I'll have to
see if it helps to quiet the noise.

12 INT. CHARLOTTE'S ROOM - MORNING

12

CHARLOTTE wakes with a start. ECU of her eyes opening,
realizing what she has to do: talk to her mom and tell her
that she needs to follow her dreams.

13 INT. CHARLOTTE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

13

**WS of CHARLOTTE is hunched over a journal at her desk,
scribbling as fast as she can on the page.**

ECU of the notebook page with messy big writing that says "**I
am just like everyone else, with some additional struggles.
That doesn't make me weak. It makes me a fighter. Despite
what I have to figure out, I'm still here. I have a purpose
and a mission. I am smart, funny, loving, understanding and
courageous. I am myself. I am a writer.**"

14 INT. CHARLOTTE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

14

CHARLOTTE picks up her phone and dials her mom's phone
number.

CHARLOTTE

Mom..? I have to tell you something.

(Beat)

I... I want to be a writer... yes.

(Beat)

It's the only thing I can see myself
doing and being happy in the future.

(Beat)

It's my dream. I know you might not
approve, but I just need to know
that you'll support my decision, no
matter what.

A smile crosses her face.

Thank you.. I love you more.

15 INT. CHARLOTTE'S ROOM - EVENING

15

CHARLOTTE is writing again. Slowly she writes, it becomes quieter until finally, she puts the pen down.

ECU of page with neat, clean writing that says "Don't let your struggle become your identity."

Blue, Gray Tones in the Beginning:

- a la *Gone Girl* (directed by David Fincher):



- a la *Lost in Translation* (directed by Sofia Coppola):



- a la *Suicide Squad* (directed by David Ayer):



Mid-tones:

- a la *Dark Knight* (directed by Christopher Nolan)



- a la *Birdman* (directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu)



Warmer, Orange Tones Towards the End:

- a la *Titanic* (directed by James Cameron)



- a la *Life of Pi* (directed by Ang Lee):



- a la *Moonrise Kingdom* (directed by Wes Anderson):



COLOR ME GOLDEN

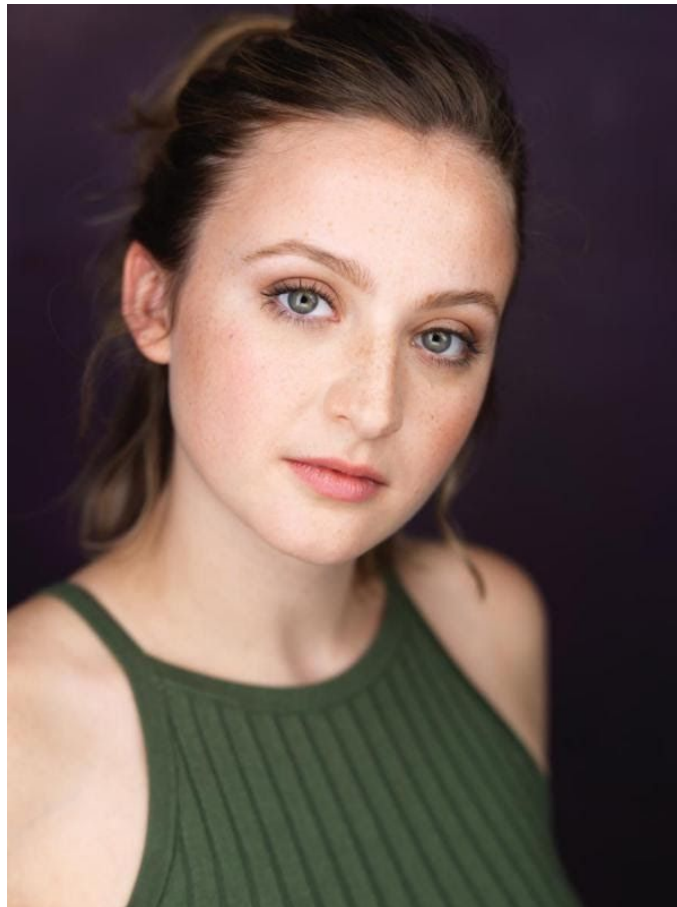
Written, Directed, and Cast by:

Rachel Weiss

Character Sketches and Casting Information

CHARLOTTE BRAWN - A YOUNG ADULT WHO STRUGGLES WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY, KEEPS HER HEAD DOWN AND ONLY HAS A FEW FRIENDS. LILY IS HER BEST FRIEND FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND NOW THEY GO TO COLLEGE TOGETHER, CONFIDANTE, AND THEY ARE A LEVEL TWO BONDED CHARACTER SET. WHEN LILY GETS INTO A RELATIONSHIP, CHARLOTTE IS REDUCED TO LEVEL ONE AND HAS TO EXPLORE HERSELF AND FIND OUT WHO SHE TRULY IS BY TRYING NEW THINGS AND ATTEMPTING TO BRANCH OUT.

Charlotte Brawn will be played by Alex O'Shea, a non-union actress who is studying at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT. (Cast through Backstage)



These sides were read for the role as a video audition:

CHARLOTTE SIDES

Side #1:

CHARLOTTE

Hey Ma... Yeah, it's going well for my first day,
I guess.

(Beat)

We made a friend, he lives down the hall.

(Beat)

No Mom, he's not a potential boyfriend. Not my
type.

(Beat)

Maybe Lily's... I don't know..

(Beat)

It's only the first day. Classes haven't even
started yet.

(Beat)

I know, I know. I'm going to... Oh. Okay. Love
you too. I'll talk to you soon!

Side #2:

CHARLOTTE

Well I guess it's okay I'm here, aren't I? Physically at least,
but mentally I'm somewhere far, very far away. I just don't
really know..

(Voice cracks as tears well up in the corner of her eyes)

I don't know what's wrong with me.

LILY YOUNG - CHARLOTTE'S HIGH SCHOOL BEST FRIEND, THE OTHER HALF OF A DYNAMIC DUO WHO NOW GO TO COLLEGE TOGETHER. SHE DITCHES CHARLOTTE ONCE SHE GETS INTO A RELATIONSHIP WITH JAY, A GUY WHO IS IN ALL OF HER CLASSES. SHE SPENDS ALL HER FREE TIME WITH HIM, WORKING ON ASSIGNMENTS AMONG OTHER THINGS.

I'm currently awaiting submissions of video auditions from a few people, but based on reels on their profile, I'm leaning towards Sophia Dorelle.

Sophia Dorelle, a non-union actress, is studying acting at the William Esper Studio in New York City.



These sides are being read for the video submission:

LILY

You'll never guess who's in all of my classes.

(Beat)

You gotta guess! How long have we been friends?

(Beat)

Fine. You ruin all the fun. Justin is the same major as me and he's in all of my classes. He asked me if I wanted to start a study group.

(Beat)

Well I think if I'm going to have every class with him, we might as well work on the assignments together, it might make it a little easier. And he's kinda cute so I wouldn't mind spending more time with him.

(Beat)

Do I detect a little jealousy, Charlie? I'm sorry that you're an incredible writer and I suck at it so we couldn't have any of our classes together. That doesn't mean we can't still meet up and do work in the library together.

JUSTIN HAN - LILY'S BOYFRIEND, COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR, LIVES DOWN THE HALL FROM LILY AND CHARLOTTE. HE IS SUPER INVOLVED ON CAMPUS AND SUGGESTS CLUBS AND EVENTS FOR CHARLOTTE TO ATTEND, ENCOURAGING HER TO MEET PEOPLE ON CAMPUS.

Will Westray, a non-union actor, is studying acting at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Virginia.



I'm also currently awaiting another submission for Justin's role, but again, I'm leaning more towards Will Westray for the character based on his reel.

These sides are being read for the role of Justin via video submission:

JUSTIN

Hi... I'm Justin Han. I live down the hall
and just wanted to introduce myself.

(JUSTIN glances down the hall where his MOM
gives him a thumbs up.)

(under his breath)

She did not enjoy her college experience and
doesn't want it to be like that for me. She
wants to make sure I make friends and get
involved to make the most out of college...
I think she's just worried that I won't like
it and she'll be stuck with me at home.

PROFESSOR SMITH - PHILOSOPHY CLASS WHERE CHARLOTTE BEGINS TO ASK HERSELF QUESTIONS AND THINK ABOUT TOPICS THAT WERE NOT PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED (I.E. SENSE OF SELF)

I'm awaiting another two submissions for the role of Professor Smith. I made the character ambiguous because I wasn't sure if I wanted a male or female to fill this character's role. I'm considering Maya Jasmin and Timothy J. Cox.

Maya Jasmin, a non-union actress from Brooklyn, has experience in voiceover and is represented by Pantera/Murphy The Agency in New York City.





Timothy J. Cox, a SAG-AFTRA actor living in Manhattan, studied at Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio, where he graduated in 1999. He's won a few awards for Best Supporting Actor and Best Actor for some of his appearances in short films.

The sides read for video auditions are:

Side 1:

PROFESSOR SMITH

Good morning! I'm Jaime Smith and you're in Philosophy 101. If you're supposed to be elsewhere, I suggest you get there quickly. Today we'll be doing an ice breaker so we can meet each other and get to know how their majors could influence their opinions on philosophy. For example, a psychology major is the science side of "what" may be, but philosophy could be the "why" of it. I'm going to pick a name at random from the roster to start and then we'll move around the room from there. Please state your preferred name, major, hometown, and a fun fact..

(Beat)

How about we start with...

(Beat)

Charlotte Brawn.

Side 2:

PROFESSOR SMITH

Don't apologize, but I also wouldn't try to keep promises that you can't certainly keep, life tends to get in the way. However, you still came into class and that's all that matters. How is the semester going for you? You seem a little distracted.

(Thoughtful pause)

I don't want to put words in your mouth, but it seems like you've been burning the candle at both ends. You've made it this far and I think that's something to be proud of. One thing that helped me was writing. Just throwing all the thoughts or scribbles down to get them out of my head and onto a page, so there's at least some semblance of clarity. Maybe try that, it could help. My door is always open for office hours, or feel free to email me, but sometimes it helps to just have someone to listen so you can get it all off your chest. Unfortunately I have a meeting to get to with my department chair so I have to go.