

One-Page Pitch

THOUGHTLESS by Ruth Pieloor

A **comic-tragedy** (drama, feature) set in a city or town not unlike anywhere today.

Logline: *When a menopausal drama teacher momentarily forgets where she lives, paranoia about becoming like her mother who has dementia, forces her to prepare for her own inevitable decline, by going on a molly-coddling crusade to organise and secure everybody's future, but her own.*

Synopsis:

No stranger to struggle and survival, Rachel Landen (50s), is the classic 'sandwich generation' single parent. Worn out and lonely, she continues to care for her elderly mother, two disconnected teenage children, and on occasion, herself. Usually a competent mother, daughter, and drama teacher; albeit somewhat broken by carer's fatigue, marital failure, and grief, Rachel naturally forgives herself for not thinking clearly most days. But one day when she mistakenly returns to a house she hasn't lived in for over a year, to come face to face with her unsuspecting tenant, who reminds her that she's now a widowed landlord, she knows something is seriously wrong.

Battling with denial and confusion over her fate with early-onset dementia, Rachel is determined to ward off its inevitable deterioration before it's too late, by investing in the preservation of family, at any cost. But Rachel's 'demented' attempts to control the situation, lead to nothing short of ridiculous, as she can't help but view her new world through this 'demented' lens.

She claims all her Superannuation up front, planning to pay off all debts. She makes various unlawful attempts to scare off her stubborn tenants, so that she can re-inhabit her old family home. She bribes and tricks her own mother into going into a safer 'forever home', much against her wishes. Keen for her children to have a parental figure in their future, and to ward off her own loneliness, Rachel creates a dating video and experiences multiple embarrassing and memorable first dates. And when her goals to speed up the adulthood journey to independence for both her own children, and her school students, aren't met, everything begins to unravel.

Rachel's mental capacity declines, and she finds it impossible to keep her secret safe. She learns that preservation of self is futile - that truth, and trust in others, is the only path. She battles to retain what she has learned in this nightmare of becoming like her mother, too soon in her life. She faces shame amongst peers, loses support and love of her only friend, faces the loss of her Mum, the death of one of her star students, and estrangement from her daughter. When she comes face to face with her biggest fear; being alone, she thinks she loses trust of who will be there to care for her in the end, but love prevails.

Themes:

The film depicts early-onset dementia, exploring themes of sanity, identity, memory, grief, loneliness, isolation, and the universal need to be loved and cared for. As the story exposes the importance of caring for the vulnerable, and trusting in family and loved ones - how we all need care and compassion.

Comparisons:

DEAD TO ME meets *STILL ALICE*.

Australian coms: *MOTHER AND SON* (2023) and *PLUM*.

About the Writer:

Ruth Pieloor a playwright and screenwriter who has won multiple festival awards for her short plays and short films. *THOUGHTLESS* is inspired by her lived experience during the care of her own mother's end-of-life journey of dementia. The writer has had previous long form works produced and published around similar themes and scenarios of compassion for women's roles, as these stories are close to her heart. She is an *AWG*, *MEAA*, *Screenworks* and *SPA* member.