

Title: An Inch of Love, An Inch of Ashes
Author: Leone Mary Britt
Genre: Autobiographical Fiction

Locale: Australia
Pages: 184
Period: 1960s - Contemporary

Logline:

A young mother struggles to cope with the abuse inflicted upon her by those closest to her while undergoing therapy from a damaged psychiatrist.

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement
Concept:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Story:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Characters:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recommendation for Adaptation:

- Strongly Consider
- Consider
- Needs Improvement

Best Medium for Adaptation:

- Motion Picture
- Television Series
- Live Theater

Brief Summary:

Born into a cycle of abuse, Calinda Carruthers falls victim to a pedophile at the age of thirteen only to learn that her mother Hazel had set the whole thing up. At fifteen, she meets an older man named Eddie who forcibly has sex with her and gets her pregnant. He marries her out of a sense of obligation and they move into his parent's house. When Calinda finds out he got a sixteen year old pregnant and has massive gambling debts, she takes her daughter Diana and leaves town. She marries a man named Thomas but after two years they divorce and she develops agoraphobia. She begins seeing psychiatrist Dr. Hal Hatter, who was also molested as a child and is experimenting with sexual therapy. Calinda falls in love with Dr. Hatter but he rejects her, recalling his experience where his first patient killed herself over their relationship. Dr. Hatter has sex with her but only wants to be friends while Calinda imagines them getting married. She follows him into the city and catches him with someone else. She finally confronts her mother over arranging the molestation when she was thirteen and drives off into the mountains with a new sense of power.

Synopsis:

In the town of Cherry Glen, thirteen year old CALINDA CARRUTHERS is parading in her bikini front of two men her mother HAZEL brought home from the bar, hoping they

would give her a part in a movie so that she could impress her father FRANKIE, who had left them when she was just three years old.

Her mother takes her to a vacant hotel for a screen test with the smaller man SMITH. After her mother leaves the room, Smith gives Calinda alcohol and takes pictures of her naked. Calinda feels embarrassed and doesn't want to tell anyone what happened. Six months later, Calinda sees Smith at the racetrack and feels sick wondering what will happen to the photographs.

Meanwhile, HAL HATTER grows up in Cherry Glen fascinated by birds' nests. After finding a nest on a field trip, Hal's teacher MR.CROWE molests him, forcing his hand to crush eggs and creating in him a fear of birds. As Hal grows up, he enjoys a life of privilege and becomes the leader of his group of friends.

When Calinda turns fifteen, she drops out of school and takes a job as a kitchen hand at the hospital. At a dance with her friend GRACIE, she meets a man named EDDIE, who asks her out. On a date, Calinda confesses to Eddie that she was molested but he reacts by using her weakness to have sex with her. Soon after, Calinda gives birth to a baby girl alone in hospital room and names her DIANA. Neither Eddie nor Hazel show up for the birth. Eddie's friends tell him to marry her so he borrows money for a ring. Calinda moves in with her in-laws but they don't attend the wedding. She lives in an atmosphere of fear and gets pregnant again but loses the baby.

Eddie loses job after job and leaves Calinda to do all the housework. Calinda finds out that Eddie has been borrowing money for his gambling problem and that they are in serious debt. Calinda finds out that she has a rapidly beating heart and has to take tranquilizers for the rest of her life. Calinda then finds out from Mona that Eddie is having several affairs and got a sixteen year old pregnant. Mona also tells her that her father wrote her mother and that she has the address. Calinda exchanges letters with her father and makes a plan to leave Eddie.

After Calinda leaves Eddie, she gets a job at a private nursing home. Eddie tries to get her to move back with him but she won't. One night, someone throws a rock in her bed and almost kills her but they never find the culprit. Calinda starts dating record executive DON, but their relationship ends when he takes her to a Rock Festival where she meets poet and horseman GABRIEL. He's only 22 and at five years his senior, Calinda thinks she is too old for him. They make a detour in the area to see Frankie. He shows her all the photographs he has collected of her but he wasn't like the hero she had imagined he would be.

Meanwhile, Hal starts his own private practice and treats people who suffer from childhood sexual maltreatment and drug and alcohol abuse. He becomes interested in his first patient SELINA and wonders if sexual therapy would be the next new thing. They

sleep together but her frail bones scare him and he cuts off their relationship. Distraught, she commits suicide and Hal decides to move back to Cherry Glen.

Calinda exchanges letters with Gabriel but dates another guy named GARTH who convinces her to pose nude for him. She confronts Hazel about the motel incident when she was thirteen and Hazel reveals that she knew what Smith would do because he had done it to her the week before.

At her divorce party, Calinda meets a man THOMAS. Later, Calinda takes Diana to visit Gabriel and his horses but she doesn't feel the same about Gabriel in person. When she returns, she makes a date with Thomas and moves in with him three months later. With only six months to live, Frankie shows up to Calinda's wedding to give her away but he can't make it at the last minute.

After two years, Calinda felt suffocated and doesn't like that her in-laws are expecting her to have more children. She suffers from agoraphobia and has trouble going outside. She decides to divorce Thomas after seeing his chemistry with her friend JOSIE. She stops taking her medication and her phobias get worse. Gabriel offers to take care of her but she refuses.

At age 35, she is referred to counseling with Dr. Hal Hatter. She tells him about her past sexual abuse and he admits her into the hospital for treatment. Through conversations with him, she realizes that Eddie is a child molester. After she leaves the hospital, her agoraphobia continues to get worse and she starts to fall in love with Dr. Hatter. After a while, Dr. Hatter terminates their therapy but wants to remain friends.

When Frankie dies, Calinda calls Dr. Hatter and he invites her into his home to talk. He attends an ethics conference where the lecturer advises them not to get involved sexually with their patients even after stopping treatment, but Hal thinks himself special. Months go by and she goes to his house again for a chat. He asks to use her in a case study and sleeps with her. While she hopes for a marriage, he makes it clear that he thinks of her as a friend and wants to see other women.

Hal decides to move back into the city but spends Christmas with Calinda's family. Calinda decides to move into the city too. She leaves Diana with Hazel and marks a new beginning with a new apartment and new nursing job. She realizes that she has been addicted to Valium for years and had transferred her addiction to Dr. Hatter. She sees a counselor who recommends she report Dr. Hatter but Calinda dismisses it. Dr. Hatter stays with her while he finishes his house but doesn't contact her for three months later. Calinda sees him with another woman and writes him an angry letter. He tells her he found someone who he wants to spend his life with and she thinks the entire relationship was a part of the therapy.

Calinda keeps exchanging letters with Gabriel and Diana arrives unexpectedly. Later, Mona commits suicide after a scare with cancer. Calinda realizes she had never been truly loved by anyone. She agrees to accompany Hazel to the funeral of a friend but shortly before, she finally confronts Hazel about the motel incident. Hazel tells Calinda she was a slut and Calinda leaves her. She drives off into the blue mountains with a sense of power.

Comments/Suggestions:

AN INCH OF LOVE, AN INCH OF ASHES depicts a pattern of abuse common and relatable but not mentioned often in public. The book presents an honest view of a complicated life through the account of a strong protagonist with accurate descriptions of flawed characters struggling to survive in a world where the lines of good and evil aren't neatly drawn.

A motion picture would be the best way to visually adapt this material as it can fully explore the depths of the characters and their motivations. The portrait of a complicated woman struggling with her identity and circumstances surrounding her decisions would make an interesting independent character drama for adult audiences.

The story doesn't end in the typical Hollywood fashion. Instead, the story is honest about the outcome for its protagonist conquering life's challenges, finding strength within her self while leaving her future open to interpretation. Calinda's beautifully flawed character exposes the vulnerabilities in every person during her bold struggle with mental illness while at the same time not coming across as weak or ill-willed.

There are several scenes that would be especially compelling if they were to be included in a motion picture adaptation. In particular, the scene where Calinda is in the hospital after giving birth, watching another woman showered with affection from her family while she sits alone would be a powerful visual scene. There are several other scenes similar to this one, depicting powerful emotional moments without a dependence on dialogue.

The dialogue in the story comes across naturally and doesn't feel the need to resolve every issue, another aspect that is true to life. When Calinda tries to confront her mother about the sexual abuse the first time, we see how hesitant she is to dig for more answers and the mother's reluctance to continue the conversation. By the end of the book, her character has developed to the point that when she confronts her mother again, she doesn't need more answers.

Overall, the story would make an honest and interesting film that would be relatable to a wide adult audience looking for something unique. It has captivating writing that would translate well into a visual medium and distinct, memorable characters driving a passionate story rooted in the realities of the world.

SAMPLE