

FEATURE FILM TREATMENT

Epie & the Moonman

CREATED BY
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SYNOPSIS

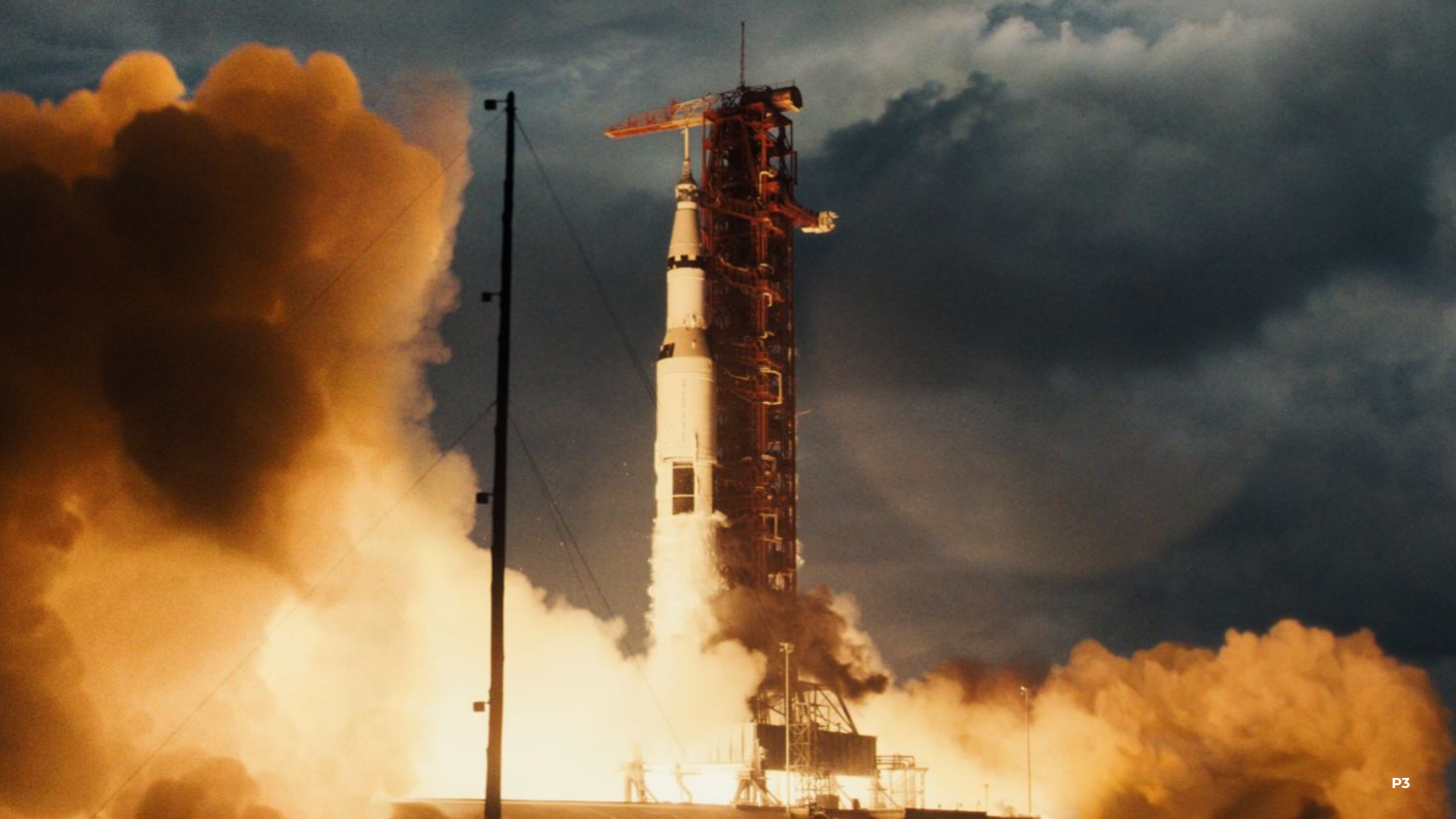
Poster: A girl without a future, a man with a broken past and an unlikely friendship that changes them both.

Logline: Opposing worlds collide when a feisty teen from the wrong side of the tracks and a cranky retired NASA rocket scientist forge an unexpected friendship and embark on a journey to find the father she never knew and the answer she's always sought – am I worthy of love?

Synopsis: Epie and the Moonman is a heart-warming drama which begins when Epiphany Salerno (16), a feisty, intelligent teen raised by a resentful single mom, makes a shocking discovery that ignites a mission to find her father and the truth about her past.

Forced to work by her overbearing mom, Epie finds herself in an after-school job caring for Norman Alvord (75), a cranky, recently widowed, retired NASA rocket scientist with heart trouble, who wants nothing to do with her. Their fiery exchanges spark an unlikely alliance and together they restore Norman's prized Thunderbird, escape on a forbidden road-trip to meet Epie's father and discover a life-changing friendship that forces each to confront the most broken parts of their lives and uncover hope for the future.

Full of heart and woven with humour, this life-affirming drama explores hopes, dreams, fatherhood, and how love transcends vast differences.



THEMES

HOPE & DREAMS: *“A man begins to die when he ceases to expect anything from tomorrow.”* This film explores how the presence of hope in our lives can determine our future. Without hope, dreams are shelved due to a fear of failure and relationships lack intimacy due to a fear of rejection. But with hope, the dreamer can arise, purpose can be found and relationships can thrive.

VALUE: Where our sense of identity and worth come from and that regardless of our past, our upbringing or our life decisions, every person has value and everyone has the potential to achieve great things.

FATHERHOOD – We explore the intrinsic role of the father-figure and how this relationship has the potential to shape us for better or worse.

LOVE – The true nature of love and how the presence or deficiency of it can drastically shape our lives.

FAMILY – The everlasting value of family and relationships and the cost of chasing a career and aspirations to the detriment of those we love.

FORGIVENESS & REDEMPTION – That it's never too late to seek forgiveness, to begin building bridges and work towards reconciliation.

FAITH – We explore the question *“Can God be loving and kind when there is evil in the world and trauma and heartache in our lives?”*

EPIPHANY SALERNO

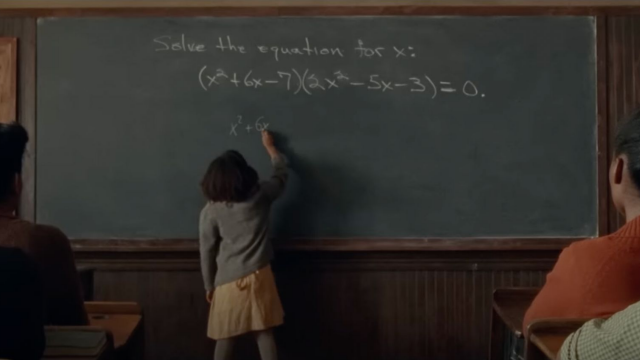
Winsome, feisty, a maths and physics prodigy and mature beyond her 17 years, Epie, is a striking bi-racial (Black and Italian) girl, whose father died in a car crash when she was born, leaving her to live alone with her neglectful mother (Silvie Salerno). Together, they are perpetually on the move from town to town as her mother bounces from one bad relationship to the next.

Ultimately, Silvie blames Epie for her discontent, failure in life and bad relationships and this steady diet of negativity has damaged Epie's identity and forged deep doubt that she is worthy of love. If Silvie has taught Epie anything it's that *"people let you down and life never works out the way you want"* so to protect herself, Epie has learnt it's safer not to dream or plan for a future but to accept her lot in life. Fiercely independent, she's developed a tough outer shell and keep's people at arm's-length.

But it wasn't always like that. When Epie was young, she spent time with the Millers and caught a glimpse of what life could be - a stable home, a loving family. Back then she would dream and look at the stars with wonder and expectation. But that quickly faded when her mom turned up with a loaded station wagon. Those dreams faded further with each new move, leaving Epie in a cycle of increasing resignation. Until one day, a new move uncovers a revelation that turns Epie's world upside down... Her father is alive.

Shaken by her mother's betrayal and a myriad of unanswered questions, Epie sets out on a mission to find her father and the truth about her past but progress is slowed when Silvie forces her into work caring for Norman Alvord, a cantankerous old rocket scientist who wants nothing to do with her. It's within this fiery relationship that Epie finds her voice and unexpectedly discovers a kindred spirit, mentor and ally in Norman.







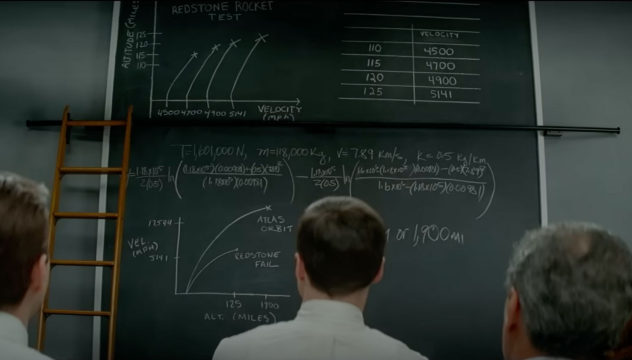
NORMAN ALVORD

When we first meet Norman Alvord, we find a cantankerous old man, at the end of his life. Once a respected NASA rocket scientist who worked with the brightest minds to put a man on the moon, he is now alone with nothing to live for.

One of Norman's deepest fears is insignificance, to leave this earth without any evidence that he has tread upon it. Once he thought he would find significance through his achievements at NASA but as he's grown older the bitter pill of perspective has hit. He has realized that the history books gather dust and the next generation will forget but everlasting significance is found in the lives of the people we touch. The only problem for Norman is that he seems to have burnt all those bridges.

After the death of his wife and rock Annalee, he is lost - filled with grief, regret and ready to hang up the towel. With an ailing heart condition Norman is intentionally reckless with his life, failing to take his pills and driving against doctors' orders much to the outrage of his only daughter, Deborah.

After a lifetime of placing career above family, their relationship is already strained, but when she insists that he needs additional care at home, it leads to an all-out war. Norman, blinded by pride, stubbornly fights for his independence. He refuses to accept help, shuts people out of his life and successfully drives them away with his rude and insulting behaviour. That is until he meets Epiphany Salerno, Deborah's latest hire. A feisty, streetwise, seventeen-year-old bi-racial girl from the other side of the tracks who turns his life upside down.





DEBORAH ALVORD

Deborah Alvord (40's) is a highly successful and respected neuroscientist, who lectures at the University and is developing cutting edge prosthetics that work with the brain. The only daughter of NASA rocket scientist, Norman Alvord and devoted housewife Annalee Alvord, Deborah is forced to confront her turbulent relationship with her father when her beloved mother passes away and Norman suffers a mild heart-attack, leaving her as his primary carer.

Despite all of her well-intentioned efforts to care for him and help him recover, she oversteps the mark. Her single-minded tenacity, stubbornness and controlling nature flip into overdrive as she doggedly tries to enforce compliance from her father to; take his pills, follow doctor's orders, stop driving and change his eating habits. But Norman is just as stubborn as her and fights for his independence at every turn. He views the in-home carers she has arranged as an invasion of his privacy and does everything in his power to drive her "spies" away. But Deborah can't see things from his perspective, all she sees is that once again, nothing she ever does is good enough.

All her life, Deborah has idolised her father. Desperate to win his love and approval she has worked hard and excelled in everything but no matter how hard she tries she has always felt unseen. In truth, Norman valued career and ambition ahead of family. Caught up in the whirlwind of the space race Norman missed his daughter growing up - school plays, birthday parties, orchestra performances, graduations - the mundane and the milestones alike. In turn, Deborah has spent a lifetime harbouring resentment against a father who was never there.

Deborah's deep need is to be seen, valued and loved by her father but she is totally frustrated and overwhelmed at having to take care of him. Worn out by his antics, at the end of her rope, she lays down a final ultimatum – either Norman shapes up or she will ship him out to a retirement village.

SILVIE SALERNO

When we first meet Silvie Salerno (30, Italian) we see a slight single-mother, her daughter the unmistakable evidence of a teen pregnancy. She has the appearance of someone who might wait your table at some out-of-the-way truck shop – not the sort you'd want roaming through your home. Her eyelids are droopy and slow, the mark of an alcoholic who's probably calmed herself with a whiskey sour or two. It's clear she was once beautiful, but these days, her makeup is heavy, her clothing inappropriate with low cut tops and short skirts – the hallmarks of someone seeking love and attention in all the wrong places.

But her story didn't start that way. The daughter of immigrants, Silvie grew up in an Italian Catholic family in small town rural Texas. Striking, vivacious, spunky, with top grades and a bright future she was the envy of every girl and the desire of every boy. But when Caleb Jones looked her way, she knew she'd found "the one". She threw herself headlong into a relationship with him, an unexpected pregnancy the aftermath of their fast passion. Determined to keep the baby, Silvie was cast out by her family and abandoned by Caleb, who couldn't face the responsibilities of fatherhood, instead choosing a scholarship at RICE. Wounded by betrayal she erected huge walls, vowed never to trust again, never to let anyone close.

Disowned, rejected, without means or a home Silvie plunged into depression. Turning to alcohol and the affection of men to soften the blow. Her only consolation, the beautiful child she bore. But motherhood came tainted – with responsibility, hardship, sacrifice and a bitter reminder of all she had lost.

17 years on Silvie has worked dead end jobs all her life, she has flipped from one bad relationship to the next, so desperate for love she has become blind to her selfish pursuit of men and the neglect of her daughter. She is volatile, defensive, jealous, resentful, controlling and isolating. She yearns for the life that she could have had and is constantly reminding Epie how much of a burden she is, yet deep down, Silvie's greatest fear would be to lose her. This fear drives her treatment of Epie – her need to pull her daughter down, to reinforce that she is the only one who loves her and to keep others from getting too close. In perhaps her most cruel betrayal, she keeps Epie from knowing other members of her family, most importantly her father, concealing his existence with the lie that he died before she was born. But this backfires when Epie discovers he is alive and sets out on a mission to find him.





DYLAN DAWSON

Dylan is the star running back for his high school football team. At 190 pounds and 6 foot tall, he's already an imposing physical presence and he enjoys all the limelight that comes with it. With incredible raw talent, Dylan has been tipped to play for the NFL and could put this small town on the map. College scouts have already come calling and Dylan has a football scholarship lined up with UT Dallas - all he has to do is keep up his grades and finish the season on a winning note.

Because of his talent people treat him differently and he has grown accustomed to a level of privilege and power; he can pull any girl that he likes, teachers boost his grade point averages, people look the other way when he gets in trouble and he is popular, with more friends than he can count but no one who truly knows him.

But whilst his public persona seems spotless, life at home is far from perfect. When he was five, Dylan's mother ran off, abandoning him and leaving him with his alcoholic father. When his mother left, it drove his father off the edge and these days it's rare that he's ever sober. Dylan frequently suffers from his father's aggressive bouts of drunken anger, so he stays away as much as possible. Dylan despises his father, blames him for his mother's abandonment and has one goal - to get as far away from him and this deadbeat town as possible.

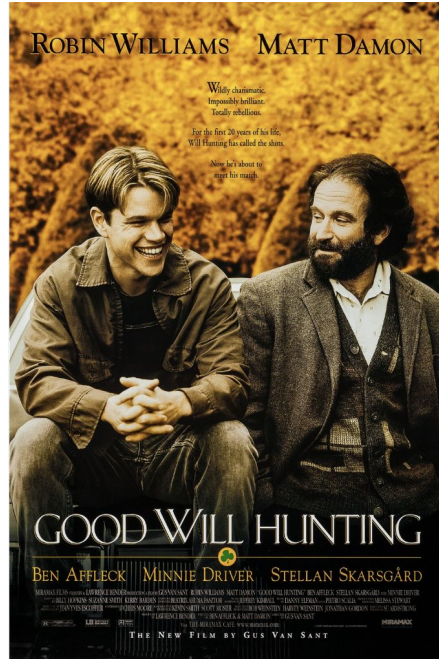
The trauma of his home life is what drives Dylan's deep need for approval and love. He quickly moves from girl to girl searching for intimacy but when each new sexual encounter isn't able to fill his void, he moves on. When Epie arrives on the scene she is new, beautiful and unattainable so he pursues a relationship with her. When he goes too far with her and Epie pushes back, refusing to sleep with him, she provokes his violent streak. Fearful of the repercussions, Dylan is determined to silence Epie through intimidation before she can damage his carefully groomed reputation or come close to ruining his chances at a successful future.



GENRE & MARKETING

A feature length, feel-good drama in the vein of: *The Peanut Butter Falcon*, *A Man Called Otto*, *Good Will Hunting*, *The Green Book*, *The Blind Side*, *Gran Torino*, *Finding Forrester*, *The Upside* and *Little Miss Sunshine*.

KEY TARGET AUDIENCE: Baby Boomers (For more information please request our marketing breakdown)





Thank you.

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