

OBSESSION (2026)

Screenwriter's Breakdown for Students & Educators

Nick Runyard

8FLiX Institute for Screenwriters (8FLiX), Toronto

Nick[!@]8flix.com

SOURCE MATERIAL

SCREENPLAY: Obsession (2026)

WRITTEN BY: Curry Barker (Original Screenplay)

VERSION: Draft

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<https://8flix.com/scripts/film/obsession-2026-screenplay/>

GENRES: Supernatural Psychological Horror, Tragic Romance, Thriller, Dark Comedy

PSEUDO SYLLABUS

MENTOR: Nick Runyard

PROFICIENCY: NOVICE | **ADVANCED BEGINNER** | COMPETENT | PROFICIENT | EXPERT

REQUIRED READING: Obsession (2026) Screenplay (8FLiX.com [free account required for downloads]).

OPTIONAL READING: Fatal Attraction (1987) screenplay by James Dearden

DUE DATES: What you can, when you can.

OVERVIEW

Consent, Complicity, and the Horror of Getting Exactly What You Asked For

A lonely music-store employee uses a mysterious novelty wish to make his longtime friend love him, only to discover that getting exactly what he wants destroys her autonomy, their friendships, and any possibility that the relationship could ever be real.

Educator Sensitivity Note

Obsession contains graphic homicide, suicide, attempted suicide, drug use, an animal corpse, sexual coercion, compromised consent, explicit sexual dialogue, self-mutilation, stalking, vomiting, urination, bodily injury, firearm violence and the concealment of a corpse.

Right?

Nicky's behaviour should not be presented as a realistic depiction of mental illness. Within the screenplay, it is caused by supernatural coercion. Other characters invoke drugs, grief and mental breakdown because they are searching for ordinary explanations and avoiding the impossible truth.

The material is best suited to mature senior-secondary or postsecondary study. Classroom discussion should clearly distinguish supernatural control from real-world mental-health conditions and should approach the sexual and self-harm material with care.

CORE TEACHING FOCUS

Building a horror premise around protagonist complicity.

Many supernatural stories place an innocent protagonist under attack after an accidental mistake. Obsession does something... more *uncomfortable*.

Bear makes the wish casually, but once he realizes it has worked, he repeatedly receives opportunities to stop, seek help, withdraw from the relationship, or acknowledge that Nicky's consent has been compromised.

Instead, he keeps negotiating with the evidence.

The screenplay's central dramatic question is therefore not:

Can Bear escape the curse?

It is:

How long will Bear accept another person's suffering if that suffering gives him what he wants?

That question transforms a familiar cursed-wish premise into a moral pressure cooker.

WHY THIS SCREENPLAY MATTERS (CONT'D)

It Does Not Blame the Magic for Everything

The One Wish Willow creates the impossible condition, but it does not invent Bear's obsession.

Before he ever opens the box, Bear has spent years privately constructing a romantic future with Nicky. He has decided that he cannot continue being her friend unless she becomes something more, rehearses his confession as though the correct wording might produce the correct answer, and reacts jealously whenever Ian enters the picture.

The wish does not change Bear into a different person.

It gives his existing desire power.

That distinction matters because it keeps the screenplay from becoming a simple morality tale about careless wording. Bear's downfall is not that he chooses an imprecise sentence. His sentence is horrifyingly precise.

It Turns Romantic Fantasy Into Body Horror

The premise initially delivers the visual grammar of a romance:

- An intimate car ride.
- A vulnerable confession.
- A first kiss.
- Breakfast together.
- Workplace make-outs.
- A candlelit restaurant.
- Shared memories.
- Talk of future dreams.

But Nicky's body continually rebels against the role she has been forced to perform. She recoils from kisses, screams during intimacy, freezes in unnatural positions, watches Bear sleep, harms herself and briefly begs for death.

The romance is not gradually interrupted by horror. The romance *is* the horror.

WHY THIS SCREENPLAY MATTERS (CONT'D)

It Makes the Audience Complicit

Bear and Nicky possess real chemistry before the wish. Their conversation about writing, love and disappointment gives viewers enough evidence to imagine that a relationship might someday have developed naturally.

That possibility creates temptation.

For a time, the audience may want to believe Bear's explanation that Nicky is grieving, intoxicated or experiencing some temporary crisis. Bear wants the same thing because every alternative requires him to give up the relationship.

The screenplay weaponizes the audience's appetite for romantic payoff.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN

Act I: The Lonely Romantic

Opening Image

Bear watches an extravagant declaration of eternal love on television while the corpse of his cat lies decomposing on the carpet.

That juxtaposition summarizes the screenplay in one image:

- Idealized romance on the screen
- Neglect and death in the room
- A man absorbed in how love should feel
- A reality he has failed to care for

Bear eventually disposes of the cat, but even this action feels delayed and reluctant. His house, medication and tested smile establish someone whose loneliness has become part of his identity rather than merely a condition he wants to change.

The Social World

At the trivia bar, Bear belongs to a small friend group consisting of Nicky, Ian and Sarah.

Each relationship establishes a different form of frustrated desire:

- Bear wants Nicky.
- Sarah is attracted to Bear.
- Ian and Nicky possess an undisclosed sexual history.
- Nicky is struggling with her work, family and ambition to become a writer.
- Everyone *believes* they understand everyone else better than they actually do.

The group is funny, casually cruel and emotionally entangled. This ordinary social texture is essential. Without it, the supernatural escalation would have fewer relationships to contaminate.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act I: The Lonely Romantic (CONT'D)

The One Wish Willow

Bear discovers the Willow while shopping for a gift for Nicky. The packaging tells him to ignite the centre, break the branch and make one wish.

Viola's warnings are delivered so dryly that Bear treats them as retail theatre. She tells him that customers who open the boxes complain, die, or wish they were dead. He responds by continuing the joke.

This is effective foreshadowing because the warning is not concealed.

Bear hears it.

He simply decides that reality is not the kind of place where warnings like that could matter.

The Failed Confession

During the ride home, Nicky speaks thoughtfully about the difference between love and romance. She believes romance creates an illusion of magic, while genuine love includes the good, bad and ugly parts of another person.

Bear appears to understand her, but he is primarily listening for evidence that she might return his feelings. When she redirects him toward Sarah, he attempts a nostalgic confession, loses courage and finally repeats Ian's terrible advice by calling her "Freaky Nicky."

Nicky clearly tells him never to use that name.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act I: The Lonely Romantic (CONT'D)

Inciting Incident

Alone in his car and humiliated by the failed moment, Bear activates the Willow.

He wishes:

Nicky Freeman loved him more than anyone in the world.

The wording matters. He does not wish for an opportunity, confidence, honesty or the courage to accept rejection.

He wishes to alter her.

Nicky immediately reappears on the porch, confused by her own home and drawn toward Bear with an unnatural smile.

Act I Turning Point: The First Fracture

Nicky accompanies Bear home, kisses him and then suddenly recoils in terror when her awareness returns.

Bear recognizes that something is wrong. He asks whether she wants the contact and is disturbed by her shifting behaviour. Yet when she resumes affection, he allows the encounter to continue.

The screenplay establishes its supernatural rule without explanation: the compelled personality can dominate Nicky, but the original consciousness remains trapped inside, occasionally fighting its way to the surface.

Bear's first major decision is not making the wish.

It is staying after he sees what the wish has done.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act II (a): Evidence Versus Desire

Investigation Without Commitment

Bear searches online for the One Wish Willow and finds contradictory claims involving an urban legend, a product recall and the Mandela effect.

The scene uses the chaos of the music store as an auditory extension of Bear's mind. Horns, feedback and chatter rise while he tries to decide whether the impossible object is real.

He does not discover a clear instruction manual. Instead, he finds enough evidence to be frightened and enough ambiguity to continue pretending.

The Convenient Explanation

Nicky says she had taken MDMA and was intoxicated. Bear initially accepts this explanation because it gives him permission to reinterpret her terror as a temporary side effect.

Moments later, however, Nicky shifts between laughter, flat affect, taunting and affection. She admits that she knows Bear likes her and tells him that she returns those feelings.

Bear has already seen enough to distrust the confession. He enters the relationship anyway.

The Romance Montage

The screenplay grants Bear the fantasy in full:

- Sex
- Breakfast
- Secret workplace intimacy
- Music together
- Shared yearbooks
- An affectionate dinner

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act II (a): Evidence Versus Desire (CONT'D)

The Romance Montage (CONT'D)

These scenes are warm, funny and convincingly romantic. Their effectiveness is crucial because Bear is not clinging to an obviously joyless hallucination. He experiences moments that resemble the life he has wanted for years.

But the montage repeatedly includes signs that Nicky's agency is missing. She snaps into panic and then returns to affection as though pulled by an invisible cord. Sarah and Ian see the relationship and react with concern rather than delight.

Ian Reveals the Lie

Ian investigates Nicky's claim that her father has cancer and finds that the story appears to be false. He also tells Bear that Nicky previously described him as a brother and found the idea of dating him unpleasant.

Bear now possesses three categories of evidence:

1. Nicky's behaviour changed at the exact moment of the wish.
2. Her conscious self periodically reacts with panic.
3. Her romantic confession relies upon a fabricated family crisis.

The screenplay removes plausible deniability one layer at a time.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Midpoint: "It Doesn't Matter to Me"

At dinner, Nicky gives Bear a tiger's-eye stone associated with confidence and willpower. The gift is intimate, personal and apparently loving.

Bear tests her feelings by asking whether she could live without him. She says she could not.

He then asks about her father.

Bear's first major decision is not making the wish.

When Nicky refuses to answer and demands that they preserve the date, Bear decides that the lie does not matter. The screenplay explicitly presents this as his willingness to disregard truth in exchange for affection.

This is the screenplay's moral midpoint.

Bear is no longer an uncertain man caught in a confusing supernatural event. He knows that something is deeply wrong and consciously chooses the relationship anyway.

The sexual encounter that follows includes another eruption of Nicky's terrified consciousness.

Bear remains calm until the compelled version returns.

His fantasy has become more important to him than the person trapped inside it.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act II (b): The Wish Consumes the Person

Watching in the Dark

Nicky stands naked in Bear's trench coat and watches him sleep from a dark corner. She cuts his arm with a crystal, shifts between childlike play and threatening stillness, and commands him to remain in bed.

The scene transforms ordinary romantic intimacy into surveillance and captivity. Bear has obtained constant attention, but constant attention is not companionship.

Total Self-Abandonment

Bear leaves for work. Nicky promises to remain in the house until he returns.

She does exactly that.

She stands motionless for the entire day, urinating where she stands and eventually vomiting on herself. When Bear returns, she greets him happily, as though her physical condition is irrelevant because he is present again.

This is an important escalation because it literalizes the wish's hierarchy.

Nicky loves Bear "more than anyone" and, increasingly, more than food, dignity, health, identity or survival.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act II (b): The Wish Consumes the Person (CONT'D)

The Party

Ian attempts to separate Bear and Nicky for one evening. Bear fails to hold that boundary and brings her to the gathering.

The sequence begins with familiar party comedy and gradually curdles:

- Nicky cannot tolerate physical distance from Bear.
- A joke about Bear placing a spell on her lands too close to the truth.
- She reads an explicit, violent passage from her new writing.
- She replaces Sarah in a kissing game.
- She publicly declares that no one can comprehend the depth of her love.
- She predicts that everyone else will die without experiencing such a connection.

The true Nicky then breaks through and tries to injure herself while begging the others to understand that the person speaking is not her.

The sequence performs several jobs simultaneously:

- It moves the horror from private space into the social world.
- It removes Bear's ability to claim that only he has seen the problem.
- It lets Nicky explicitly identify herself as trapped.
- It forces the friend group to witness the consequences of Bear's wish.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act II (b): The Wish Consumes the Person (CONT'D)

The Failed Hospital Visit

Bear takes Nicky to a hospital, but she refuses to enter or accept care. The nurse will not force her into treatment.

The scene is bitterly ironic. Nicky outwardly refuses help, but the personality making that refusal is itself the product of stolen agency.

Bear brings her home again.

Each attempted exit closes because the person who must consent to intervention is no longer fully in control of the consent being expressed.

“Be Normal”

Bear asks whether Nicky is happy and whether she even likes him.

Her answers are mechanical. When he asks her to behave normally, she tries to construct a sexual performance based on what she believes he wants.

She then articulates the screenplay’s central accusation.

Had Bear loved Nicky as she was, Nicky would not have needed to change for him.

The supernatural compulsion has understood something Bear resisted: his wish was never an act of love toward Nicky. It was a rejection of the person she had chosen to be.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act II (b): The Wish Consumes the Person (CONT'D)

The Moral Abyss: "I've Never Been With You"

While the compelled personality sleeps, the original Nicky whispers to Bear.

She asks him to kill her.

Bear's response is devastating. Instead of immediately confronting the violation, he asks what could be so terrible about being with him.

Nicky answers that she has never been with him at all.

This is Bear's lowest moral point.

The woman he claims to love is directly telling him that she has been absent from their relationship. He still experiences her rejection primarily as a judgment upon his worth.

He leaves her alive, but he does not yet free her.

Act II Turning Point: Sarah Tells the Truth

Sarah meets Bear privately and reveals that Nicky and Ian had maintained an intermittent sexual relationship for approximately two years. Ian ended it shortly before Nicky began dating Bear, leading Sarah to suspect that the relationship might initially have been designed to provoke Ian.

Before the conversation can continue, Nicky attacks the vehicle and kills Sarah with a brick.

Nicky then blames Bear. Her heart, she says, was forced onto a path she did not choose.

This murder permanently changes the story.

Until this point, Bear could still imagine that the damage existed primarily inside the relationship. Sarah's death proves that the wish has expanded into the destruction of anyone who competes with, questions or threatens Bear's position.

Bear helps conceal the body after Nicky coerces him into compliance.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act II Turning Point: Sarah Tells the Truth (CONT'D)

The Acceptance Letter

After disposing of Sarah's body, Bear opens the final art-school letter she had been afraid to read.

She was accepted.

The revelation arrives after the future it promised has been taken from her.

This is a cruel but effective delayed payoff. Sarah was not merely a romantic alternative or suspicious friend. She had a life waiting beyond the plot.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act III: The Attempted Reversal

Returning to the Crystal Shop

Bear finally returns to the store and demands a solution.

Harry immediately understands that Bear made a bad wish. Rather than offering a magical loophole, he tells Bear that the package contained warnings and that, even if Bear did not consciously understand them, some part of him knew what he was doing.

Harry's most disturbing suggestion is that Bear may now have a moral responsibility to remain with Nicky because the wish has made her incapable of happiness without him.

The statement turns Bear's fantasy into an obligation.

He wanted to be necessary. He has made himself biologically, psychologically and supernaturally necessary.

Ian's Wish

Bear brings the remaining Willows to Ian and asks him to wish that Bear had never made his original wish.

Ian does not believe the explanation. Treating the box as a joke, he wishes for one billion dollars.

Money rains from the ceiling.

The beat is funny, absurd and catastrophic. Ian receives proof of the supernatural only after spending the one opportunity that might have reversed the original event.

It also confirms something important about the Willow: there is no obvious ironic corruption of the wish.

Ian asks for money. He gets money.

Bear asked for Nicky's absolute love. He got absolute love.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

Act III: The Attempted Reversal (CONT'D)

The Failed Counter-Wish

Bear returns home and attempts to use another Willow himself, wishing that Nicky did not love him.

The screenplay shows no reversal, which is consistent with the previously established rule that each person receives only one wish. Bear cannot simply edit his original choice after seeing its consequences.

Nicky has *arranged* the murdered Sarah inside Bear's home, wearing Sarah's dress and imitating her tattoos, habits and appearance. She is attempting to become the version of a woman she believes Bear might prefer.

Her imitation of Sarah is not simple jealousy.

It is identity collapse.

The wish has made Nicky's entire self subordinate to Bear's imagined approval.

Ian's Death

Ian enters the house, sees the carnage and is immediately shot by Nicky.

She then threatens increasingly graphic acts of self-harm until Bear repeatedly declares his love. Her response is that he owes her that love.

The original wish has become a debt-collection mechanism.

Bear forced Nicky to love him.

The compelled Nicky now believes he is morally required to return the same intensity.

STORY STRUCTURE BREAKDOWN (CONT'D)

The Ending

Bear convinces Nicky that they can repair the relationship and locks himself in the bathroom.

He considers shooting himself, stops, then swallows a fatal quantity of pills. The tiger's-eye stone remains in his hand, recalling Nicky's gift of confidence and willpower at the moment he finally acts decisively.

But before he dies, the screenplay introduces one final reversal.

Nicky has used the remaining One Wish Willow.

The exact wording of her wish is withheld. Bear's sudden change in expression and his spell-like desire to embrace her strongly imply that she has compelled his love or made him return the connection she was forced to feel.

Bear emerges, kisses Nicky and collapses from the overdose.

Nicky realizes what he has done. His final words promise connection in this life and the next. She takes his gun and kills herself beside him.

The ending completes the screenplay's symmetry:

1. Bear uses magic to override Nicky's will.
2. Nicky uses magic to override Bear's.
3. Neither receives genuine love.
4. Both die inside a counterfeit version of the relationship they wanted.

The tragedy is not that the wishes fail.

The wishes work perfectly.

CHARACTER STUDY

Bear Bailey

External Want: To be loved romantically by Nicky.

Internal Need: To accept that another person's rejection does not diminish his value and that love cannot exist without the other person's freedom to refuse it.

Defining Contradiction: Bear believes he loves Nicky for who she is, yet he uses magic to make her become someone who chooses him.

He is capable of extraordinary compassion and ruthless calculation, sometimes within the same scene.

Strength as Flaw

Bear is observant, emotionally sensitive and capable of listening carefully.

Those qualities allow him to understand Nicky's ambitions and vulnerabilities. They also give him an enormous collection of details from which to construct a private version of their relationship.

He does not *merely* want Nicky

He wants the Nicky he has written in his head.

Moral Escalation

Bear's culpability develops through distinct decisions:

1. He makes the wish after a humiliating rejection.
2. He continues the relationship after seeing Nicky recoil in terror.
3. He accepts her false story because challenging it might end the romance.
4. He has sex with her despite repeated signs that her agency is fractured.
5. He refuses the real Nicky's plea for release.
6. He lies to Sarah about Nicky's condition.
7. He acts decisively only after Sarah has been murdered.

CHARACTER STUDY (CONT'D)

Bear Bailey (CONT'D)

Moral Escalation (CONT'D)

This escalation is important because it prevents one impulsive mistake from carrying the entire moral argument.

Bear is repeatedly allowed to choose again.

Arc

Bear begins as someone who believes his suffering entitles him to a romantic resolution.

He ends understanding that the relationship was never real, but his recognition arrives after he has helped destroy every person involved.

His final suicide is an attempt to escape the system he created, but even that act occurs after Nicky has used the Willow to bind his feelings to hers.

He dies knowing, perhaps for the first time, what it is like to experience desire without freedom.

CHARACTER STUDY (CONT'D)

Nicky Freeman

Before the Wish

Nicky is witty, creative, perceptive and interested in writing a love story that rejects the false promises of conventional romance.

She distinguishes romance from love. Romance creates the movie-like illusion that feelings make life magical. Love, as she understands it, includes difficulty, disappointment and truth.

This philosophy is not decorative dialogue. It becomes the standard by which the entire story should be judged.

The relationship Bear creates contains romance without love:

- Grand intensity
- Constant attention
- Sexual availability
- Emotional dependence
- Absolute devotion

What it lacks is truth.

After the Wish

Nicky is not simply transformed into a conventional antagonist.

The screenplay presents at least two competing states:

- The compelled personality, which exists to love Bear
- The original Nicky, who surfaces briefly and understands that she has been violated

These moments of emergence preserve Nicky's humanity. Her panic is not random instability. It is resistance.

CHARACTER STUDY (CONT'D)

Nicky Freeman (CONT'D)

Identity Erosion

As the wish intensifies, Nicky loses:

- Independence
- Bodily awareness
- Hunger and self-preservation
- Creative control
- Social relationships
- Sexual autonomy
- A stable sense of personality

By the climax, she copies Sarah's clothing, tattoos and behaviour. She is no longer asking Bear to love Nicky. She is trying to discover which available identity might secure his affection.

The Final Wish

Nicky's own use of a Willow complicates her victimhood.

It mirrors Bear's original violation, but it occurs after the compelled personality has dominated her for most of the story. The screenplay does not reveal whether the true Nicky, the magical persona or some fusion of both makes the final wish.

That ambiguity is productive

It asks whether a person whose will has been rewritten can still be held fully responsible for using the same mechanism against someone else.

CHARACTER STUDY (CONT'D)

Sarah Harper

Sarah operates as the truth-teller Bear continually avoids.

She notices that the relationship has appeared suddenly, warns that Nicky is relying on Bear in an unhealthy way, admits her own feelings honestly and eventually reveals Nicky's history with Ian.

Unlike Bear, Sarah risks rejection by speaking without supernatural assistance.

Her art-school storyline gives her an independent future. The acceptance letter arriving after her death turns her murder from plot escalation into lost possibility.

A critical reading should still ask whether Sarah's death reduces her to emotional fuel for Bear's remorse. The screenplay tries to resist that problem through her artistic ambition, personality and final letter, but the concern remains valid.

Ian

Ian is Bear's friend, rival and imperfect voice of reason.

He recognizes that Nicky's behaviour is alarming and repeatedly challenges Bear's willingness to continue the relationship. At the same time, Ian has concealed his own history with Nicky and often treats serious situations with immature humour.

His billion-dollar wish expresses the exact carelessness that allowed Bear to activate the Willow in the first place.

Both men encounter something impossible.

Both initially treat it as a joke.

CHARACTER STUDY (CONT'D)

Viola and Harry

The crystal-shop employees function as a dark comic chorus.

Viola delivers the warning before Bear makes the wish. Harry delivers the judgment after the consequences arrive.

Together, they establish the screenplay's worldview:

- The supernatural exists.
- People are warned.
- People believe warnings only after they have become personally inconvenient.
- Regret does not automatically earn reversal.

Harry's observation that Bear "knew" even if he did not consciously believe is especially important. The box did not conceal its promise.

Bear's disbelief became his excuse.

MAJOR THEMES

1. Love Versus Possession

Love recognizes another person as separate.

Possession treats separation as the problem to be solved.

Bear does not initially want Nicky's happiness, growth or freedom if those things lead her away from him. He wants access to her affection.

The Willow simply removes the final obstacle: Nicky's independent choice.

2. Consent Is Not Merely a Spoken Yes

The compelled Nicky frequently initiates affection, asks for sex and verbally declares love.

The screenplay nevertheless shows that those actions cannot be treated as meaningful consent because the person performing them is being controlled.

This distinction is central to the horror.

Words alone cannot establish consent when the speaker has been deprived of the ability to choose otherwise.

3. The Horror of Exact Fulfilment

Traditional cursed-wish stories often depend upon clever misinterpretation.

Obsession is more severe.

The Willow does not need to twist Bear's wording. It gives him precisely what he requests: Nicky loves him more than anyone and, eventually, more than herself.

The lesson is not "choose your words carefully."

It is "examine what your words reveal that you actually want."

MAJOR THEMES (CONT'D)

4. Self-Deception Is an Action

Bear repeatedly claims confusion, but the screenplay distinguishes uncertainty from refusal.

He knows:

- The change began at the moment of the wish.
- Nicky's behaviour contradicts her previous feelings.
- Her original consciousness is frightened.
- Her family story is false.
- The relationship is harming her.

His denial is not passive ignorance. It is work.

He continually invents explanations that allow the fantasy to survive.

5. Romance as a Script

Bear rehearses declarations, studies romantic films and believes that the right performance can produce the desired emotional outcome.

Nicky is a writer who explicitly distrusts romance as an illusion.

After the wish, she becomes trapped in a grotesque romantic screenplay written by Bear's desire:

- She adores him.
- She needs him.
- She forgives him.
- She becomes sexually available.
- She cannot imagine life without him.

The more completely she performs the fantasy, the less human she appears.

MAJOR THEMES (CONT'D)

6. Wanting to Be Wanted

Bear's deepest desire may not be intimacy.

It may be confirmation that he is indispensable.

Nicky's absolute dependence initially reassures him even when it frightens him. He repeatedly asks whether she loves him, whether she would miss him and whether she could survive without him.

The wish answers his insecurity by turning another human being into evidence of his worth.

7. Responsibility Without Original Intent

Bear did not believe the Willow was real.

The screenplay refuses to let that disbelief erase what follows.

Once he understands the consequences, responsibility shifts from the original wish to every subsequent decision.

Intent explains the beginning.

It does not excuse the continuation.

MAJOR THEMES (CONT'D)

8. Wanting to Be Wanted

Nicky cycles through identities designed to please Bear:

- Grieving friend
- Romantic partner
- Sexual fantasy
- Childlike dependent
- “Normal” girlfriend
- Writer of grotesque desire
- Imitation of Sarah

Her final collapse demonstrates the logical endpoint of changing oneself entirely for another person: eventually there is no stable self left to perform.

RECURRING MOTIFS

Crystals

The script surrounds supernatural coercion with objects marketed as tools for self-improvement:

- Rose quartz for love
- Citrine for positive energy
- Tiger's eye for confidence and willpower
- A sharp "love crystal" used to cut Bear

The symbolism grows increasingly ironic. Objects associated with empowerment become instruments through which autonomy is lost.

Mirrors

Bear tests a smile in the bathroom mirror near the beginning.

He later sees himself bloodied in the crystal-shop mirror and finally confronts his reflection before the overdose.

The mirror tracks his declining ability to recognize the person he has become.

Corpses Arranged as Care

Bear throws his cat into the trash. Nicky retrieves the body, surrounds it with petals and creates a funeral display.

Later, she positions Sarah's corpse inside Bear's house and attempts to incorporate Sarah's appearance into herself.

Nicky's idea of care becomes inseparable from preservation, display and possession.

Romantic Music and Imagery

The screenplay begins with a cinematic declaration of eternal love and ends with music giving a falsely optimistic tone to a blood-soaked double death.

RECURRING MOTIFS

Romantic Music and Imagery (CONT'D)

Near the conclusion, Bear and Nicky share what the screenplay explicitly describes as a romantic-comedy moment, except that both are wounded, covered in blood and acting under supernatural influence.

The tonal contrast makes romantic convention feel sinister without changing its basic visual language.

Stillness

Nicky frequently becomes unnaturally motionless:

- Watching from a corner
- Remaining where Bear leaves her
- Freezing mid-gesture
- Staring while other characters speak
- Holding an expression too long

Stillness suggests that her body is waiting for an instruction the original Nicky never chose to follow.

“Freaky Nicky” and “Normal”

Bear uses a childhood insult because Ian tells him it might create flirtatious tension.

After the wish, the compelled Nicky adopts the name herself.

Later, when Bear demands that she act normally, she treats “Normal” as another character she can perform.

Both words reduce identity to a role assigned by someone else.

SCREENWRITING CRAFT LESSONS

Lesson 1: Make the Premise a Moral X-Ray

The best high-concept devices do more than create plot.

The Willow exposes what Bear's desire contains when stripped of social limits. It reveals that his fantasy requires Nicky's resistance to disappear.

Lesson 2: Let the Supernatural Fulfil the Request Honestly

The screenplay does not rely on an obscure linguistic loophole.

Bear's wish is inherently destructive. That makes the consequence feel less like punishment from an external trickster and more like an extension of character.

Lesson 3: Establish Rules Through Behaviour

The script avoids a lengthy mythology lecture.

Viewers learn that:

- Each person receives one wish.
- Wishes work literally.
- A person cannot simply overwrite their own first wish.
- The Willow can alter emotion and material reality.
- The changed person may retain trapped awareness.

These rules emerge through action, failed attempts and consequences.

SCREENWRITING CRAFT LESSONS (CONT'D)

Lesson 4: Use Comedy to Lower Defences

The crystal-shop clerks, music-store banter, trivia, Jenga, Bear's food-critic fantasy and Ian's billion-dollar wish are genuinely funny.

The humour makes the characters recognizable and prevents the screenplay from becoming uniformly grim. It also allows warnings to pass unnoticed until their meaning turns lethal.

Lesson 5: Escalate Through Social Exposure

The horror develops across increasingly public spaces:

- Bear's car
- Bear's bedroom
- The music store
- A restaurant
- Ian's party
- A hospital entrance
- Sarah's car
- The crystal shop
- Bear's final domestic crime scene

Each new environment gives Bear another opportunity to recognize that the problem can no longer be contained privately.

Lesson 6: Build a Moral Midpoint

The midpoint does not depend upon a larger monster or a new supernatural rule.

It is Bear deciding that Nicky's lie does not matter because he wants the relationship.

That choice clarifies the remainder of the story. From then on, the audience is not merely watching a man discover consequences. It is watching someone remain inside a fantasy he knows is harming another person.

SCREENWRITING CRAFT LESSONS (CONT'D)

Lesson 7: Preserve the Victim's Consciousness

Nicky's brief returns prevent the magical personality from replacing her completely.

Each appearance reminds the audience that someone is still inside the performance, aware of what is happening and unable to stop it.

Lesson 8: Give Supporting Characters Futures

Sarah's art-school application gives her scenes purpose beyond romantic rivalry.

The acceptance letter becomes painful because it reveals the future she had earned rather than simply announcing that Bear feels guilty.

Lesson 9: Mirror the Beginning in the Ending

Bear begins by wishing away Nicky's autonomy.

The ending strongly implies that Nicky wishes away Bear's.

This structural mirror converts the climax from punishment into experience. Bear finally occupies the emotional condition he imposed.

SCREENWRITING CRAFT LESSONS (CONT'D)

Lesson 10: Let the Protagonist Cross the Line Gradually

Bear does not make one monstrous choice and remain unchanged.

He crosses smaller lines:

- A joke
- A kiss
- An excuse
- A lie
- A silence
- A refusal to help
- Participation in concealment

By the time the violence becomes undeniable, the audience can trace the route that brought him there.

KEY SCENES TO STUDY

1. Romance on Television, Dead Cat on the Floor

Study: Opening image, thematic contrast and character diagnosis.

2. Viola Sells the Willow

Study: Exposition hidden inside banter and warnings the protagonist chooses not to hear.

3. Nicky Explains Love and Romance

Study: Theme stated naturally through character ambition rather than authorial lecture.

4. Bear Makes the Wish

Study: Inciting incident, exact wording and immediate visual consequence.

5. Nicky Recoils From the First Kiss

Study: Establishing fractured agency without explaining the supernatural mechanism.

6. “It Doesn’t Matter to Me”

Study: Moral midpoint and the moment desire becomes conscious complicity.

7. Nicky Watches Bear Sleep

Study: Turning intimacy into surveillance through blocking, stillness and shadow.

8. Nicky Waits at the Door All Day

Study: Escalating obsession through behaviour rather than violence.

9. The Jenga Party

Study: Moving private horror into a group setting and using social discomfort as suspense.

10. “Kill Me, Bear”

Study: The victim directly states the truth and the protagonist fails the clearest possible moral test.

11. Sarah’s Confession and Murder

Study: Simultaneous revelation, reversal and irreversible escalation.

KEY SCENES TO STUDY (CONT'D)

12. Harry Refuses a Simple Solution

Study: Delivering the thematic judgment through a comic secondary character.

13. Ian Wishes for a Billion Dollars

Study: Comic timing, rule confirmation and tragic waste.

14. The Final Willow

Study: Structural symmetry, withheld information and an ending built around implication rather than explicit explanation.

CRITICAL LENS – *OPINE*

What the Screenplay Gets Right

It Refuses to Excuse Bear Because He Is Lonely

Bear's depression and insecurity explain his vulnerability, but the screenplay does not treat emotional pain as permission to control someone else.

His loneliness is context, not absolution.

It Makes Consent the Source of Horror

The most disturbing scenes are not necessarily the bloodiest. They are the moments when Nicky says and does what Bear wants while another part of her reacts in terror.

The screenplay understands that apparent compliance can become frightening when choice has been removed.

It Connects Every Escalation to Bear's Decisions

Bear is given multiple exits. The story does not need to force him back into the relationship through arbitrary circumstance.

He repeatedly returns because leaving would require surrendering the fantasy.

It Uses Tone Aggressively

The comedy is not pasted onto the horror as relief. It often becomes the mechanism through which danger is ignored.

Warnings sound like jokes. Intimacy looks romantic. A billion-dollar miracle becomes a punchline one second and an irreversible catastrophe the next.

It Ends With Symmetry Rather Than Rescue

No outside expert arrives to explain the rules. There is no final technical loophole.

The ending forces Bear to experience the kind of compelled affection he imposed upon Nicky, but recognition arrives too late to restore either person.

CRITICAL LENS – *OPINE* (CONT'D)

Where It May Fall Short

Nicky's Interior Life Becomes Fragmented

The screenplay intentionally restricts access to the original Nicky after the wish. Her brief returns are powerful, but much of the second half presents her through Bear's fear.

Some viewers may want more sustained access to her internal struggle rather than receiving it primarily through screams, self-harm and momentary pleas.

Extreme Imagery May Overpower the Ethical Argument

The graphic violence, sexual language, bodily fluids and self-mutilation create a deliberately abrasive experience.

For some audiences, that extremity will sharpen the horror of lost agency. For others, it may draw attention away from the consent critique and toward spectacle.

Sarah Risks Becoming Narrative Collateral

Sarah has humour, ambition and emotional honesty, but her death primarily triggers Bear's final attempt to reverse the wish.

The art-school letter helps restore the sense of a future taken from her, though it also intensifies the familiar concern that a woman's death is being used to complete a male protagonist's moral awakening.

The Hospital Beat Is Highly Compressed

The hospital sequence closes the possibility of outside intervention very quickly. As a piece of plotting, it isolates Bear and Nicky efficiently.

As drama, it may feel mechanically convenient because the possibility of treatment ends before the scene can explore the contradiction between Nicky's outward refusal and her compromised agency.

CRITICAL LENS – *OPINE* (CONT'D)

Where It May Fall Short (CONT'D)

The Final Wish Is Deliberately Unstated

Withholding Nicky's wording creates a strong final inference, but it also leaves practical questions:

- What precisely did she request?
- Which version of Nicky made the wish?
- Did she know Bear had overdosed?
- Did she wish for love, obedience or permanent connection?

The ambiguity supports thematic discussion, though viewers seeking firm supernatural rules may find it frustrating.

Bear May Become Too Difficult to Follow Emotionally

Bear ignores increasingly direct evidence, including Nicky's explicit plea for death.

That severity is central to the screenplay's critique, but it may cause some viewers to disengage from him before the final act. The story accepts that risk in exchange for refusing an easier redemption arc.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. At what exact moment does Bear become morally responsible for continuing the supernatural relationship?
2. Is the One Wish Willow corrupting Bear's desire, or merely revealing what the desire always contained?
3. Why does the screenplay establish Nicky's philosophy of love before Bear makes the wish?
4. Does Bear love Nicky, or does he love what being wanted by Nicky says about him?
5. How does the script distinguish verbal consent from meaningful agency?
6. Why does Bear repeatedly ask Nicky whether she loves him after the wish has already guaranteed the answer?
7. What does the tiger's-eye stone represent at the restaurant, and why does Bear hold it before his final decision?
8. Is the original Nicky responsible for the violence committed by the compelled personality?
9. What does Sarah's acceptance letter add that a simple scene of Bear regretting her death would not?
10. Why is Ian's billion-dollar wish funny, and why does that humour make the situation worse?
11. What is the dramatic purpose of leaving Nicky's final wish unstated?
12. Does Bear's suicide represent accountability, escape, sacrifice or another refusal to face consequences?
13. Could the story end with Nicky surviving, or does the logic of Bear's original wish make her death inevitable?
14. Which scene most effectively turns romantic imagery into horror?

WRITING EXERCISES

Exercise 1: The Honest Cursed Wish

Write a wish that is granted exactly as spoken.

Do not rely on wordplay or an unexpected technical interpretation. The consequence must come from what the protagonist genuinely asked to possess, change or control.

Goal: Build horror from desire rather than loopholes.

Exercise 2: The Moral Escalation Ladder

Create seven decisions that move a protagonist from understandable temptation to undeniable complicity.

Goal: Show how characters cross major ethical boundaries through smaller acts of denial.

Exercise 3: Romantic Blocking, Horrific Context

Write a scene using the blocking of a conventional romance:

- Two characters alone
- Warm light
- Close physical proximity
- An intimate confession
- A kiss

Change only the context surrounding the actions so the scene becomes frightening.

Goal: Use visual grammar against audience expectation.

WRITING EXERCISES (CONT'D)

Exercise 4: The Person Under the Performance

Write a scene in which a character is compelled to behave in one way while their real consciousness surfaces for no more than ten seconds.

Do not explain the mechanism

Goal: Communicate fractured agency through behaviour, timing and contradiction.

Exercise 5: The Ethical Midpoint

Give the protagonist enough evidence to understand the truth halfway through the story.

Have them make a conscious decision that allows the harmful situation to continue.

Goal: Replace a plot twist with a moral turn.

Exercise 6: Warning Disguised as Comedy

Introduce the rules of a dangerous object through a character who appears to be joking.

Later, repeat one apparently comic line in a context that reveals it was literal.

Goal: Plant exposition without pausing the story.

Exercise 7: A Future Interrupted

Give a supporting character a concrete goal unrelated to the protagonist.

After that character disappears or dies, reveal whether the goal would have been achieved.

Goal: Make loss register as the destruction of a future, not merely the removal of a body.

WRITING EXERCISES (CONT'D)

Exercise 8: Mirrored Violation

Begin with the protagonist imposing a supernatural or psychological condition upon another person.

End with the protagonist experiencing the same condition from the inside.

Goal: Create structural symmetry without repeating the same scene

SCREENWRITING VOCABULARY

Agency: A character's capacity to make meaningful choices and act upon them.

Anti-protagonist: A central character whose goals or behaviour may be morally troubling while still driving the narrative.

Body horror: Horror focused on the violation, transformation or loss of control of the human body.

Complicity: Participation in wrongdoing through action, assistance, silence or continued benefit.

Dramatic irony: A situation in which the audience understands a truth that one or more characters deny or cannot perceive.

Escalation ladder: A sequence of increasingly severe complications or decisions.

Externalization: Turning an internal desire, fear or conflict into a visible object, event or opponent.

Moral midpoint: A central turning point defined by an ethical choice rather than a new piece of plot information.

Motif: A recurring object, image, phrase or action that accumulates meaning.

Plant and payoff: Introducing an element early so it can return later with greater dramatic significance.

Tonal counterpoint: Pairing conflicting emotional elements, such as romantic music with violent imagery.

Tragic irony: A situation in which a character's attempt to achieve a goal creates the outcome they most fear.

Uncanny behaviour: Familiar human action made disturbing through timing, repetition, stillness or emotional mismatch.

Wish fulfilment narrative: A story in which a character receives a desired outcome, often revealing unforeseen consequences or hidden motives.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

Obsession takes one of the oldest romantic fantasies in storytelling:

What if the person I love suddenly realized they loved me too?

Then it removes the comforting assumption hidden inside that fantasy:

What if they did not choose the realization?

The One Wish Willow is memorable because it does not behave like a mischievous genie. It does not punish Bear by misunderstanding him.

It understands him perfectly.

Bear asks for Nicky's love without asking for her freedom. He receives devotion without recognition, intimacy without consent, companionship without another independent mind.

By the time he understands that distinction, Nicky has been reduced to an instrument measuring his desirability. When she finally uses the same power against him, the relationship becomes perfectly mutual in the bleakest possible sense.

Both are compelled.

Both are together.

Neither is free.

That's Obsession. A love story with the consent surgically removed and the wound left wide open.

Nick Runyard

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8FLiX Institute

545 King St., West

Toronto, ON., Canada M5V 1M1

+1 (647) 317-9057

