Script coverage

A reader's report

Title	LOW TIDE	**Writer**	Anna Kessler
Format	Short film	**Genre**	Drama
Pages	12	**Draft**	First draft, June 2026
Setting	A cottage on the coast, the present day	**Budget**	Low
Submitted by	Open call	**Reader**	S. Varga, October 2026

LOGLINE

A sound recordist who goes back to record her late mother's cottage on the day it is sold finds her estranged father there, and learns in one afternoon that the betrayal she has blamed him for was her mother's wish.

SYNOPSIS

MARA WELLES (32) records the sound of empty houses for film soundtracks. She drives out to her late mother's cottage on the coast, sold and due to be handed over at sundown, to record it one last time.

Her father, DES (63), is already inside, packing. They have not spoken since the funeral of her mother, ELENA, thirteen years ago, which Mara left early. Neither will be the one to go, so they pack together, trading small hostilities, and Des hints that Elena hid more than Mara knows.

On the beach at low tide the real grievance surfaces. Through Elena's long illness Des told Mara there was no need to come home, and she never saw her mother again. Des says the choice was not his, and walks off rather than explain.

Over Des's protest, Mara opens a locked drawer in Elena's desk and finds unsent letters addressed to her and twelve numbered cassettes. On the first, Elena admits she hid her illness and made Des swear to keep Mara away, so that her daughter would not give up her new life to nurse her. The tape breaks off. Des confirms he kept the promise and took the blame.

Reconciled on the porch, they share a first laugh. As RUTH, the estate agent, arrives, Mara records Des telling a story about Elena, and she drives away in the dark playing his voice over her recording of the sea.

Ratings, comments and verdict

RATINGS

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Premise	☐	☑	☐	☐
Story and structure	☐	☐	☑	☐
Character	☐	☑	☐	☐
Dialogue	☑	☐	☐	☐
Tone and voice	☑	☐	☐	☐
Marketability	☐	☐	☑	☐

COMMENTS

LOW TIDE is a controlled, quietly made two-hander, and Mara's job is its best idea. A woman who records rooms before they change hands has made a career of saying goodbye to places and still can't do it with people. The last scene pays this off by turning her microphone on her father.

The dialogue is spare and often very good. "You were in the doorway. There's a difference" does in two short sentences what most scripts would need a scene for, and Des's dry humour keeps the grief from getting heavy. Mara is hard to warm to, deliberately so, but the opening pages lean on her silence and could show her wit sooner.

The weakness is the reveal. Everything that turns the story arrives on Elena's tapes, in long voice-over speeches (pages 8 and 9), so the climax becomes two people listening. It is moving, but it is exposition, and a tape that snaps just before the key word is a convenience most readers will notice. Elena's taped line about "the box", heard in the car on page one, also tips the hand. And Des's thirteen years of silence would be easier to believe if we saw him try, once, to tell her.

At twelve pages it sits comfortably in a festival programme, though the kitchen and hallway scenes cover similar ground and could be combined. Production needs are modest: one cottage, a beach and a road, with two actors on screen and a third heard on tape.

The writer has an ear, and the restraint to end on a gesture instead of a speech. The script needs another pass on the reveal. The writer is worth meeting now.

VERDICT

Script	☐ Pass	☑ Consider	☐ Recommend
Writer	☐ Pass	☐ Consider	☑ Recommend

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