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## Development Worksheet



# Cry of the Loon

**PROJECT:** Feature Film

**GENRE:** Drama

**COMPARISON:** *Forrest Gump* meets *On Golden Pond*

**LOGLINE:** Returning home to mourn the death of her grandfather, a young woman must now face a dominating mother and the truth behind a tragic family incident.

**SYNOPSIS:** A heavy-character ensemble piece, *Cry of the Loon* explores the depths of genuine human behavior amongst a dysfunctional family--the GEHRINGS. In vain of *On Golden Pond* and *Ordinary People*, an independent, strong-willed daughter, AMY, clashes contentiously with an obstinate, Type-A mother, ELIZABETH, almost immediately upon Amy's

return to the lakeside family estate. Elizabeth has been forced to care for her dying father and the son, CHUCKIE--who became mentally handicapped as a result of an accident three years earlier. After learning of her grandfather's death, Amy returns from the Army to face her greatest fear—Elizabeth—and to seek forgiveness from her brother, Chuckie. What Amy discovers is that Chuckie has been shunned by their mother and lives in a Tarzan-like setting amongst the mountains.

Amy is the youngest sibling and only daughter. A one-time successful movie stunt actor, she is now the first woman to serve in the highly elite USAF Pararescue Team. A tragic family accident three years ago became the impetus for Amy to leave the estate and join the Air Force – a terrifying incident in which the middle sibling, Chuckie (a one-time prominent New England attorney), suffered major brain damage and partial bodily paralysis. Chuckie now lives with the simple mind of a child. Amy could not bear to see Chuckie in such a state; therefore, like her father before her, she left. An indication of love and even guilt, Amy consistently sent money to Chuckie while in the A.F. She also sought out research in hopes of a miracle cure for him. Amy returns to the estate to eventually seek Chuckle's forgiveness while audaciously protecting him from the scorning abuse of their mother. It is through Amy the truth is revealed as to what "really happened" on that mountaintop three years ago.



Elizabeth is a 60-something no-nonsense mother who acquired her callous aura from a disastrous marriage that left her permanently scarred. Married at the innocuous age of 15 to a well-established physician, Elizabeth was plagued with a painful divorce that forced her to rear her 3 offspring on her own. Elizabeth always struggled to mode Amy into the woman Elizabeth wished her to be. Instead, Elizabeth only met constant resistance from her rebellious daughter. After the tragic incident in which the youngest son, Chuckie, became injured, she was forced to care for her dying father as well as the now mentally handicapped son. As responsibility and pressure aggrandized, Elizabeth needed an outlet. She found it in a glass and a bottle—alcohol.

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# Bear-Buca

## ENTERTAINMENT

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**SYNOPSIS (cont):** When the family incongruously converges to mourn the passing of Elizabeth's father, we discover Elizabeth has shunned Chuckie. We also learn Elizabeth has engaged in a romantic relationship with a struggling musician, BRETT. Brett happens to be 30-years Elizabeth's junior.

The final addition to the ensemble story is the eldest sibling, DON. A one-time hero Air Force pilot and former proud commercial jetliner pilot, Don currently struggles with a mid-life crisis. And like his mother, he "picked up a bad habit along the way"—alcohol abuse. To mourn the passing of his grandfather, Don ventures to the family estate with his pre-teen, tomboyish daughter, TIANA. It's clear early on that Don refuses to accept responsibility as a nurturing parent. But the special relationship that develops between Chuckie and Tiana acts as an eye-opener for Don. Although Don's attitude is genuinely carefree, he shadows himself in the background during the warfare between Elizabeth and Amy. However, when the timing becomes opportune, it is Don who authenticates reality for both women.

Besides the strength of the characters, *Loon* digs much deeper. A wonderful parallel is drawn between the remarkable bird called the loon and Chuckie. Chuckie's deep-seated love and admiration for these prehistoric birds, spurred on by his grandfather, gains the rare and unheard of respect that these water-dwelling birds have for Chuckie - a respect in which the loons act as watchdogs for Chuckie. Seeing this in piecemeal throughout the movie is Amy. There is a figurative similarity between Chuckie and the loon. As the adage goes, "Crazy as a loon," thus we think of Chuckie. His mental imbalance and physical actions cause those around him to think he's crazy. However, one realizes the actions of those around him are crazy; Chuckie is the one who appears to be simplistically sane.

Throughout the piece there are natural occurrences between the family members that any viewer can relate. The emotion and actions involve animosity, love, joy, peace, fear, deception, envy and greed. The viewer finds herself attached to the Gehring family from beginning to end, cheering for the character she admires and disdaining the one she doesn't. The viewer remains in suspense wondering if there is a mystery regarding the family skeleton. He finds that there is. Finally, the viewer will yearn if a reunion filled with love and strength is in store for the Gehring family. There is; but the price paid is a tragic one.

**For information on BBE or *Cry of the Loon* please visit [www.bbe-la.com](http://www.bbe-la.com)**