

TITLE: You Are What You Are

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DRAFT DATE: 11/6/25

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DATE COVERAGED: 11/6/25

SUMMARY

The story begins with a past accident: In 1970 in Chicago, a man named BOBBY KENYON and his lover CINDY were driving a truck at full speed on a stormy night. Bobby clearly knew he should go back to be with his wife ALICE who was giving birth, but he was still hooked by Cindy. He wanted and tried to avoid her at the same time. As a result, they collided in the excitement and speed. The image of a tiger is also interspersed in the picture, clearly using the animal's ferocity to reflect Bobby's desires and loss of control. This is the earliest "original sin" moment in the entire film: he betrayed his wife and was entangled with her sister. This mistake will be passed down to the next generation.

The plot suddenly jumps to the small Kansas town of Constant in 1995. Bobby is no longer in this home. All that remains is GABE KENYON, the son of him and Alice, a talented pianist with a scar left on his face from the car accident back then. Gabe played very well at the jazz festival in town and everyone praised him, but he didn't enjoy it at all because he had to go home to take care of his mother Alice, whose mental condition was deteriorating. There is a very passionate girl named MAISIE by his side. She has always liked him, supported him and dreamed with him, such as making a musical. But Gabe has never really included her in his future plans, this will hurt Maisie a lot later.

Constant is a small town. Small towns are known for gossiping. Everyone in the town knows that Gabe's mother is "a bit crazy", and Gabe knows that too. This makes him want to leave even more. The only one who truly understood him was the town's female doctor, DR. JEAN COURTNEY. She was both a doctor and clearly had a crush on Gabe. She told him he was handsome and the scar was charming. Later, she even had a relationship with him, as if she wanted to "seize an opportunity" before he left the town. And she also wants to be like Bobby, partly wanting to run and partly wanting to go back to Chicago.

The plot throws out the main objective at this point: Gabe's mother, Alice, suddenly passes away. When she dies, she still holds a shoebox in her hand. Inside is not a photo but a shredded letter from his father, Bobby, leaving only a few words that can be spelled out: "Gabe, you are what you are..." come to Chicago... to the Two Rivers Bar... try to forgive... love you... "Dad." That is to say, the title *YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE* is actually written by the father to his son, rather than an empty phrase. It carries a sense of destiny: you are your father's son. Whether you like it or not, you have his things in you.

After his mother's death, Gabe's concerns were gone. He decided to go to Chicago. One reason was to find out why his father had left back then, and the other was to figure out why his mother had cut up this letter. This indicated that Alice had also hated Bobby, to the extent that she wanted to destroy the clue. Maisie wanted to keep him and told him that they could do a musical together or watch the piano for him. But Gabe was very straightforward: he had to make a "self-only" choice first.

Meanwhile, around the first 20 pages of the script, another timeline and another geographical line are inserted: Mexico in the 1970s. We can see that Bobby didn't simply run away back then. He went to Mexico and established a very deep brotherly/father-son bond with a man named DOMINGO BELARIO - the one he had saved in a Chicago bar. So Domingo regarded him as his savior in Mexico and even brought him home. Introduced to a long list of her family members, including her 16-year-old daughter CARITA. Here, Bobby is essentially building another home, and in this home, there is an underage girl watching him and worshipful of him. This line later gave rise to a very gloomy branch: Carita married a man named DON TIZANO later, but she left him in just seven days. Tizano died in depression, completely trapped in the obsession of "Why did she leave me?" Tizano's son, RAMON TIZANO, grew up watching his father suffer outside. After growing up, he was sent to a mental hospital, but he always believed that he should avenge his father and find the root that made everything start - that is, the American line that extended from the Chicago bar back then. Even in the hospital ward, he would use the violin as a gun, which indicates that the violence of this character is a mixture of imagination and reality.

As Gabe's journey northward mirrors Ramon's journey northward from Mexico, both men become the unconscious heirs to their fathers' sins. Gabe's search is motivated by longing and confusion; Ramon's by vengeance and delusion.

When Gabe finally reaches Chicago, he finds the Two Rivers Bar, the address mentioned in his father's letter. The bar, run by MAXTED, turns out to be his father's old haunt—and Maxted himself is, in fact, Bobby Kenyon, living under a new name. Their first meeting is tense and understated: two men circling a truth they're not ready to face. Bobby, now weathered and remorseful, tries to bridge the gap with stories of the past, but decades of silence have hardened Gabe. Just as the fragile possibility of reconciliation appears, Ramon arrives, armed and unhinged, believing Bobby to be the man responsible for his father's misery.

In the climax, Gabe was having a heart-to-heart talk with Maxted and his twin brother ABE in the bar, but Ramon suddenly barged in. Amid the chaotic conflict in the bar, ramon shot and killed bobby, who was seriously injured and lost his life. Gabe was drawn into the center of a violent maelstrom that he could hardly understand, protecting his twin brother Abe. But he was also surprised to find that Abe had long lost his eyesight. It was Bobby who had been taking care of Abe all along. Shortly after, Ramon also lost his life in this chaos. At the very last moment before his death, he didn't even know that he had completed his revenge.

The story ends in a quiet and sorrowful cemetery scene. Bobby's body was buried in the Chicago Cemetery. Gaibu stood in front of the tomb, repeating his father's words with a new understanding. It's no longer a helpless acceptance, but a calm face to the complex life. "You are what you are. Now I understand what they mean..." Meanwhile, Maisie, the nun who has now given up her vows, took off her habit and put on a yellow tunic dress symbolizing rebirth and liberation. After a brief pause, everyone began to giggle. Finally, everyone burst into laughter, and the laughter echoed throughout the cemetery. The scene of the cemetery was gradually replaced by songs and music, which not only hinted at mourning but also at rebirth.

COMMENTS

You Are What You Are is an ambitious, multi-layered and emotionally delicate script. The story spans more than two decades and involves multiple countries. The core of it is that people not only inherit blood ties but also the sense of guilt, how personal mistakes reverberate through generations, and forgiveness eventually becomes the only way to survive. The script demonstrates confidence, a rigorous structure and literary refinement. Its timeline is interwoven, the characters' morality is complex, and it employs a wealth of symbolic images.

Thematically, the film explores the inevitability of identity. What it means to be shaped by our parents' sins and to accept, rather than escape, who we are. The father's repeated phrase, "You are what you are," evolves across the story, at first, it feels like fatalism; by the end, it becomes an acceptance of human imperfection. This transformation gives the screenplay philosophical depth and emotional resonance.

The advantages of the script are obvious. The character development is extremely exquisite: Gabe is a delicately depicted protagonist, struggling between resentment and longing in his heart. Bobby /Maxted is a tragic figure who combines charm, weakness and self-justification, making people empathize with him. Although Ramon's madness is extreme, it also reflects Gabe's inner struggle over inheritance and revenge. The parallel life paths of these two young people create an effective sense of dramatic symmetry.

The structure, while ambitious, is occasionally cumbersome. The multiple timelines: Chicago 1970s, Mexico 1970s, Kansas 1995, and Chicago 1995, sometimes compete for focus, leading to occasional narrative drag in the middle act. Some secondary characters (notably Maisie, Dr. Courtney, and Carita) are more symbolic than dimensional, functioning primarily to reflect the male characters' arcs. While this can be intentional in a story about patriarchal inheritance, it risks flattening their emotional reality.

From a production perspective, this won't be a commercial blockbuster. Its strength lies in its emotional depth and visual poetry rather than its ease of understanding. It will attract producers or directors who are interested in intergenerational moral stories, and its tone is similar to that of

films of the Babel type. The multilingual and cross-border elements of the film may also make it attractive to international co-productions or film festivals.

However, for the time being, *You Are What You Are* may be difficult to be adopted by mainstream production companies. Its non-linear structure, intricate character relationships and narrative style driven by a large amount of dialogue all require the director to have precise control. The script needs to be streamlined, especially the scenes in Mexico and the first half of the second act, to maintain the clarity of emotions and the smoothness of the narrative.

Recommendation: PASS