



# Chicago Screenplay Awards

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## **Screenplay Review: *Face Painters***

*Face Painters* is an epic tale that focuses intensely on character. In this way the script succeeds as we get to understand Buono and Luca as intimately as family. There are multiple time periods where we get to see choices given new context and characters in a different light. It's one of the deepest dives into character that we've seen and gives the script one of the most incredibly detailed, original, and complex casts we've come across in some time. The character interactions are often filled to the brim with drama, and it's difficult to turn the page without the conflict intensifying or at least showing more layers to it. This is a script that demands audience attention and rewards those who really engage with the family dynamics and lose themselves in the story.

But there's an elephant in the room, namely the page count. At 200 pages this is a real epic of a script. This makes sense considering the decades-spanning narrative and grand nature of the plot. However, at the current length, we're looking at just under a three and a half hour film that might test anyone's patience. Trimming down some of the action description could help, but there are probably some individual scenes that could go too. We recognize that's a big ask because despite the length, this feels like an intricately-crafted plot where each scene is building on what came before. We would not envy this particular "kill your darlings" phase.

Despite this one issue, we really enjoyed our time with *Face Painters*. There's just a richness to this tale. It's memorable because of its intergenerational plot and its deep themes. The writer does a wonderful job of complicating the standard American Dream story and brings up issues of honor, family, duty, and many more heady concepts. It made the script stand out in our minds well after the final page. With some trimming this is a script that could have a wide and devoted audience.