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SCREENWRITERS

TO WATCH



Jennifer Lee

Disney Toons Make Childhood Dream Come True

The thunderbolt hit Jennifer Lee in a meeting at Random House, of all places, and revealed to her that she wanted to be a screenwriter. She was in her late 20s and established as an art director for the publishing house. She'd been writing in her free time "but nothing jelled," she says.

Then, she says, "I was in a very funny meeting, and I wrote the scene of the meeting, and that was it. I wrote a whole screenplay in about a month from that." That led to her attending Columbia Film School.

Lee had grown up dreaming of being a Disney animator but never pursued animation until her friend Phil Johnston, who had been writing "Wreck-It Ralph," asked her to move to L.A. and take over writing the picture, because he had another commitment. She took to it at once, and Disney asked to stay on to work on the script for "Frozen," then become co-director.

While she's well ensconced in animation, her live-action screenplay "The Roundup" is in development at Appian Way.

"(Animation) is the most satisfying creative thing I've been a part of. But the live action side of me is there and I don't want to shy away from it. Screenwriting is the thing I go to. That's the thing I always want to be doing." *David S. Cohen*

AGE: 42

REPS: **Chris Till, CAA; Rich Freeman, Code Entertainment**

LAWYERS: **Andrew Hurwitz, Frankfurt Kurnit Klein & Selz**

INSPIRATIONS: **Billy Wilder, Nora and Delia Ephron, William Goldman, James Schamus, Eric Roth, Atom Egoyan**



Barbara Marshall

'Genre Girl' Develops Thick Skin

"My agent calls me her creepy girl. I'm totally healthy, I swear. But a good plague just makes me happy. I like anything with zombies, vampires, apocalypses. ... That's my happy zone."

So says Barbara Marshall, screenwriter for Lionsgate's upcoming "The Exorcism Diaries," quickly and effectively delineating her areas of expertise. An Austin, Texas, native, Marshall cut her teeth as a staff writer for NBC's "Terra Nova."

"After I saw 'Battlestar Galactica,' I just sort of freaked out, and I told my agent, 'You have to get me into TV somehow,'" she says.

While writing for the Steven Spielberg-produced series, Marshall was cooking away on her 2012 Black List script "Peste," which recently sold to IM Global. She also sold her TV pilot "Getaway Girls," though she acknowledges the series is "pretty much dead now." Watching a beloved project die in development is, of course, an occupational hazard in the screenwriting trade, and one for which Marshall has her own appropriately macabre metaphor.

"Things you write can become your babies, and you have to write them knowing that you might have to give away your baby to someone else, or that it might not even live to grow up," she says. "But you do develop a really thick skin." *Andrew Barker*

AGE: 35

REPS: **Debbie Deuble Hill & Lee Dinstman, APA; Ava Jamshidi, Industry Entertainment; LAWYER: Kevin Kelly, Gendler & Kelly**

INSPIRATIONS: **The Dardenne brothers, Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu and Danny Boyle**

