

FORTUNE FOLLOWS – FILM TREATMENT

Working Title: Fortune Follows

Logline: After months of dating apps, failed organic meet cutes, and tragic set ups, Margot is forced to leave the fate of her love life up to her fortune cookie fortunes for a week full of ambiguous messaging, wrong interpretations, and dicey dates, only to be led to the one who was always there.

Concept:

Fortune Follows is a nostalgic feel-good romantic comedy that emulates romcoms in its past: *Notting Hill*, *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days*, and *Crazy Stupid Love*. A control obsessed woman surrenders her dating life to a fantastical force: her fortune cookie fortunes. Their messages lead her through humorous but real trials, leading her to the true love that was always there: her best friend Drew.

We find comedy within the witty situations, dialogue, and fortunes in Margot's world. The heart comes from her struggle and Drew's unwavering love for her, even when he doesn't agree. The end instills hope and may trigger some tears.

Theme: What is meant for you cannot be controlled and will never pass you by.

Characters:

1. Margot (21) - Senior Business Analytics major at University of Chicago. She's hyper realistic about everything in her life, except this elusive concept of love. Margot's been a serial dater since her breakup a year ago (relationship just shy of a year) and been jumping from dates to short lived situationships nonstop. She claims to be complete by herself and yet won't take any time to be alone; tired of dating, ready to meet the love of her life. Very good student and friend. Control issues. Lives with Eloise. Best friend of Drew.
2. Drew (22) - Senior Accounting major at UChicago. A romantic, though he's shy about it. Hopelessly in love with his best friend, Margot, since they met. Playing the longest long game ever played. Struggles to support her dating decisions, often picking up the messy pieces.
3. Eloise (21) - Senior Creative Writing major at UC. A free spirit, Margot's reminder to not take life so seriously. A

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great roommate and support system. Good friend to Drew too. Knows what's up. She's in a 2 year long term relationship that Margot has always secretly envied.

4. Tyler (22) - Senior Finance major at UC. Margot's ex-situationship. A complete douche, woman hating user. His charisma masks it.
5. Grant (23) - Graduated. Eloise's sweet fiancé who sometimes hangs out with the crew. One of the few good ones their age.

Story Breakdown

Act I

MARGOT, 21, on a date with a Chicago frat boy. He's uninteresting and immature. They eat at The Crane: an old Chinese restaurant and bar; the kind of place fake IDs pass. The staff know her by name. Out of the corner of her eye, she spots DREW, 22. He shushes her. Moments later, he rushes up with an excuse, relieving Margot from the date. They laugh and wait outside, watch her date leave, then return to the booth themselves.

They finish dinner when the waitress, SOPHIE, 34, gives the check and two fortune cookies. Margot follows her ritual, hovering her hand over the two cookies. Drew patiently smiles and signs the check in blue pen. She rips open her fortune, discarding the cookie: "What shall be, shall be." Drew opens his. Smiles. Wraps it in the receipt. He tosses it into her bag. She doesn't notice.

Margot and Drew return to ELOISE, 21, in their campus apartment. It's small and cozy, covered wall to wall in mementos from the last three years. On the wall, rows upon rows of signed polaroid pictures. Margot, Eloise, and Drew take the first and oldest spots with faded photos on the bottom.

Drew rats out Margot about the failed date, while Eloise is not surprised. Margot laments about how the frat guy could have been the one. Eloise states our theme, saying: "What is meant for you won't pass you by." She references the shiny engagement ring on her finger.

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Margot meets a new boy in class, JOEY, 21 and gets ready for a date with him. Eloise tries to talk her out of her “but it’s so convenient” justification. She promises she won’t need a bail out... just before calling later: “Can you bail me out.” Margot returns to the table of her classmate, trying to recover the conversation.

Like after every bad date, Margot meets up with Drew. This time at his place, she complains how Eloise was right. We get a look into Drew’s feelings: no guy friend cares *that* much about a post-date debrief unless he’s rooting for the date to lose.

Later, another date. Margot drags Drew and Eloise to a hazy night club for an open mic night. A terrible poet, and tonight’s bachelor, rambles about death and beauty and the unrelenting day to day in this capitalistic hellscape blah blah blah. He gets off stage and puts an arm around Margot. Eloise and Drew roll their eyes.

The trio debriefs at a late-night bar and grille. Drew and Eloise can’t help but make fun of him. Margot reminds them she is not going to Eloise’s wedding without a date. Drew again tries to dissuade her. As he does, their waiter, a handsome 20-something, hits on Margot who gives him her number.

Margot waits in a crowded sports bar by herself. Checks her phone. Looks around every few seconds.

Later, confetti falls around her as the Bears win on TV. She’s been waiting for an hour. Distraught, she leaves. On her way back, Drew calls. She swears off dating. Drew promises take out. She mentions that Eloise is with her fiance, GRANT, 23. Drew lights up. We see Drew’s roommate, another one in on his not-so-secret feelings, make fun of him on the other side of the phone.

Eloise greets Drew at the door and brings him in. Margot takes the bag, dumps it out and scrambles for the fortunes. She hovers her hand over and picks one: “Love is out there if you leap.” Margot decides she has to stop looking for guys... and let the fortunes decide for her instead. Drew and Eloise groan at the resolution. Margot grabs her mason jar full of fortunes and quickly reads every fortune she’s ever saved before declaring she is giving up control.

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Act II

Margot and Drew wait at The Crane. Margot asks Sophie for seven cookies, one for each day. Sophie hands her a bowl which Margot rifles through. She comments, warning Margot that she can't take the fortunes at face value. (She doesn't listen).

Margot sits Drew, Eloise, and Grant down in their apartment and opens the first cookie: A stranger now, more meaningful later." They brainstorm what it could mean. Grant, eats takeout and occasionally contributes, including he and Eloise's sickening sweet love story. Margot decides it means an online date. She swipes and swipes until she gets a match. Eagerly, she makes plans for later that night. Margot leaves to meet her stranger, when Eloise interrogates Drew about his feelings. He does not admit to them and claims to just be her friend. Eloise claims she knows better but lets him go.

Margot meets NOLAN, 22. A recent grad of a nearby university. He's too good to be true: attractive, smart, even somewhat funny. Margot has butterflies. **Not sure what to do with this yet.**

Margot facetimes Eloise from the bathroom, Drew still at their place. She talks about how great and hot he is. We see Drew's face sink.

Tatum and Margot say goodbye outside of her building and share an innocent first date kiss. Then, a montage: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday's dates.

Tuesday: Hunter - Hiking date, except Margot is way behind the entire time. They get to the top and she can barely breathe. (Fortune: "Great adventure leads to high reward.") Wednesday: Michael - House party with Eloise and Drew. He's super touchy, good energy... until Margot finds him making out with someone else... (Fortune: "Risk will be rewarded today.") Thursday: Dylan - dinner date, he will not stop talking. Margot tries to get a word in and can't. He then asks her to go home with him (gross.) (Fortune: "There's a lesson to be learned in every encounter." She later jokes, "or at least free dinner")

Margot and Drew sit at their booth in The Crane. Business Law textbooks, worksheets, and their laptops cover the table next to plates and drinks. Margot hands Drew the cookie as she reads her fortune: "Trust one's self in the presence of other's opinions." She keeps it to herself. As she reads, Drew begins to point out

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how she should take a break and how she deserves so much more than these random flings. He jokes about her knack for choosing the wrong guys. Drew quickly talks himself into a corner as Margot grows more and more upset. They argue, Margot claiming how good it is for her to just go with the flow for once and how he has no right to slut shame her. He only makes it worse. Margot leaves, more determined than ever.

Margot scrolls her dating apps. A text from Nolan flashes on her phone: "When do I get to see you again?" Margot groans and rolls over.

Back in class, Margot sits between Drew and Joey. She isn't sure which is worse. Drew leaves his headphones on covering his ear closest to her. Their professor drones on about a new project. Margot quietly takes out a fortune cookie. She cracks open the cookie and looks to Drew... then pushes it back into the wrapper and into her bag. The fortune reads: "Second chances may heed new beginnings." The professor reads off pairs: Drew with EMMA, 22, and Margot with TYLER, 21: her very first college situationship. He broke her heart harder than any boyfriend she's ever had. They haven't talked in years. Margot's face drains of color. Even Drew looks up at Margot.

Margot and Tyler meet up. It's awkward. He can't help but notice how much prettier she's gotten since freshman year. She thinks, wow maybe he did grow up. They talk through the assignment. They don't get far before he asks to take her to dinner.

Back at her apartment, Drew rants to Eloise about how bad the situation is. It's revealed how he led Margot on for almost a year after getting her to sleep with him. The whole time he was dating another girl and taking her out, using Margot for sex while he waited. Drew complains that he can't say anything or else he'll lose her for good... and how much he misses her.

Friday night, Margot sits dolled up at an upscale bar. She opens her second to last fortune cookie: "True love is closer than you think." She smiles. Tyler, also spiffed up, joins her. They hug. Margot's already finished a cosmo. They exchange pleasantries. Due to her chugged liquid courage, Margot brings up the old relationship. Tyler apologizes, saying he was a child and he's learned a lot since then. He's ready to start taking things seriously.

Drew and Eloise continue talking when Margot approaches the door. They can hear her and Tyler talking. Drew freaks out and

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Eloise tells him to hide. They scramble as her keys unlock the door. He ends up wedged behind the door as Margot swings it open, clearly drunk. Tyler greets Eloise who does not reciprocate. Tyler says he'll see Margot tomorrow and kisses her forehead. Drew is furious behind the door. Tyler pulls it shut as Margot floats to her room in her drunken bliss. Eloise calls out, talking to her, while Drew rushes to collect his stuff, pissed off. Margot answers, raving about how much he's changed and "right person, wrong time." Drew storms out and Eloise follows.

Eloise catches him at the elevator down the hall. He's distraught and mumbles about how awful Tyler is. She doesn't have to pry much before he finally admits that he's in love with Margot. Eloise celebrates, inappropriate for the moment. She assures him that she'll make it right and talk some sense into her.

Eloise finds Margot spinning around the living room, "It's Been a Long, Long Time," blasting over their speaker. She sings the lyrics: "haven't felt, like this my dear, since can't remember when." Eloise comments on how she was drunk like this just last weekend. Margot drunkenly admits that she thinks he could be the one this time. Eloise asks why and she shows her the fortune: "True love is closer than you think." Eloise suggests she see Nolan or Michael again, but Margot protests and ignores Eloise's reminders of what Tyler did to her. Margot slips up, commenting on how cute Drew is and how they should set him up with someone.

Saturday morning, Margot lays in bed hungover. She reaches for her phone: 3 new matches. A message from one reads: "Are you free tonight?" She opens it, scrolls through his profile: DARREN, 24. Margot switches to a new text chain with Tyler. All caps letters next to his contact read "DO NOT TEXT." She deletes it, then texts, "Are you free tonight?" and hits send. She clicks out of the text chain and see's Drew's contact below. The last text from Tuesday night reading: "Marg, I'm sorry." She clicks her phone off.

Drew studies in the library. A girl approaches him and asks to get coffee. He politely declines. Drew clicks into his text chain with Margot. "Read Thursday."

Eloise complains to Grant about Drew and Margot being meant to be but not knowing it. She's frustrated being the middleman. Grant supports her and they have a cute moment.

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Nine o'clock rolls around as Margot and Eloise doze off on the couch, movie flashing on their faces. Margot's phone buzzes. A text from Tyler: "You wanna come over?" Margot's eyes light up. She immediately replies and creeps up off the couch. She sneaks around her room, hurriedly wipes her smudged makeup into place. She changes and collects her stuff into her purse. Margot tiptoes past a sleeping Eloise on the couch and makes it out the door.

Drew sits on at a bar with his class partner, Emma. She's pretty, and nice enough. He pretends to be interested as he fidgets, mind elsewhere.

Margot gets to Tyler's place. It's clear what they're there to do. More importantly... later, Margot stares up at the ceiling, Tyler asleep next to her. Suddenly she's that 18 year old girl again, laying in her dorm room, feeling smaller than ever.

Eloise wakes up and calls out for Margot. When she can't find her, she checks her location and sees it at Tyler's. Drew checks his watch as Emma continues telling a story. He feigns a laugh at something she said. Margot walks down the street in the rain, tank top soaked. She texts Eloise: "I fucked up."

Margot goes to The Crane hoping to find Drew there. She gets a drink for herself. She fights back tears. Drew apologies and confesses that his mind is occupied. He gets a call from Eloise. Walking away, he takes it. Eloise yells to him that Margot is leaving Tyler's really upset and that they have to find her. Sophie brings Margot her food and rubs her back sympathetically. Drew rushes over to his date. There's something he has to do. He leaves money for their bill and leaves the restaurant.

Sophie brings Margot the check, but they're all out of cookies... she can't help but laugh sadly. Margot reaches into her bag, finding a folded-up receipt. Inside it, the receipt from the opening. In blue ink: "fortune #103" with an "X" scribbled next to it. A fortune falls out of it: "Your true love will become clear, in due time."

Margot thinks about her dates: Joey, Nolan, Michael, Hunter, Dylan, and Tyler... She can't believe how dumb she was to believe him. That's what she gets for listening to the fortunes. She crumples up the one in her hand.

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Eloise paces around the apartment, scrambling to get dressed. Drew watches his phone through raindrops to see Margot's location. It clicks.

Margot picks up her phone. Her background: a picture of her and Drew hugging, her kissing his cheek. She looks to the receipt again. It clicks.

Drew runs through the rain, getting held up by cars and red lights. Eloise fights her umbrella as she hurries down the street. Margot hurries to sign her check. Drew and Eloise yell through the phone to each other. Margot steps out of the restaurant into the rain. She looks up.

Across the street, Drew stands, soaked. A car drives between them. Margot calls across the street: "I'm an idiot." Drew calls back: "I know." She smiles. He walks to her and puts his hand on her cheek. They kiss... finally!

Margot shows him the receipt and asks what it meant. He takes it. "103 dinners at The Crane since I've loved you, and the number of fortunes that didn't make you realize you do too." She takes out the balled-up fortune from the check. "Make that 102."

Act III

A few months later, now spring. Eloise and Grant's wedding. They celebrate and we see Margot and Drew very much in love. They watch their friend dance and talk about their future.

Margot and Drew sit in their booth at The Crane, Margot in her bridesmaid dress with Drew's sport coat draped over her, Drew with his tie hanging over his shoulders. Through the window we see him grab her hand and smile. Everything just as it should be.