

YOUNG TALENT

Genre: Drama with comic relief

Logline: A young man has to grow up overnight, becomes a screenwriter by fate, and lands a killer script with the unusual help of his eccentric mentor.

Synopsis: Udo Whitmore, a shy and socially awkward 18-year-old who likes to write poems goes through a crisis after he gets rejected from his friends and dumped by his girlfriend. His sister Elke, the only person he feels close to, has left the U.S. for a while to learn German.

In the expanse of cyberspace, Udo meets 40-year-old Hollywood studio executive Henri Kleinschenk. Henri initially mistakes Udo for someone else, but they chat anyway. Henri preys on Udo's desire to be a working screenwriter...

Udo has his reservations, but Henri is an expert at convincing people to do what he wants. Using his wealth and connections, Henri manages to win the young man over, lending him his flashy car and even buying him luxury toys that cause the girls in his school to find him more interesting than ever before. Loving the attention he gets when they're together, Udo begins to ditch his school friends and spend more and more time with this eccentric man.

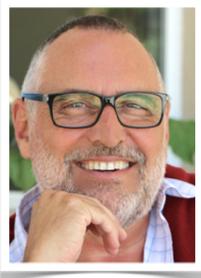
Henri tells Udo he has writing talent. He sells Udo on the idea of becoming a screenwriter, telling Udo to use his talents to shoot for where the money is. He offers his services as a writing coach, and Udo, who realizes that becoming a screenwriter is a sure way to prevent from becoming a loser like his dad, enthusiastically agrees.

Henri soon becomes a friend of Udo's entire family, and Udo has a substitute for his birth parents who are more interested in their own lives than the lives of their children. Udo's mother, Jane, of German origin, is the most welcoming to Henri. He lavishes her with gifts and compliments, feeding her needy ego at every turn. Peter, Udo's father, is a bit skeptical of Henri. Struggling with his own feelings of insecurity and lack of success, which Jane constantly reminds him about, Peter is threatened by Henri's presence at first. He comes around, however, when Henri pulls some strings to help him get a promotion at work.

But Henri has a hidden agenda. When Udo realizes that Henri's interest in him includes a romantic need that Udo cannot satisfy, he desperately breaks off the friendship and gives up on writing the screenplay. But Henri is not ready to let his friend go. Realizing that he's losing Udo, Henri seduces and marries Udo's sister in an attempt to stay close to Udo's family.

But there's much more behind Henri's interest in Udo than simply a sexual obsession. Now that Henri has a secure place in the family, he can let his real plan play out... and it does, twist after twist.

YOUNG TALENT is a drama about a dysfunctional family, with some comic relief. It could be seen as "Ordinary People meets The Player".



Writer: Hans-Peter Zimmermann, born and raised in Switzerland, has been a non-fiction writer since 1991. Three of his eight books have become bestsellers in the German-speaking countries. Some of his works have been translated into Dutch, Czech, Chinese, and Russian. "How to Heal your Inner Family", his first book in English, is now available on Amazon.

Inspiration: YOUNG TALENT is loosely based on a true life story.

As incredible as it sounds: There is a Henri figure in real life. When I was 18, much of what happens to the protagonist, happened to me, including the fact that the real Henri ended up marrying my sister, a twist that was described by a Scriptapalooza reader as "contrived". Ironic, isn't it? Or, as Udo says: "Life is fiction anyway. Couldn't be more crazy if it was made up."