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**Path of Totality**

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Contest: Launch Pad Manuscript Competition (2020)

Date: 03/17/2020

Page Count: 49

Analyst: 7DB4F

## Feedback

Path of Totality brings forward the faces of the men left behind and ignored after they fought and survived the Vietnam War. The writer does a great job describing John's misery, emotionally and physically, as he attempts to figure out life in a country that no longer feels like home even ten years after returning to it. This character is very well developed. His sudden mood swings and psychotic breaks are intense and the descriptions jump off the page. His suffering is deeply felt.

Our first encounter with Cindy strongly suggests that she will bring a least some balance to John's life and at most healing. The two women searching for items to hurl at John to pull him back from his demons inform the reader that John is loved and people believe his is worth saving.

The backstory is offered in a way that only temporarily takes us away from the current action. And, frankly, it is a good break from the intensity of John's hallucinations, which bubble up and explode so quickly. I found Cindy's history intriguing because it seems to run parallel with her current position as a budding photojournalist who is still trying to balance the pursuit of her goals against the tyranny of patriarchy. The scene in the car while the family is on vacation skillfully sums up the family dynamic: her father's uncontrolled anger, her mother's weak and ineffective attempts to sooth that anger, her brother's fear and uncertainty in the face of that anger, and Cindy's measured steps at challenging that anger.

The introduction of the women who trying to figure out ways to help John come back to himself through a spiritual means signals the otherworldliness aspect of the story, with the promise of interesting and unconventional story lines to come.

The descriptions in this pilot are vivid from the gradual identification of John to the different settings that the characters find themselves in. I think the diversity in the settings highlights the diversity of the characters.

I see the focus on John's PTSD as a draw for a current-day audience because we now have the vocabulary for what vets were suffering after Vietnam, and I think people will see the pain and struggles that those soldiers endured in a different light than people did during that time. The story may also help newer vets to identify issues in their own lives that they have failed to address. I think it will be quite interesting to see how all of the primary characters eventually come together and how the women will work together to help John heal. It will also be interesting to learn the full story behind Emma and how she connects with John and Cindy. The different perspectives and voices offered in the story work well together with the narrator keeping a respectful distance and allowing the characters' points of view to carry the day.

I think the story is well written with characters and a main plot that captures the reader's attention from the first line. The story flows well and uses backstory and dialogue to educate the reader about the characters while moving the current action forward. I think the themes in the story and the mix of characters will draw a broad audience. Putting mental illness front and center makes this a good story. Pairing that subject with the aftermath of those who have completed military

service makes the story even more powerful.