

## A Brief Introduction to Coverage

*Excerpts from "Full Coverage: How to Analyze a Script (In the Real World)" by M.J. Daugherty*

Many would-be assistants begin their quest for Hollywood glory in that most noble of all academic institutions: film school. The professors often require their students to write essays analyzing films and screenplays from historical, psychological or even sociological standpoints, while striving to uncover the deeper symbolic meaning behind films sublime to ridiculous.

College essays are valuable tools in learning how to look at films and scripts analytically, but in Hollywood, the only symbol most people are concerned about is "\$" (or sometimes "%"). As an assistant, there is *only one reason* that you will be asked to read a script – *to help your boss decide if it is worth his or her time*, and you will be expected to give that opinion clearly, confidently, and most importantly, concisely, often in the form of "coverage."

For an assistant with aspirations of moving up in the Hollywood pecking order, reading scripts is a great place to start. *Coverage is one of the few chances that most assistants have to really have their opinions heard*, and it is one of the easiest ways for an assistant to take some initiative for finding a new project or client. Yes, it can be a chore, especially given that the majority of undiscovered scripts out there are undiscovered for a reason. But if you can build a reputation as someone who shows intelligence and "good taste" (i.e. you have some sense of what might actually sell), then you will be on the path to success.

Every company will have a slightly different template for their coverage, but all coverage will contain the same basic information: a run-down of the elements: name of the writer, names of other attached elements (i.e. talent, director, producer, etc.), page count, draft date, genre, period, location, estimated budget (ie. low, medium, high), who submitted the material and to whom, the name of the reader, and the date of the coverage.

Below that should be a logline of the project. Think of a logline as a blurb that you might get from the TV Guide. It should be a one or two sentence summary of the basic story. To give a better example, a logline for the original *Star Wars* movie might read "A farm boy who dreams of greatness as a pilot intercepts a distress signal from a rebel princess and goes on a quest to rescue her alongside a space pirate and an old knight to ultimately save the galaxy from the forces of evil. "

Before the synopsis, give your bottom line comments in a few sentences. Simply put, is this script worth perusing or not? A check-box section will ask you to rate the material as "Recommend," "Recommend with Reservations" or "Pass," and a graph will ask you to rate various elements of the script, such as dialogue,

character, plot, etc. on a sliding scale from “Poor” to “Excellent.” This can be especially useful if the writing is solid, but the story is poor, as you may want to take a look at the writer’s other projects. For example: “FREE WILLY on ice, this sweet tale of friendship between a socially inept boy and his mission to return a penguin that has escaped from the zoo to Antarctica will surely find favor with a wide family audience and comedic talent alike.” Before you give your recommendation, make sure that you know why you are being asked to read it. Your boss may be considering the writer as a potential client, as a potential vehicle for a talent or literary client, or for packaging. You could read the same script multiple times and come to very different conclusions depending on which scenario applies.

A good summary should be as brief as possible, but should give a solid understanding of the story. Avoid getting into running commentary in the summary. Just tell the story as clearly as you can. Your boss should be able to talk knowledgeably about the plot based only on having read your coverage.

Following the summary is the section you’ve been waiting for, the Comments section. This is where you can hold forth on all of your opinions in detail. Keep it in the realm of useful information, and don’t get too “highfalutin” in your wording. These comments should be about a page. This is your chance to make a case for a good script and to argue against a bad one.

Be sure to read other scripts in addition to the ones that your boss gives you. Read what has sold to get a feel for good material, ask your industry contacts to send you their favorites. Make sure that you know your company’s policy on submissions before you start opening the door to new material. Any submissions that aren’t sent by a representative may need a submission release agreement.

This same process can also apply to material beyond scripts, too. Novels, short stories, graphic novels, existing films, magazine articles and even websites have all been fodder for Hollywood projects. There’s no reason you can’t strike gold with something that isn’t a formal script yet.

If you can find the next great idea before someone else does, you will be on the road to superstar status before you know it. The trick is finding that elusive needle in the haystack of bad material, and that means your going to have to go through a lot of it. So let’s get covering!

## Coverage Process / Reading and Writing

If possible, try to read your script all in one sitting, as if you are playing a movie in your mind. This will make it much easier to write the synopsis in as succinct and accurate a manner as possible. Try not to take notes if you can (other than to flag characters names, etc). Try to keep in mind both the script's three-act-structure and your reason for reading the script (Avail, ODA, Casting, etc). You should plan on taking about a page per minute to read your script. If you are needing more than two hours to read, come and speak to the analysts about ways to skim your script more effectively. Writing your coverage should not take more than two hours as well.

Coverage at WME consists of four parts:

1. Coverage Detail
2. Synopsis
3. Roles
4. Comments

Your coverage must always appear in this order.

A quick regurgitation of the script's synopsis (including looking back through the script to add details and character names) should take you not much more than half an hour. Depending on what you want to say, your comments shouldn't take much longer. Your form page and breakdown are the quickest parts to write.

## Coverage Technique

### Coverage Detail

The Coverage Detail page is a thumbnail sketch of your entire coverage. Be sure to fill out every blank so that all of the script's pertinent information can be evaluated at a glance, including the production scheme, genre, draft date, page numbers, type of material, assigning agent's name, and your name.

Make sure that your logline summarizes the arc of your synopsis in as close to a single sentence as possible. The hero should be the subject of the sentence and the action that takes place should paint a picture of the entire three-act-journey (without spoiling any twists or surprises). Do not use characters' names or phrases such as "a story about" in your logline. Although it is tempting, refrain from using such phrases as "hilarity ensues" since it is too vague to summarize the lessons learned by our hero at the script's end.

Your Comments Summary is the thesis paragraph to your comments which you will literally copy and paste into your Comments as the opening paragraph. It should include one sentence with each of the following: comparison to other movies aka Hollywoodese, discussion of the genre and whether the script defies, subverts, celebrates or reinvents it, one good thing and one bad thing about the script and what it means to our clients (whether it is a pass, consider or recommend for Casting, ODA, etc).

In the Evaluation, most of what you read will be a pass. If you are ambivalent about the script, it's a pass. If you like something, but it has a few flaws, it should be considered. If the script is nearly perfect, or if you love it so much that you would put up your own money to get it made, it should be a recommend. Don't strongly consider or recommend anything you can't defend to the assigning agent, but don't be afraid to make a strong judgment.

With this in mind, always recommend writers who are clients, and those writers with whom you think we should be in business. Consult the WME Intranet and the IMDB to check credits. It is acceptable to pass on the script itself in these instances, even if you've had to recommend the writer.

Be sure that your Comments are consistent with these markings. If you criticize the structure or title in your Comments and then give them high marks here, it can be confusing. Please double check that this visual representation reflects your written one.

## SYNOPSIS

While some thoughts about how to write your Synopsis appear in the Reading and Writing section, the following are a few more important things to keep in mind:

Your Synopsis should not be longer than a page, unless the script is incredibly convoluted or long. By telling a linear short story about the script without recounting it beat for beat, you will hold your audience's interest longer (which is sometimes more than we can say for the screenwriters we read).

Always use the omniscient third person and present tense. Try to focus on the main plot and characters and avoid sub plots unless they have a direct bearing on the main story and move the plot forward. Avoid any phrases that take the reader out of the story i.e.: "the story opens with," "we cut to," etc. Character names should appear in all caps the first time you introduce them (subsequently, they should be in regular case) and when introducing secondary characters, be sure to relate them to the protagonist.

Below is a brief breakdown of what should be included in your Synopsis. You can use it to build your synopsis, and if you find that your synopses are too long, remember to whittle it to these essentials.

Catalyst (10-15): Balance is upset. Desire, problem, need, goal, mission, something to do

Big Event (20-30): Changes life in a big way

Pinch (about ½ way): Point of No Return. Full commitment where motivation becomes clear

Crisis: Forces crucial decision. Low point. All looks hopeless

Showdown: Climax. Antagonist & Protagonist go head to head

Realization: Central character grown, changed, or figured things out. Usually after showdown, but can come before

## **ROLES – CHARACTER BREAKDOWN**

The breakdown provides character descriptions which are crucial for casting purposes. It also allows you to elaborate on characteristics there is no room for in your synopsis. The more pivotal of a character, the more you should write about.

After listing the characters in order of importance / largest role to smallest (from Lead, to Support, etc), write a brief character description and more importantly their character arc /function in the script. You should provide an answer to the question of what journey the character takes during the course of the story. This description must always appear in complete sentences. Feel free to link fragments together to create longer sentences which economize space and still keep the description grammatically sound. For minor characters, indicate their relationship to the lead character or other important roles. In the “Type” column, list the importance of each character with only one of the following designations: Leading Male / Female, Support Male / Female, or Cameo Male / Female, as AIM will not recognize any other designation. Please remember to always keep ages in 5 year brackets (in multiples of 5), since this corresponds directly with our Talent Department’s grid system. Since ethnicities are important in some scripts, please be as thorough as possible in this section if the script specifically references ethnicity.

It is never appropriate to make casting suggestions in your coverage. Using a nebulous description such as “a comedic leading man” or “a talented young ingénue” will help the coverage fulfill as many needs as possible.

## COMMENTS

The Comments section is where you as an individual get to shine, using your knowledge of the business, film history and your creativity to showcase the script and your opinion of it. With this in mind, please avoid the subjective, i.e.: “I think the script is boring,” but instead speak generally, i.e.: “The injection of higher stakes could keep the audience’s interest alive through the slow third act.”

It is important that each subsequent paragraph contains a topic sentence, support and conclusion. Always back up your assertions. Avoid simply saying that something isn’t working; indicate why it isn’t working. Your ideas on how the script can be improved should be presented here. In fact, the phrase “with a rewrite” should appear in some variation in all coverage that you write, since the most awful scripts can be improved and even the best script ever could surely be polished in some way.

Your Comments should always be broken down as follows, and in fact, using this guideline (which has been copied into the Template) and building at least one sentence around each topic will guarantee that your comments are thorough. How thoughtful they are is up to you.

- **Comments Summary**
  - Comparison to other movies
  - Genre – defies, celebrates or reinvents
  - One good thing / one bad thing
  - What it means for our clients
- **The Story / Concept – What is this script really about (under two sentences)?**
  - Concept – Does it deserve to be brought to the screen?
  - Originality - Does this script compare to other movies?
  - Plot – Are there holes in it that need fixing?
  - Concept vs. Execution - What are the strengths and weaknesses of each?
- **The Writing / Execution - Does it serve the story? Is it effective?**
  - Writing - Was the script too long? Was anything missing?
  - Visuals – is this cinematic? Are there special effects?  
Stunts?
  - Dialogue – is it catchy, lifelike, funny, in need of a punch-up?
  - Tone – does it suit the story’s concept?
- **Structure - What is the dramatic tension? What is at stake in the story?**
  - Structural tension – Ticking clocks? What keeps us in our seats?

- Conflict – Man vs. Self, Man, Society, Nature, Technology
- Antagonists – What stops our hero from success?
  
- Characters
  - Lead and Supporting Characters - Who is the protagonist?
  - Talent - Will talent be attracted?
  
- The Big Picture / Conclusion
  - Circles back to the opening – strengths / weaknesses
  - Themes - What is the moral of the story?
  - Commerciality / Critical Potential – Tentpole blockbuster or Oscar winner?
  - Direction - Is the script is a recommend, consider or a pass?

**GLOSSARY OF HELPFUL TERMS:**

<b>Action</b>	Along with Dialogue, Transitions and Scene Headings, this is another element of screenwriting found on every page of a script. It is the descriptions of everything that happens onscreen.
<b>Actions</b>	What a character does in the script, based on what he wants, or his objective / goal.
<b>Adaptation</b>	A script which is based upon another work, a book, a play, an article, etc.
<b>Antagonist</b>	The person or force that opposes the protagonist, or main character, in his struggles to achieve his goal.
<b>Character</b>	Someone who embodies major actions or has a defined story arc. The main character is he whose actions drive the story.
<b>Character Arc</b>	How the character changes from his introduction at the beginning of the script to what he has learned or become by script's end. (Also called character development.)
<b>Climax</b>	A decisive moment of maximum intensity and a major turning point in the plot which leads the hero to ultimate victory or defeat.
<b>Concept</b>	The story told in broadest terms. The concept in a refined single sentence is the logline.
<b>Conflict</b>	The struggle or clash of opposing or contending characters in a story. There are traditionally 5 levels of classic conflict: Man vs. Self, Man, Society, Technology and Nature.
<b>Dialogue</b>	Conversation between characters. Good dialogue consists of rapid and life-like back and forth exchange, advancing the action of the story and providing a quick glimpse into the minds and souls of the characters.
<b>Discovery</b>	The revelation or unfolding of something previously unrecognized or unknown, usually by the main character in the climax of a drama. Think pages 45 and 75 where the stakes are raised.

<b>Execution</b>	The way in which the concept is written or interpreted in the current draft.
<b>Exposition</b>	Technique by which critical elements of the plot, often involving the back stories of the characters, are not depicted directly but are instead elaborated in dialogue by one of the characters or by a narrator.
<b>Goal / Objective</b>	The single driving force that motivates and pushes the main character forward.
<b>High Concept</b>	A commercial idea or premise, as of a story or film, that lends itself to easily promotion and marketing (i.e. JAWS, STAR WARS).
<b>Hook</b>	A striking incident or action at the opening of a story, the purpose of which is to capture the audience's attention, or the most commercially viable version of the script.
<b>Inciting Incident</b>	An event from outside that causes the lead character to take action.
<b>Log Line</b>	The idea of the story told in a single sentence. The main character (using generic terms, not names) is the sentences' subject and what he/she has to overcome and perhaps the story's twist will follow. It should not include the outcome of the story, but hint at it.
<b>Narration</b>	The events of a story that are not dramatized but related by a character or narrator.
<b>Obstacles</b>	The events that stand in the way of a character achieving his or her goals.
<b>Plot</b>	What the main characters, protagonists and antagonists, do in the story.
<b>Premise</b>	The "what if" or "what happens when" situation that gives birth to a story.
<b>Protagonist</b>	The main character of the story, characterized by his/her ability to evolve and change throughout the story.
<b>Red Herring</b>	A false clue or lead that distracts or diverts from the original objective.

<b>Reversal</b>	The turning point in the plot. Think page 60.
<b>Sequence</b>	A group of relating scenes.
<b>Stakes</b>	The compelling reason we agree to go on a journey with the character, this is a reflection of how badly they want something and what they are willing to risk in order to get it.
<b>Storyline</b>	Main line or thrust of development of a story or plot.
<b>Structure</b>	The order of what the main character does in the story, it is determined by the story's genre. It should follow the "Basic Plot Outline / Beat Sheet."
<b>Subtext</b>	The content which is not announced explicitly by the characters (or author) but is implicit or becomes something understood as the story unfolds.
<b>Suspense</b>	Tension created by uncertainty of the story's outcome, creating worry and fear about what is going to happen next.
<b>Theme</b>	The general meaning or idea of a story. Something that the main character and/or the audience learns or proves by the end of the story.
<b>Twist</b>	Because the protagonist and / or the audience has misread the facts, the plot takes this unforeseen turn.

## Sample Coverage

Coverage for: WME Entertainment  
 Assigning Agent: Barcos

Title: Pirates of the Caribbean  
 Writer(s): Stuart Beattie  
 Draft Date: 11/9/01  
 Pages: 118

Genre: Action  
 Period: 1700's  
 Setting: Various  
 Locale: Caribbean  
 Budget: High

Story: Excellent  
 Structure: Good  
 Dialogue: Good  
 Writing: Excellent  
 Commercial: Good  
 Visual Elements: Excellent  
 Title: Good  
 Characterization: Good

Studio: Disney  
 Producer: Jerry Bruckheimer  
 Director: Open

Consider for: Direction  
 Writer: Recommend  
 Project: Recommend

Analyst: Jennifer Bilovsky

### Logline:

Two groups of warring pirates try to take over a pre-colonial Caribbean port, as a loveable rogue Pirate, the governor's daughter and the young man who loves her are thrust into the middle of the adventure.

### Comments Summary:

STAR WARS meets THE PRINCESS BRIDE in this thoughtful interpretation of the Disneyland ride of the same name. Capitalizing on all that is magical about pirate movies without falling prey to the pitfalls, what could be a weak concept has instead been crafted into a thorough, meaningful premise. Likewise, the action-packed, heartfelt execution is just as thrilling as a trip down the Disneyland ride. Both talent and direction would have a fun time on this project for all ages.

### Synopsis:

In the year 1705, a shipwrecked boy WILL THORNTON (11) is rescued by a young girl ELIZABETH SWANN (10) far at sea. She pulls him aboard the ship of her father, GOVERNOR SWANN, the new leader of the British township of Port Royal Jamaica. They are just headed

there themselves to begin a new life since Elizabeth's mother died. Elizabeth begs her father to keep and train Will, who vows to one day take vengeance on the pirates that killed his family.

Ten years pass, and Will has grown into a handsome man, madly smitten with beautiful Elizabeth, who treats him like a brother. Dejected, Will scowls at a wanted poster for the notorious pirate CAPTAIN BLACKHEART, wondering if he is the one who killed his parents. Across town, dashing pirate CAPTAIN JACK SPARROW cheats at cards and wins, and the entire town comes after him. Will sees this, and personally turns the scoundrel in to the Royal Navy, led by self-involved LIEUTENANT NORRINGTON, who jails Jack and scoffs at Will. Norrington is also in love with Elizabeth, who wants nothing to do with him. He tells her she will regret it, and threatens Will to stay out of his way.

Will practices his sword fighting in front of Jack, who critiques it. Will's father was a sword-maker and Jack feels badly for his loss. In the middle of the night, a band of pirates kidnap Elizabeth, hustling her aboard a ship. Will tries to save her but he is too late. Elizabeth is now a prisoner of Blackheart himself! Norrington and Governor Swann argue about her rescue. Swann wants to pay the ransom but Norrington doesn't want to give in to pirates. He asks Swann for a commission of every man in the colony to go destroy Blackheart's secret lair once and for all. Swann agrees, but only if Norrington takes the ransom with him.

Will bursts in on Jack with a pistol, demanding to know the location of Blackheart's lair. Jack agrees to help, but only if Will sets him free. Jack warns Will that rich Blackheart has no need for a ransom. Elizabeth will surely die if they don't get her out before Blackheart's unknown evil purpose is served. Jack and Will steal a ship and head to sea. Elizabeth is taken to the lair, where Blackheart gives her fine clothes and jewels to don before her last meal, where they argue about life. Blackheart tells her that such a smart girl shouldn't wait for a perfect love when it could be right under her nose. She is then fed to the crocodiles.

Norrington informs Swann that Will has turned into a Pirate on him, having stolen a Navy warship. Swann can't believe it, as he feels he has failed the two people closest to him in the world. He agrees to put up a ransom for Will's head, alongside of Jack's. Jack takes Will to a pirate port, where they will round up an army that is sympathetic to their cause. Jack explains that he and Blackheart were allies before Blackheart started to enjoy the killing. Will and Jack bond as Will realizes that Jack isn't so bad.

Back at Blackheart's lair, Elizabeth crawls out from the crocodile pit – having faked her own death! Jack and Will approach a tavern of would-be allies, only to find that they want Jack dead. Jack fights with them, until he convinces them that he can get them Blackheart, and through him, their lost treasure. Norrington sets sail with 600 men, as Jack, Will and the pirates follow suit.

Elizabeth realizes Blackheart's plan; with the Port Royal armada at their lair, the pirates can take them over and wreck havoc over the high seas. She pulls a stolen gun on Blackheart, as hundreds of guns are aimed at her. She asks Blackheart how he plans to have impunity when Norrington arrives. He begs Elizabeth to give him her pistol; her father misses her. She does as Blackheart and Norrington shake hands. They are in this together!

Jack and Will approach the island and Norrington takes aim at them. The renegades go through a secret, trap-ridden entrance to enter the island and avoid Blackheart's men. This occurs as Blackheart's men take the Port Royal Armada hostage. Jack and Will survive the traps, only to unearth a treasure trove. Will is furious with Jack, knowing that his greed is the only reason for his assistance. Will goes to find Elizabeth alone, and hides as he sees the armada being forced to exchange clothes with the pirates. He knows that they are in over their heads.

Jack uncovers one of Will's father's swords among the treasure. Regret and guilt sweep over Jack, as he rushes to find and help Will. Norrington straps Elizabeth to a torture device, explaining that the only reason he wanted to marry Elizabeth was so that her father would

nominate him the next Governor of Jamaica. Instead, they will take Port Royal, with the “armada” holding the “pirates” in bindings as a facade.

Just as Elizabeth is left for dead, Will rescues her, introducing her to Jack. The three of them fight their way towards the treasure and their ship. They load the heavy ship up with cargo, and have a hard time racing away. They see Norrington and Blackheart out at sea, heading to Port Royal with intention to overthrow Swann and install their own pirate-friendly government. Jack agrees to take Will and Elizabeth home, but says that he is done fighting. Will gives up on Jack.

Will and Elizabeth reach Swann, and set a plan in motion. Norrington arrives expecting a homecoming and is instead met with a volley of cannon fire. The pirates take aim and attack with all their might. Will leads the charge in fighting back, but their defenses are no match. It looks as if all hope has been lost when Jack appears. He unleashes the imprisoned armada and they take the pirates to town. Norrington gets in a swordfight with Will, as Jack takes on Blackheart. Jack gives Will his father’s sword, which gives his fight new life. Will Kills Norrington, and Jack captures Blackheart.

To Elizabeth’s surprise, Swann gives her his blessing to be with Will. He is down at the docks with Jack and his friends seeing them off. They had dumped their treasure overboard to be able to come back and save the day, and will go on an adventure now to find it. Jack hopes that Will can join him on another adventure someday. Elizabeth goes to Will and professes her love to him. They kiss, as the pirates sail off into the sunset.

#### Character Breakdown:

Age	Name	Role	Description
25-30	Jack Sparrow	Leading Male	A charming and handsome rogue pirate with a heart of gold, he is wronged by Captain Blackheart. He tries to get back to his treasure with Will’s help, promising in turn to assist him in finding Elizabeth. At sea, he has a change of heart and vows to help Will in any way he can.
20-25	Will Thornton	Leading Male	A sandy-haired young whipper-snapper, he wants nothing more than to defend the honor of the women he loves. His family was killed by pirates, and so he vows to take vengeance on them. He may have nothing, but he is the perfect gentleman and will do anything for Elizabeth.
20-25	Elizabeth Swann	Leading Female	A dark-haired beauty, she is brave and kind. She is the daughter of the township governor, but has ideas of her own for the way it should be run. She ahead of her time, with ideas about bringing the port into the next century. She loves Will although she doesn’t know it yet.
25-30	Norrington	Supporting Male	The cocky and cruel head of the army, he has the Governor’s ear and wants to marry Elizabeth. He takes her refusal to heart, and vows to take revenge on her by killing her father and taking over the colony to get rich off of the pirates.
50-55	Governor Swann	Supporting Male	Elizabeth’s father and the governor of the township, he is a good man who is under a lot of stress. He wants nothing more than to govern justly and make his loving daughter happy. He treats Will as his own son.
35-40	Captain Blackheart	Supporting Male	The rogue pirate who wronged Jack, he is a vicious man. However, he is reasonable and logical despite this. He is impressed with Elizabeth’s ingenuity and Will’s bravery. He is Sparrow’s bitter rival.

25-30	Vache	Cameo	A mean French gunner pirate, he is Jack's right hand man, although he thinks Jack abandoned him. He rallies with him to save the day.
25-30	Rafael	Cameo	A Spanish Main Mestizo pirate, he also helps out Will and Jack with their cause.
30-35	Kitwana	Cameo	A tough African pirate, he fights the bad pirates with daggers.
25-30	Haley Marie	Cameo	A pretty bar wench, she is in love with Jack.

Comments:

STAR WARS meets THE PRINCESS BRIDE in this thoughtful interpretation of the Disneyland ride of the same name. Capitalizing on all that is magical about pirate movies without falling prey to the pitfalls, what could be a weak concept has instead been crafted into a thorough, meaningful premise. Likewise, the action-packed, heartfelt execution is just as thrilling as a trip down the Disneyland ride. Both talent and direction would have a fun time on this project for all ages.

The script's concept is amazingly well crafted. There is a reason to care about every character's stake in this picture. Although the villains are obvious, they are never stereotypical. Despite the fact that the idea is crafted from both preexisting movies and rides, it comes across as original. Based on the familiar ride, as well as story models from the aforementioned movies, certain elements feel borrowed, but it works. Inigo Montoya's revenge-fueled sword fighting scene as well as the Han-Luke-Leia relationship are direct copies into this film, to great effect. The plot is a realistic story that is engaging in its use of action, adventure, romance, drama and comedy.

The writing lyrically and lovingly describes characters and scenes. Both highly visual and very cinematic, it is easy to picture action sequences and dramatic sequences alike. Dialogue is comprised of some witty quips, which could be pushed even more. The tone is always fun, as it should be. Structural tension erupts just as soon as Elizabeth is kidnapped, as well as when we know that Will and Norrington will battle for her affection. Conflict exists on multiple levels for the three main leads. The tough nature of the high seas and the strict society of both the colonists and the pirates all combine to form a heated climate that is ripe with conflict.

The three lead characters are well-developed in every sense - their fears are tested and their goals are reached. Man vs. man is played out between the three leads and their adversaries. While more of a conflict could arise between Elizabeth and Jack, all other relationships are developed satisfactorily. Both Jack and Will have crises of conscious, as Elizabeth's greatest fears are tested. Jack and Will's inner conflict as they relate to each other could be given a little more attention. If Jack goes back for Will, Will has to go back for Jack. All three leads change significantly from this ordeal. Talent would be attracted to these active, inquisitive roles.

Commerciality is not in doubt here if audiences can forget the travesty that was CUTTHROAT ISLAND. This script is nothing like the former, and a director's vision could help ensure that. They are a slew of reasons for why a director would want to be involved in a project like this, but in short, it is a well-written, fun-loving, action-packed extravaganza, that could bring a director's talent to the forefront.