

Review US Sentient version – 4th draft

TEASER

Strong drama to start

Better descriptive stuff than before to understand what we are witnessing from a distance. Immediate empathy with the crew and relationships between JJ and Syd and JJ and Lindsey.

The only slightly jarring note is when the two crewmen drive off – would they really desert their comrades? (Makes what happens to Syd all the more scary for JJ!)

ACT 1

Dripping blood provides dramatic entrance to Act 1. We immediately wish Reese well. Getting back to JJ we meet Sal and they have a discussion on what the issue might be makes us think about our own assumptions.

Nice introduction to Lena with the flashback story of her birthday surprise – good empathy again.

Nice feel-good empathy between Reese and Lena.

I also like the sense of collaboration between JJ and Sal. The only slight puzzle for me was that Sal went off expecting JJ to go to the dam, Then JJ followed in the same direction as Sal and they ended up together again?

ACT 2

The developing relationship between Reese and Lena works OK [by the way spelling problem on page 33 – Lena “...bights (sic) her lip”]

Coming across the dying prison guard adds to the tension and laves us with a puzzle about Block D and the dying smile? ...but in a good way

ACT 3

The observation about surviving animals in intriguing.

I like the ironic humour between Reese and Lena and the fact that she is taking at least her fair share of the decision making.

Follow up from surviving farm animals to letting the zoo animals out is a good segue.

[Second spelling problem top of page 49 – “...we`ve been taken matters into our own hands...” = ?? `we have taken matters` or ..`we`ve been taking matters...`??]

Tensions introduced by the bully miners fit the slightly `disaster movie` feel and enhance our `hero`s` status.

ACT 4

Interestingly – I only realised I had made no comments on ACT 4 until after I had finished ACT 5 – so I guess it was a “page-turner” – Had to read again to comment here. Works well.

ACT 5

Start of this Act improved on previous version.

JJ not picking up on what we, the audience can see from having `met` Reese and Lena already – and Jenny noting Dallas as an unpleasant man provides a sense of tension.

The reveal of Dallas as a real threat works better then before with tighter writing.

And the conclusion to the Act is much, much more effective.

OVERALL COMMENTS – 4 STARS

Much better overall, with tighter writing than the previous version I saw. Came close to giving it 5 stars, but there are just a few small issues (Teaser and Act 1) that may benefit from minor change. For example we perhaps need a clue early in the Teaser to show *why* the two crewmen are selfish enough to drive off without their colleagues JJ & Syd.