Sample report for an invented script, LOW TIDE, by an invented writer.

LOW TIDE

Written by Sam Okafor · Draft 2 · Screenplay · Drama + Thriller & crime · October 27, 2026

Dear Sam,

I knew I was in good hands by page three, when Theo's crates go onto the morning run and Mara says nothing. That silence told me more about the two of them than any backstory could, and I spent the rest of the first act waiting for her to finally speak.

The middle stretch wandered a little for me. Around the second visit to Pike's shop I felt the film catching its breath when I wanted it to keep moving, and I found myself waiting for Rowe to want something of his own. Then the boatshed scene pulled me straight back in. From there to the end I didn't look away.

The storm crossing is earned, and the last image stayed with me long after I closed the script. It's the same empty ramp from the opening, and it means something completely different now. That's hard to pull off, and you did it.

4.1/5 NEARLY THERE, ONE MORE DRAFT

A controlled, honest drama with a thriller engine, close to ready and strongest where most drafts are weakest.

The dialogue carries subtext in nearly every scene, the island creates the story's problems, and Mara changes by losing an argument with herself rather than by announcing it.

Most worth a look: Act two has three scenes doing work already done, and the supporting cast outside June and Ellis exists mostly to serve Mara. Both trace back to the second act being built around Mara's problem alone.

THIS DRAFT WORKS

Congratulations. The dialogue and the world are working at a professional level, and the ending is a real decision that the first page set up. Most drafts never get the opening and closing images talking to each other. This one does.

MOMENTS THAT STAYED WITH ME

> You don't get to ask me that. Not on my boat.
>
> Scene 6 · EXT. BREAKWATER - NIGHT
>
> Mara has been quiet for six scenes, so when she finally pushes back, it lands like a door slamming. The line is short because she's been holding it for years.

> June sets out two cups. Looks at the second one. Pours it down the sink.
>
> Scene 5 · INT. MARA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT
>
> No one says Theo isn't coming home. The cup says it, and June is the one who notices.

> Dad ran this route forty years. Never once asked what was in the hold.
>
> Scene 25 · EXT. CHURCHYARD - DAY
>
> Pike hands us the family history in one line, and it explains Mara better than a flashback would.

> She lets go of his hand.
>
> Scene 30 · INT. FERRY WHEELHOUSE - NIGHT
>
> Five words, and the whole film turns on them. Every rescue before this one is undone here.

THE NOTES THAT MATTER MOST

If you only read one part of this report, read this.

THE MIDDLE CATCHES ITS BREATH

Between the first crossing and the boatshed, a few scenes do work the film has already done. Pike's shop twice, the second quiet wheelhouse scene, the school gate. Each is well written, but together they let the pressure drop just when it should be building. What would happen if Mara had to make one more choice in that stretch, instead of thinking about the last one?

WHO IS ROWE WHEN THE CASE IS CLOSED?

Rowe is patient, tired and good at his job, and right now that is all we get. He wants exactly what the plot needs him to want. If he wanted one thing the case couldn't give him, his patience with Mara would start to cost him something, and their interview scene would have two people at risk in it instead of one.

BETWEEN THE LINES

A slower reading of 4 scenes: what is said, what is meant, and whether the gap lands.

Scene 6 · EXT. BREAKWATER - NIGHT

ON THE SURFACE

Theo jokes about the weather and asks Mara to cover his morning run.

UNDERNEATH

He's asking her to choose him over the rules again, the way she always has.

HELD BACK

Mara knows what's in the crates and doesn't say it. Theo knows she knows.

DOES IT LAND 5/5

Yes. Because neither of them names it, the audience leans in to do it for them, and the scene plays twice as long as it is.

Scene 17 · INT. THEO'S BOATSHED - NIGHT

ON THE SURFACE

An argument about who's in charge of the boat.

UNDERNEATH

Mara realises he's been using her name, and that protecting him now means becoming him.

HELD BACK

Theo hides how deep the debt goes.

DOES IT LAND 4/5

Mostly. The turn is strong, though one line spells out the debt when the look before it has already told us.

Scene 26 · INT. MARA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

ON THE SURFACE

June asks if there's any more milk.

UNDERNEATH

She's offering her mother a way back in.

HELD BACK

Everything about the night at the hospital.

DOES IT LAND 5/5

Beautifully. This is the trust scene the film has been waiting for, played entirely through a carton of milk.

Scene 30 · INT. FERRY WHEELHOUSE - NIGHT

ON THE SURFACE

Almost nothing. The storm does the talking.

UNDERNEATH

Mara chooses her daughter over her brother.

HELD BACK

Whether Theo understands why.

DOES IT LAND 5/5

Yes, and the restraint is the point. Resist any urge to add a line here.

THE STORY AS I READ IT

A ferry pilot on a dying island discovers her brother is using her boat to smuggle, and has one storm-season crossing to decide which of them she can save.

PREMISE

Mara runs the last ferry between a small island and the mainland. When her younger brother Theo starts loading crates onto her morning run, she is pulled into his debts and a police investigation, while trying to keep her teenage daughter June out of it.

TONE

Quiet and weathered, with the pressure of a thriller underneath.

SITS ALONGSIDE

Manchester by the Sea (2016) · Hell or High Water (2016) · The Outrun (2024)

CHARACTER	SCORE	TIER	ROLE	WANTS	ARC
MARA	5/5	PRIMARY	protagonist	to keep the ferry, and her family, running	From protecting her brother at any cost to choosing her daughter and letting him face what he did
THEO	4/5	PRIMARY	antagonist	to clear his debt with one more run	From using his sister to turning himself in, quietly, in scene 32
JUNE	4/5	SECONDARY	witness	to be told the truth	From shut out to trusted
ELLIS	4/5	SECONDARY	challenger	to hand the harbour to Mara	From ally to the man who has to choose the rules over her
ROWE	2/5	SECONDARY	challenger	Theo's supplier, not Theo	no change detected
PIKE	3/5	SECONDARY	mirror	to see the island survive	no change detected

THE SPINE

The premise and the argument underneath the draft, read through the cards of The Spine.

This is the story of Mara, who wants to keep her family afloat, and who will have to give up her brother to get it.

THE DRAMATIC QUESTION

4/5 Will Mara protect Theo at the cost of everything else she has? Posed in scene 6.

THEME AND ANTI-THEME

4/5 For: Love sometimes means letting someone face what they did Against: Family comes first, whatever it costs. Theo argues the anti-theme well in the boatshed; Pike could argue it harder.

THE ARENA

5/5 Everyone owes everyone; silence is currency; the ferry schedule is law. Load-bearing: the story could not be moved to a city without losing its plot.

IRREVERSIBLE STATE CHANGES

5 found. A feature usually needs four to six.

PREMISE CARD	ON THE PAGE	SCORE
Want	Keep the ferry running and her family afloat through the storm season	4/5
Obstacle	Theo, who needs her boat to clear a debt he cannot survive	5/5
Cost	Her brother, or her daughter's trust	4/5
Clock	The last legal crossing before the storm season closes the route	4/5
Link	The obstacle and the cost are the same person: Theo.	

SIX POSITIONS

The six load-bearing changes every feature turns on. A long gap with no irreversible change is where a reader starts to drift.

POSITION	WHERE	WHAT HAPPENS	SCORE
World with flaw	Scene 1 · EXT. NORTH HARBOUR - DAWN	Mara carries the island and her brother without complaint	4/5
Intrusion	Scene 3 · EXT. FERRY DECK - DAY	Theo's crates go onto the morning run	5/5
Commitment	Scene 11 · EXT. OPEN WATER - NIGHT	Mara chooses to run the crossing herself, knowingly	5/5
Reversal of method	Scene 17 · INT. THEO'S BOATSHED - NIGHT	She learns Theo used her name; protecting him now means becoming him	4/5
Collapse	Scene 23 · INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT	June's trust, lost at the hospital	4/5
Trade	Scene 30 · INT. FERRY WHEELHOUSE - NIGHT	She lets go of Theo's hand to bring June's world home	5/5

THE SEQUENCES

Each block of the story as an objective the protagonist is pursuing, how it turns out, and what it leaves open. A block with no clear objective is where the middle sags.

#	SCENES	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	LEFT OPEN
1	1-4	Keep the route running as normal	achieved	What is in Theo's crates?
2	5-9	Stay out of Theo's business	lost	Ellis is asking questions
3	10-13	Protect Theo from the police	achieved at a cost	Rowe knows more than he says
4	14-17	Keep June out of it	lost	Theo has used her name
5	18-20	Find a way out without choosing	no clear objective	Ellis reports the boat
6	21-24	One last crossing to clear the debt	achieved at a cost	June in hospital

#	SCENES	OBJECTIVE	OUTCOME	LEFT OPEN
7	25-28	Win June back and stop Theo	lost	The storm and Theo's run
8	29-34	Bring everyone home	achieved at a cost	

CHARACTER SPECS

The principal characters read through the specification in The Engine: a want they could say out loud, the belief underneath it, what they do to protect it, and the contradiction that makes them more than one note.

CHARACTER	SCORE	THE WANT, AS THEY SAY IT	THE BELIEF	SHIELD	CONTRADICTION	ARC	RECEIPTS
MARA	5/5	"Ellis, give me this season and the harbour stays open. I'll sign by the first of March."	If I stop holding everything together, it all sinks.	Starts a practical task: checks the engine, makes tea, checks the timetable	She is the kind of person who rescues everyone, which is why she also never lets anyone rescue her.	positive change	4
THEO	4/5	"Just one more run, Mara. Then I'm clear and you never hear about it again."	The island owes me for what Dad took.	Jokes, then leaves the room	He is the kind of person who needs to be owed, which is why he also cannot ask for help.	flat	2

FOUNDATIONS

Six questions a draft should answer without the writer in the room.

5/5 What does the protagonist want (an external, pursuable action) and what do they need (the internal change they do not know they need)?

Mara wants to keep the ferry and her family running (scenes 2, 7). She needs to stop rescuing Theo at June's expense, made explicit in action in scene 30.

5/5 Do the opening and closing images rhyme: the same image, transformed in meaning?

Yes. The empty ferry ramp at dawn opens (scene 1) and closes (scene 34), first as routine and finally as a choice.

4/5 What are the rules of this world, and what happens when they break?

The island runs on favours and silence; whoever breaks the silence loses their place. It breaks in scene 20 when Ellis reports the boat.

4/5 Where is the midpoint, and does it change the question from "can they get it?" to "what will it cost?"

Scene 17 in the boatshed. Mara learns Theo has used her name, and the question becomes what helping him will cost.

4/5 What does the protagonist lose at their lowest point?

June's trust, in scene 23 at the hospital.

3/5 What is the film about, in one sentence that has nothing to do with plot?

How much of yourself do you owe the family you were born into? The page asks it but never quite lets Theo answer it from his side.

THE GENRE CONTRACT

Drama with a thriller engine comes with scenes its audience expects. Missing one is worth knowing; leaving one out on purpose is a choice.

EXPECTED SCENE	IN THE DRAFT	WHERE	NOTE
The life as it is, specific	Yes	Scenes 1-2	The ferry routine
The thing that cannot continue	Yes	Scene 3	The crates
The attempt to continue anyway	Yes	Scene 7	
The person who tells the truth	Yes	Scene 20	Ellis
The failure of the external solution	Yes	Scene 24	Rowe's deal
Complete isolation	Missing	missing	Mara is never fully alone with the choice before the storm
The acceptance, as a quiet action	Yes	Scene 30	
The new state, briefly	Yes	Scenes 33-34	

PLANTS AND PAYOFFS

Every late payoff needs an early plant that was doing another job at the time. Anything set up and never paid off costs the reader's trust.

SET UP AND NOT PAID OFF

The second key to the boatshed (scene 10)

PAYOFF	PAYS OFF IN	PLANTED IN	NOTE
The bilge pump fails in the storm	Scene 29	Scene 2	Planted as banter about Ellis's retirement
Mara lets go of Theo's hand	Scene 30	Scene 6	Echoes the breakwater, where she pulls him back
The empty ramp at dawn	Scene 34	Scene 1	Opening image, transformed
Pike's story about their father	Scene 25	Scene 4	Gossip that turns out to be history

BY THE NUMBERS

Counted from the page. Figures in amber sit outside the usual range for a feature, which is worth knowing, not a rule.

108
pages (approx.)

34
scenes

3.2
pages per scene

8
speaking parts

47%
of words are dialogue

18
locations

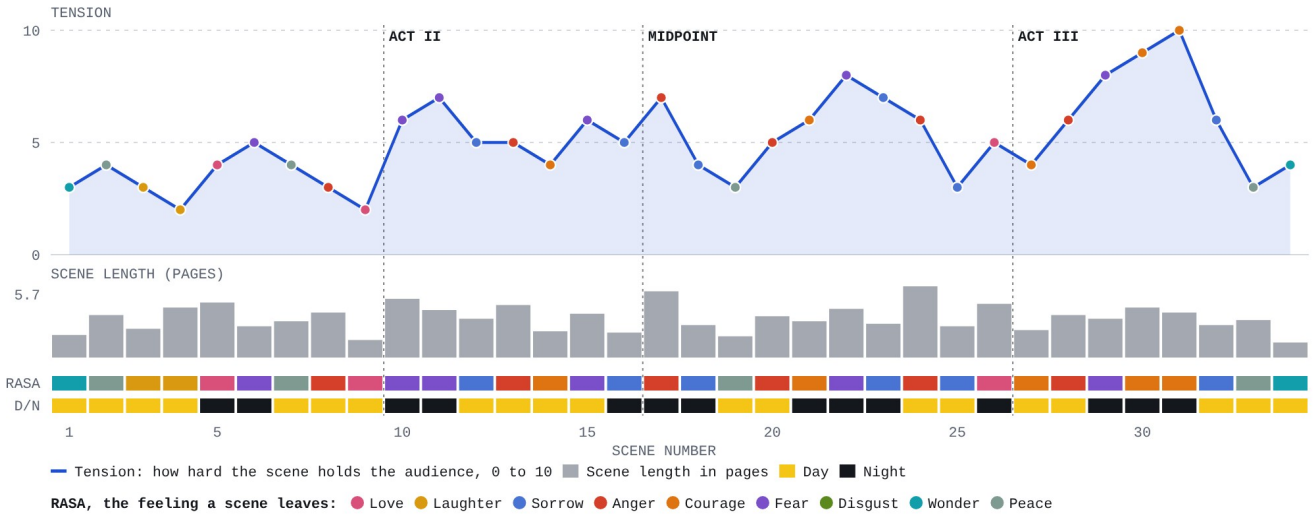
14
night scenes, 6 exterior

9
inside-the-head words in action lines

3
camera directions

THE EMOTION CURVE

How hard each scene holds the audience, and the feeling it leaves behind. The peak lands in scene 31 of 34.



RASA BALANCE: HOW MUCH OF THE SCRIPT EACH FEELING HOLDS

- Fear Bhayanaka · 18%
- Anger Raudra · 18%
- Sorrow Karuna · 18%
- Courage Veera · 15%
- Peace Shanta · 12%
- Love Shringara · 9%
- Wonder Adbhuta · 6%
- Laughter Hasya · 6%

WHO CARRIES THE FILM

How often each character speaks, their share of the dialogue, and the scenes they speak in.

MARA	212 · 39%	Speaks in 30 of 34 scenes
THEO	118 · 24%	Speaks in 15 of 34 scenes
JUNE	64 · 10%	Speaks in 9 of 34 scenes
ELLIS	52 · 10%	Speaks in 7 of 34 scenes
ROWE	47 · 9%	Speaks in 6 of 34 scenes
PIKE	31 · 6%	Speaks in 4 of 34 scenes
DEAN	9 · 1%	Speaks in 2 of 34 scenes
NURSE	6 · 1%	Speaks in 1 of 34 scenes

Bar: number of speeches, then their share of all dialogue

Squares: the scenes they speak in, scene 1 to the last

PART BY PART

The detail behind the notes above. Every suggestion is optional. You know what this film is meant to be.

Premise & spine	4 · WORKING
Opening & ending	5 · EXCEPTIONAL
Structure & pacing	4 · WORKING
Primary characters	4 · WORKING
Secondary characters & relationships	3 · GETTING THERE
Scenes	4 · WORKING
Dialogue & subtext	5 · EXCEPTIONAL
Tension & stakes	4 · WORKING

Theme & meaning	4 · WORKING
World & visual storytelling	5 · EXCEPTIONAL
The page	4 · WORKING
Production readiness	3 · GETTING THERE
Market readiness	4 · WORKING

PREMISE & SPINE

4/5 · WORKING

A clean premise with a real clock: the want, the obstacle and the cost all run through one family.

WHAT'S WORKING

> Theo is both the obstacle and the cost, so the premise tightens every time the two of them are in a room.
> `Mara, Theo`

> The storm season is a clock the island already lives by.
> `Scenes 2, 21`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> The cost reads as Theo or the ferry for most of act one; June only becomes part of the price at the hospital. Bringing her into the price earlier would sharpen the spine.
> `Impact 3/5 · Scenes 5 to 12 · structure pass`

Go deeper: The Spine

OPENING & ENDING

5/5 · EXCEPTIONAL

The opening and closing images are in conversation from the first page, and the ending is a decision Mara makes.

WHAT'S WORKING

> The empty ramp at dawn is a thesis, not an introduction: it returns in scene 34 with its meaning transformed.
> `Scenes 1 and 34`

> Tension arrives on page three with the crates, so there is almost no prologue.
> `Scene 3`

> The climax requires something Mara learned: letting go of Theo's hand is the reverse of every rescue before it.
> `Scene 30`

WORTH CONSIDERING

Nothing to suggest here. This is working; keep it safe while you revise elsewhere.

Go deeper: The Spine

STRUCTURE & PACING

4/5 · WORKING

A clean, escalating spine with two soft spots in the middle where scenes repeat each other's work.

WHAT'S WORKING

> Each act-two scene leaves Mara measurably worse off; this is escalation, not episodes.
> `Scenes 10 to 22`

> The midpoint changes the question exactly as it should.
> `Scene 17`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> Scenes 4 and 19 are the same catch-up scene in disguise at Pike's shop. You could merge them so Pike appears once, with a reason to be there.
> `Impact 4/5 · Scenes 4, 19 · structure pass`

Go deeper: The Spine

PRIMARY CHARACTERS

4/5 · WORKING

Mara is legible and active throughout; Theo is a real argument rather than an obstacle.

WHAT'S WORKING

> Mara loses the argument with herself instead of announcing a decision. The change is seeded in her first lie to Ellis.
> `Scenes 8, 30`

> Theo answers almost every antagonist question, and his case in the boatshed is hard to refute.
> `Scene 28`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> We never see Theo's life when Mara is not there, so his debt stays abstract. One short scene of him with the people he owes would make the stakes his as well as hers.
> `Impact 3/5 · Theo, between scenes 10 and 17 · character pass`

Go deeper: The Engine

SECONDARY CHARACTERS & RELATIONSHIPS

3/5 · GETTING THERE

June and Ellis are specific, but Rowe and Pike exist mainly to serve Mara.

WHAT'S WORKING

> June is the witness, and her silence lands like a verdict when she finally speaks.
> `Scenes 23, 26`

> Ellis gets the line Mara cannot say, which is what a good supporting character is for.
> `Scene 20`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> Rowe wants only what the plot needs. One option is a want of his own that the case cannot satisfy, so his patience costs him something.
> `Impact 3/5 · Rowe, scenes 13, 24 · character pass`

> Mara and June skip the trust hinge until scene 26. One moment of unguarded honesty earlier would make scene 26 earned rather than sudden.
> `Impact 4/5 · Around scene 15 · character pass`

Go deeper: The Engine

SCENES

4/5 · WORKING

Most scenes cost someone something, and power moves in nearly every confrontation.

WHAT'S WORKING

> Scene 6 on the breakwater shifts power twice without either character raising their voice.
> `Scene 6`

> Several scenes open on objects or silence instead of dialogue, which suits the register.
> `Scenes 1, 5, 16`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> In scenes 7 and 18 Mara is thinking rather than doing, and the film pauses with her. Worth considering: a small, irreversible action in each, so something changes.
> `Impact 3/5 · Scenes 7, 18 · scene pass`

Go deeper: The Scene

DIALOGUE & SUBTEXT

5/5 · EXCEPTIONAL

The best thing in the draft: people talk around what they mean, and every voice is distinct.

WHAT'S WORKING

- Real subtext that would change the scene if said out loud, especially at the kitchen table.
  `Scenes 5, 26`
- Exposition about the father arrives through Pike, in conflict, only when the audience is asking.
  `Scene 25`
- Silence is used deliberately and protected in the final scenes.
  `Scenes 31 to 34`

WORTH CONSIDERING

Nothing to suggest here. This is working; keep it safe while you revise elsewhere.

Go deeper: The Scene

TENSION & STAKES

4/5 · WORKING

Tension is built on opposed wants, not secrets, so it survives every reveal.

WHAT'S WORKING

- The clock arrives at exactly the right time and everything is measured against the last legal crossing.
  `Scene 21`
- The bilge pump is planted three times before it matters.
  `Scenes 2, 11, 29`

WORTH CONSIDERING

- The interview room deal in scene 24 resolves the police tension too early without replacing it. Leaving Rowe's offer open until after the storm would keep that pressure alive.
  `Impact 4/5 · Scene 24 · structure pass`

Go deeper: The Audit

THEME & MEANING

4/5 · WORKING

The film lives inside a real question about family debt and does not preach the answer.

WHAT'S WORKING

- Mara's right choice has a visible cost: she loses Theo as well as saving June.
  `Scene 32`

WORTH CONSIDERING

- Pike states the theme outright in scene 25. The scene may already say it without his last two lines.
  `Impact 2/5 · Scene 25 · dialogue pass`

Go deeper: The Audit

WORLD & VISUAL STORYTELLING

5/5 · EXCEPTIONAL

The island is designed, not decorated: the story could not happen anywhere else.

WHAT'S WORKING

- The ferry schedule creates the plot's problems and its clock.
  `Throughout`
- Sound carries information on the page, from the bilge pump to the foghorn.
  `Scenes 1, 11, 29`

WORTH CONSIDERING

Nothing to suggest here. This is working; keep it safe while you revise elsewhere.

Go deeper: The Scene

THE PAGE

4/5 · WORKING

Clean, visual pages, with a little of the inside of Mara's head leaking into the action lines.

WHAT'S WORKING

> The first ten pages answer who, what and what might stop her, and the tone is set by page three.
> `Scenes 1 to 3`

> Action paragraphs are short, and the storm sequence reads fast.
> `Scenes 29 to 31`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> A handful of action lines tell us what Mara knows or feels instead of showing it. Worth a search for realises, knows and feels.
> `Impact 2/5 · Scenes 7, 12, 18 · read-aloud pass`

Go deeper: The Spine

PRODUCTION READINESS

3/5 · GETTING THERE

Reads as a mid-budget shoot, driven by the night water work in act three.

WHAT'S WORKING

> A small cast and recurring locations: the kitchen, wheelhouse and boatshed carry half the film.
> `Scenes 5, 12, 26, 33`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> Five night exteriors on open water, two in a storm, is the single largest cost. Scene 22 could play from the wheelhouse interior with the same tension.
> `Impact 3/5 · Scenes 11, 22, 29, 31 · structure pass`

MARKET READINESS

4/5 · WORKING

Easy to describe and hard to reduce, with a lead role an actor would chase.

WHAT'S WORKING

> The logline lands in one breath, and the role of Mara is a gift for a lead in her forties.
> `Mara`

WORTH CONSIDERING

> The title is shared with several existing works. It may be worth testing alternatives before it goes out.
> `Impact 2/5 · Title page · read-aloud pass`

Go deeper: The Audit

SCENE BY SCENE

What kind of scene each one is, what it costs someone, and where a scene might do more.

#	SCENE	TYPE	WHAT IT COSTS	TENSION /10	SCORE	READING
1	EXT. NORTH HARBOUR - DAWN	subtext	nothing yet	3	4/5	WORKING Opening image of the empty ferry ramp, rhymed in scene 34.
2	INT. FERRY WHEELHOUSE - DAY	intimacy	Ellis loses his excuse to retire	4	4/5	WORKING Banter carries a real offer underneath.

#	SCENE	TYPE	WHAT IT COSTS	TENSION /10	SCORE	READING
3	EXT. FERRY DECK - DAY	revelation	Mara's trust in the cargo	3	4/5	WORKING First moment of tension, three minutes in.
4	INT. PIKE'S BAIT SHOP - DAY	reflection	nothing	2	2/5	COULD MERGE Reads as a catch-up scene; the gossip could fold into scene 3.
5	INT. MARA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT	intimacy	June's belief her mother tells her everything	4	4/5	WORKING The two coffee cups do the work of a speech.
6	EXT. BREAKWATER - NIGHT	confrontation	the siblings' easy peace	5	4/5	WORKING Power moves twice; Mara leaves with less than she came with.
7	INT. FERRY WHEELHOUSE - DAY	reflection	Mara's plan to stay out of it	4	3/5	COULD REWORK Repeats scene 2's job; a new cost could earn its place.
8	INT. HARBOUR OFFICE - DAY	confrontation	Ellis's faith in Mara	3	4/5	WORKING The first lie, technically true.
9	EXT. SCHOOL GATE - DAY	intimacy	nothing	2	2/5	COULD CUT Lovely, though June's school life is already clear by now.
10	INT. THEO'S BOATSHED - NIGHT	revelation	Mara's innocence	6	4/5	WORKING Act two turns here.
11	EXT. OPEN WATER - NIGHT	decision	Mara's clean record	7	5/5	WORKING The choice that drives the film.
12	INT. MARA'S KITCHEN - MORNING	reflection	June's trust	5	4/5	WORKING Silence held well.
13	INT. POLICE STATION - DAY	confrontation	Rowe's patience	5	4/5	WORKING Rowe wants something Mara can't give.
14	EXT. FERRY RAMP - DAY	decision	her route	4	4/5	WORKING Short and clean.
15	INT. FERRY CABIN - DAY	intimacy	June's childhood	6	4/5	WORKING Interrupted at the right moment.
16	EXT. CLIFF ROAD - DUSK	reflection	Theo's last good memory	5	4/5	WORKING No dialogue needed; the road does it.
17	INT. THEO'S BOATSHED - NIGHT	confrontation	the partnership	7	5/5	WORKING Midpoint: the question becomes what it will cost.
18	INT. MARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT	reflection	sleep	4	3/5	COULD REWORK A second reflection in a row; an action might help.
19	EXT. NORTH HARBOUR - DAY	catch-up	nothing	3	2/5	COULD MERGE Does the work of scene 4; could merge with 20.

#	SCENE	TYPE	WHAT IT COSTS	TENSION /10	SCORE	READING
20	INT. HARBOUR OFFICE - DAY	confrontation	Ellis's job	5	4/5	WORKING Ellis gets the line Mara can't say.
21	INT. FERRY WHEELHOUSE - NIGHT	decision	the last legal crossing	6	4/5	WORKING Clock arrives.
22	EXT. OPEN WATER - NIGHT	confrontation	Theo's safety	8	5/5	WORKING Peak of act two.
23	INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT	reflection	Mara's certainty	7	5/5	WORKING June's look is the verdict.
24	INT. POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY	confrontation	her freedom	6	3/5	COULD REWORK Runs long; the deal is clear by page two of four.
25	EXT. CHURCHYARD - DAY	reflection	the family story	3	4/5	WORKING Backstory without a flashback.
26	INT. MARA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT	intimacy	June's childhood	5	4/5	WORKING The trust hinge.
27	EXT. BREAKWATER - DAWN	decision	the plan	4	4/5	WORKING Choice to continue anyway.
28	INT. THEO'S BOATSHED - DAY	confrontation	the brothers' pact	6	4/5	WORKING Theo's argument is strong, and that is the point.
29	EXT. FERRY DECK - NIGHT	confrontation	the crossing	8	5/5	WORKING Weather as antagonist.
30	INT. FERRY WHEELHOUSE - NIGHT	decision	Theo	9	5/5	WORKING Climax is her decision.
31	EXT. OPEN WATER - NIGHT	decision	everything	10	5/5	WORKING Earned. It needs no more dialogue.
32	EXT. SOUTH SLIPWAY - DAWN	reflection	Theo's freedom	6	4/5	WORKING Slows down after the climax, as it should.
33	INT. MARA'S KITCHEN - MORNING	intimacy	nothing left to lose	3	4/5	WORKING Ends on behaviour, not explanation.
34	EXT. NORTH HARBOUR - DAWN	subtext	the old life	4	4/5	WORKING Rhymes with scene 1, transformed.

SUGGESTIONS, IF YOU WANT THEM

Optional moves, in the order a rewrite usually runs. Take what serves your film and leave the rest.

STRUCTURE PASS

- [ ] Consider merging the two Pike shop scenes and dropping the school-gate scene. Act two would run about four pages tighter.
  Impact 4/5 · Scenes 4, 9, 19 · Structure & pacing Go deeper: The Spine

- [ ] You could keep Rowe's deal open until after the storm, so the police pressure carries into act three.
  Impact 4/5 · Scene 24 · Tension & stakes Go deeper: The Audit

CHARACTER PASS

- [ ] One option: a short scene of Theo with the people he owes, and a want of Rowe's own.
  Impact 3/5 · Theo, Rowe · Primary characters Go deeper: The Engine

SCENE PASS

- [ ] Scenes 7 and 18 might each carry a small, irreversible action.
  Impact 3/5 · Scenes 7, 18 · Scenes Go deeper: The Scene

DIALOGUE PASS

- [ ] Try the churchyard scene without the last two lines of Pike's speech.
  Impact 2/5 · Scene 25 · Theme & meaning Go deeper: The Audit

BEFORE THE NEXT DRAFT

If Theo had won the argument in the boatshed, what would Mara have lost, and does the audience feel that loss before scene 30?

ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT

This report is a close reading of your draft. It brings together figures counted directly from your script and an assessment made through the craft frameworks of The Audit, The Scene, The Spine, The Engine and Rasa by Aditya Rathi.

It is technical scrutiny of craft, not a judgement of your work as art or of you as a writer. Scores describe how the draft reads against those frameworks and nothing more. Every suggestion is optional. A choice that runs against a framework may be exactly right for your film.

A reading is one perspective on one draft. Another reader, or the same reader on another day, may weigh things differently. Page counts and other figures are estimates taken from the text.

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