

'Bull Dancing' **Script Analysis**

The story concept has potential. But every scene except the naked females at the end was predictable and that scene didn't make any sense. There was no antagonist. Alena is clearly the protagonist. I felt no connection to any character – no empathy. I couldn't feel for any of the characters because they came off as stock stereotypes. All the characters had the same voice. I didn't get any sense of the majesty for the bull or bull dancing. Everyone came off as being angry with little class or style. The story concept is fascinating but presented in a boring and weak manner. The ending is anti-climactic and makes no sense.

It's a tough task to keep the same characters and create an original story that makes sense with this concept. But it can be done and a dramatic and exciting script can be created.

Genre

Suspense/Drama/Romance

General Comments: *(used in conjunction with the downloadable 'Dancing with Bulls' Critique)*

Note: Comments in RED are suggestions for improvement.

- Title feels derivative of 'Dancing With Wolves'
(perhaps make the title a theme of the story)
- Remove name and title footer Information.
(it's incorrect.)
- Action Blocks should be 4 lines max before broken by white space (blank line)
(to focus attention on each word)
- Format for action lines & Dialogue wrong, it is center justified.
(it should be left justified)
- There is much repetition,
(Ex: talking about the beauty of women and majesty of the Bulls. This is done to death)
- Yet, we actually never see the Majesty of the Bulls.
(perhaps Falcon should have a powerful pet bull and marvel at it)
- There is no specific training shown other than gimmicks.
(need imaginative training that is unique and visually capturing)
- Need to know sooner than later how many are on a team

- Doesn't seem to be a scoring system.
(need to create/know how scoring is done so the audience can root for our women against the competition - competition is conflict - it's not just for fun)
- Too many characters are using 'fuck', 35 times.
(I might limit cussing to Juliette only, if at all)
- Past Tense ending in -ed words is used 219 times
(rewrite Past Tense to Present Tense)
- 'walks' used 67 times
(repetitive & shows little imagination)
- 'look' used 103 times
(repetitive & shows little imagination)
- 'begin' used 23 times
(repetitive & remove them all - action takes place in the now)
- 'that' used 185 times
(repetitive & remove them all - action takes place in the now)
- Parentheticals used 222 times
(excessive - give the actor some breathing room - remove most if not all parentheticals)
- All the characters have the same voice.
(without taglines you couldn't tell the characters apart)
- '-ly' words used 126
(usually shows a poor choice of a powerful verb)
- Falcon comes across as an asshole. In fact no character comes across as sympathetic.
(we need to root for someone)
- As of now all the characters are stereotypes with no depth.
(to allow us to have empathy and care for our characters we need to find out about their feelings, not just the external things that happen to them)
- This is a single threaded storyline.
(I'd have a thread about Julitta and another about Gabriel and have them all intercept at some point)
- We never are instructed why the different drills are needed to do bull dancing. They seem arbitrary.
(there should be a compelling reasons for each training drill)

- The actual interaction with bulls seems minimum.
(I'd have more personal interaction with Bulls by Falcon and the women)
- There is not a single line of SUBTEXT (Dialogue or Action) in the entire story.
(subtext adds a layer of meaning that makes the characters interesting)
- From early in the script, I assumed Alena and Sunny were in college. Surprised to see on p.48 they are still in High School.
(I'd make them in college, especially since they don't interact with anybody in school like normal teenagers)
- On p. 51 Micah thinks that Sunny trying out for bull dancing is cool.
(surprised at him thinking it's no big deal. Him making it a big deal would be conflict - something nearly devoid of in this script)
- There is 115 pauses in the Dialogue.
(seems excessive – let the actor decide when to pause)
- I don't think most of the Dialogue interruptions are necessary.
(let the actors decide)
- Need to show the primary skill set of each of the women competitors.
(we need to believe in their superior athletic abilities)
- It gets tiring to hear how good looking each of these women are.
(sounding like a broken record - this is beginning to sound very sexist)
- I'm unimpressed and can't visualize this obstacle course or why it relates to bull dancing.
(I don't get a sense that what these girls are doing is related to what they hope to compete in)
- Constantly referring to four and five year old bulls is getting boring.
(they are bulls in their prime - leave a reference to the bulls age out of the story)
- They all breeze through the obstacle course. Doesn't anybody fail?
(It appears everyone that tries out makes the team)
- There is no scoring system.
(In Minoan times (2500 BC) men and women performed with bulls bigger than today. Later Greece turned the art of bull leaping into the modern sport of gymnastics. I'd create a scoring system similar to Gymnastics)
- There is no love story.
(I'd add at least one love story, perhaps with Gabriel and Alena. Or Marcelo and Julitta or Falcon and one of the women)

- No team has a name.
(I'd name the different teams so they can be rooted for properly)
- Lots of misspelled words/missing words/punctuation errors.
(Need to carefully edit your script)
- The women getting naked with body paint makes no sense.
(Make a believable reason why they have body paint)
- There is no antagonist.
(Make Bernardo an antagonist and he must confront the protagonist Alena and she must defeat him)
- I felt no empathy for any character.
(must develop empathy for the characters)

Specific Scene Comments: (used in conjunction with the Critique)

Page 7: We are told how athletic and tomboy, Alena is in this scene.

(show her athletic skills)

Page 10: In this scene between Alena and her brother, we learn Marcelo brings lots of women around and Alena is disgusted with his behavior. Since Alena knows he does this all the time why is she so upset. I don't feel sympathy for Alena because it's not as if this was the first time. Plus she is deliberately embarrassing the woman and her brother by confronting them.

(this can be conveyed in a few words and/or actions)

Page 10b: This scene is not needed. We already know all this, about not remembering her name.

(NEVER tell us things we already know, it slows the story)

Page 11: Alena doesn't not come off well calling other women skanks. She sounds way too worldly.

(it's not as if Marcelo hasn't done this before. I'd have this whole scene removed and perhaps comment later about it to her brother.)

Page 12: Marcelo would know Alena is bored with his sport a long time before now.

Page 12-13: This long exchange of Informational Dialogue is telling us the obvious, that Marcelo thinks bull jumping is too dangerous for women, that Carlos could have been killed, rather than just injured 'that's why he's in the hospital', that if it's too dangerous for Alena then it's too dangerous for Marcelo, that Dad wouldn't allow it, and that Alena was going to college.

(imply some of these and we already know most, like the danger. Again, don't tell the reader/audience what they already know. To show what the family would think Marcelo could say to Alena skeptically 'Yea, pass that by Dad!')

Page 13b: Marcelo says Alena should stay out of trouble.

(we should have shown earlier in her character that she's not the type to stay out of trouble)

Page 23: This becomes a beauty contest for they would never ask this about the men or the bulls being beautiful. Imagine people saying this about 'Track and Field'. Which makes this not about the sport but about sex.

(I'd remove this or if kept they must later change their mind and appreciate the athletic event for what it is)

Page 28-30: This seems excessively pompous. Falcon sounds way too formal to be taken as a serious innovator.

(I'd make Falcon, especially with these women he is trying to recruit more accessible)

Page 37: Why is everybody shocked all the time. These women want to do it that is why they volunteered.

(I'd remove the shock)

Page 42: Bull dancing is not an endurance sport. It would be more Fartlek 'speed play'. That is what one would need to maximize that part of the training. So, running four miles as Falcon wants them to do is non-sense. Plus, there are no indication that these women have done any running whatsoever.

(the two women should refuse and tell Falcon and Maria that they don't have a clue to how to train. THIS WOULD BRING IN SOME NEEDED CONFLICT)

Page 43: Maria and Falcon comes across as arrogant assholes. This is neither good nor bad but arrogance suggests they don't know what they are doing.

(don't have Maria come across as arrogant. This should create tension between her and Falcon)

Page 43b: Maria's smoking cigars? This suggests she knows nothing about endurance training herself. She would have learned in her own training not to smoke.

(don't have Maria smoking cigars)

Page 52-54: Long and repetitive. Julitta seems excessively angry for no reason. And why is Alena interested in helping this asshole. Alena doesn't know how many other girls are going to be at tryouts.

(I'd have Julitta confront Alena and then we figure a way for Alena to tell Julitta about the bull dancing.)

Page 53: Here's another example of no real conflict—just talking heads.

(I'd have Julitta lay into Alena really believing she called the cops. That would surprise the reader/audience)

Page 53: What is Alena's internal motivation to contact Julitta. I don't see it.

(Have an earlier scene where we see Alena having empathy for Julitta's lot in life)

Page 55: Falcon seems incredibly ignorant about athletics and what talent is needed to do bull jumping.

(I'd at least have Maria knowledgeable, if not we need a new coach/trainer. I'd probably have a male coach in the first place, someone who's an expert in another sport that requires these skills, perhaps a famous Parkour expert. I'd probably have the expert tell Maria and Falcon they have no chance and explain why their training regime is a waste of time)

Page 59: Alena buys into this beauty contest approach.

(I'd have her balk at this and see this for what it really is a beauty contest controlled by a misogynist)

Page 69: As an example where does Sabrina come from? What's her unique skills? How did she find out about the trials?

(there needs to be a narrative of what skills and who these women are)

Page 72: This is becoming a movie where the only redeeming feature of women are

their looks. There is also a catch-22. Falcon wants them to look athletic but not actually be athletic.

(Extremely sexist remark and not true. The men bull jumpers I've seen on youtube are very graceful. In fact, grace is usually synonymous with expertise)

Page 77: This scene is a stereotype – daughter defies father, father angry, father forbids daughter, father hits daughter, daughter runs off hurt.

(I'd have her have a tantrum or have the argument come up subtly with the father telling the dire ramifications if she continues)

Page 79: Each scene is exactly what we expect.

(I'd have Sunny after seeing Alena's reaction, walk up to Alena's father and call him an asshole for not supporting his ONLY daughter)

END: It's funny that when women are empowered they must be butt naked.

(Anyway, you slice it, this is just soft porn. How would the crowd react if the men were butt naked and body painted.)

Characters

Pablo Falcon	- male, older gentleman
Manuel	- male, Falcon's assistant
Bernardo	- male, star recortador
Alena Doliva Camacho	- female, 18
Marcelo Camacho	- male, Alena's older brother and star bull dancer
Diego	- male, Marcelo's teammate
Julitta	- female, a Parkour Jumper, tough young woman
Coach	- male, men's bull dancing coach
Gabriel Lawry	- male, brother's teammate
Maria Ramsey	- female, works for Falcon
Sunny Grey	- female, Alena's best friend.
Marco Camacho	- male, Alena's father
Micah	- male, Sunny's boyfriend
Sabrina Chavez	- female, bull jumper
Anya Virkoff	- female, bull jumper
Rebecca Haynes	- female, bull jumper
Zoe	- female, bull jumper
Magdalena	- female, bull jumper
Julio Vega	- male, team coach

Active Voice: use of action verbs that show movement or action or taking place in the moment as opposed to have taken place already. An actor must be able to perform the action. Action is the manifestation of feelings and thoughts *through* activity. In screenwriting, the acid test for action will be whether it is behavior that actors can perform and a camera can photograph. Action should be written in the Present Tense, preferably Simple Present Tense.

Chit-Chat/Small Talk: is everyday direct small talk and simple question and answer conversation that in the real world starts up a conversation. A character asks a question another character answers it. This is POISON to your script. After a few boring lines of

this the reader will conclude that you are not a screenwriter and toss your script.

Exposition/Informational Dialogue: it is Dialogue that supplies information that normally no person would say. (e.g., *If you are talking to your brother and sister and say, 'Joan you are my sister and twenty five with two kids. we just want you to tell John here, my dear brother who's also married with two kids, that we think he's crazy.'*) It is Dialogue that supplies facts that a person wouldn't normally convey but the writer feels necessary to supply for their story to make sense.

On-The-Nose/Direct Dialogue: is when people stay on the same topic and responses directly to what has just been said. It is usually predictable because each person is on the same topic and they get into a groove of speaking so the other person often can predict what they will say which is usually some cliché saying so they don't have to think.

Oblique/Indirect Dialogue: is where each person has their own agenda and is not usually interested in what the other person is saying or they wish to divert the conversation in a different direction. This is usually unpredictable keeping the reader guessing, is not informational, compresses the story, and is interesting.

Subtext: is the message/thoughts/emotions underneath the actual words, something hidden Beneath or behind the words of what is said. The real meaning behind the words. A character who says one thing but implies another is using subtext.

Foretelling: Telling information about the outcome of events in the future.

Voice

Active Voice: use of action verbs that show movement or action or taking place in the moment as opposed to have taken place already. An actor must be able to perform the action. Action is the manifestation of feelings and thoughts *through* activity. In screenwriting, the acid test for action will be whether it is behavior that actors can perform and a camera can photograph. Action should be written in the Present Tense, preferably Simple Present Tense.

Passive Voice: is any use of the conjugations of 'to be'.

Person, Number		Present	Past
1st,singular	I	Am	Was
2nd,singular	You	Are	Were
3rd,singular	he/she/it	Is	Was
1st,plural	We	Are	Were
2nd,plural	You	Are	Were
3rd,plural	they	Are	Were

Today's Good Movies Have: (used in conjunction with the critique)

Characters with a lot of personality (*your characters are all predictable – which means uninteresting*)

(e.g., **'The Silence of the Lambs'**, **'The Usual Suspects'**, **'Zootopia'**)

Oblique Dialogue/Subtext, where every character has their own personal agenda and are not just dull props (*'Dancing with Bulls' uses everyday On-The-Nose Dialogue that bores the audience*)

(e.g., **'Birdman'**)

Uses scenes to impart information to the audience in subtle ways that peak the audiences interest and keep them actively engaged (*'Dancing with Bulls' uses massive blocks of Informational Dialogue to put the audience into a coma like state*)

(e.g., **'The Sixth Sense'**, **'Being There'**)

Do not use clichés because their familiarity causes the audience to disengage for a moment. Too many moments and they lose all interest (*original metaphors engage the audience to eagerly await what the character will say next – it also attracts quality actors that wish to advance their own careers by being in a movie that highlights their talents as opposed to dumbing their talents down*)

(e.g., **'A Clockwork Orange'**)

Creates scenes with tension/conflict. (*Conflict is what storytelling is all about. We want to be ripped apart worrying about our characters. How will they achieve their goals with the world against them. I see little tension/conflict in any of the characters*) (e.g.,

'Whiplash', **'It's a Wonderful Life'**, **'Eye in the Sky'**)

Have a satisfying/emotional ending. (*'Dancing with Bulls' ending kind of fades away with no direction or purpose or resolution*)

(e.g., **'The Usual Suspects'**, **'The Silence of the Lambs'**, **'Gattaca'**, **'The Sixth Sense'**, **'Cast Away'**)