

NARRATORA

SAMPLE OUTPUT

PROFESSIONAL SCRIPT COVERAGE

Inception

Feature screenplay coverage — original science-fiction heist with a grief engine at its centre.

MATERIAL

Feature screenplay

GENRE

**Science Fiction /
Heist / Psychological**

VERDICT

RECOMMEND

COVERAGE DATE

Sample output

Coverage Verdict

VERDICT	RECOMMEND
WRITER'S VERDICT	RECOMMEND — distinctive conceptual voice with full command of structure
MATERIAL	Original feature screenplay, 142 pages
GENRE	Science Fiction / Heist / Psychological Drama
FORM	Feature screenplay
BUDGET TIER	Studio tentpole — visual-effects led
COMPARABLE TITLES	The Matrix, Mission: Impossible, Memento, Shutter Island

This is an exceptionally confident piece of conceptual screenwriting. The script marries the mechanics of a heist picture to a metaphysical premise about invading the subconscious, and it earns the marriage because the rules of the dream world are established with genuine rigour before they are exploited. The writer understands the fundamental risk of high-concept material — that the audience will spend the third act asking what is allowed to happen rather than caring what happens — and neutralises it by front-loading exposition into an apprenticeship sequence that doubles as characterisation. What elevates the material above a well-built genre exercise is the grief engine underneath it: the protagonist's professional expertise is the same faculty that keeps him tethered to a dead wife he cannot stop rebuilding. The concept is not decoration on a character story, and the character story is not ballast for a concept. They are the same mechanism.

HEADLINE ASSESSMENT

The dream architecture is not a gimmick — it is a literalised map of the protagonist's refusal to grieve, and every escalation of the heist is simultaneously an escalation of his denial. That structural fusion is what makes the material a recommend rather than a consider.

Industry Scorecard

Weighted against produced material in the same genre and budget tier. Scores below 6 indicate a development priority; scores of 9 or 10 indicate a commercial asset that should be protected through every revision.

Premise / originality		10/10
Structure		9/10
Characterisation		8/10
Dialogue		7/10
Emotional engagement		8/10
Visual imagination		10/10
Commercial potential		9/10

Production feasibility



5/10

Overall readiness



9/10

Production feasibility scores low by design rather than by fault: the script commits to practical-scale set pieces (a rotating corridor, a folding city block, a zero-gravity hotel interior) that will drive the budget and the schedule. The score is a flag for the production department, not a note to the writer.

Logline

A fugitive thief who steals secrets from inside people's dreams is offered the one thing he cannot buy — passage home to his children — in exchange for the inverse of his craft: planting an idea in the mind of a corporate heir, a job that requires descending three dream levels deep and confronting the projection of the wife whose death he caused.

Synopsis

DOM COBB extracts information from the dreaming minds of corporate targets. The opening sequence establishes his method and immediately breaks it: the mark, SAITO, recognises he is inside a constructed dream because Cobb's own subconscious has sabotaged the architecture. The saboteur is MAL, Cobb's dead wife, who appears in every dream Cobb enters and destroys every job she touches. This is the script's central and most elegant decision — the antagonist is inside the protagonist, and cannot be left behind.

Saito, impressed rather than offended, hires Cobb for inception: planting an idea so deep in the mind of rival heir ROBERT FISCHER that Fischer will believe he conceived it himself and dismantle his father's empire. Cobb's fee is extradition cleared and a return to his children. He assembles a team — ARTHUR, the point man; EAMES, a forger who impersonates figures inside the dream; YUSUF, a chemist; and ARIADNE, a young architecture student recruited to build the dream worlds.

Ariadne is the script's cleanest piece of structural engineering. She is the audience's proxy, so every rule she needs explained is a rule the reader needs explained, and her questions never feel like service because she has her own agenda: she discovers Mal in Cobb's private dream levels and becomes the only character willing to force him to confront it.

The heist itself is a nested three-level descent — rain-soaked city, hotel, snow fortress — with a fourth uncharted layer, Limbo, held in reserve. Time dilates at each level, so a van falling from a bridge in level one occupies ten minutes in level two and an hour in level three. The script cuts between all four simultaneously in its final forty pages and, remarkably, never loses the reader. Each level has its own clock, its own antagonist pressure, and its own visual grammar.

The emotional climax is not the heist's success. It is Cobb reaching Limbo, finding the decayed world he and Mal built across fifty subjective years, and finally telling the projection of his wife the truth: she is not enough, she is a shade of the woman he loved, and he has to let her go. Fischer's inception lands in the same beat. The closing image — a spinning top that may or may not topple as Cobb walks away from it toward his children — is a deliberate, well-earned ambiguity: the script's argument is that Cobb has stopped needing to check.

Structure and Narrative Logic

Act architecture

Movement	Pages	Function
Cold open / Limbo frame	1–8	Opens on the ending out of sequence; establishes Saito, the shore, and unanswered stakes.
Act One	9–38	Extraction job fails; Mal revealed as internal saboteur; Saito's offer; team assembly.
Apprenticeship	39–58	Ariadne learns the rules — and so does the audience. Exposition converted into character.
Act Two-A	59–86	The plan built and stress-tested; Cobb's secret pressurised by Ariadne.
Act Two-B	87–118	Three-level descent; the plan degrades; Fischer's militarised subconscious.
Act Three	119–136	Four simultaneous clocks; Limbo; Cobb releases Mal; inception lands.
Resolution	137–142	Airport; extradition cleared; the top; the children.

Assessment

The structure is the strongest element in the script and it deserves specific credit. The writer solves the hardest problem in nested-timeline storytelling — the reader's need to always know which level they are on and what is at risk there — with three independent tools used consistently: a distinct weather and palette per level, a distinct antagonist pressure per level, and a distinct physical countdown per level. By the time the final cross-cut arrives, the reader has been taught the grammar so thoroughly that forty pages of quadruple intercutting read faster than the setup did.

- The cold open is a flash-forward to page 128. It buys goodwill for the slower assembly sequence and pays off precisely, without cheating.
- The apprenticeship sequence (pp. 39–58) is the script's most instructive passage for other writers: every rule the third act depends on is delivered while Ariadne is doing something she personally wants to do.
- Limbo is withheld for eighty pages before being entered. Establishing a place as a threat long before depicting it is the reason the third-act descent carries dread rather than novelty.
- The only structural softness is pages 87–96, where the team's transit between the first and second levels covers logistics the reader has already inferred.

Characters

DOM COBB — protagonist

Cobb is built on a genuine contradiction rather than a trait list: he is the world's finest architect of other people's realities and the one man who cannot live in his own. His guilt is not backstory delivered in a monologue; it is an active antagonist that attacks the plot at intervals, which means his interiority and the action are the same thing. The one reservation is that the script protects him slightly. His culpability in Mal's death — he planted the idea that killed her — is the most interesting fact about him, and it arrives on page 104 rather than page 60. Moving that revelation earlier would cost nothing in suspense and would buy a more uncomfortable, more compelling lead.

MAL — antagonist / projection

An excellent antagonist because she is not a villain. She is a memory with agency, and the script is careful that everything she says to Cobb is arguably true. Her strongest scene is the hotel confrontation, where she argues that Cobb's world is the dream — an argument the script never fully refutes, which is correct. The risk is that she is defined entirely through Cobb's guilt; two or three lines establishing who she was before the experiment would deepen the loss without slowing the machine.

ARIADNE — audience proxy / conscience

The most functionally perfect character in the script. She carries exposition, moral pressure and the third-act rescue, and she never reads as a device because each function grows from her own curiosity. Her arc is the thinnest, however: she ends the script as she began it, differently informed rather than differently changed.

ARTHUR, EAMES and YUSUF — the crew

Arthur is pure competence and gets one memorable action beat (the zero-gravity hotel sequence) plus the script's best comic exchange with Eames. Eames provides the tonal relief the material badly needs and his forging ability is properly weaponised in the plot. Yusuf is the weakest of the three: he is a chemistry function with a van, and his driving sequence would benefit from any personal stake at all.

ROBERT FISCHER — the mark

The script's quiet achievement. A device character — a mind to be broken into — who is given a real wound: a father who never said he was proud of him. The pinwheel and the deathbed safe pay this off with restraint, and the moment Fischer weeps inside the third level is the point at which the heist becomes moving rather than merely intricate.

Dialogue

Dialogue is the script's most improvable dimension. It is clean, purposeful and never confusing — no small achievement given the volume of mechanics it carries — but a great deal of it is explanatory

rather than characterful. Cobb, Arthur and Ariadne can occasionally be swapped line for line without either character sounding wrong, which is the standard diagnostic for insufficient vocal differentiation. Eames and Mal are the exceptions; both have a distinct register on the page.

- Strongest exchange: the Mal hotel confrontation (pp. 111–114). Threat, tenderness and argument in the same breath, with no exposition.
- Weakest tendency: characters narrating the rules to each other mid-action ('if we die in the dream we wake up' restated three separate times after it has been established).
- Eames earns his keep verbally — his deflections are the only lines in the script that would get a laugh, and the material needs them.
- Recommend a dedicated voice pass on Cobb: he currently speaks in the register of the script rather than in his own, which is the cost of him carrying most of the exposition.

Screenplay Craft

Professional throughout. Scene description is lean and visually specific, action is written in the present with strong verbs, and the writer resists the temptation to over-direct on the page. Formatting is correct and unfussy. The script's craft standout is its handling of simultaneity: cross-cutting four locations with different time signatures is written with enough white space and enough slug-line discipline that the reader is never lost.

- Page count (142) sits at the top of the acceptable range for the genre. Pages 87–96 and 119–123 both contain recoverable length.
- Slug lines carry level identifiers consistently — a small discipline that does enormous work in the final act.
- The kick mechanism (a synchronised physical jolt across levels) is visualised as action rather than explained as rule, which is the correct choice.
- Two instances of on-the-nose parenthetical direction ('desperately', 'with dawning horror') that strong actors would find redundant.

Theme and Meaning

The script argues that grief is an architecture we keep inhabiting, and that the mind will choose a beautifully built lie over an unbearable truth every time. This is dramatised rather than stated: Cobb's profession is literally the construction of persuasive falsehood, his wife died because she preferred one, and his own resolution is not proof that he is awake but a decision to stop demanding proof. The final image withholds certainty on purpose, and the thematic reading is unambiguous even though the plot reading is not — Cobb turns away from the top. He has chosen his children over the question. That is a real and adult ending for a summer tentpole.

Market Position and Comparables

Commercially this is a rare asset: an original property with franchise-grade world logic, a male lead in the prestige register, and a set-piece inventory that markets itself in a thirty-second spot. The risk is

comprehension — a segment of the audience will feel the material is withholding — and the mitigation is already on the page in Ariadne's apprenticeship. Expect strong repeat viewing and unusually long-tailed word of mouth driven by the ending's ambiguity.

Comparable	Relation	What it indicates
The Matrix	Closest structural comp	Proves an audience will absorb dense invented rules when the action delivers.
Memento	Tonal / authorial comp	Non-linear puzzle construction with an emotional rather than intellectual payoff.
Mission: Impossible	Genre chassis	The crew-assembly and nested-plan grammar the script borrows and inverts.
Shutter Island	Audience overlap	Psychological unreliability sold to a wide audience in the same window.

Casting Recommendations

Offered as tonal calibration for packaging conversations, not as availability guidance.

Role	Casting note
Cobb	A leading man who can play competence and grief simultaneously without softening either; the part fails with pure charm.
Mal	European-trained dramatic actress; must read as an argument rather than a threat.
Ariadne	Young actress with natural authority — she has to be able to interrogate the lead and win.
Eames	Charismatic character actor with comic timing; the script's only pressure valve.
Fischer	Vulnerable rather than corporate; the third act depends on the audience pitying the mark.

Strengths

- A genuinely original premise executed with rule-level rigour rather than hand-waving.
- Structural fusion of concept and character wound — the heist and the grief escalate on the same curve.
- The apprenticeship sequence, a model solution to high-concept exposition.
- Exceptional visual imagination that is written as action rather than as description of spectacle.
- An ending that is ambiguous in plot and unambiguous in meaning.
- Fischer: a device character given a real emotional wound, which converts the heist into drama.

Development Opportunities

- Cobb's culpability in Mal's death arrives on page 104. Move it to the Act Two turn and the lead becomes more uncomfortable and more interesting.
- Vocal differentiation: Cobb, Arthur and Ariadne share one register. A voice pass is the single highest-value revision available.
- Recoverable length in pp. 87–96 (inter-level transit) and pp. 119–123 (restated rules).
- Mal exists only as Cobb's guilt. Two or three lines of who she was before the experiment would deepen the loss at no structural cost.
- Ariadne is informed but not changed; a small want of her own would complete her.
- Yusuf is a function rather than a character, and he is asked to carry an entire level's suspense.

Prioritized Revision Roadmap

Ordered by impact on the material's readiness. Pass one addresses anything that affects the reader's comprehension; pass three is polish.

Pass	Priority	Action
1	Reveal timing	Relocate Cobb's confession of culpability from p. 104 to the Act Two turn (~p. 86).
1	Vocal pass	Differentiate Cobb, Arthur and Ariadne; remove interchangeable explanatory lines.
2	Compression	Cut 6–8 pages from inter-level transit and restated rule dialogue.
2	Mal	Add two beats of pre-experiment Mal so the loss is specific, not abstract.
2	Yusuf	Give the chemist one personal stake before he is asked to hold level one alone.
3	Polish	Strip redundant parentheticals; tighten the two overwritten action paragraphs on pp. 96 and 131.

Reader's Closing Note

This is the rare high-concept screenplay whose emotional logic is as engineered as its plot logic. It should go out on this draft. The notes above are refinements of a script that already works, and the single most valuable one is the earliest: let the audience know what Cobb did to his wife before they have finished deciding how they feel about him.

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