



SCRIPT READER PRO

CLASSIC TV COVERAGE

TITLE	XXXXXX	GENRE	Drama
WRITER(S)	XXXXXX	CIRCA	Present
SUBMITTED BY	XXXXXX	LOCATION	US
FORM / PAGES	Pilot / 55	BUDGET	Med
DATE	XXXXXX	ANALYST	XXXXXX

LOGLINE

Removed for writer confidentiality.

COMMENTS

Thank you for sending in your pilot for TV script coverage, XXXXXX. You've set up several very interesting relationships as well as finding a new way into a procedural. Especially now, procedurals are great specs to either try to sell at a network or use for a staffing sample. Of the 40+ dramas that were picked up to shoot during network pilot season, all but about six were procedurals of one form or another. Yours feels especially character driven with strong female leads, which is a wonderful distinction. There's a lot about this script that's very good. In this report, I'll analyze your characters, story, and structure to help you make it even better. So, let's get started.

One of my favorite parts about your script was the relationship between Emma and Ellie. It's wonderfully complicated. You start the pilot with a scene between Ellie, her imaginary life, and the doctor.

To ramp up the emotional stakes, consider having the violence occur between Emma and Ellie. We can still get the great introduction of Sara, Wyatt, Buster-822, and Katy-907. Then we can hear them urge Ellie to hurt Emma when she calls her for dinner or gets mad at Ellie for snooping around her room. Though it's great to see it in flashbacks, it would be even better to establish this at the very beginning. The violence will be especially shocking in what feels like an idyllic family home. We can still get a scene with Ellie in the hospital and the diagnosis of schizophrenia. The unfairness of Emma's situation will resound even more if Emma's wearing a cast/ bandage/ stitched up, and her parents say they'll do anything it takes for Ellie. It reinforces the idea that not only does Emma come second to Ellie's disease, she also isn't being physically protected by her parents. This heartbreaking loneliness and resentment that Emma must feel is completely understandable and makes us root for her from the very beginning.

When we next see Emma, it's at Ellie's birthday party. Ellie seems like she has her life together. She's stable, with a difficult job that she's very good at, and has a wonderful, handsome boyfriend. Emma, however, seems a bit of a mess. The incident with the cake feels abrupt and needy, plus her aside about her marriage and divorce feels lonely and bitter. The idea that Emma is desperate for her parent's approval feels especially sad. You state that she has a job working in a grocery store. Consider changing Emma's arc to make her stronger and more successful. For instance, maybe she's a very high-powered lawyer. Unlike Ellie, she didn't get everything handed to her by her parents. She studied hard in high school, despite Ellie's constant crises. Determined not to let her entire life revolve around Ellie, Emma won a scholarship to college. Maybe she got into her top choice of school, but felt like she had to attend a closer university to help with Ellie. Alternately, it could be interesting if she had four amazing years away without being responsible for anyone or anything. She might have even fallen in love with someone and they planned to go to law school together, but then Ellie had a crisis and Emma had to go to a closer law school. This one, however, didn't offer scholarships, so even though she's making a decent living, she also has crippling debt. She and the man she loved broke up because it was too difficult doing long distance.

Since then, she's been almost entirely focused on her career and making partner. She's also done a TON of therapy, which was moderately successful in dealing with her family. Especially her parents who always try to make her feel guilty for not being supportive enough of Ellie. Part of Emma resents them intensely, but another part still really wants her parents' approval. We can have the cake be an issue, but rather than bringing it in during the middle of dinner, perhaps she buys a \$200 showstopper of a birthday cake that's exquisitely decorated, with sparklers on top. Brett might comment that it's a fire hazard. Her mother can ask how much she spent on it. She should have just gotten a cake from the grocery store.

Her father says he hates fondant icing. It's Ellie who jumps to her defense saying it's the most beautiful cake she's ever seen. Almost too much of a work of art to eat, but she bets it tastes even better.

It's a nice rock and a hard place for Emma to feel badly about Ellie's disease, while resenting how much attention she still needs. We're told that Emma's the only person Ellie really trusts. Expand on this a bit more, especially considering Ellie physically hurt Emma. How did Ellie gain that trust back? Did Ellie ever fully regain Emma's trust? It would be nice to see them having a loving relationship beyond the fact that Emma was forced into a caretaker role. Consider making them closer in years or even twins. Maybe Emma's even a year younger than Ellie, which makes the fact that she has to grow up so fast even more unfair. With their similarity in age, part of Emma looks at Ellie and thinks, "Thank God that didn't happen to me." Yet at the same time, Emma had to suffer through school being "the psycho's sister." Kids are cruel. During the good times, they could have had adventures together riding their bikes around the town. Perhaps Emma just got her license and was taking Ellie out for a ride when Ellie had an episode. Obviously, we don't need to see all of this on screen, but it would be great to see some good moments together. Perhaps after the first incident of Ellie seeing Sara and Wyatt, after Emma handcuffs her, they curl up in bed together watching old movies.

Consider bringing them into closer contact with regards to their professional world. Maybe Emma is a defense attorney or a D.A. It's never been an issue before the case with Karen Benedict. Emma was always able to keep her lives separate, but now that Ellie's crashing into this one, it's way too close to home. It might drive Emma crazy to hear the cops praising Ellie's detective skills. Conversely, Emma might get judged by Ellie's outbursts. It also becomes more difficult to hole up in her office, if Ellie is closer and pops by with work or other matters. Something to consider is that you might make this more of a two-hander. Right now, it's definitely Ellie's story, but Emma is such a rich, interesting character and their relationship is so interesting that you could bring Emma in a lot more. We could see her life, whether she's lonely while Ellie has Brett (and now Sara and Wyatt) or whether she's attempting to date, but things with Ellie keep getting in the way.

Expand on Ellie and Emma's relationships with their parents a bit more. While it's understandable that Emma's not close with them, it doesn't really feel like Ellie is either. They sacrificed a lot for Ellie when she was growing up. Does she take their devotion for granted? Does she resent them for feeling like they coddle her? How aware is Ellie of Emma's resentment, not only of her disease, but also of the difference in the way they were treated growing up? Right now, the parents feel one-sided. They seem to do nothing but criticize Emma.

In the scene in the hospital on page 33, Anna's being angry and frustrated, then slapping Emma is harsh. They seemed genuinely surprised to hear of Emma's resentment of everything she missed growing up. On page 40 they turn to Emma, their roles reversed, where she's asked to make a major decision, while they are the children pleading with her to get what they want. This is a heart-breaking dynamic that will be fascinating to explore as the series continues. It would be nice to see just one moment of Emma's parent's being self-aware, otherwise, they feel like terrible people.

The moment between Emma and Brett in the parking lot on page 41 is fantastic. We really get a sense of Emma's heartbreak and despair when she says the line, "No. I thought you would save me." Set their dynamic up earlier in the family dinner by mentioning Ellie and Brett were introduced to each other by Emma. Tell us how Brett was in her life, previously. Maybe we get the sense that they were having coffee/ drinks. Emma was hoping it was a date, but then Ellie popped by because she needed something. Brett saw her and the rest was history. Brett complains about her while he and Ellie are doing dishes. You might be able to get in a bit more of their backstory there, too. In the parking lot scene, help us to understand why Brett seems really angry at Emma for not telling him about Ellie. She has a good argument that it wasn't her place. This is a moment when knowing more about their backstory will really help. Also, give us a sense whether Brett knew Emma was into him before he met Ellie. It will color their relationship in complicated, interesting ways that will be fun to explore in the series. If possible, have their interactions not be tainted by the feeling of Emma's loneliness. We want to have a reason why he might love her and that's hard to do if she feels too pathetic in her personal life.

Additionally, it would be great to see a bit more of Brett and Ellie's relationship before she's hospitalized. Maybe on her birthday, instead of going home, she stays over at his place. Sara and Wyatt's reappearance isn't all the sudden, she's just worried that she's seeing things from the corner of her eye and maybe hearing a voice or two. It would be great to see them alone together and really get a sense of how much they love each other. It would also be good to see the moment when Brett finds out about Ellie's illness, whether it's from her mouth or from her parents. Let's see his shock and then whether he's supportive or feels like he's been lied to for the past three years. Give us a sense of whether he might stay with her because he loves her and they can work things out together, or whether he feels like this is too much to ask of him. You can even leave it on a cliff hanger of him not knowing what he's going to decide, but it feels like we need one more scene with him and Ellie specifically after he's found out about her disease.

One of the aspects that I most appreciate about this script is the fact that Ellie's disease reemerged through no fault of her own. She regularly took her medication and told Emma that this new pill might not work. She put a plan in place, just in case things went sideways. When it did, she called Emma immediately. Ellie is being incredibly responsible in the care and management of her disease. Sara and Wyatt's appearance is interesting, in that they feel vaguely threatening, but they're also helpful. As the script progresses, really amp up the feeling that the audience doesn't know whether they're good or evil. There's a lot to explore if the audience is less trusting than Ellie who seems to have given herself over to them completely.

The idea that Ellie's brain has a quantum switch that's been turned back on is a nice, supernatural twist, especially when we see Ellie unlocking all of the locks in hospital. What's even more interesting is her connection with Karen Benedict and the fact that Karen asked for her specifically. When all signs point to Karen being guilty, Ellie has faith in her, even though she can't explain it. There's a nice parallel here between Ellie taking Karen's side and the people who have faith in Ellie's ability to control her disease, despite years of struggles. The budding relationship between Ellie and Detective Welkowitz is also great in the sense that even though Ellie can be a bit quirky, she has an advocate in the police station.

That said, Ellie's ability to touch the victim's blood and discover what happened felt too easy. She wasn't so much putting the bread crumbs together as being handed a whole loaf. The story of the case gets a bit lost during the middle section while Ellie is in the hospital. Consider that this is something that she can't stop thinking about. Perhaps she's already been to the crime scene and there were a few things that didn't make sense. She talks it out with Sara and Wyatt, putting everything together before she touches the blood and it all falls into place. Consider looking back at a show from the 2000s called *Medium*. In it, Patricia Arquette plays a psychic who helps the police department. She has dreams or flashes, but they're almost never reliable. Sometimes she can't flash at all in a crime scene. Her ability gives the police a leg up, but they still have to do a lot of investigative work themselves. The show also deals a lot with her family. Though your script is much edgier, it might be a good template to look at with regards to weaving together the investigation with a special ability.

One of the major issues I had at the end of the script is that I didn't know what episode two and the rest of the series look like. While I was reading it, I imagined it would be a procedural with Ellie helping the cops, while there would also be a very strong element of family, specifically her relationship with Emma. It felt like the missing girls could be a season-long arc in the same way that in *The Mentalist*, Jane helps out on cases every week, but he never stops looking for the man who killed his family. However, with Ellie riding the bus into the night while everyone is looking for her, it feels like you've taken us out of this world you just established.

A possible resolution is that Ellie returns to Emma and agrees to go into intensive treatment, but she also wants to help the cops. In doing something along these lines, it will stay true to the network structure and establish the weekly pattern of episodes.

A couple of smaller notes. I don't think the title works well. Being Schrodinger's Cops, I expected this to be set in a police station, exploring the idea of someone existing as both alive and dead. Perhaps look for something more evocative that encompasses the relationships or Ellie's powers.

With regards to your act outs, they're good, especially Act Four, but Act One, Two and Three could be better. They feel a bit bland. You really want your act outs to be lean in moments where the reader can't wait to turn the page. Try to amp up the mystery a bit more.

CONCLUSION

This is a really good script, XXXXXX. It clearly shows that you're a good writer and are well on your way to mastering a network procedural. Consider ways to amp up and more clearly define the relationships between your main characters. The relationship between Ellie and Emma is good, but try to clarify their feelings for one another. Consider making Emma more successful and independent. We really want to root for her to have a life outside of Ellie's illness. Additionally, see if there's a way to make this both Ellie and Emma's story, seeing they're so closely intertwined. There's some very good elements in the procedural, but try to amp up the investigation and see Ellie be very smart at finding small clues. Try not to make her entirely dependent upon her ability to see things with her quantum ability.

On the whole, this script was a pleasure to read. Good luck with your revision, I'm sure it will be great! Thanks again for choosing Script Reader Pro for your TV script coverage.

RATINGS GRID

	1ST CLASS	SOLID	NOT BAD	WEAK
Concept	X			
Story		X		
Structure			X	
Protagonist		X		
Antagonist			X	
Stakes Character		X		
Minor Characters			X	
Dialogue		X		
Scenes			X	
Pacing			X	
Theme		X		
Tone		X		
Writing Style		X		
Marketability	X			
Formatting			X	
Grammar			X	
Title				X

SCRIPT RECOMMENDATION:

DEVELOPMENT NEEDED / CONSIDER / RECOMMEND

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The Script Reader Pro team