

# BLOOD LAND

**Analysis: 2018 BlueCat Screenwriting Competition**

**(competition pending)**

Archive #646  
Blood Land  
Reader #8207

## What did you like about this script?

This hard-hitting, gorgeously-written, action-packed, burly, dark, wintry noir is reminiscent of sprawling, blistering epics like *The Revenant*. Focusing on a poverty-stricken, oppressed, Mafia-controlled Siberian town in 1993, the script begins as a political drama and ends as a symbolic Man vs. Man vs. Nature journey into the essence of living. It's a brilliant trek.

What makes this script a winner is that there are clear protagonists (Peter and Mishka and the rest of the family) and antagonists (Gavril and the rest of the Mafia), but the lines between the two are blurred as the story progresses. By the end, there is blood on everyone's hands. This script is the epitome of balanced forces. No one is right or wrong – they each just have motivations that collide with each other, and they're all driven by a central source of greed in a time of great desperation. The script even writes Gavril's death in a heartbreaking tone, and I'll be honest, I teared up as he was being mauled alive. This is what great writing is – grayness, balance, an artistic portrayal of real experience.

What's also fantastic about this narrative is that, like in *Breaking Bad* and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, none of the characters see the fruits of the source of violence in the end. The tiger's pelt drifts away with Peter, and all the blood shed was in vain. It's tragic, but fitting for this script. And it also plays into the balance of the script, as Nature enacts vengeance on Man in the end as repayment for the magnificent tiger being killed in the beginning.

The pacing of the script is impeccable once it picks up steam. The narrative peels its layers continuously. The descriptions are excellent. They are dark, cold, and originally written, and they paint a beautiful yet merciless picture of the sprawling Siberian landscape. The descriptions also illustrate some flawless action sequences, such as the sorrowful tiger killing. And they're unabashedly graphic and violent when they need to be.

The plot is harrowing and affecting. It becomes essentially an epic game of cat and mouse, and there are many tragic twists in its calculated, surgical storytelling, such as the Tracker sparing Peter's life and immediately being shot by Mishka, who didn't know that the Tracker had let Peter go.

The characterization is also a very strong element of the script. It centers on Peter's moral and psychological decay, which is painful to experience but fulfilling in a strange way. Each character is treated with tenderness and instilled with humanity, even the most dastardly antagonists.

### What do you think needs work?

There really isn't much to gripe about here. This is a fully realized narrative in many ways. However, there are some small aspects that could be rectified to strengthen this script further.

I've commended the beauty of the script's descriptions, but some are a bit lengthy. It feels like some pages are giant walls of text, which is something you want to avoid. Try to leave as much white on the page as possible.

