Abstract

In *Story: Style, Structure, Substance, and the Principles of Screenwriting*, Robert McKee maintains that while action-adventure is "often dismissed as mindless fare, it is in fact the single most difficult genre in which to write today…simply because it's been done to death." Said death came swiftly for *Cutthroat Island*, the 1995 flop that sank the pirate subgenre—until *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* premiered in 2003. The film was a risk that paid off massively for Disney, the pirate subgenre, and arguably the adventure genre as a whole in the modern age. This article seeks to analyze how the screenplay, written by Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, plays within adventure conventions to create a mindful, unique adventure story and breathe new life into the adventure genre on-screen.