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Creative Screenwriting: Understanding Emotional Structure



Synopsis

Christina Kallas argues for and sets out a genuinely original and creative approach to writing for the screen. This textbook aims to excite the imagination, inspiring and dramatizing stories with thematic richness, emotional depth and narrative rhythm. Structured like a screenplay, the book moves through the pre-credit sequence to the epilogue, interweaving theory, practice and case studies. Kallas combines an awareness of the history of dramatic writing with a very practical focus on how to find ideas and develop them. Supported by innovative and inspiring exercises that enable writers to create stories out of emotions and images, this book is challenging, motivating and essential reading for anyone interested in screenwriting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This book is long overdue - it finally exposes the emperor's new clothes of narrative screenwriting. The exaggerated emphasis on the narrative structure in screenwriting analysis is both misguided and tyrannical. It is the emotional journey that matters, not the narrative - as most moviegoers would tell you. The narrative is needed only as a skeleton to hang the real stuff upon, and Christina Kallas' insightful book provides a rare glimpse into the real stuff - the viewer's emotional journey and the way for the writer to provide for it." — Milcho Manchevski, writer-director of Golden Lion winner, Academy-Award-nominated *Before the Rain* "Creative Screenwriting" is at once practical and erudite. Bringing the best of the art's greatest teachers together, both past and present, into one compelling 'dialogue,' Kallas delivers an excellent insight into our craft with the warmth and passion of a truly gifted writer and teacher. Of the many fine books on screenwriting

one might have in their library... this is among the best." • David N. Weiss, co-writer, Shrek 2, Vice President, WGA, West

"A great screenplay is worth its weight in gold - not just to its author, but also its producer, director, actors and, most important of all, its ultimate audience.

Creative Screenwriting is a great place for any screenwriter to mine for treasure. It's filled with insights, alternatives, stimulating exercises and springboards for your imagination.

David Howard, Founding Director of the Graduate Screenwriting Program at USC and author of Tools of Screenwriting "Smart. Thorough. Insightful. Kallas has an authoritative understanding of creative issues, historical issues, and the intellectual issues about screenwriting and covers them with a sense of the head and the heart of the subject. Filled with exercises, analysis, and thoughtful discussion, the book is an important addition for anyone wanting to learn more and write with more emotional depth."

Linda Seger, script consultant and author of Making A Good Script Great "A most erudite, encyclopedic and wise synthesis of the craft of screenwriting, which both novice and seasoned writer would do well to investigate. A fascinating overview of notions of drama and techniques, ancient and modern which should open writing horizons, and redefine the craft of screenwriting, inject it with the life, philosophy and emotional wisdom it increasingly lacks."

Jeff Gross, novelist, film director and writer of some forty screenplays

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I read the table of content. It is good information. The author says, "First you have to know the rule then you will know how to break it". I am interested to read more about what she has to say. It is a college level reading.

I'm only half-way through the book, but so far it reminds me very much of Colleen Mariah Rae's Movies in the Mind, How to Build a Short Story, except this book focuses on screenwriting rather than short stories, and Christina Kallas comes off as far more steeped in the scholarship of dramaturgy and poetics. All in all, an exceptional hybrid of a book on story structure and a helpful how-to guide of writing exercises. As I said, I've only completed the first half of the book and I already feel that I've gotten way more than my money's worth, though I do have to echo the comment of a previous reviewer, that this is probably not the best book for beginning students of story structure. If you are just getting started with story structure or narrative theory, let me recommend Save The Cat! The Last Book on Screenwriting You'll Ever Need, or Invisible Ink: A Practical Guide to Building Stories that Resonate, or even Robert McKee's Story: Substance, Structure, Style and The Principles of Screenwriting. But if you're a serious student, this is a must-have book.

Having taught screenwriting for many years, I am always on the look-out for new resources. I found CREATIVE SCREENWRITING to be an excellent "second tier" text we will be using at the Nebraska Writers Workshop for discussions throughout 2012. This book builds on basic concepts we found in Karl Iglesias' WRITING FOR EMOTIONAL IMPACT with clear discussions of various films and more in-depth, advanced screenwriting techniques. Not for the beginner, this book challenges the experienced screenwriter to THINK about the layers of writing in each and every scene. Kallas explains this text grew out of her Greek and German books thus was carefully structured for the English-speaking market. The screenwriters at NWW are appreciative and better for the effort and insights.

This isn't a book for beginners. You need to know a lot about the subject, the Poetics, Aristotle and Plato, and a random assortment of odd facts--but, if you do? This book will blow you away. Although I need to back that up. This book will blow you away if you have an open mind and are willing to explore new ground. Kallas isn't easy to understand, and is occasionally almost "too" academic, but her work on emotional structure goes way beyond what is currently out there in the field. It is "not" the right fit for someone still working through structure by the minute or believes turning points are set in stone. It's a tour de force of original thought by a master in her field. This book is front and center on my keeper shelf. Nice job.

Well, no Steven Spielberg did not actually approve of this book, my point was that individuals in this field (such as college professors) and students approve of this book. They recommend it for those wanting to get into screenwriting, and I also bought it as a gift; so far he's enjoying it! Hope this helps your purchasing decision!

Kallas offers a way to rethink narrative structure and film theory, and to create unique and compelling screenplays. She has a scholar's understanding of all of the main schools of thought, academic and otherwise. She has a writer's perspective on the creative process. Highly recommended

Prior to buying this book I read the reviews and based on them and the title bought the book. Now I am out probably \$8. I Paid \$19 including shipping. I am returning the book which will probably cost \$5 to \$6. Oh well the con of purchasing online. The condition of the Book was the worse of all the used books I have ever purchased at especially given the price, \$16. For a used paperback.

However, I would have gladly paid if the content was any different from any other screenwriting book. I am not a fan of the Syd Fields, McKees, Linda Segers, etc. I am skeptical of writing experts who do not write. It doesn't take a genius to deconstruct great scripts, can they help you write one? Telling someone a house has a roof and door doesn't mean they can help you build a house. Thus I was intrigued by *Creative Screenwriting: Understanding Emotional Structure* because I thought it would offer a new strategy into writing scripts. It just the same old derivative dribble, though the book did include exercises, which I consider frivolous. I did find John Truby of all the guru writing teachers/coaches helpful but again deconstructing the elements of a script is helpful it does not get you to the mountain top. I have no idea why this book rec'd rave reviews. It had to be family and friends. Back to the grind.

Perhaps I misunderstood the purpose of the book. I was looking for a practical guide to creating an emotional structure in screenwriting. This wasn't it. There may good, usable information in this book, but getting to it is time-consuming and tedious. It's written at college level but that's not the problem. I understand big words and complex sentences. The writing is just long-winded and boring. I didn't make it through the first chapter. I skimmed through the rest but couldn't find enough gems of useable knowledge to make the excavation worthwhile. Really disappointed.

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