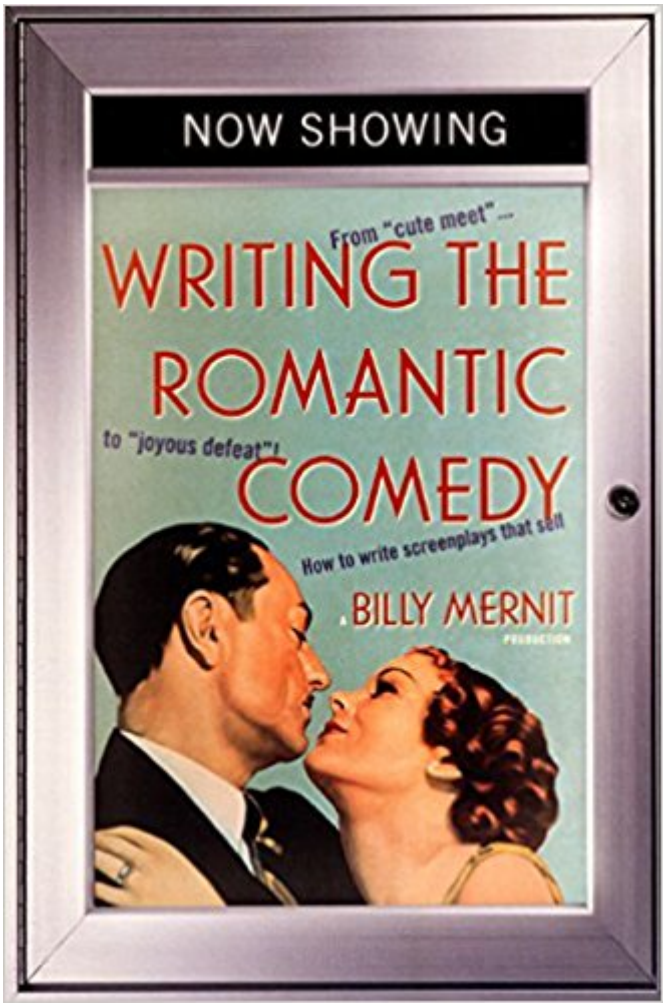
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Writing The Romantic Comedy



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Synopsis

From the slapstick shenanigans of Hepburn and Grant in Bringing Up Baby to the sexy repartee of Shakespeare in Love, romantic comedies have delighted filmgoers -- and challenged screenwriters -- since Hollywood’s Golden Age. Whether you’re a first time screenwriter, or an intermediate marooned in the rewriting process, this thoroughly charming and insightful guide to the basics of crafting a winning script will take you step by step from "cute meet" all the way to "joyous defeat." You’ll learn the screenwriting secrets behind some of the funniest scenes ever written; how to create characters and dialogue that set the sparks flying; why some bedroom scenes sizzle and others fall flat; and much more. Writing the Romantic Comedy features case studies drawn from beloved romantic comedies such as When Harry Met Sally, Annie Hall, Tootsie, and The Lady Eve, as well as field-tested writing exercises guaranteed to short-circuit potential mistakes and ensure inspiration.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

According to Billy Mernit, all the Hollywood studios--and most major actors--"are actively seeking romantic comedies." But the same studios and actors reject hundreds of romantic comedies a month. Mernit should know. As a story analyst who has read nearly 4,000 screenplays in the last 10 years, Mernit has seen the good, yes, but also too much of the bad and the ugly. With Writing the Romantic Comedy, Mernit presents his UCLA Extension rom-com writing workshop in book form. Believe it or not, it’s not enough to have Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks play the leads. You actually

have to create characters for them--characters that an audience will believe "absolutely must end up together." Mernit manages to lay down ground rules without seeming rigid: "he can’t be in it only for the sex

"Writing the Romantic Comedy is so much fun to read it could pop a champagne cork." -- -- Alexa Junge, writer/producer of Friends --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A terrific book to learn how to write a romantic comedy screenplay. Things worth noting from it are....1. Story fundamentals - a) Characters: plot comes from people, b) Plot and structure: how a character deals with a given situation, makes us ask what comes next, three acts - beginning, middle, end, c) Theme:an idea to be explored, d) Imagery: visual metaphors, pictures, e) Point of view, f) World: setting - time, place, period, weather, atmosphere, and g) Style: writer’s voice.2. Rom-com - meet, separate, reunite,, conflict, crisis, resolution. Character-driven, emphasize internal conflicts, hero usually emotionally incomplete - power of love, hero either grows or not.3. Sub-genres -ensemble, marital, triangle, cross-genre hybrid. Includes history of rom-coms.4. Key to good rom-com characters - purpose, empathy, complexity, credibility, surprise, contradictions, quirks. Guy not in it for sex, girl not in it for money. The other man/woman, the buddy. Couple must have chemistry, interlocking needs, misfits who fit only each other.5. Theme has to be personal, the writer’s point of view, comments on the human condition, speculates on a possible truth. Axiom - statement accepted as true, argument, good to explore, pose as a question. Theme has subplots. Test every character, image, storyline, against axiom/theme. Jokes rooted in truth are best.6. 7 rom-com beats-setup/beg act 1, cute meet/mid act 1, turning point/end act 1, the hook/mid act 2, swivel second turning point/end act 2, crisis/mid act 3, resolution/end act 3.7. Tell simple stories with complicated emotions. Keep it credible. A plausible world. Have sensibility and consistency, set rules in story and follow them. Setup/payoff -if a gun at start, must go off later.8. Be able to pitch movie in one sentence. Be able to say what genre or sub-genre. Be able to describe story in 3 sentences - one per act.9. The art of funny - reversal (like girl is the aggressor),be serious (others do funny things to them), make them hurt then happy, define your tone -farce, satire, parody, black comedy, dramedy. threes, leave no good gag untopped.10. Sex - implicit best, foreplay, people don’t shed character and personality in bed, plot doesn’t stop. Aftermath - intimacy, heighten conflict, revelation raises stakes, rom-com can’t be just about sex.11. Dialog - answer what happens next, moves plot forward, reveals the past,, reveals characters, defines tone/world, reveals theme

subtly, creates tension/suspense, avoid conflict. Should do more than one thing at a time. Less is more, come in late as possible, leave as soon as possible, inference, intimation, innuendo, what isn't said sometimes better than what is said, characters must have emotional clarity.12. Imagery - think in pictures.13. First drafts - have the courage to be bad, test ideas, are for finding what you are writing about and what your problems are.14. Craft enhancers - specificity/the right word, invention,compression, intensity, integrity.15. Writing is re-writing. Keep file of deleted stuff.16. Feedback - three people,give specific focus like what do you think of John and Mary, don't defend just listen17. Reader-friendly form -first 10 pages establish genre, tone, protagonist, some main plot. Turnoffs - useless info, chatter, hype, clutter.A very helpful book.

I bought this book to help me develop the romantic subplot in my romantic mystery adventure series, TAKE BACK TEXAS. It was extremely helpful in explaining the arc of the romance element and in giving examples so that I could improve my work. I will continue to refer back to this book as a resource as I write more books in the series. Extremely insightful!

He describes the book himself as "a complete romantic comedy screenwriting workshop in one book" (p. x), and so it is. So while the author can be funny, don't expect this to be a light read. It is packed with hard information. I suggest you read one chapter and then stop to digest the material before ingesting the next. That's what I had to do to avoid information overload.But it's useful stuff. Before you pick up a comedy writing instructional manual, you think you sort of know what's funny, and of course, you're right. But Mernit explains why we laugh, and knowing this can improve your writing. In 13 chapters in four sections he discusses storytelling fundamentals, character development, the art of being funny, dialogue, credibility, conflict, and more. He takes being funny very seriously, and so should you if you intend to write comedy--books or movies--for a living. I learned a few valuable tips about character development that I plan to incorporate into my next novel. Thank you, Mr. Mernit.The author is/was an instructor affiliated with UCLA Extension Writers' Program, so understandably the book reads a bit like a textbook: it is instructional, comprehensive, and contains writing exercises. The book is aimed at screenwriters, not book writers, so he frequently uses romantic comedy movies, contemporary and vintage, to illustrate a teaching point. It's embarrassing, but there is a wide and dismal 30-year hole in my inventory of popular films, so his illustrations were often wasted on me. But I am the exception, so that shouldn't be a problem with most readers. The good news is that everything he teaches applies equally to authors of romantic comedy books and screenwriters. There's something here for both camps.The 286-page

book contains relevant lists (noteworthy and top-grossing films, etc.), a bibliography, and an index.

A terrific book but why isn't it available as an ebook?

I have to admit I had a really tough time reading this book. When I sat down with it, I had the shell of an idea. As I read the book, the idea began to develop in my head. With each page I had an urge to throw the book in the corner and start writing my romcom. I resisted that urge, and I'm glad I did. Because also with each page, my story turned in new directions and I found new doors and ideas opening in my head.The book directly tackles the romcom and offers useful insight. It breaks down classic romcoms so you can see the methods in action. The best thing is that it takes a structure you are familure with (the standard three act structure) and shows how to map your romcom on it. But, it doesn't present the structure as a hard and fast rule. That makes it easy to manipulate the structure to your own story.I would have liked to have seen more on creating/building chemistry between characters. The book does offer practicle, useful advice on character chemistry, though. I just think that it's such a huge part of a romcom that maybe the book could have devoted a little more time to it.What I appreciate most is that it has good excercises that can help you get your story moving.

First time I read about screen writing I am really enjoying this book because it goes through all the basics clearly and makes case reference to several movies I have already seen, ex. When Harry met Sally etc...It introduces structure, theme, fun, sexy, chemistry, conflict, dialogue. I am fiinding that it ties in well with some of Woody Allen romantic comedies, i.e. Manhattan and Annie Hall.Happy reading.

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