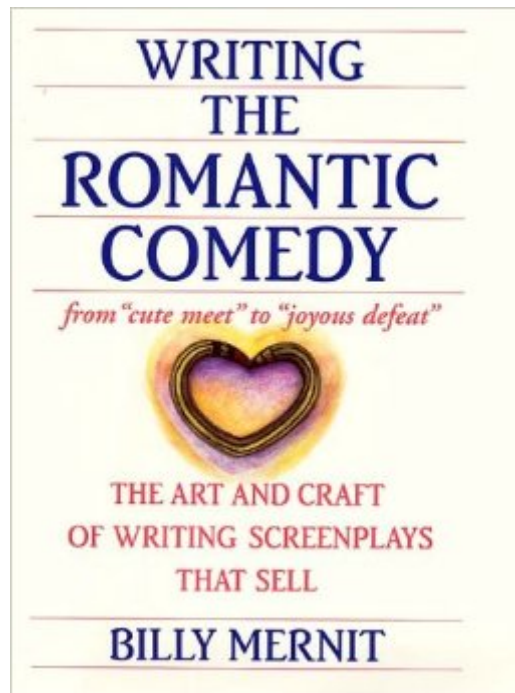


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Writing The Romantic Comedy: The Art And Craft Of Writing Screenplays That Sell



Synopsis

From the slapstick shenanigans of Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn in *Bringing Up Baby* to the sexy repartee of Shakespeare in *Love*, romantic comedies have delighted filmgoers-and challenged screenwriters- since the early days of Hollywood. *Writing the Romantic Comedy* is the first screenwriting guide to focus exclusively on the mechanics of this ever-popular genre. Whether you're a firsttime screenwriter, an intermediate marooned in the rewriting process, or an armchair enthusiast looking for an insider's perspective on what makes the genre tick, this thoroughly charming and insightful guide teaches you everything you need to know in order to craft a winning script. All of the romantic comedy basics are covered-from setting up an interesting and inventive story concept to creating characters that set off sparks, laughs that go deep, and dialogue that gets right to the heart. Written in a refreshingly accessible style, *Writing the Romantic Comedy* is a lively guide to the essentials of character, theme, and plot development. It features case studies drawn from classic and contemporary romantic comedies as well as field-tested writing exercises that will short-circuit potential mistakes and spark inspiration.

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Customer Reviews

I'm a sucker for romantic comedies. Watching stories about cuddly, charismatic couples falling in love can turn this hard-bitten cynic into a mushy puddle of Jell-O in no time. They're this writer's Achilles' heel. You could show me the worst romantic comedy ever made, and I'd still probably find something good to say about it. So, I was delighted to come across Billy Mernit's "Writing the

Romantic Comedy."Although I've done some screenwriting in my time, my head isn't exactly bursting with ideas for romantic comedies. But since I'm an admirer of the genre, Mernit's book felt like a guided tour through a favorite building when you don't have any plans to construct a building of your own. Hollywood producers notoriously hate to read, so if you're a Hollywood writer, you need to pick up a few tricks to make reading as easy for them (or their surrogates) as possible. As a writer for the entertainment industry, Mernit has obviously picked up a few tricks of his own, making his book a brisk and enjoyable read. The historical overview is appreciated almost as much as Mernit's disassemblies of some of the rom-com's stand-outs to show how the genre ticks. Although the book is sprinkled with a few factual errors (for example, on page 177, he refers to author Milan Kundera as "Polish" instead of Czech), these aren't enough to upset the taco stand. Mernit's explanations of the genre's components are straightforward, artful, but clearly presented. And his dubbing of the Mr. Wrong character (a convention in many rom-coms) as the "Bellamy," after actor Ralph Bellamy who specialized in such roles, had me laughing out loud.

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.

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