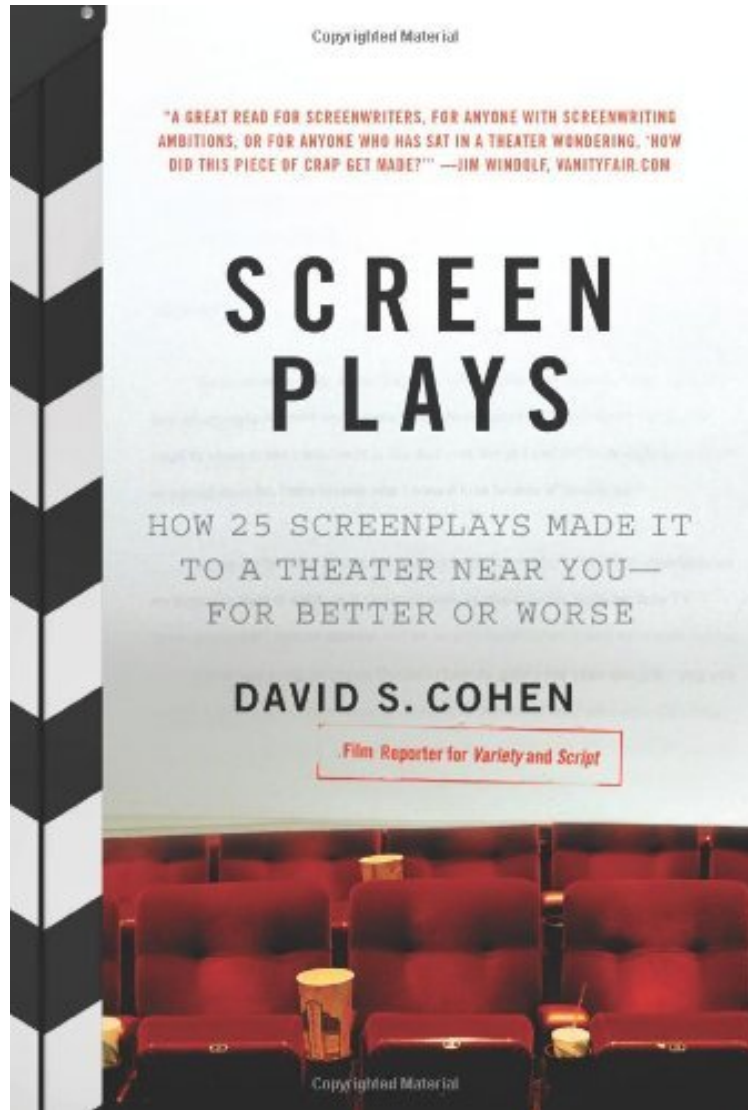


Screen Plays: How 25 Screenplays Made It to a Theater Near You--for Better or Worse

David S. Cohen

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Screen Plays: How 25 Screenplays Made It to a Theater Near You--for Better or Worse:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An unbent tale..!!By Ms. Swati SrivastavaAll one has to do is read the introduction of this book. If after reading it, you can't help feeling atleast a bit sorrowful for the 12 year old whose work of art was changed against his wishes, you are going to love this book. It's certainly what happened to me.I am a young filmmaker and I write my own scripts. I want to say, that I have had just about enough of "how-to" books

teaching young screenwriters about how to write "high concept" movies that sell quickly in Hollywood. Teaching young people in any profession how to sell one's soul while making a quick buck seems to have become the hallmark of all creative professions. As I was reeling from depression induced by reading one more of the "how to sell your screenplay in Hollywood" type book (to be fair I did learn some things from that other book but it was as painful as trying to find a few pearls hidden behind layers upon layers of mud), I came across "Screenplays" by Mr. Cohen. I read the introduction on "look inside" feature and the honest ingenuity in it, won me over. This was the book I wanted to read and I am so glad I did it. From the first pages, the book is gripping and I didn't want to put it down. But I did put it down and read it slowly, so that it gave me more time to chew it and absorb it. The book is thoughtful, hopeful and well written. It provides food for thought for every kind of writer. It brought out the challenges of screenplay writing and development and what it means to stand up for the story you want to tell. The lessons I learnt from just the two chapters: "It's difficult talking to idiots" by writer-director Don Ross and "All you need is one person to believe in you" by novelist-screenplay writer George Dawes Green paid for the book itself. All the chapters have smart, practical tips mostly from people who had the guts to stand behind their stories and fought hard for it from page to screen. Now that's NOT what most get-rich-quick-in-Hollywood books are likely to teach effectively, is it? The most important tool in the toolbox for a budding artist is hope. Hope and a certain sense of faith in oneself. After all as per Mr. Cohen's rule for Star Trek: Deep Space Nine, "faith can move mountains of inventory"!! Conversely, the most dangerous place for an artist is being jaded. So, if you are feeling a little bit jaded and "torn at the edges", this is the book to cure you from it...! Mr. Cohen, thanks for writing this original book. This is certainly a "tale" that didn't get bent..! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I LOVE movie trivia By A.I. very entertaining read, even if you're not a writer. I LOVE movie trivia, and to learn more about movies I love (or just the process of movie making in general) is fascinating, and the writer clearly has a way with words. It's easy to read, but very well put together. Definitely recommend this book for a flight or a day at the pool. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Ever want to be a fly on the wall? By Laura Smith Everybody with a job wishes, at some point, to be a fly on the wall during an important conversation between masters in their field, and listen in to the important negotiations, discussions and decision-making. But in the elusive world of writing, master craftsmen become hermits and useful information from successful people actually making a living by crafting stories is hard to come by. Enter SCREEN PLAYS. Read it and find yourself in awe. But to be clear: they're not all stories of success. Some illustrate bad choices and career-ending decisions. But learn from it, we will. No matter if you're wanting to be a screenwriter yourself, a novelist, a children's author - whatever - if your craft involves plot, characters, and dialogue, you can learn something from this book. Moreover, SCREEN PLAYS is also entertaining. Because you've seen most of the movies the book discusses, you can compare the final product with the work that went into the creation - and you'll find yourself nodding your head in agreement, reading with your mouth open in an O of wonder, and laughing at the events that unfold in this biography of sorts. I read this over a 6-week period; one movie discussion at a time as a break between other reading. This is a keeper for me and something I highly recommend to anyone interested in any kind of behind-the-scenes dirt on the business of writing.

In this fascinating survey of contemporary screen craft, David Cohen of Script and Variety magazines leads readers down the long and harrowing road every screenplay takes from idea to script to screen. In interviews with Hollywood screenwriters from across the board—Oscar winners and novices alike—Cohen explores what sets apart the blockbuster successes from the downright disasters. Tracing the fortunes of twenty-five films, including Troy, Erin Brockovich, Lost in Translation, and The Aviator, Cohen offers insider access to back lots and boardrooms, to studio heads, directors, and to the over-caffeinated screenwriters themselves. As the story of each film evolves from the drawing board to the big screen, Cohen proves that how a script is written, sold, developed, and filmed can be just as dramatic and intriguing as the movie itself—especially when the resulting movie is a fiasco. Covering films of all kinds—from tongue-in-cheek romps like John Waters's A Dirty Shame to Oscar winners like Monster's Ball and The Hours—Screen Plays is an anecdote-filled, often inspiring, always revealing look at the alchemy of the movie business. With Cohen as your expert guide, Screen Plays exposes how and why certain films (such as Gladiator) become "tent poles," those runaway successes every studio needs to survive, and others become train wrecks. Full of critical clues on how to sell a script—and avoid seeing it destroyed before the director calls Action!—it's the one book every aspiring screenwriter will find irresistible.

From Publishers Weekly As a well-placed observer who knows intimately many of tinsel town's key players, Variety reporter and 25-year Hollywood insider Cohen reveals the story behind 25 scripts that became such high-profile projects as Lost in Translation, Troy, American Beauty and The Aviator. On the way, budding screen-writers convinced their own story seems like a long-shot will find inspiration (or at least comfort) in stories like Milo Addica and Will Rokos's, whose screenplay for Monster's Ball was rejected by top industry brass as "the best script that will never get made." With the deep background reporting he's known for, Cohen produces revealing nuggets of moviemaking trivia, alongside stories of serendipity and triumph; for instance, had Erin Brockovich not shared a

chiropractor with her future producer, Carla Santos Shamberg, her movie probably would never have been made. Nowhere is Cohen's understanding of the tempestuous film industry more apparent than in the compelling account of Black Hawk Down screenwriter Ken Nolan, who was terminated from that project only to get himself re-hired and, ultimately, sole writing credit. Cohen's is a surefire crowd-pleaser for casual movie fans and true cineastes. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Variety reporter Cohen tells the stories of the scripts of several commercially and artistically successful recent films. Most were significantly tweaked to improve their commercial prospects. Some, such as those of Gladiator and My Best Friend's Wedding, underwent wholesale change on the way to the screen. American Beauty, TV scribe Alan Ball's attempt to break into the movies, was among the rare few that survived largely intact. Cohen also inspects a few stinkers, like Random Hearts and Pay It Forward, whose stories are just as revealing and instructive, despite their unhappy endings. The writers at issue range from novices to writer-directors John Waters, Sofia Coppola, and Todd Solondz, and include one of the few screenwriters considered a film auteur in his own right, Charlie Kaufman. Besides revealing each script's genesis and fate, Cohen recounts the writers' backstories and includes commentary by many of the movies' stars. Almost any movie lover should enjoy the book's illuminating insight into how what's on the screen gets there, and aspiring screenwriters may be invaluablely guided by the writers' experiences. --Gordon Flagg "A great read for screenwriters, for anyone with screenwriting ambitions, or for anyone who has sat in a theater wondering, 'How did this piece of crap get made?'"