

A Screenwriter's Companion: Instruction, Opinion, Encouragement

Joseph Dougherty

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Joseph Dougherty, whose script credits include his Emmy-winning work on the sitcom *thirtysomething*, as well as *Pretty Little Liars*, shares his personal writing philosophies and best practices in *A Screenwriter's Companion*. The book includes a quick rundown of how Dougherty first became interested in writing scripts, as well as his advice on finding out “if you like writing and if you’re happy with what you write.”

The book includes a few detailed writing exercises to demonstrate how writers can use their own voices to shape a script. One example suggests watching scenes from the classic 1954 monster movie *Them!* and scripting them, alongside encouragement to attempt one’s own version before reading the provided examples of different approaches to the assignment. Later, the book uses *Casablanca* as an entry point to a discussion of developing characters before placing them into a plot.

Mixing personal stories with focused exercises, *A Screenwriter's Companion* is a handy addition to an aspiring screenwriter’s preparation kit. It’s not a primary text, but is still an enjoyable supplemental book that can get writers thinking about their projects in new and creative ways.

JEFF FLEISCHER (September / October 2022)

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