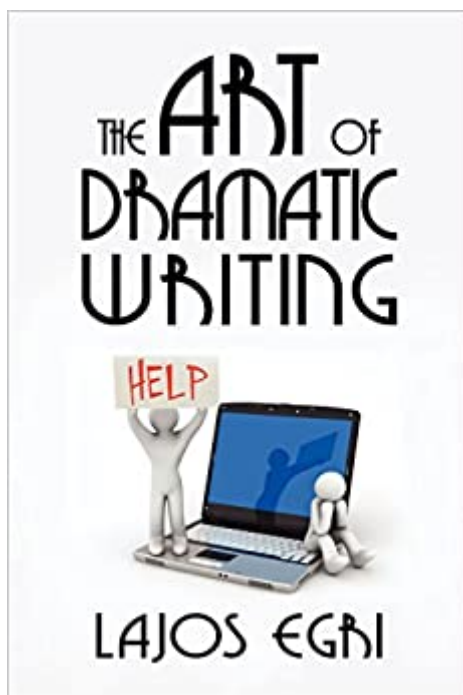


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The Art Of Dramatic Writing



Synopsis

"For many years, Lajos Egri's highly opinionated but very enjoyable *The Art of Dramatic Writing* has been a well-guarded secret of playwrights, scriptwriters, and writers for television. Unlike many other books on playwrighting (several of which Egri criticizes during the course of this one), the author's systematic breakdown of the essentials for creating successful realistic plays and screenplays effectively demystifies the process of creative writing." --John Longenbaugh

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lajos Egri is a highly opinionated man, and one of a bygone era. His analysis of what makes great theater has long been disproved by the inventiveness of playwrights like Harold Pinter, whose dramatic tension powerfully hinges on the pause between words, and screenwriters like Charlie Kaufman, whose narrative line successfully obsesses over the incongruity of the human condition. These writers, who emerged since the 1946 publication of Egri's *"The Art of Dramatic Writing,"* have shown that character does not necessarily drive plot, the purely visual can suffice in revealing a story, and style can trump structure. Nevertheless, *"The Art of Dramatic Writing"* is an excellent book for novice playwrights, aspiring drama critics, or theatre students. Readers interested in dramatic theory will also be absorbed by Egri's systematic deconstruction of plays by Ibsen, Strindberg, Shakespeare, and O'Neill to prove his theory that character is the basis of a great story. In summary, here is what Egri writes: * Character drives plot, not the other way around. * Well-drawn characters possess three dimensions, physiology, sociology, and psychology. Avoiding any of these three in developing a character will lead to composing a failed drama. * The play must have a

premise that its writer can assert in a three-part sentence suggesting character, conflict, and resolution. Examples: Power-mongering (character) results in (conflict) self-destruction (resolution). Love (character) conquers (conflict) oppression (resolution).^{*} Conflict should slowly rise to create conflict, tension, climax, and conclusion. It should not be static, leading to boredom, or jumping, leading to melodrama.^{*} Conflict demands perpetual exposition, or transition.^{*} Plays should start at a turning point in a pivotal character's life.^{*} Characters in conflict are drawn by unity of opposites. He does a fine job of illustrating this concept by breaking down numerous dramatic characters, most notably Nora and Torvald in Ibsen's "A Doll's House." A lot has been said about the author's relentless assault on plays and playwrights he considers inferior (he despises "Tobacco Road" and rebukes all things Noel Coward). But Egri's observations on humanity are universal and his tips on approaching the craft of playwriting are timeless. Great writers such as Woody Allen have found his work stimulating. This is one engaging, highly instructive book.

THE best book for the serious writer. It's old but still absolutely relevant regardless of the literary genre you write in (play, novel, screenplay). It's not for the casual, commercial writer. It's designed for writers who aspire to writing timeless literature. It won't make you a literary genius. That's up to you, but this is your primer.

The Classis text.

As a professional screenwriter and teacher of screenwriting I believe this is the best book on screenwriting ever written. Egri gets to the core of what it takes to construct a script. No one has done it better or more concisely since he wrote this book in the 1950s.

Wonderful foundational guidelines that I needed, thank you.

This book covers the subject succinctly and clearly in a very understandable way. Though structured for play writes I have recommended this book to many screenwriters and all have found it really informative and instructive. In my opinion a must have for any writer.

If you're a screenwriter highly recommend this book. So much better than any script book out there. Clear and easy to follow.

great

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