The Pleasures of Structure: Learning Screenwriting Through Case Studies

Julian Hoxter
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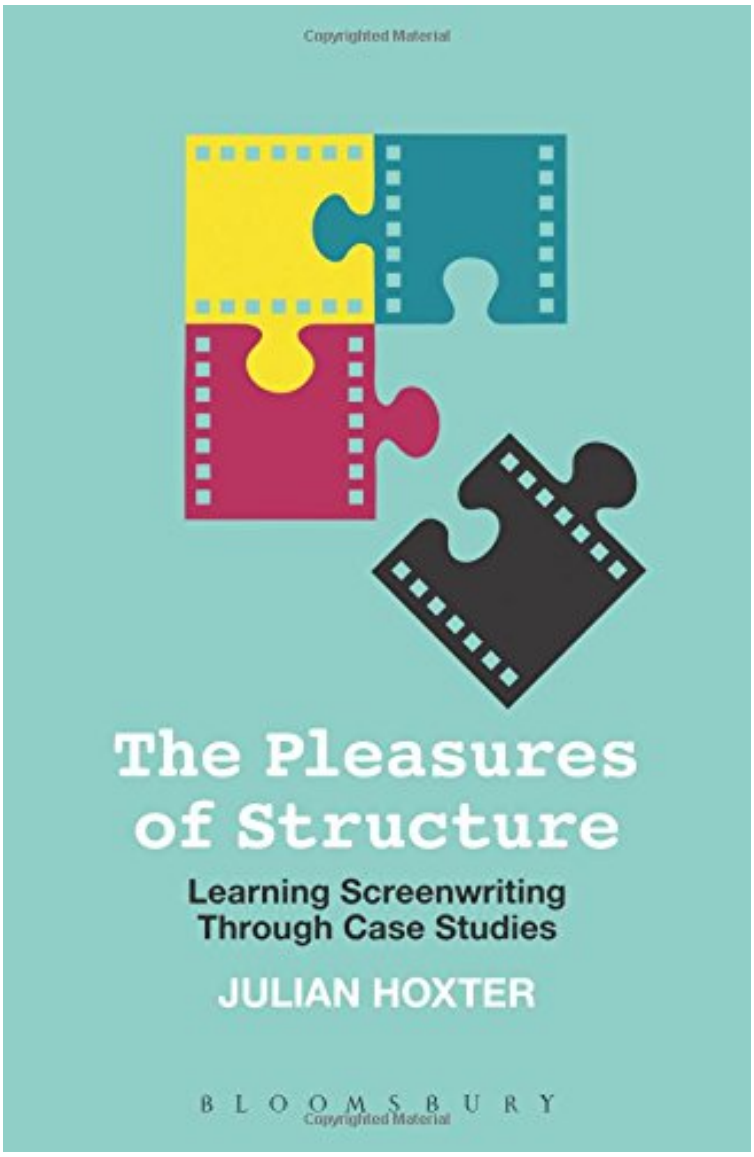

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Julian Hoxter : The Pleasures of Structure: Learning Screenwriting Through Case Studies before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pleasures of Structure: Learning Screenwriting Through Case Studies:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding Enjoyable Screenwriting BookBy Nicholas

O'MahonyThis is an outstanding book for honing ones craft as a screenwriter. It provides essential guidance to give deep structure to a screenplay, and illuminates this process with guided dialogues which answer many of the questions writers will have whilst wrestling with their scripts.The case studies help the reader get to terms with the nuts and bolts of writing screenplays.Hoxters sense of humour with the guided dialogues in the case studies cannot disguise his shrewd wisdom as he promotes excellence in screenwriting.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Hold off on the 6-pack, buy this insteadBy SunspotReally helpful book on screen-writing. If you have any desire at all to learn structure, this is your book. Personally I wanted to learn it so I could fully understand the rules and just how to break them. Whether you want to learn the standard or how to break free. This is your book.

The Pleasures of Structure starts from the premise that the ability to develop a well understood and articulated story structure is the most important skill a screenwriter can develop. For example, good structure requires a great premise and rigorous character development. Without clear character motivations and goals--which are themselves indicative of key structural beats--your story is going exactly nowhere. Using the simple and flexible 'W' model of screenplay structure developed in the prequel Write What You Don't Know, Hoxter sets this out as its starting point. This model is tested against a range of examples which are chosen to explore the flexibility not only of that model but of movie storytelling more generally. Writers and students often worry that they are asked to work 'to formula'. This book will test that formula to breaking point. For example, the first case study will offer the example of a well written, professional, mainstream movie against which our later and more adventurous examples can be compared. So the lessons we learn examining the animated family adventure movie How To Train Your Dragon lead us directly to ask questions of our second case study, the acclaimed Swedish vampire movie Lt den Rtte Komma In (Let The Right One In). Both movies have protagonists with the same basic problem, the same goal, and they use the same basic structure to tell their stories. Of course they are very different films and they work on their audiences in very different ways. Our linked case studies will expose how simple choices, like reversing the order of elements of the protagonist's transformational arc and shifting ownership of key story beats, has an enormous impact on how we respond to a structural model that is otherwise functionally identical.

Julian Hoxter is a great teacher and an always entertaining writer. His deep knowledge of the history and practice of American screenwriting makes his latest book another 'must read.' In The Pleasures of Structure he embeds simple, helpful story concepts into a wide range of detailed and up-to-date case study examples, making them relevant for aspiring writers who want to work in every aspect of cinema from the mainstream and genre, to the wilder worlds of indie and microbudget screenwriting. The excellent critical glossary of screenwriting terms at the end also makes this book truly unique--it is worth the purchase price alone. Michael Grais, Filmmaker and Acclaimed Screenwriter of PoltergeistIn the world of the screenwriter the simple things we see are always complicated. Hoxter has the knack to unpack and to explain. A cogent, witty and absorbing read. Hoxter boldly goes! Tony Moon, Filmmaker and Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of the Creative Industries, Southampton Solent University, UKA stunningly thoughtful and unique approach to teaching screenwriting grounded in both a love of movies and exceptional research. Whether you are a veteran writer or starting your first screenplay, the 'W' model provides guidance without limiting your creativity or forcing you into a restrictive structure. The breadth and depth of research support Hoxter's concepts and the case studies provide practical examples of how to apply them. The Pleasures of Structure is a must read for all screenwriters. Michael Whalen, Award-Winning Producer, Screenwriter, and Knight-Ridder / San Jose Mercury News Endowed Professor and Professor of Communication, Santa Clara University, USAAbout the AuthorJulian Hoxter is the Screenwriting Coordinator and Associate Professor of Screenwriting in the Cinema Department of San Francisco State University, USA. He is an award winning educator and filmmaker whose films have been shown in festivals around the world. He has taught screenwriting and filmmaking in the US and the UK for over 15 years.