The Screenwriter's Problem Solver: How to Recognize, Identify, and Define Screenwriting Problems

By Syd Field

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All writing is rewriting. But what do you change, and how do you change it? All screenplays have problems. They happened to *Die Hard: With a Vengeance* and *Broken Arrow*-and didn't get fixed, leaving the films flawed. They nearly shelved *Platoon*-until Oliver Stone rewrote the first ten pages and created a classic. They happen to every screenwriter. But good writers see their problems as a springboard to creativity. Now bestselling author Syd Field, who works on over 1,000 screenplays a year, tells you step-by-step how to identify and fix common screenwriting problems, providing the professional secrets that make movies brilliant-secrets that can make your screenplay one headed for success...or even Cannes. Learn how to:

•Understand what makes great stories work
•Make your screenplay work in the first ten pages, using *Thelma & Louise* and *Dances With Wolves* as models
•Use a "dream assignment" to let your creative self break free overnight
•Make action build character, the way Quentin Tarantino does
•Recover when you hit the "wall"-and overcome writer's block forever

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Can't get your characters to shut up? Is the bit player in Act II more compelling than your protagonist? Do your scenes drag on f-o-r-e-v-e-r? Whatever your problem, screenwriting guru Syd Field can help; he's written four previous books on screenwriting, teaches worldwide, and is "involved in the reading and writing of about a thousand screenplays a year." Screenplays bog down in vague and mysterious ways, says Field; identifying a screenwriting problem is half the battle. Fixing a screenplay that seems dazed and confused might seem like Mission: Impossible, but you've got to have courage under fire. By identifying symptoms in the writing, Field isolates about 20 different screenwriting problems, each related to plot, character, or structure (after all, what else is there?). His fixes generally involve getting to know your characters or story better, through the use of automatic writing, biographical sketches, and the like. For examples of spectacular screenwriting, he offers excerpts from the screenplays for *Thelma and Louise*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Apollo 13*, and *Silence of the Lambs*. Field is a man of many mantras: "Writing is rewriting," "Film is behavior," "Drama is conflict," "Action is character." But his advice is so useful that you'll forgive him his facile phrasemaking. And you'll thank him for persuading you that, yes, "a problem is an opportunity, a challenge that will allow you to ultimately improve your craft." *--Jane Steinberg*

Review
With examples from *Pulp Fiction, How to Make an American Quilt, The Shawshank Redemption, Crimson Tide, Broken Arrow*...and more of Hollywood's biggest hits

"The most sought-after screenwriting teacher in the world."—*The Hollywood Reporter*

"If I were writing screenplays...I would carry Syd Field around in my back pocket wherever I went."—Steven Bochco, writerproducerdirector, *L.A. Law, NYPD Blue*

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Users Review

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Paulette Rodriguez:

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