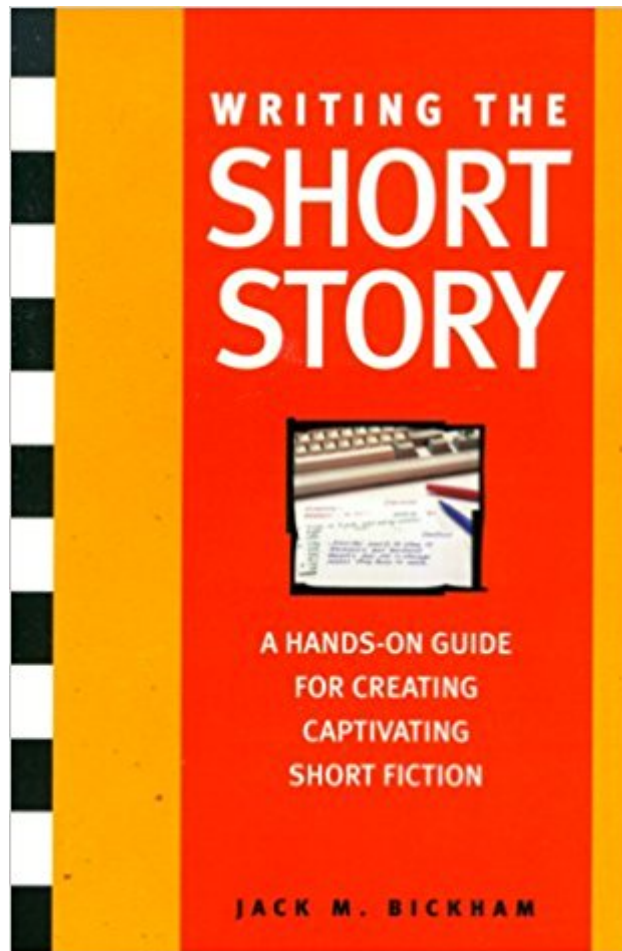




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Writing The Short Story: A Hands-On Writing Program



Synopsis

The author here conducts an index card based "workshop on paper" - a programme founded on his successful Writer's Digest magazine Blueprint series. Bickham guides readers through the steps needed to plan, organise, write and revise a short story.'

Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Writer's Digest Books (July 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0898798809

ISBN-13: 978-0898798807

Product Dimensions: 8.9 x 5.9 x 0.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars 14 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

This book met all of my expectations and will be very useful writing shorts.

Jack Bickham's reach in the fiction world is pretty far, and he has great insights to share in this book. This edition was published in 1994, but having seen the 2nd edition, the two are virtually identical, so buying this instead of that will serve you fine.

I like the checklist and structure this book provides for writing short stories. It is now a handy reference book for my bookshelf.

Amazing book.

The book is exactly like it was described and it came in the time that was informed. I'm happy with my book. Thank you. I hope to buy more things from them in the future.

Now I know: A book's combined review standing can be misleading. Maybe I expected more. The copyright is 1994 and, sadly, it shows its age. My biggest complaint throughout the book is this: Regardless of the topic, author Bickham seems to be insistent in using 500 words where 50 well-edited words will do. Upon realizing the jig was up, I finally started going to the the summary at the end of the chapters. Within the pages it's all boring b/w text with zero visual diagrams or other diversions to break up the page or, better yet, to illustrate valid points. I've seen cookbooks with more appeal. If you are looking for a "how-to" guide for writing short fiction, keep looking. However, if you're concerned about possible nighttime side effects of Ambien, curl up with this. Contained within the pages of "guidance" for an unsure writer is an old, tired approach to writing. Keep looking, you'll find better books. Again, I was bamboozled with the glowing four and five-star recommendations. Proceed with caution, young Chekovs!

Writing the Short Story was something of a disappointment to me. It wasn't a bad book. But I was expecting something that really delved into the short story and how it was different than the novel. Instead, it gave the author's technique for writing short stories. I'm not going to say that Bickham's technique is bad or wrong. It's certainly worked for him and he's published far more than I probably ever will. That said, his technique (essentially keeping everything you think of on note cards that you file and sort into stories, keeping separate cards for plots, setting, characters, etc.) was so arduous that I think I'd kill myself prior to trying it myself. That said, if you're looking for a new organizational system for plotting short stories or novels, his technique might work for you. So if you're in that group, this might be worth a skim through at the library or bookstore. But if you're looking for a book on what makes a short story different than a novel, or on how to write a short story in your own idiosyncratic way, this may not be the best buy.

When Jack Bickham was a student at the University of Oklahoma, his teacher and mentor was Dwight Swain. Swain was one of the finest writing instructors of his generation -- right up there with John Gardner -- and many who were fortunate enough to study with him went on to publication. Bickham went on not only to publish many science fiction and western stories and books but to teach writing, continuing in the fine tradition of his mentor. This is not the only book he has published with Writer's Digest Books, but it's one of the best. In fact, for novice and published pro alike, it's one of the finest books on writing extant. Too many amateur writers reject the notion that stories and books are constructed. They expect to sit down and write for an hour -- an evening at the most -- and produce The Great American Short Story. But writing doesn't work that way and

Bickham has done a fine job of organizing the muse and showing the writer just how to pull the most out of his creativity. WRITING THE SHORT STORY is a program geared to lead the writer through inspiration to publication. Acknowledging at the beginning that published works today SEEM to lack form, he proceeds to show just how much form a story must have. By definition the short story has a "beginning, a middle and an end" and here Bickham provides a story roadmap practically guaranteed to produce a publishable finished work. Writing isn't easy. At least it's not if you want to be published. The writer has to know him/herself and must know the markets and the competition equally well. All that learned, s/he must proceed to understand the structure of the story as well as the importance of characters and characterization. Then there's how setting and mood affect the story. And more...from the story map to marketing, and it's all here. Follow the assignments in the book and you'll learn. I don't care how often you've been published or what you've published -- there are lessons to be learned here. In all, I'd say this is one of the finest books on writing in print. Any writer who studies Dwight Swain's books and Jack Bickham's books and follows their directions with practice and persistence WILL be published.

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