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From Methuen Publishing Ltd : Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting (Methuen Film) by McKee, Robert (1999) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting (Methuen Film) by McKee, Robert (1999):

132 of 135 people found the following review helpful. Great for Some; Good for Most (with some caution)By C. MakaFor me _Story_ by Robert McKee is an incredibly useful book in terms of analyzing stories after the fact. If you read a popular, well-crafted book or view a movie or TV show with those qualities and want to understand how it works, what makes it tick, you would be hard pressed to find a better book, and you should just order this book now -- you're in for a treat.If you're an aspiring writer, _Story_ may be extremely helpful for you (as evidenced by the many glowing reviews here), but it might also be problematic in ways you don't expect. It's from this perspective that I'm writing this review. Writing fiction is an incredibly personal experience, so to be clear I'm not saying that people who love this book as a writing how-to are wrong. I think if you have a certain mindset or approach to writing, this book will be extremely helpful to you. But if you don't, you may want to approach _Story_ with some caution (which I'll explain in a minute).Some fiction writers employ a very methodical, intellectual approach, putting stories together like watchmakers carefully constructing a complex timepiece, creating detailed outlines first and using them as blueprints to build their stories. This is a completely valid way to work -- in fact, I'm envious of such writers and wish it worked

for me. If you already know that you are this sort of writer, you should just order *_Story_* right now, because you almost certainly are gonna love it and find it incredibly useful. Some writers employ a more organic, intuitive approach, where creating a story is an unstructured process of discovery (the so-called "pantsers", because they work from "the seat of their pants"). In my view this is also a perfectly valid way to work, not inherently better or worse than being a dedicated outliner. If you know that you're this sort of writer, you may find *_Story_* intellectually compelling (because it surely is), but it might also mess with your head (see below). I personally am neither a hardcore outliner nor a committed pantser. I am finding that I produce my best, most satisfying work when I bounce back and forth between the two approaches. I can't go full organic because I get lost in the work and find that I constantly have 16 ideas that I can't choose between, and each one of those leads to 16 other ideas, and so on. On the other hand, for me employing a rigorous outlining approach is too intellect-driven. I feel I lose the creative spark and fascination that made me want to write the story in the first place. Instead, deliberately or not, I find myself "solving" my story structure like a sudoku puzzle, overtaken with concern about hitting the right points in the right way at the right time, and things like, losing control of my story that way. Which brings me back to *_Story_*. As someone else here said, McKee isn't telling you, "These are rules! You must follow them!" He's describing principles of storytelling he's developed over years and years of experience and analysis. The thing is, his approach is extremely methodical and intellect-driven, it has a gravity that's going to pull you in that direction. It's so intellectually appealing it's like your brain can't let go of it. Like I said earlier, if your writing mindset and approach are on the same wavelength as what McKee teaches, this is gonna be awesome for you and you're going to love it. If you're not, this can really mess with your head and your writing for a bit. That said, this is good material even for someone like me, and I am glad I read it. There are useful ideas here, and it's good to be aware of them even if you're not going to go about building stories the way McKee teaches. But if you go about putting McKee's tools into practice and it just doesn't work for you, or you're simply not that kind of writer to begin with, don't panic if it feels like your brain has been taken over by McKee for a while. :-)

This too shall pass, and afterwards you will probably feel like you have learned things that will be useful to you at some point down the road.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must have for any writer

By Frederyk Henry I've read John Truby's anatomy of story before reading this one and even with that dense tome to compare it to, McKee's book has plenty of it's own unique information, tips, and strategies for developing plot and story that I don't regret buying it in the slightest. In fact, I found myself highlighting passages just as often as in Truby's book. With that said, McKee's book has a lot more general advice towards story in comparison to Truby's incredibly analytical method of outlining. It is, however, this general advice that I found highly useful. The advice on how to make turning points and create the gap is invaluable for both grabbing the readers attention and maintaining it throughout the story. If you're even somewhat interested in making your writing better, then definitely pick this up.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Not for beginners!

By Ricky This book is extremely wordy for the first few chapters but after the writer runs out of unnecessary synonyms it begins to really help you construct your story. Structured poorly for newbies. It will inspire you to write instead of continuing to read maybe because it's kind of boring...