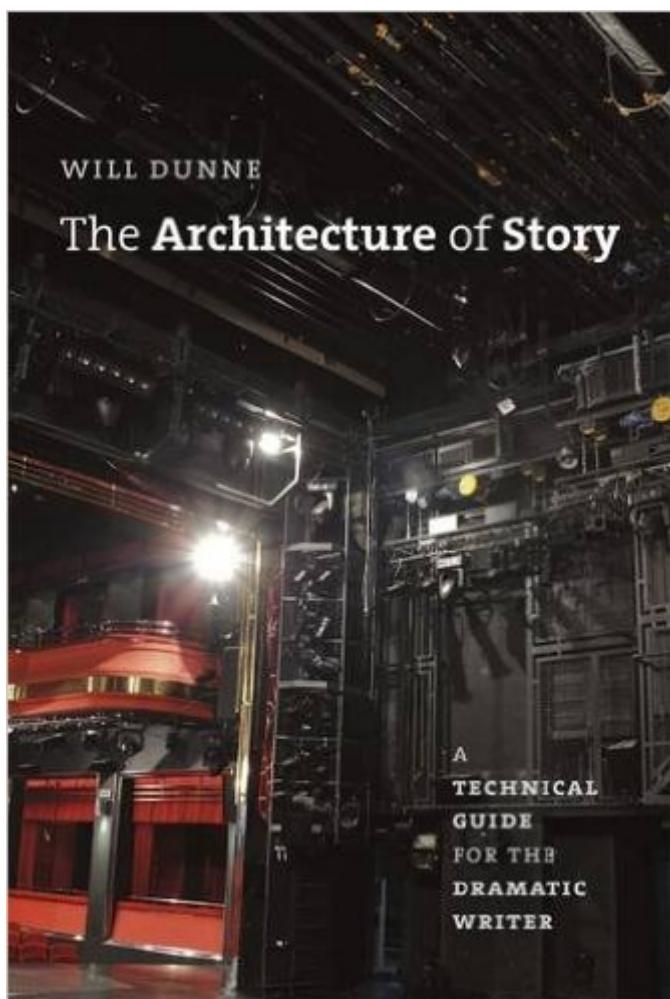# The Architecture Of Story: A Technical Guide For The Dramatic Writer (Chicago Guides To Writing, Editing, And Publishing)

Synopsis

While successful plays tend to share certain storytelling elements, there is no single blueprint for how a play should be constructed. Instead, seasoned playwrights know how to select the right elements for their needs and organize them in a structure that best supports their particular story. Through his workshops and book The Dramatic Writerâ ™s Companion, Will Dunne has helped thousands of writers develop successful scripts. Now, in The Architecture of Story, he helps writers master the building blocks of dramatic storytelling by analyzing a trio of award-winning contemporary American plays: Doubt: A Parable by John Patrick Shanley, Topdog/Underdog by Suzan-Lori Parks, and The Clean House by Sarah Ruhl. Dismantling the stories and examining key components from a technical perspective enables writers to approach their own work with an informed understanding of dramatic architecture. Each self-contained chapter focuses on one storytelling component, ranging from â œTitleâ • and â œMain Eventâ • to â œEmotional Environmentâ • and â œCrisis Decision.â • Â Dunne explores each component in detail, demonstrating how it has been successfully handled in each play and comparing and contrasting techniques. Â The chapters conclude with questions to help writers evaluate and improve their own scripts. The result is a nonlinear reference guide that lets writers work at their own pace and choose the topics that interest them as they develop new scripts. This flexible, interactive structure is designed to meet the needs of writers at all stages of writing and at all levels of experience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have the author's previous book, The Dramatic Writer's Companion, which I use often and have recommended to my students and colleagues. This new book offers a complementary approach, looking at the art and craft of playwriting through the lens of three exemplary plays. I knew one of the three plays quite well, the others not as well. This didn't diminish the value of using the book, but extended my pleasure in studying, as I read the other two plays concurrently with finishing the book. There's great information here for both experienced and beginning playwrights, and a series of questions at the end of each chapter that are valuable in self-assessing your play-in-process. I imagine this book would be useful to directors and actors as well as playwrights- particularly those who are working on any of the three plays the book analyzes. I think The Architecture of Story would make an excellent foundation for an undergraduate or graduate playwriting course.

Fantastic new resource from generous writer and teacher Will Dunne. Clever multi-use structure, conversational in tone, with challenging questions for your own scripts. Illuminating analysis of three modern plays. I look forward to working with The Architecture of Story for forever. Be sure to check out Will Dunne's earlier book: The Dramatic Writer's Companion - it has helped my writing immensely.

I have read a lot of books on playwriting. This may be the single most helpful one of the lot. The author breaks down the elements of a successful play in the most practical ways possible. He focuses on three plays in particular and refers to others along the way. What I especially like about the book is how it acknowledges that there "are no rules" for playwriting, and good plays often break what often stand for the rules. But good plays also have certain things in common in their writing, and here it gets really interesting. For the working playwright, the book becomes a checklist of the many elements that combine to make a good play. It forces the playwright to think hard about why his or her play operates the way it does. And it forces us back into our play to deepen and clarify its elements.

With the deftness of an architect who values the necessity of a strong foundation, Dunne guides the writer, actor or director to the most compelling qualities of the character he or she is depicting as well as the detailed considerations of story. I turn to Will Dunne's two handbooks when I have exhausted other resources knowing that here, at last, I will find what is essential and what is possible. The book is well organized, easy to decipher and apply to any creative writing journey. It

offers self-criticism, self-confidence and the promise of results.

Everything you would want in a guide to becoming a better writer: an understanding of how a dramatic story works, and how to apply it to your own work. Not only is it helpful but it is fun to read. Worth every penny.

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