

[FREE] The Thing Happens: Ten Years of Writing About the Movies

# The Thing Happens: Ten Years of Writing About the Movies

*Terrence Rafferty*

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**Terrence Rafferty : The Thing Happens: Ten Years of Writing About the Movies** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Thing Happens: Ten Years of Writing About the Movies:

8 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Stylish writing By E. Hawkins Although Terrence Rafferty is obviously indebted to Pauline Kael -- they both share, in addition to a mystifying regard for Brian De Palma, a snappy, conversational style -- his prose is a smoother, and his opinions, while always delivered forthrightly, are a little less kinky than Kael's. I think this is an excellent collection of film criticism and appreciation. The long essay on Renoir's 'Rules of the Game' is first rate, and his overviews of several prominent director's careers are right on the money. Anyone who enjoys Pauline Kael will find much to admire in the writing of Terrence Rafferty. When can we have more of his work, especially the first-rate stuff he's doing for GQ now? 7 of 11 people found the following review helpful. great book of film criticism By Al Kihano Rafferty's New Yorker pieces make great reading for anyone who has been watching movies for the last twenty-odd years. The book consists of many reviews of films, plus a few essays on directors. Rafferty tends to be a bit less vivacious than Anthony Lane (my New Yorker critic of choice) and less idiosyncratic than Pauline Kael. He has an exceedingly level head for cinema, though, and a knack for writing about it in a clear way.

In a collection of his essays, the film critic explores the principles and practices behind filmmaking, the roles movies

play in culture, the style and technique of the world's most celebrated directors, and what reviews tell us about the direction of cinema.

From Publishers Weekly  
New Yorker film critic Rafferty emerges in this collection of essays and reviews as a witty and perceptive observer, blending erudition and enthusiasm without pretentiousness. A piece on *The Rules of the Game* discusses Jean Renoir's use of music, images and metaphor in that 1939 film; the article is "as close to a comprehensive statement of my aesthetic principles as I'll ever get," Rafferty notes. Twelve essays evaluate the style and vision of various directors, including Martin Scorsese, Satyajit Ray and Mike Leigh. In his reviews (all previously published) of 53 films released since 1986, Rafferty deems David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* not a "midnight movie" but a "demented matinee"; details how Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* "winds up bullying the audience," and classifies Barbara Kopple's seemingly even tone in the documentary *American Dream* as "the exaggerated calm of deep shock." Readers will be entertained whether they have seen particular films or not, so deftly does Rafferty analyze them.  
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From Library Journal  
Rafferty, currently the film critic for *The New Yorker*, has written for several important periodicals. This collection of previously published pieces is divided into three parts, the first being a long, adulatory essay on Rafferty's favorite film, Jean Renoir's *The Rules of the Game*. There are brief discussions of 12 directors, including John Huston, from whom the title is derived. The final portion consists of reviews of films released over the past ten years, with the exception of a discussion of Jean Vigo's *L'Atalante* (1934). This compilation reveals Rafferty to be a keen observer of cinema, and like other well-regarded film writers and critics, his opinions are sometimes controversial. His writings are usually cogent, however, in the tradition of his predecessor at *The New Yorker*, Pauline Kael. Recommended for cinema collections.- Roy Liebman, California State Univ. Lib., Los Angeles  
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