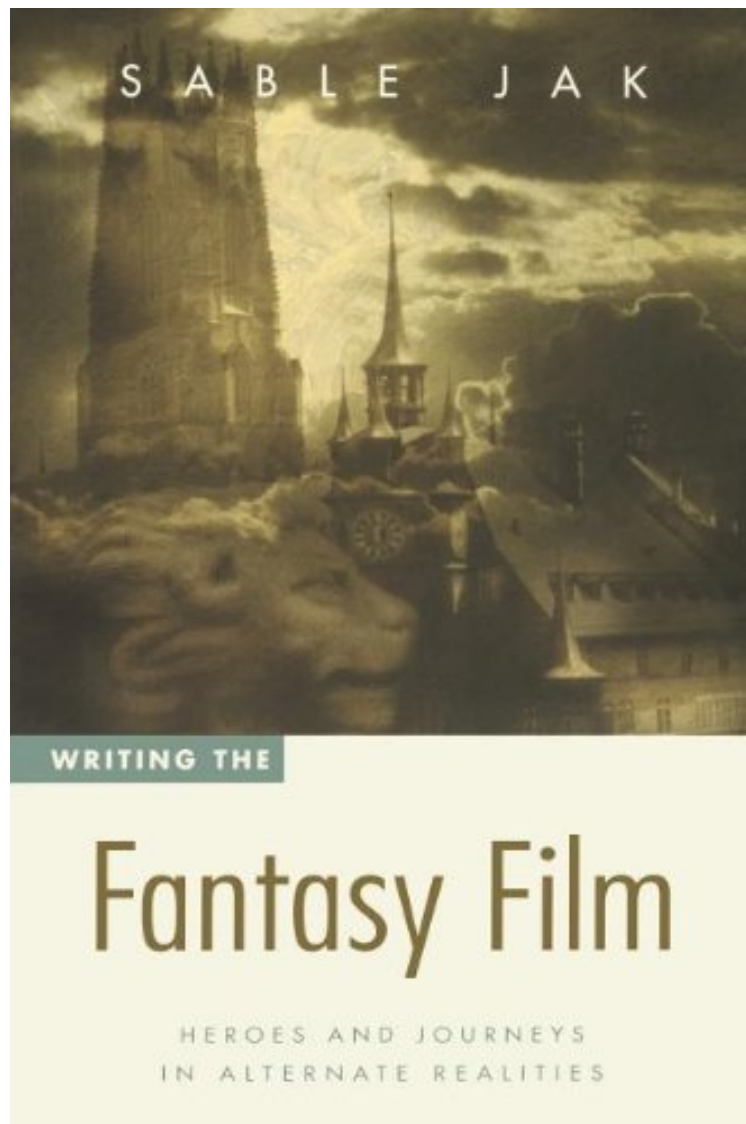


(Free pdf) Writing the Fantasy Film: Heroes and Journeys in Alternate Realities

Writing the Fantasy Film: Heroes and Journeys in Alternate Realities

Sable Jak

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Sable Jak : Writing the Fantasy Film: Heroes and Journeys in Alternate Realities before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Writing the Fantasy Film: Heroes and Journeys in Alternate Realities:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nice Book...By Bob W.The book wasn't exactly what I was looking for, but it was worth keeping as a future reference. It involved more of the hard-core fantasy type stories and didn't

give me enough info on "adult" fantasy like FIELD OF DREAMS.14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Resource for Fantasy Film Screenwriters By Matthew Terry Okay, I'll admit two things right off the bat: 1. I've never written a fantasy script. 2. I'm not a big fan of the genre. Yes, I love "Star Wars (Episodes III, IV and V)" but don't really think of them as "fantasy." The Lord of the Rings Trilogy really can't be beat and truly feel the human elements of the story transcended the "fantasy" elements. I guess my biggest issue of the fantasy film genre is that I really can't relate to it much. Whether I'm too distant, too grounded in my work-a-day reality, or just a bit too distracted to believe in Wizards, Dragons, Damsels in Distress, Magic Potions and Ogres. Then I read this book. Coming at screenwriting from more of a "logical" point of view I kept reading this book in hopes of picking apart the whole grasp of fantasy films. This is the book, I thought, that was going to help me make my arguments against the whole genre. What it did was teach me that Fantasy Films (adventure, romantic, sci-fi, modern world based ("BIG," "It's A Wonderful Life"), middle world based, outer world based, etc.) have many of the same elements you find in your standard genres (romantic comedy, western, action film, buddy picture, etc.). In fact, the more I read the book, the more I realized that if some of the archetypes found in fantasy films were plopped into the middle of a standard drama film - it would add an whole element that would enhance the film, not take away from it. As Ms. Jak broke down all the elements of the Fantasy Film, from Wizards to Buddies, from Spells to Witchcraft, from Outer-Space to Central Europe - I found myself either itching to write a Fantasy Film or, at the very least, incorporate some of those archetypes into my current screenplays: "Maybe the main character has a Wizard he talks to, but he's not really a wizard, but a teacher could be the wizard character." Ms. Jak says, early on, this book is not for beginning screenwriters but there are MANY MANY things a beginning screenwriter can learn about in the book that they could incorporate into their current screenplay (even if the story is a "buddy picture set on the streets of Hong Kong"). The book is clearly written with chapters in regards to what "exactly" is a Fantasy Film, doing the research and breaking apart the characters and situations. One of the risks of doing a Fantasy Film is that so many of the archetypes border on the cliché (hero, maiden, witch, warlock, wizard, etc.) but what I found fun was in my own mind putting a twist on those clichés to make them different. She is both encouraging in those terms and she gives plenty of examples. She ENCOURAGES breaking the mould (and I would encourage it, too). And that's really where the fun comes in. Taking the normal and making it abnormal, twisting the clichés until they scream, finding the tent poles upon which the genre rests and then kicking them out from underneath. THIS is what makes writing Fantasy Films so much fun. You can't break the rules in a romantic comedy (trust me, I've tried). But with Fantasy you CAN break the rules, you're ENCOURAGED to break the rules - and Ms. Jak shows you how to do so. If I have any complaints about the book, it is these: 1. After every chapter there is an "exercise" to do in regards to what you have just read. I don't know anyone who would actually stop reading this book to do the exercise. Though helpful, I'm sure, and a great learning tool - I just didn't see any reader not moving on to the next chapter so they could "write their script's story in epic poem form." These may have been better served in a separate chapter later in the book, once someone has read the book through. 2. I have found that the more I read books on screenwriting and film the more they mention certain films and/or certain websites. I hereby declare that books should now not only contain a bibliography (like this book does) but also a "cinemaography" and an "internetography" to list out both films and websites that are mentioned in the book. Ms. Jak, especially in the section on research, mentions a number of websites she encourages the reader to visit. Then, in later chapters, she mentions more. It would be great to have a compendium of websites near the end of the book so someone doesn't have to hunt and peck later on. Same with films. She mentions dozens of films as examples. Some contain many of the "standard" elements of a fantasy film while others are a great example of one type of conflict or one type of love story. This book would have been made better if there was a thorough listing in the back stating which films are mentioned in the book and why and listing other films to check out in the same genre. (Recently a Producer I know ripped me a new one for not seeing films in the genre I was writing.) If you want to write a Fantasy Film, this book is an excellent resource. If you are a new screenwriter just starting out - I would give this a look, too. This book is both fascinating AND fun. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An excellent resource for fantasy writers. By Ian Frost Having read more than my share of creative writing books, with several titles focused on fantasy, I was pleasantly surprised that this one got it right. The author breaks down what makes a story or screenplay part of the genre. She provides you with the conventions of fantasy so that, knowing them, you can break them in interesting ways. To me, though, the exercises were alone worth the price of this book. Using one of these I broke down the film "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and discovered dozens of "fantasy" elements in the script. Also, in going over the first "Lord of the Rings" film I looked over and listed the "grounding elements" -- those that make the story believable by placing things and events found within our own world. I also found the character arc (though not explicitly stated as that) idea within it fascinating: "_____ (character) desperately tries to achieve _____ (their desire) or prevent _____ (someone else's desire), even as _____ (their Nemesis) and _____ (other forces) try to prevent him from achieving that. In the end, he goes from being a _____ (who he was at the story's start) to _____ (something different)." As a fantasy author, I especially enjoyed the chapter on Character Creation. Her ideas of the Archetypes found in the genre have been added to my creative toolbox -- I have used a couple as starting points for several characters. Add one of her Archetypes to a standard fantasy Archetype, such as

mixing a Demon with a Temptation Prone Friend, and something interesting just may happen. Overall, I found this to be a strong entry into the field of creative writing for fantasy and sci-fi. A field where most of the books are minefields, roadmaps to oblivion, mind stultifiers, or very limited in their scope. This book is none of those. It has currently joined my small list of works I regularly turn to in my writing career. These include "The Writer's Journey" by Chris Vogler, "Creating Unforgettable Characters" by Linda Seger, and "The Character Naming Sourcebook."

From it's a Wonderful Life, to Star Wars, fantasy is not bound by a specific formula. It spans all genres, times and locals, and has contributed to the folklore and literature of every culture around the world. Writing the fantasy film guides you through the fantasy script process, without having to sprinkle the fairy dust.

About the AuthorJak was born and raised in the lake country of Southern Wisconsin. She currently lives in the Pacific Northwest. She is a columnist with Scr(i)pt Magazine's ezine and absolutewrite.com.