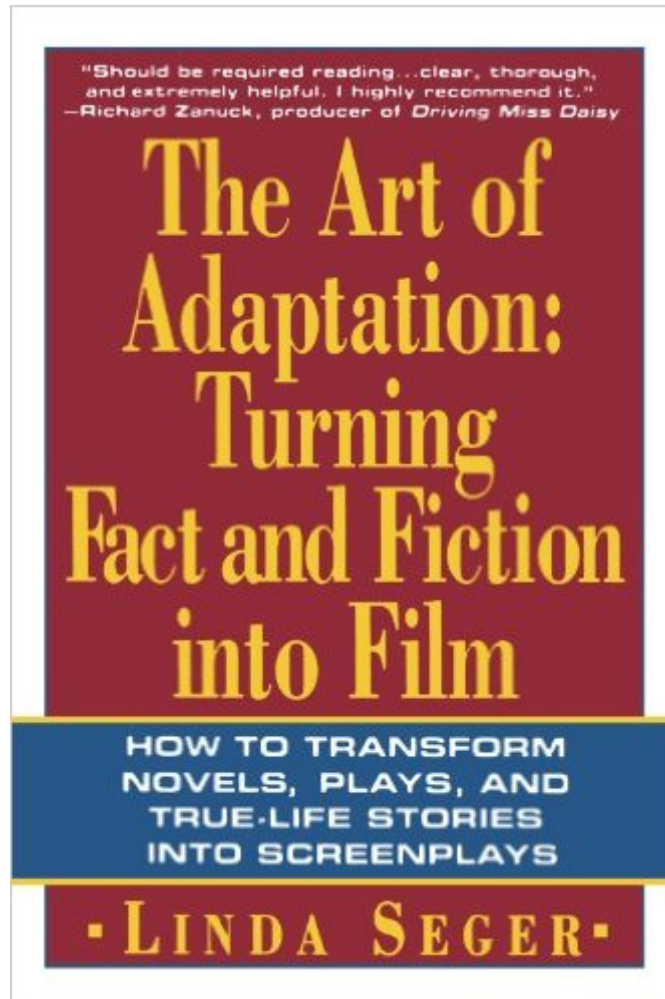


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The Art Of Adaptation: Turning Fact And Fiction Into Film (Owl Books)



Synopsis

Adaptations have long been a mainstay of Hollywood and the television networks. Indeed, most Academy Award- and Emmy Award-winning films have been adaptations of novels, plays, or true-life stories. Linda Seger, author of two acclaimed books on scriptwriting, now offers a comprehensive handbook for screenwriters, producers, and directors who want to successfully transform fictional or factual material into film. Seger tells how to analyze source material to understand why some of it resists adaptation. She then gives practical methods for translating story, characters, themes, and style into film. A final section details essential information on how to adapt material and how to protect oneself legally

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Customer Reviews

Adapting a story from one medium and making it work in another is a daunting task -- far more difficult than someone who has never tried it might imagine. Dr. Seger clearly understands the challenges and gives writers useful information on how to tackle the job. Her book is useful not only for film and television writers, but for all writers who are struggling with the issues inherent in adaptation. I have adapted true stories (histories and contemporary events) for film and TV; novels for TV dramas; and feature films (including Pixar's "Toy Story") for interactive stories and games, and have found Dr. Seger's book a great help and support for all these situations.

Historically, more than 75 percent Academy Award and Emmy Award-winning films have been adaptations of novels, short stories, plays, nonfiction books, and articles. Linda Seger sets the tone of *THE ART OF ADAPTATION* on the opening page: "In spite of what we may think, there is no such thing as an easy adaptation. We've probably all heard people say, 'All you have to do is film the book,' Francis Ford Coppola tried that with the 1974 version of 'The Great Gatsby,' and it failed. Others say, 'This was immensely popular it's bound to be a blockbuster.' 'Bonfire of the Vanities' was a best-seller, but the film was panned." With exceptional lucidity, the author explains the issues and solutions in adaptations from fact and fiction into film. The book includes two detailed examples of successful adaptations: E. M. Foster's novel "A Room with a View" and Andrew Lloyd Webber's play "The Phantom of the Opera." Other examples include "Gone With the Wind," "It's a Wonderful Life," "Deliverance," "Dances With Wolves," "Silence of the Lambs." This was the first Linda Seger screenwriting book I read. Impressed, I went on to study three more: "Creating Unforgettable Characters"; "Making a Good Script Great"; "Advanced Screenwriting." Each of them a five-star book.-- C J Singh

Not having read other books on adaptation, I have nothing to compare this one to but as a stand alone book, it offers a lot of good information on different types of materials to adapt and things to consider when looking for material to adapt. Seger's writing is easy to follow and I find myself referring back to sections I've highlighted so I guess that means I'm getting something out of it. She occasionally seems to spend too much time on analyzing some stories (I found the "Gone with the Wind" stuff to drag quite a bit) but overall you get a lot of insight into different parts of the adaptation game which makes this a good read for those considering or about to take on an adaptation.

This book had slightly more information to offer than Richard Krevolin's "How to Adapt Anything into a Screenplay." It isn't quite as repetitive as Krevolin's text, nor is it as easy to read (though it certainly isn't difficult to read). It has a different tone and is organized differently than the Krevolin text. Much of the information is the same, but it seems to offer slightly more information and advice to the reader. Like the Krevolin text, much of the advice is given in common sense (or should be). However, it is motivating for a person to read a book and find out that their intuition was correct. Out of the 3 books about Adaptation that I have read, this book is the most solid and helpful.

Seger does a good job of covering the basics of how to adapt a published work &/or a real-life story into a saleable screenplay. The final section of the book explains the legal aspects of optioning a

script, and this is extremely helpful as well. On the down side, this book was published in 1992 and most of the examples Seger uses are from films that were released around that time. As someone who was born in the late 70s, I found myself skipping paragraph after paragraph about movies that I'd never seen, or that I hadn't seen in 10 years. The book is further dated when Seger gives mailing addresses and phone numbers of places to seek more information -- pretty much no one had a website in 1992. If you've recently watched Room With a View, Deliverance, Out of Africa, Reversal of Fortune, Driving Miss Daisy, and Field of Dreams, you'll probably connect with this book better than I did.

I've used the principles I learned from this book since I read it over a year ago. The adaptation techniques helped turn our reality based productions from around the world into character driven stories in three acts. Story development on our news magazine format is easier. The audience reaction has been amazing. I just recommended it to another producer.

This book was purchased for a screenwriting class. The instructor uses it as one of our textbooks. Our assignments were from that book and others. I would recommend it to writers because sometimes we can take other people stories and rewrite them in other forms with additional information.

Finding the information very applicable.

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