

(Download free ebook) Howard Hawks, Storyteller

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Gerald Mast

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Gerald Mast : Howard Hawks, Storyteller before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Howard Hawks, Storyteller:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Gerald Mast illuminates Hawks By Dagwood I am blown away by this book. I picked it up at the public library as an interesting, probably breezy discourse on a famous director that I wanted to read about. It turned out not to be breezy, but rather a heavyweight treatment of a heavyweight director in the pop culture of the movies. My purpose in reading such books is their usefulness to me as a journeyman screenwriter. Searching for insights into famous directors' works is always of interest: What separates the text that I write, from a strong and masterful movie such as we have seen on TV or in the theaters all our lives? Mast compellingly breaks out some of the "essential Hawks" themes such as depicting "professionals" in movie roles (Hawks is quoted saying he hates amateurs), the importance of a system of morality and a moral code (he references Wayne Booth, "The Rhetoric of Fiction," for that; I've now bought that book), how the hero and the girl work together at a task as a way of relating, and reversing roles for a more interesting film (like making the male Hildy Johnson character from the Hecht-MacArthur play "The Front Page" into a female character for his movie "His Girl Friday" based on that play). All the tricks of the trade for Hawks. The book also deftly points out the ethos of the era, especially the Bogart-Bacall movies, where everything is tough, tough, tough. You could summarize that as "Things are tough all over. I'm tough, you're tough, she's tough, everybody's tough, except that softie over there whom we deride." It's interesting to note, because now that ethos has passed. But it's for the value of comparing and actually incorporating some of those themes into my

own poor screenplays that the book is most useful to me. We're now so far removed from old-movie tricks of the trade, that I'm confident in my knowledge that today, no moviegoer will even remember the name of Howard Hawks, let alone an audience recognizing his major themes from these old, really good movies, so the themes should be fresh again. And no current movie production executive will have read Mast's book, itself already more than 30 years old, to ever call me out on the Hawks plot devices I have lifted from it. I look forward to stealing away from these tricks and see how they might work in a new screenplay, TCM movie fan that I am. I've got more than 20 pages of handwritten notes from the book for my own edification, transcribing passages that seem especially useful or meaningful. Every time I read a page I feel compelled to copy something down from it. Maybe it's just me, but maybe it's the quality of the book, especially for my purposes, that make me rate this book as a really top analysis of a pivotal movie director.