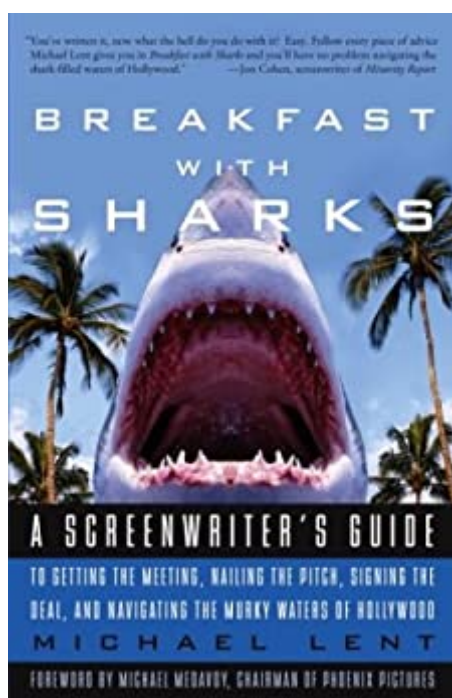


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Breakfast With Sharks: A Screenwriter's Guide To Getting The Meeting, Nailing The Pitch, Signing The De Al, And Navigating The Murky Waters Of Hollywood



Synopsis

What They Didn't Teach You in Your Screenwriting Course Screenwriters, listen up! Breakfast with Sharks is not a book about the craft of screenwriting. This is a book about the business of managing your screenwriting career, from advice on choosing an agent to tips on juggling three deal-making breakfasts a day. Prescriptive and useful, Breakfast with Sharks is a real guide to navigating the murky waters of the Hollywood system. Unlike most of the screenwriting books available, here's one that tells you what to do after you've finished your surefire-hit screenplay. Written from the perspective of Michael Lent, an in-the-trenches working screenwriter in Hollywood, this is a real-world look into the script-to-screen business as it is practiced today. Breakfast with Sharks is filled with useful advice on everything from the ins and outs of moving to Los Angeles to understanding terms like "spec," "option," and "assignment." Here you'll learn what to expect from agents and managers and who does what in the studio hierarchy. And most important, Breakfast with Sharks will help you nail your pitch so the studio exec can't say no. Rounded out with a Q&A section and resource lists of script competitions, film festivals, trade associations, industry publications, and more, Breakfast with Sharks is chock-full of "take this and use it right now" information for screenwriters at any stage of their careers. From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a great insider's guide to the inner-workings of the Hollywood machine. I found it not only enlightening and helpful, but entertaining as well. The author often illustrates a point or principle with personal anecdotes that brings the issue to life. In fact, I wish he'd done this with virtually every subject he discussed. He also dwells heavily in the world of pitch meetings: how to get the meeting, how to prepare, what to do, even what to wear (not a suit) and how to sit (not on the couch if possible).Lent goes into great detail on the function of all the major cogs in the movie-making wheel: producers, directors, actors, agents, managers, creative executives, and more. For those of us with a script to sell but little in the way of industry know-how this is an invaluable course.On the downside, I'm sure most people reading this book are relatively new to the business and the first questions on their mind are: "Do I need an agent, and how do I get one?" Lent, in my opinion, wrote the book in the wrong order. I would have addressed this point up front, but instead you have to wait 123 pages for your answers. And it's not just burning curiosity that would serve this order, Lent often speaks about 'your agent' in the first 100 pages as if he's assuming you've got one and I don't think that's a fair assumption. My second fault with the book is his exceedingly sparse coverage of the screenwriting contest world. This is a vital topic for new screenwriters, one he devotes an astonishingly petite 4 pages to. The topic is well represented online, but we turn to Lent, again, for an insider's view on this milieu and are very disappointed with the lack of coverage.Overall, a quick and easy read that provides loads of useful and applicable information.

Refreshingly different point of view. Easy read with tons of info about survival in Hollywood as a writer. From hints where to live over the immensity of the place to the everyday struggles and battles that you can actually overcome with less stress. This is no "how to" book. It's a "how it is". Many of things are constantly changing in Hollywood. My personal feeling is that we are (hopefully) coming back from under the avalanche of ... let's say movies that didn't need to be made. Whatever the next wave will be, in order for this industry to flourish, Hollywood will collapse without screenwriters (You can go only as far with endless franchises) and writers need to write good scripts. And do the homework. Learn the game, know the necessary to succeed. I have read many books in this genre and I believe this one can help.

I bought this book at the Screenwriters Expo 2007, but I didn't read it until this year. What's unfortunate is that I didn't read it when it first came out (2004), and, what's more unfortunate is that it wasn't available when I first got involved in scriptwriting in 1997. "Breakfast with Sharks" is a very honest assessment of what it takes to sell a script in Hollywood. The author, although not associated with "big" movies" (in fact, his IMDB profile only lists one film, "Cashmere," as writer), nonetheless has obviously gone through the ringer and had the meetings, done the pitches and written the assignments -- and lived to tell about it in a clear (and occasionally hysterically funny) fashion. BWS is NOT about how to write a screenplay, so do not buy it for that purpose. But for what it offers, it is an excellent read. What I liked most about BWS is that Lent suggests a five-year plan to "make it" in Hollywood. He realizes (and points out) how this type of "dream career" can wreak havoc with "real" life (relationships, marriages, family, "real" jobs) and takes on the role of a helpful older brother who points out what awaits us if we decide to wade into the undertow of Hollywood's enticing waves. Lent also is one of the few writers who addresses the harsh realities of "older" writers who try to sell their scripts. He doesn't hold back on anything and tells it like it is. At least he respects older writers and I appreciate his concern and sympathy for them. In addition, he obliterates all the fairy dust and sparkle by pointing out what the handful of working screenwriters earn (85k/yr), making it clear that the idea of writing a script and becoming an overnight millionaire probably only happens in the movies (there... an idea for your next script!). He has occasionally scathing observations, and I did sense that he was somewhat jaded and bitter -- although I do not blame him, because Hollywood is the cruelest town on earth. He's had his ideas stolen from him, he's had major projects placed in his lap -- then had them canceled at the last second -- he's taken assignments so he could survive, and not because he necessarily wanted to -- and he's dealt with the egos, the fakes, the phoneys -- you name it, he's been there, except, it seems on a major motion picture; again, I do not hold that against him. One doesn't have to be associated with a major motion picture to understand what it takes to write and sell a screenplay, and he clearly does. And he makes an excellent effort to guide the clueless and the misinformed through the muck so that they can sell their screenplay (or at least understand why they may not sell it, no matter how good it is). He encourages people to make several short films and to have several scripts before coming to Hollywood or before hitting the pavement, and I couldn't agree with this advice more. So many people have stars in their eyes that they think the brilliance of their "high-concepts" will have them in their penthouse above Sunset before the sun sets. Highly unlikely, and Lent makes that clear, too. The only thing I would criticize is that he mentioned a friend of his who worked the midnight shift

at a copy shop so that he could have his "days free" to take meetings and write, etc. He mentioned this about three times, I'm not sure why. If you are working 12am-8am, you are going to have to sleep and it is not healthy or productive to imagine that you can have your "days free" to pursue your dreams. The only thing that has worked for me, personally, is to stop working (except for once a week gigs) and dedicate huge chunks of time to finishing my script(s). Now I can say my script is almost done because I had the time to focus on it and hardly anything else. That is a luxury, I know, and Lent makes suggestions for jobs you can do while you're trying to reach your star. To that I would say: If you say you are a writer, that's what you are. If you say you are a "personal assistant," that's what you are -- you become who you say you are, and others view you that way. Just a tip to keep in mind that I have learned the hard way. Overall, thumbs up on this book.

This appropriately titled, carefully written gem is an indispensable guide to the nasty business of writing for and doing business with Hollywood. The author's real world experience is invaluable, his comprehensive description of the Hollywood system incomparable, and his down-to-earth literary style very readable. Great read for any aspiring screenwriter. Wish I'd discovered it years ago!

Decent and practical.

As a writer on the edge - no, not that edge, but the edge of selling his first spec script I have to say this is far and away the BEST book on working Hollywood that I have ever read! It is excellent in its execution. Michael Lent covers issues that most authors at best touch on. He tells you the WHY of things. He covers issues such as agents and managers that aren't working for you - why it's likely happening and what you can do about it. In my mind this is really the first and last book you'll need to read. Of course there will be other books and articles that can give you other tidbits of information but this is really a FOUNDATIONAL book. From Lent's book you can go forward with your career and not NEED to read anything further in the realm of HOW TO. My hat is off to Lent and the great service he has done for all of us trying to storm the gates of Hollywood!

Must-read. Very informative and lots of great tips.

Great condition!

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