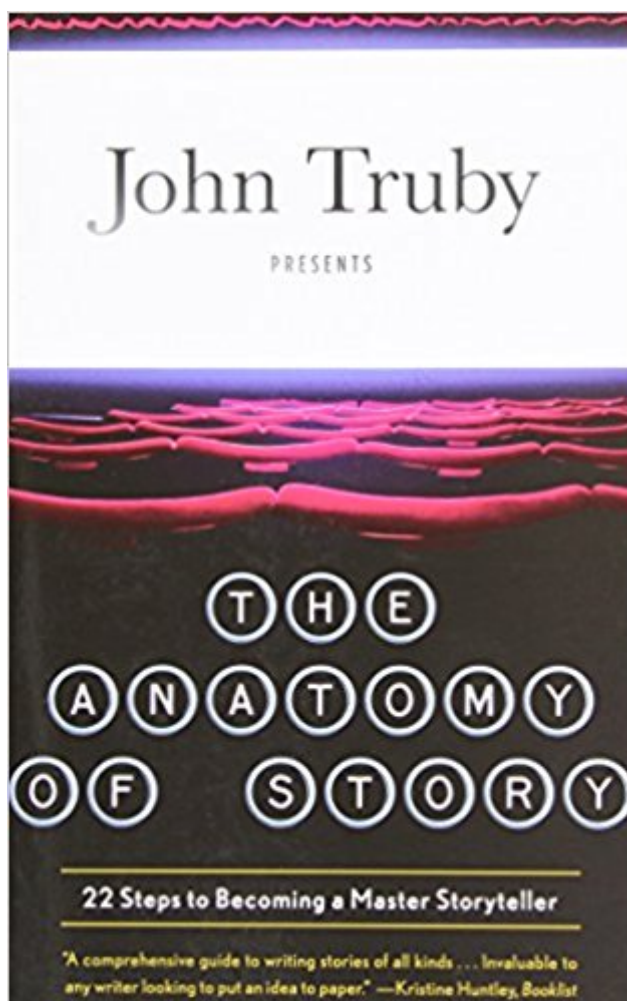




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# The Anatomy Of Story: 22 Steps To Becoming A Master Storyteller



## Synopsis

"If you're ready to graduate from the boy-meets-girl league of screenwriting, meet John Truby . . . [his lessons inspire] epiphanies that make you see the contours of your psyche as sharply as your script." —LA Weekly John Truby is one of the most respected and sought-after story consultants in the film industry, and his students have gone on to pen some of Hollywood's most successful films, including *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Scream*, and *Shrek*. *The Anatomy of Story* is his long-awaited first book, and it shares all his secrets for writing a compelling script. Based on the lessons in his award-winning class, *Great Screenwriting*, *The Anatomy of Story* draws on a broad range of philosophy and mythology, offering fresh techniques and insightful anecdotes alongside Truby's own unique approach to building an effective, multifaceted narrative.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Teacher and screenplay doctor Truby (responsible for popular screenwriting software *Blockbuster*) brings his complicated but time-tested story development system to print for the first time, a 22-point process that's more thorough—"an extremely precise map of your entire plot" that "shows you the most dramatic way to tell your story"—but also more unwieldy than the traditional "three-act" technique. For example, the first seven steps Truby introduces apply to structure: develop "weakness and need" and "desire" in your hero, give him an "opponent" and a "plan" for overcoming that opponent, then throw in a "battle" that leads to "self-revelation" and, finally, a "new equilibrium." Chapters build on each other, fleshing out these steps with a number of terms and concepts (character types include hero, main opponent, ally, fake-ally opponent and fake-opponent ally) that

alternate between cagey (the "character web") and confusing (the nearly indistinguishable "designing principle," "theme line" and "moral argument"). Further frustration arises in Truby's examples, old movies retrofitted with his techniques (most notably *The Godfather* and *Tootsie*) rather than a script that has actually been put through Truby's paces (or, even better, a new script invented just to demonstrate the steps). Following Truby's complex system may yield a memorable screenplay, but writers without great patience may find it more trouble than it's worth. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Truby attempts to inform the entire story, addressing plot, character, tone, symbolism, and dialog. The key here is to grow a script organically rather than force the story into preexisting mechanics . . . Highly recommended.”  
—Library Journal  
“A comprehensive guide to writing stories of all kinds, Truby's tome is invaluable to any writer looking to put an idea to paper.”  
—Booklist  
“The Anatomy Of Story is concrete and practical without resorting to simplistic 'Three Act Structure' screenwriting clichés. It will be an indispensable guide to writing your first great script. Then, the perfect survival manual to help you negotiate the often confusing, contradictory and cutthroat world of professional screenwriting.”  
—Larry Wilson, co-writer /co-producer of *BEETLEJUICE* and co-writer of *THE ADDAMS FAMILY*  
“A veritable bible for screenwriters.”  
—Backstage  
“If you're ready to graduate from the boy-meets-girl league of screenwriting, meet John Truby . . . [His lessons draw] epiphanies that make you see the contours of your psyche as sharply as your script.”  
—LA Weekly

Excellent foundational book about all the elements to create a great story. Used this for a 4 week Writer's Workshop as the text and found it to be very useful whether you are at the beginning of crafting your story or toward the end and need the review of solid elements of backbone for your story. Recommend it.

Excellent book on how to construct an "organic" screenplay or novel, using various proven structures and techniques while breaking away from tradition "formula" approaches. Definitely should be included in any writers study of the art form.

Being always on the lookout for great books that teach the art of writing in meaningful ways, I

ordered this book last year with high hopes that it might help take my writings to the next level. I was not disappointed. This is a book you cannot read just once... especially if you're a writer. It must be studied carefully and its messages put into practice on a daily basis. John Truby has written a masterpiece! Now, when I see a well-made movie or read a really good book, I recognize the makings of his 22 steps lurking there beneath the story. I ask myself, how can I apply Mr. Truby's advice to my own writings? How can I make the plot thicken and my characters stand out from the normal run-of-the-mill stories that abound these days? The answers are here! Highly recommended for any writer, beginners as well as seasoned veterans!

Really enjoyed this unique take on writing, with a keen eye on how great movies used these techniques explored within to maximum effect. This is one technique book that I found hard to put down. And it's one that I will definitely reread. I wish Mr. Truby had more volumes printed about genres and craft, I understand that there are audio classes you can purchase and download. I'd much prefer more actual books, though.

The most powerful point made in this book is that of the importance of structure. Trust argues that you shouldn't even begin to write until you have gone over the structure so many times that it's engrained in your brain. Perfect it. The dialogue is the last thing you touch. This point was revelatory to me and I benefited from it greatly. The book is not particularly helpful in the particulars such as dialogue and pacing, but it is helpful in aiding your processing through your story and discovering an organic structure that will drive your theme home to the audience. I recommend it.

This book has single-handedly changed my ability to conceive and write a novel. Although the examples used to illustrate John Truby's points are primarily from films, I have found the information in this book about how to draft characters and plot far more useful than anything else I've ever read on the subject (and I've read a lot!) I would recommend reading this book if you're new to writing or even if you're more experienced and open to reconsidering how you structure your work. It's great for novelists, screenwriters and anybody writing for television. There is also a great website that you should check out - [www.dottrubydotcom](http://www.dottrubydotcom). I really don't think you'll be disappointed if you read this book. I do believe though that your writing, whatever the media, will be all the better for it.

This book is a must for anyone who wishes to write that next big seller. It is a great book that guides you through a number of exercises to create outstanding characters and a professional manuscript

for your book or movie script. If you are a serious writer this is one of those books you need in your arsenal of reference material.

I bought this book because I heard an interview with Truby about how it all started for him. At the beginning of his interest in writing, he could not find much about how to do it, so he watched a lot of movies and basically reverse engineered them, coming to the points he talks about in the book. Syd Field went through the same type of growth pattern- reading hundreds of scripts submitted to his employer and seeing what the problems and good pieces were, and then synthesizing them into Screenplay, which is still worth reading and rereading. There is an abundance of books about mechanics and structure of screenwriting, but if your story sucks they won't save you. No doubt he has recycled many ideas from others, but he has added a lot of heavy thinking as well, just as McKee has. A lot of Hollywood's product is failing at the box office these days, so there is a huge opportunity for people who can write really good scripts with really good stories. If you pay \$10 for a movie ticket, the theater keeps half. This means that if they spend \$50 million producing a movie, they have to do \$100 million at the box office. If you go to IMDB or boxofficemojo you will see that a lot of films aren't doing that = opportunity. Heads will roll until they find a new profitable formula. People like Jason Blum (Paranormal Activity 4- gross at least 9 times production budget) are paving the new way.

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