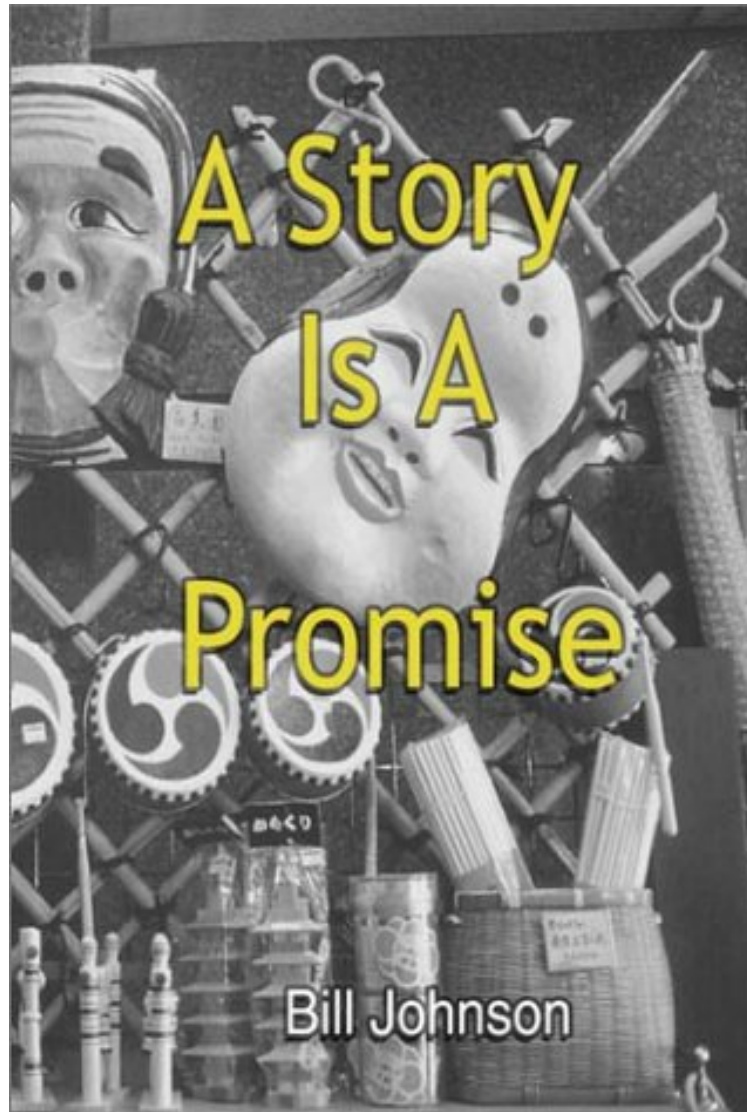


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A Story is a Promise

Bill Johnson

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Bill Johnson : A Story is a Promise before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Story is a Promise:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Useful if a Bit RedundantBy Jus Sayin"This was a straight-forward book, and the author has some useful concepts. What I didn't like about the book is the repetition. I'm pretty sure the phrase "a story is a promise" appears on every other page. Other language repeats to a lesser extent, and he doesn't miss an opportunity to hammer home his rules for writing. If the book were half the length and the author said what he had to say just once it would be very useful. The other thing I found annoying was the condescending tone the author uses when referring to writing mistakes made by people who go to his seminars. A Story Is a Promise: Good Things to

Know Before You Write That Screenplay, Novel, or Play

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Essential for writers, good for anyone

By Ashley

This book literally transformed both my own writing and the writing of everyone I know who has read it. But beyond that, it transformed the way I read and watch movies. I used to be unable to explain why I liked or disliked movies. Now I can identify exactly why a movie is or isn't good. No fiction writer should write another day without reading this book. But it is also a good book to read if you just want to be able to better understand the world around you.

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Best of the best on the subject of storytelling

By Tech Guy

Alas, I have studied many of the popular books on the craft of writing. Bill Johnson's stands at the very top of my recommended list. Why? Well, most books teach specific techniques and/or discuss structured approaches to storytelling. This is fine, but they somehow skirt the issue of what really separates the good stories from the bad. Bill gets to the bottom of this most critical issue (it is curious that so many of the other books have overlooked the essence of these most important points). I found that the principles Bill outlines are a great complement to the "hero's journey" approach taught in many popular books on the craft. Bill's book is NOT about teaching specific techniques as much as it is about understanding the essence of what will make your story compelling. As Bill will teach you, there are some specific things you need to do . . . and if you don't . . . well, you will struggle more than you need to. If you are serious about writing, don't go without studying this wonderful book.

A Story is a Promise is a writing workbook created to help writers gain a deeper understanding of the craft of powerful storytelling.

.com

In A Story Is a Promise, Bill Johnson posits that a well-designed story "promises dramatic fulfillment of our needs." Too often, says Johnson, writers embark on projects without first identifying the dramatic issue that is at the heart of their story. These writers--novelists, playwrights, and, clearly closest to Johnson's heart, screenwriters--would do much better, and save a lot of time otherwise spent writing in circles, by first identifying their key dramatic issue, Johnson says. Once they have identified a premise, which can be easily summed up (for Honey, I Shrank the Kids, Johnson offers "overcoming a shared catastrophe leads to renewal"), they can measure every word they write against it. Ask yourself, says Johnson, whether you can determine if "every character issue, event, line of dialogue, and scene description serves to dramatically advance the story." If the answer is "no," that event, dialogue, or description doesn't belong. If you find the concept unclear, don't worry--apparently, a lot of Johnson's students do, too. But once you understand what's at stake in your story, you will be better equipped to make all the decisions you need to make along the way concerning characterization, plot development, dialogue, conflict, and the like. With workshoplike questions at the end of each chapter aimed at the writer-in-process. --Jane Steinberg "You come away with an understanding of what it takes to fulfill the promise every writer makes to the reader." -- Lawrence Booth, Half Moon Bay Film School

About the Author

Bill Johnson is a produced playwright, published author, he's read manuscripts for agents and editors, and he's done rewrite and consulting work in the movie business (Monsoon Wife, Five Stages of Beer, The Fever). He has taught at writing conferences around the United States.