The Architecture of Story: A Technical Guide for the Dramatic Writer (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)

Will Dunne

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While successful plays tend to share certain storytelling elements, there is no single blueprint for how a play should be constructed. Instead, seasoned playwrights know how to select the right elements for their needs and organize them in a structure that best supports their particular story.

Through his workshops and book *The Dramatic Writer's Companion*, Will Dunne has helped thousands of writers develop successful scripts. Now, in *The Architecture of Story*, he helps writers master the building blocks of dramatic storytelling by analyzing a trio of award-winning contemporary American plays*: Doubt: A Parable* by John Patrick Shanley, *Topdog/Underdog* by Suzan-Lori Parks, and *The Clean House* by Sarah Ruhl. Dismantling the stories and examining key components from a technical perspective enables writers to approach their own work with an informed understanding of dramatic architecture.

Each self-contained chapter focuses on one storytelling component, ranging from "Title" and "Main Event" to "Emotional Environment" and "Crisis Decision." Dunne explores each component in detail, demonstrating how it has been successfully handled in each play and comparing and contrasting techniques. The chapters conclude with questions to help writers evaluate and improve their own scripts. The result is a nonlinear reference guide that lets writers work at their own pace and choose the topics that interest them as they develop new scripts. This flexible, interactive structure is designed to meet the needs of writers at all stages of writing and at all levels of experience.

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