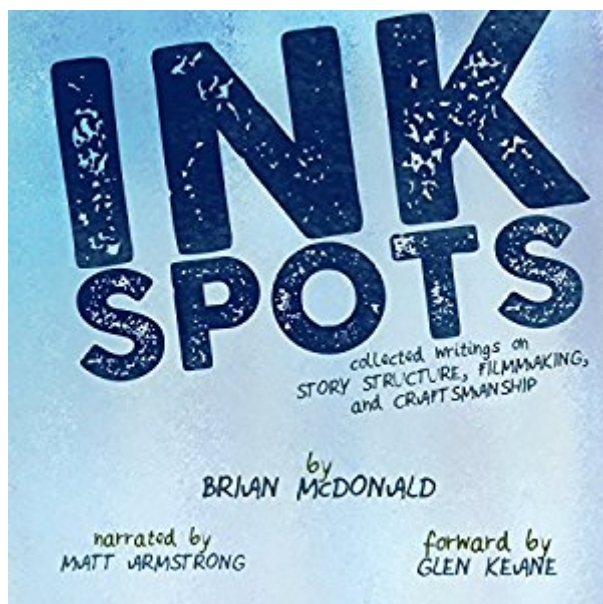


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Ink Spots



Synopsis

Ink Spots is a collection of brief but powerful essays on writing, story structure and filmmaking by award-winning writer/director/producer Brian McDonald. With inspiring wit and wisdom, he will not only teach you how to be a better writer, but a more observant person and a better student in any field. You'll find yourself uncontrollably thinking deep thoughts about writing, film or anything else you are passionate about in life. Foreword by Glen Keane.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I never review my purchases but Brian Mc Donald deserves it. Ive read tons of books on screenwriting and writing over the past 10 years and this guy is one of the rare few who knows what he's talking about. His other books, The Golden Theme and Invisible Ink are stellar and this is right up there. Brians focus is "storytelling" not just writing and thats what separates him from the rest. The book is a collection of blog posts about the craft of storytelling and is meant to be used as more of a guide rather than a dogmatic formula that the other guru's teach. In fact there is no formula at all, just the substance of story and how to make one.

Just about anything Brian McDonald writes is worth reading and this book is no exception. If you've already read Invisible Ink and The Golden Theme and you're hungry for more, this is the perfect follow-up. If you haven't read those books, yet, I'd recommend starting there and moving onto this volume. Of course, to be fair and to be clear, these essays are a compilation of posts from Brian's Invisible Ink blog, so there's a chance you may have already read some of this material if you've

been following him for a while. Keep that in mind if it's something that'll bother you. Then again, most of Brian's stuff stands up to repeated readings and there's plenty of good stuff here that you may have missed the first time around, so it really shouldn't bother you. Bottom Line: If you're a fan of Brian McDonald, this is a book worth getting.

Brian McDonald's approach to writing made sense. His encouragement to go ahead and write, expect it to be bad, and write a lot of bad things knowing that an artist does a lot of less than perfect work before he creates anything others can enjoy. By saying some of us use perfection as a means to procrastinate and by pointing out "as long as a project exists only in your head it is an uncompromised ideal" he stomped on my toes. As soon as I recover, I plan on writing some of those bad pieces. Also, I found the character in relation to plot segments particularly helpful in defining what to include and what to leave out of a story in order to move it forward to provide reader/viewer identification.

This was my first exposure to McDonald's work, but I really liked what he has to say. He really puts his finger on what's wrong with today's movies: too many of them don't bother to tell a story. Again and again, he makes the case for STORY, but somehow he never gets strident or preachy. In short essays (excuse me, blog posts), he shows what we get with the great films and don't get with the CGI-heavy blockbusters: a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. I never understood the three-act structure before, but he makes it crystal clear. There's also a terrific life lesson in stories he tells: if you want to be good at something, learn everything you can from the people who came before you. That's not just screenwriting, obviously. My own rating system assigns 4 stars to a book that I'll want to read again, and this one qualifies. McDonald's style is clear and engaging, he says what he has to say without wasting words, and what he has to say is worth hearing.

Brian McDonald has done it again! This tri-part collection of essays, instructions, and careful examples of good screenwriting is a valuable resource for writers seeking a great teacher. I enjoyed the real-life writing observations that McDonald drew in his first section, Things I've Learned, felt cogs click and spin as I moved into his Thoughts on Craft, which gave me a lot of "head-nodding" moments, and then I watched it all blend together in the third part, Movies I Like. In this final section, I saw working examples of the powerful storytelling that McDonald celebrates, as demonstrated by films that practice the careful storytelling that he preaches. I was skeptical at first about the Movies I Like section, and yet found myself delightfully surprised by what I learned (I also have a list of films I

need to watch again, and more carefully!). This is a great book for all writers, especially those who are interested in the essence of what makes a profound story that endures in the hearts and minds of your audience/readers long after they have stopped seeing, reading, or hearing your words.

This my third book I read from Brian. And as before, it didn't disappoint me. It will give inter to some deep thinks and believes of the author about the craftsmanship of storytelling. Also along this compilation Brian gives a lot of movies references and screenwriters and why you, aspiring screenwriter or filmmaker student, should study them. Grate knowledge, grate master. Thank you Brian!

Sometimes you just want something to read that doesn't take too long and won't make you feel too guilty for procrastinating yet again on your writing. If this sounds familiar, then you might like INK SPOTS as much as I do. I've been following Brian McDonald's Invisible Ink blog for years now. When I heard that he was going to collect his best posts into a book, I knew I had to get it. I love Brian's blog posts. I learn so much about the craft of writing, story structure and great movies every time I read his blog. INK SPOTS hits the spot. Whenever I need some inspiration, a shot in the arm, or am feeling down about my writing and just need a break from it, I read one of Brian's stories in INK SPOTS. Takes 5 minutes or so. And then I'm back in the game.

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