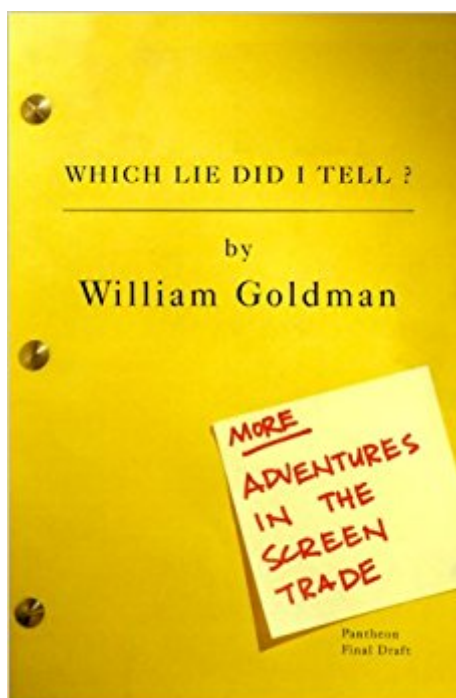


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Which Lie Did I Tell?: More Adventures In The Screen Trade



Synopsis

William Goldman's *Adventures in the Screen Trade* was a classic for moviephiles, revealing all the secrets behind the business of the big screen. Now, screenwriter extraordinaire Goldman returns to give us the latest lowdown on Hollywood moviemaking. He dishes the dirt, adventure by adventure, from his most recent films -- the successes and the failures -- with inside anecdotes from such star-studded sets as *The Princess Bride*, *Misery*, and *Absolute Power*. We find out what it's like to work with Mel Gibson, Michael Douglas, Richard Donner, Rob Reiner, Clint Eastwood, and all the rest of Hollywood's major power players. But this is much more than just a tourist's guide to the backlot. Goldman conducts a virtual writer's clinic: he tells us exactly what works on film and why, dissecting classic moments in great screenplays ranging from the crop-dusting scene in *North by Northwest* to the zipper scene in *There's Something about Mary*. He gives us insider tips on everything from good storytelling to effective pitch-making, and he shows us where his ideas come from and what he does with them when they get there. Finally, he brings together some of today's top screenwriters to analyze, doctor, or destroy a screenplay he created just for this book. Enlightening as well as entertaining, *Which Lie Did I Tell?* is certain to follow its predecessor as the definitive guide to the real workings behind the glitzy facade of contemporary Hollywood. "Bill Goldman has proven, once again, that he is the most observant, knowledgeable and intuitive screenwriter in the business today." -- Joe Roth, Producer and former Chairman, Walt Disney Studios "Almost as great as an evening with the irrepressible, brilliant, sometimes infuriating, always original -- one and only Bill." -- Joel Schumacher, Director

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Customer Reviews

Something odd, if predictable, became of screenwriter William Goldman after he wrote the touchstone tell-all book on filmmaking, *Adventures in the Screen Trade* (1983), he became a Hollywood leper. Goldman opens his long-awaited sequel by writing about his years of exile before he found himself--again--as a valuable writer in Hollywood. Fans of the two-time Oscar-winning writer (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *All the President's Men*) have anxiously waited for this follow-up since his career serpentine into a variety of big hits and critical bombs in the '80s and '90s. Here Goldman scoops on *The Princess Bride* (his own favorite), *Misery*, *Maverick*, *Absolute Power*, and others. Goldman's conversational style makes him easy to read for the film novice but meaty enough for the detail-oriented pro. His tendency to ramble into other subjects may be maddening (he suddenly switches from being on set with Eastwood to anecdotes about Newman and Garbo), but we can excuse him because of one fact alone: he is so darn entertaining. Like most sequels, *Which Lie* follows the structure of the original. Both Goldman books have three parts: stories about his movies, a deconstruction of Hollywood (here the focus is on great movie scenes), and a workshop for screenwriters. (The paperback version of the first book also comes with his full-length screenplay of *Butch*; his collected works are also worth checking out). This final segment is another gift--a toolbox--for the aspiring screenwriter. Goldman takes newspaper clippings and other ideas and asks the reader to diagnose their cinematic possibilities. Goldman also gives us a new screenplay he's written (*The Big A*), which is analyzed--with brutal honesty--by other top writers. With its juicy facts and valuable sidebars on what makes good screenwriting, this is another entertaining must-read from the man who coined what has to be the most-quoted adage about movie-business success: "Nobody knows anything." --Doug Thomas

Two-time Oscar-winning screenwriter Goldman follows up his irreverent, gossipy and indispensable screenwriting bible, *Adventures in the Screen Trade* (1983), with this equally wise, tart and very funny account of the filmmaking process. He begins with the surprising admission that he was a "leper" in Hollywood between 1980 and 1985: after *Magic* (1978), he was unable to get any screenplays produced until *The Princess Bride* (1987). (Moviegoers' loss was readers' gain: during those years he wrote six novels.) Wildly opinionated ("*Vertigo*--for me, the most overrated movie of all time") but astute, Goldman is a 35-year industry veteran with lots of tales and a knack for spinning them. He knows how to captivate his audience, peppering his philosophical advice with star-studded anecdotes. Whether he's detailing why virtually every leading actor turned down the lead in *Misery* before James Caan offered to be drug-tested to get the part, or how Michael Douglas

was the perfect producer but the wrong actor for *The Ghost and the Darkness*, Goldman offers keen observations in a chatty style. In the last section of the book, he gamely offers readers a rough first draft of an original screenplay. Even more bravely, he includes instructive, intuitive and sometimes scathing critiques by fellow screenwriters, including Peter and Bobby Farrelly (*There's Something About Mary*), Callie Khouri (*Thelma & Louise*) and John Patrick Shanley (*Moonstruck*). Movie buffs of all stripes, even those with no interest in writing for the screen, will enjoy this sublimely entertaining adventure. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

If you are interested in writing, you must read this book. I can't begin to give a summary because the book is more like a stream-of-thought thesis than a structured narrative. It includes fascinating anecdotes, tangible writing tips, dissection of existing works, and insight from other successful writers. That Goldman pulls this off (this unstructured narrative full of screenwriting advice) is nothing short of amazing. And he doesn't just pull it off, he makes it shine. If it sounds like I am a William Goldman fanboy, it's probably because I am. A brand new one, mind you - this is the first of his writing I have ever read. But he is unique and interesting and, in my opinion, genius. Read this book. You will not be disappointed! (Interesting aside: I started reading this book because someone somewhere mentioned that Mr. Goldman claims to have written the *Good Will Hunting* script in this book. In fact, he says just the opposite, but because he uses sarcasm, it seems that some people have misinterpreted his comments.)

Ok, this is the best book about screenwriting EVER written, and tied for the best book about how Hollywood really works (with "*The Kid Stays in the Picture*" by Robert Evans - if you don't know who he is, give up -- film, Hollywood, and great storytelling are NOT for you!) -- Mr Goldman even wrote a screenplay just for this book, which he includes to show you how it's done, and though I think the screenplay is NOT really good, meaning it would not really make a great movie, Mr Goldman is so good at writing, that you believe it is a great screenplay, may even be tempted to finish it, and will absolutely learn more than you ever knew about how to write a screenplay from reading it -- this book is a masterpiece, and Mr Goldman IS a master screenwriter, sort of the Mozart of screenwriting! I can't recommend it highly enough -- 100 out of 10!!!!

Really a tremendous read. I bought this book to better understand the frame narrative of *The Princess Bride* - written also by William Goldman. As a novelist, not a screenwriter, I wasn't sure how much to expect, but was tremendously surprised how much I enjoyed this book, and how much

of an in-depth, behind the curtains look Goldman gives at the Hollywood industry of screenwriting. If you're a writer, a reader, a Goldman fan or a film fanatic, this is for you. Far from being a theoretical text, Goldman delivers his own personal stories, his own insights into the film business as retold from his stellar career (which included two Academy Awards), extracts from his own screenplays and those of other well-established Hollywood writers, and an all round humorous approach to what is often viewed as a dry sort of process. A great read. And one that makes me want to read the first of the series.

I'm a huge fan of Goldman's books and most of his screenplays, and the original *Adventures in the Screen Trade* still stands as the definitive how-Hollywood-works primer. It's great to have him deconstructing the industry once again, praising some unlikely subjects--who would think the 67-year old author of *Marathon Man* would have picked the Farrelly brothers' *There's Something About Mary* as 1998's best film?--and attacking even more unlikely subjects--would you expect the screenwriter of *A Bridge Too Far* to loathe *Saving Private Ryan*? Goldman does, and how.) I have two key problems with *Which Lie Did I Tell*, however. One is, many Goldman fans will have seen a lot of this text before. Much of this material has appeared in *Premiere Magazine* over the years, as well as in collections of Goldman's screenplays. Long-time Goldman enthusiasts, then, might be a bit miffed about buying recycled material. My other misgiving is Goldman's tendency to rely too much on *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* when he's trying to get a point across. The original *Adventures*, remember, included the complete *Butch* screenplay and a lot of background material about the real-life duo and the making of the film. So it's disconcerting to see scene after scene from *Butch* used in the new book, along with many of the same anecdotes Goldman told us the first time around. On the other hand, if you're going to use a single film for a lot of your examples of screenwriting, you could do a lot worse than an Oscar-winning Western classic. So, if you read (and liked) *Adventures in the Screen Trade* and haven't read Goldman's movie pieces elsewhere, give this review an extra star and give *Which Lie Did I Tell* a try. If you know every line of *Adventures* and sought out everything Goldman has written since then, you might consider waiting for the paperback. (Hey, he's rich and his children are grown, no one's going to starve if you pass on the hardcover.)

You want to know the "real" Hollywood just ask (or read in this case) William Goldman.

I learned lot from this, Goldman is a genius. I can't say enough about him, he's a must read for all.

Got just a tiny bit boring as time went on. Not up to his 'Adventures in the Screen Trade', which is a gem.

Goldman is the master. Not only is he a great screenwriter and novelist, he also writes great nonfiction. But when you're talking about behind the scenes Hollywood, who better to tell it than William Goldman? I've already read it twice and I'm sure I'll read it again some day.

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