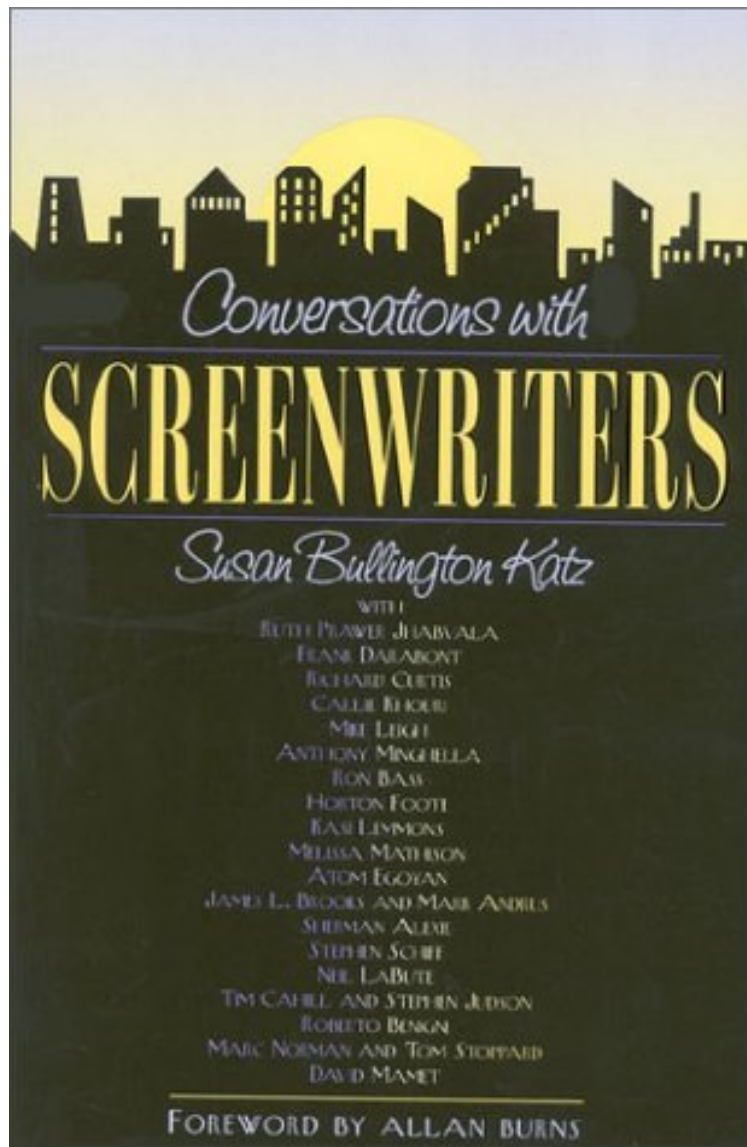


Conversations with Screenwriters

Susan Bullington Katz
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Susan Bullington Katz : Conversations with Screenwriters before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Conversations with Screenwriters:

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Wow!By Ian AbramsA marvelous book for writers-- I ordered copies as Christmas presents for all of my writing students.6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Tops of its kindBy CustomerOK, I'm prejudiced. I read many of these interviews in the versions that were published in the Writers Guild of America's magazine and thought they were terrific. I called up my editor at Heinemann and told her

that she should get in touch with Susan Katz and collect them into a book. My editor (who is obviously quite smart) did and it makes a swell book indeed. Katz is a screenwriter talking to screenwriters about writing; she asks questions from the perspective of an insider and gets real answers as opposed to the surfacey stuff you tend to get in shorter newspaper interviews. My favorite? Probably the slightly testy interview with Mike Leigh talking about how he used improvisational input from his cast in creating *SECRETS AND LIES*. (But then, I'm particularly interested in improv used for writing.) There isn't an ounce of fat in this book. Smart, useful stuff. 9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. An excellent book! Not just for writers, but for all! By A Customer This is a collection of interviews with famous screenwriters, such as David Mamet, Tom Stoppard, Callie Khouri, Horton Foote, Anthony Minghella, etc. If you want to really feel as though you, yourself, have had a wonderful conversation with these infamous screenwriters, this is the book for you. Ms. Bullington Katz has an extraordinary talent for asking just the right questions and truly listening to the answers, and I have never read such compelling, engrossing interviews in any book before. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves books, writing, movies, tv, and/or just reading a terrifically well written book! I can't wait until she has another book coming out!

Susan Katz, in conversation with some of the top screenwriters working today, gives us an insider's look into the art, craft and business of screenwriting.

"...Susan has a knack for posing questions that get the answers we all want to hear." -- Allan Burns "Collected from the pages of *Written By* magazine, these interviews with screenwriters by Susan Bullington Katz provide insight into the wildly different processes by which writers produce their stories for the motion-picture screen. In all, 22 award-winning screenwriters are engaged in informal but revealing conversations with Katz, who has a deceptively simple but fruitful way of handling an interview. In his foreword to this collection, screenwriter Alan Burns notes, 'Someone once said that a critic is a person who comes onto the battlefield after the war and shoots all the wounded. The person who said that was a writer.' Katz knows all about a writer's wounds, and she's gotten her subjects to discuss their own with great candor. Compiling these interviews over the course of five years, Katz notes that 'not one of them said about the actual act of writing that it's easy.' Ruth Praver Jhabvala, who has adapted literary works such as 'A Room with a View' and 'Howard's End' for film, relates that while writing, 'I really don't think much about it, how it's going to be in a film. I just think, 'How are these two characters going to interact with each other?' I know it can't be the same as on the page in a novel - it must be much more direct and the language has to be simpler.' Writer/director Frank Darabont, who has adapted Stephen King's 'The Shawshank Redemption' and 'The Green Mile' for the big screen (along with Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'), describes the payoff a filmmaker gets when an audience responds to his work: 'There's nothing like pushing all those buttons as you go through the story and have the audience react the way you decided a year and a half ago they were supposed to react,' he says. 'There's nothing better than surprising them and hearing them gasp, or amusing them and hearing them laugh, or touching them and hearing them sniffle. That is the best.' Katz asks writer/director Mike Leigh how he makes the audience care about his characters. 'I can only make you care,' responds Leigh, 'by caring about them myself.' For Leigh, the writing of the shooting script comes out of working with the actors to explore the world of their characters in rehearsal. For his Academy Award-winning film 'Secrets Lies,' Leigh rehearsed for five months before finalizing his script and shooting. Anthony Minghella describes how he left the novel 'The English Patient' by Michael Ondaatje behind in adapting it to screenplay form. 'I think the job of the screenwriter is much more architectural than it is a work of poetry,' he says. Minghella believes that a script is a map that a filmmaker can use to create cinematic poetry; he beautifully compares a writer's inspiration to looking into a drawer which is only open for about two or three seconds every day. 'There's a lot of time spent roaming, waiting for the drawer to slide open,' he says, 'then you see some lines and write them down quickly as you can, and the drawer slams.' Minghella notes that sometimes the drawer stays open for hours, or 'days will go by where the drawer never opens.' Katz's interview with Horton Foote, the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of 'To Kill a Mockingbird' and 'Tender Mercies,' is an object lesson in the power of persistence. 'Don't ever give up on something,' says Foote. 'You just can't, because you just never know.' Foote's 1953 television play 'The Trip to Bountiful' took 32 years to make it to the big screen. Writer/director Atom Egoyan, whose films include 'Exotica,' 'The Sweet Hereafter' and 'Felicia's Journey,' has always been intrigued by the things people can't say. Not surprisingly, his heroes are playwrights Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter. 'I've always loved the silence and pause, where there would be extended moments where the viewer or the reader would have to imagine what was unsaid,' he offers. This fine collection of interviews is highly recommended for anyone interested in how the filmmaking process begins." -- American Cinematographer magazine, March, 2001 (review by Ray Zone) This fine collection of interviews is highly recommended for anyone interested in how the filmmaking process begins. -- American Cinematographer, March, 2001 About the Author Susan Bullington Katz is a writer and screenwriter whose monthly interviews with screenwriters appeared for years in "Written By," the journal of the Writers Guild of America, west, and earned her a 1999 Maggie Award nomination for "best interview." As a writer and producer of entertainment news, she works with CNN, Showtime, and Sundance Channel. Her articles have appeared in the Washington Post, the L.A. Times, Woman's Day, Premiere, TV Guide,

Southern Magazine, USA Today, Newsday, and dozens more. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, she also went to Duke Drama in playwriting.