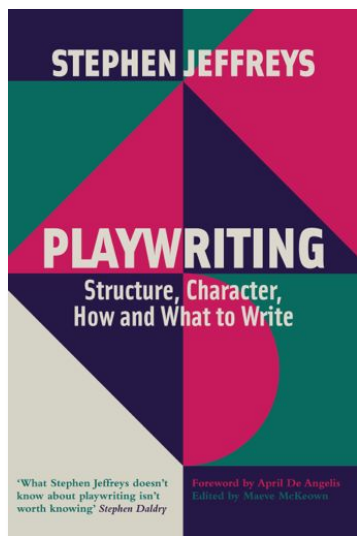


Nick Hern Books publishes...

The complete guide to playwriting, by a master of the craft



Playwriting

Structure, Character, How and What to Write

by **Stephen Jeffreys**

An authoritative guide to the craft of playwriting, based on the author's highly influential Masterclasses

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For over two decades, Stephen Jeffreys's remarkable series of workshops attracted writers from all over the world and shaped the ideas of many of today's leading playwrights and theatre-makers. Now, with this inspiring, highly practical book, you too can learn from these acclaimed Masterclasses.

Playwriting reveals the various invisible frameworks and mechanisms that are at the heart of each and every successful play. Drawing on a huge range of sources, it deconstructs playwriting into its constituent parts, and offers illuminating insights into:

- **Structure** – an in-depth exploration of the fundamental elements of drama, enabling you to choose instinctively the most effective structure for your play
- **Character** – advice on how to generate and write credible characters by exploring their three essential dimensions: story, breadth and depth
- **How to Write** – techniques for writing great dialogue, dynamic scenes and compelling subtext, including how to improve your writing by approaching it from unfamiliar directions
- **What to Write** – how to adopt different approaches to finding your material, how to explore the fundamental 'Nine Stories', and how to evaluate the potential of your ideas

Written by a true master of the craft, this authoritative guide will provide playwrights at every level of experience with a rich array of tools to apply to their own work.

This edition, edited by Maeve McKeown, includes a Foreword by April De Angelis.

'What Stephen Jeffreys doesn't know about playwriting isn't worth knowing'

Stephen Daldry

'Stephen Jeffreys is as important a teacher as he is brilliant a writer... Without him, I wouldn't have been able to write the plays that I have written'

Simon Stephens

'An incredibly useful writing helpmeet. As witty and humane as its author'

Emma Thompson

'What Stephen taught me has shaped my mind and I have shared this with countless writers' Kwame Kwei-Armah

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About the author



Stephen Jeffreys' plays include *The Libertine* and *I Just Stopped By to See the Man* (Royal Court); *Valued Friends* and *A Going Concern* (Hampstead); *Bugles at the Gates of Jalalabad* (part of the Tricycle Theatre's Great Game season about Afghanistan); *The Convict's Opera* (Out of Joint); *Lost Land* (starring John Malkovich, Steppenwolf, Chicago); *The Art of War* (Sydney Theatre Company) and *A Jovial Crew* (Royal Shakespeare Company). His adaptation of Dickens's *Hard Times* has been performed all over the world.

He wrote the films *The Libertine* (starring Johnny Depp) and *Diana* (starring Naomi Watts). He co-authored the Beatles musical *Backbeat* which opened at the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, and went on to seasons in London's West End, Toronto and Los Angeles, and translated *The Magic Flute* for English National Opera in Simon McBurney's production.

For twelve years Stephen was Literary Associate at the Royal Court Theatre where he was a member of the Council. His celebrated playwriting workshops influenced numerous writers, and provided the material for his book *Playwriting*, which he was working on right up until his early death in 2018. His plays are published by Nick Hern Books.

Further praise for *Playwriting*

'Stephen was a true mentor... I still draw upon much of what he taught me today' Abi Morgan

'Like a bird in the air, Stephen was utterly in his element as a teacher. We sat spellbound' Phyllida Lloyd

'I had the great pleasure of working with Stephen on his play *The Libertine*. Would that all playwrights had his openness, his talent, his hard-headedness, his experience, his enthusiasm, his audacity, his complexity, and perhaps best of all his talent and interest in eliciting the best in others' John Malkovich

'Stephen's wit was legendary. "Wit": from the proto-Indo-European word "weid" meaning "to see"/"to know". Stephen "saw" clearly and "knew" profoundly; which is why we sought out the clarity of his words and learned deeply from his laughter' Simon McBurney

'Stephen was more than just a great bloke whose easy laugh set a room alight; he was a genuine geek, an obsessive about the craft of writing... As I read, I was reminded again of his deep connection to plays and how they work. There are gems in here, there is guidance, there is the spirit of Stephen Jeffreys'
April De Angelis

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