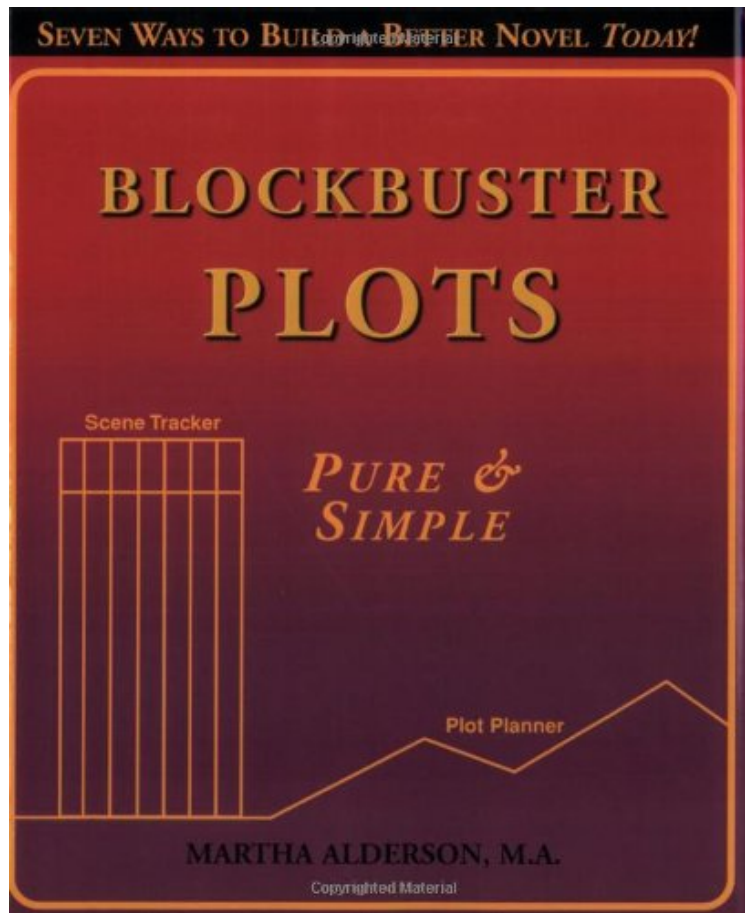


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Blockbuster Plots: Pure Simple

Martha Alderson

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Martha Alderson : Blockbuster Plots: Pure Simple before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blockbuster Plots: Pure Simple:

32 of 32 people found the following review helpful. A Great Tool to Have! By Livvy This is my first time giving a review for a book. I was compelled to do so because my expectations for the book were high based on past ratings. Was the book and the author's tools for plotting helpful? Yes and No. Let me explain my take on it. The scene tracker, although simplistic, listed some areas that one should chart in order to be aware of gaps that one may have in certain scenes. I especially liked the concept of tracking the emotional change and how important it is to have "change" and "conflict" in each scene or it needs to be reevaluated or discarded. I give the book 2 stars just for learning that aspect/tool in scene tracker. There is more to scene tracker, however, I will not give it away. You'll have to buy the book. The scene tracker makes the purchase of the book worth it. On Plot Planner, the only thing I found helpful was connecting individual scenes together above below the plot planner to make a line if only each consecutive scene can be connected thru cause and effect. If not, then again, those scenes need to be reevaluated or discarded. For bringing

that "Aha" into light, I give the book another star. However, the book notes under the PLOT PLANNER section on how to plot THEME and EMOTIONAL Development. The author only records those aspects under scene tracker. SHE DOES NOT track it under the PLOT PLANNER. Unless I failed to understand her diagrams; theme and emotional development are not tracked on the PLOT PLANNER. She refers back to her SCENE TRACKER for those 2 aspects. So in essence, it is not the PLOT PLANNER that is tracking them but Scene tracker. I guess that would be fine with THEME, as you can make a connection with all the Theme points for each scene and come out with an overall sense of what the theme is or what scenes support the theme. But I fail to understand how the Emotional Change in each scene can demonstrate the protagonist's character arc or journey of emotional changes on the whole through the scene tracker (although it works for each individual scene). But the author's premise is that it is tied into the PLOT PLANNER and I didn't see where she connected those aspects into that tool. What is recorded under PLOT PLANNER is just a visual of individual scenes divided by the beginning, middle, and end sections of the story. All in all, still a valuable tool, but I already had some knowledge of this. However, throughout the book, the author spreads out tidbits of basic information on plot and the such which is helpful for the novice which I would have liked if she had delve into more detail. She tickled my palette for more knowledge. I guess the supposed beauty of the book lies in it's simplicity. However, she gets off tangent in several areas (saying that she has gotten ahead of herself) and if you seek clarification of what she is talking about she refers to you to her DVD or website or she just barely touches the surface on it. In fact, almost every other page, along the side bars, her DVD is mentioned. The book at times seems like a disguise for marketing her DVD. I understand that authors need to self promote, but the amount of self promotion in this book became distracting. Perhaps just putting a footer on each alternate page with her website address would have been more appropriate than on the sidebars. In addition, she left alot of white space on the sidebars which could have been utilized more efficiently to dispell more information. If anyone has seen her dvds, please post a review and let me know how you liked it. I'm tempted to buy one, hoping that she does go in deeper with her tools. I think she made a very good attempt to what she was trying to accomplish when she started the book with the SCENE TRACKER (EXCELLENT tool that can be really tailored to suit your needs and she does emphasize that). But once she got into the PLOT PLANNER, I think she needs to clarify it a bit more and make the examples at the appendix more coherent in the sections of theme and emotional development. Overall, its a good book to have for a reference. The scene tracker is excellent and having more developed examples of the plot planner with more detailed explanations would have been golden. Her website and Blog has a wealth of information that is basically a reiteration of about 1/3 of her book. I have emailed her requesting clarification on some of the above and will update my review according to her response. *****UPDATE - October 12th*****Martha Responded to me on her Blog! She explained how the Character's Emotional Development Theme can be tracked through the plot planner. It was so simple that I simply overlooked it. Along with her website, her book delivers! It is great to see an author who supports what they have written in such expedited fashion. If would give me the ability, I would upgrade my rating from 3 to 4 stars. Not 5 you may ask? Well, the self promotion needs to be cut a bit (lol) and it would be more helpful to have color examples of her tools to see how she tracks the different aspects of plot, and for her to expand a bit more on what she delves in the book (like how she does on her site). There's just so much good stuff in her book, but she doesn't go into it as deeply as I would have liked. But overall, I am very pleased. Any further explanation you might need, you can find on her site and blog. Her tools are excellent. I highly recommend. 2 other books that I would also recommend to supplement with the Plot Planner is Dara Mark's "Inside Story: Power of the Transformational Arc". Also, a great book on Endings which also gives an overview to story structure is Drew Yanno's "The 3RD Act". It is simple and to the point and the 30 question checklist at the end of the book makes it a good investment! Happy Plotting! 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A Tremendous Tool for those who Author their work. By M. P. Sebar I doubt you will find a better tool. As many who set out to create their literary work can attest to, plotting can be a real bear. This is not always the case, there are a lucky few of us who have no problems plotting, but a great many who do. Essentially what this book does is give you a way to structure your work and plot it chapter by chapter. It by no means is the only way, but a very fine one. It also can be an aid to those of us who have published or authroed work in the past, because it allows us a new and successful approach. The author does pitch some products here and there (and who doesn't these days), but that aside, they do have a support site that adds a greater value to the book. I own many writing and literary research books, and this is one that focuses primarily on the art of plotting, and it does so extremely well. My advise after authoring since 1975, to newer authors, authors who are stuck and even established authors, is this is a tool that can only help. Since I find there is never enough writing books, I highly recommend this as you will never know some time if you are stuck in your literary endeavors, that a chapter might help you out, and that is certainly much cheaper than hiring outside help or worst yet, doing nothing! 23 of 25 people found the following review helpful. a simple method of tracking and planning conventional novel By John C. Dunbar The author has devised a method to track scenes that is similar to what others have proposed in the past. However, the author then uses that analysis to have you guide and improve your plot. It is this second area that is both simple and unique. There are many other books on writing that go much deeper into the development of the novel and various aspects of plotting. But this book does a very good job of simplifying that process. I think it makes a great methodology for a beginning writer or for

one that is hopelessly lost in organizing his or her plot. If applied, a prospective author should be able to turn out a conventional novel. Upon reflection I first thought that the book didn't warrant a 4 star because it lacked depth, but then I concluded that the simplicity of the plot framework is probably more than most authors use, and thus would be a great help to authors. I was pleased to see that the author had a web site that supported the book. However, mid-way through the book I had already read too many promotional messages about buying things at the web site. Also, the book had so much white space that it looked like the author was stretching to meet a page count with a small manuscript. Overall, I liked the book, will use it, and recommend it to others. Critics might call it "simplistic," satisfied readers would call it "essential plot rules, easy to apply."

Blockbuster Plots Pure and Simple (BBP) shows plot rather than talking about it. Using two unique step-by-step visual tools for developing and deepening scenes and plot, BBP shows how the pros layer three distinct yet overlapping plotlines Character Emotional Development, Dramatic Action, and Thematic Plot. When the dramatic action changes the character at depth over time, the story becomes thematically significant. BBP uses the Scene Tracker as a visual tool to track the seven essential elements of scene, side-by-side from the beginning to the end of any project. BBP uses the Plot Planner as a visual place to plot out the action, character and thematic plotlines. Both parts are intended as a step-by-step interactive guide for writers interested in maximizing their scenes and providing depth to their stories. BBP is unique because of its hands-on, down-to-earth multi-sensory approach to learning. BBP provides specific activities linked directly to each writer's individual project. The book is divided between explanation and activity forms. By analyzing scenes and plots from classic and contemporary writers such as Twain, London, and McCarthy, writers learn how to add a dynamic, effective twist to their work. BBP provides writers with the tools and resources to get from where they are stuck and unable to begin or stuck and unable to finish to where they want to be holding a finished project. BBP effectively demonstrates the relationship between scene and plot and explains the principles involved in the art and craft of developing sizzling scenes and compelling plots and story design. BBP offers techniques to help writers maintain faith and enjoy the process of creation.

"Few writers teachers understand the subtleties of plot as deeply, or can explain them as clearly. A must have." -- Frank Baldwin, author of *Balling the Jack* and *Jake Mimi* "This book will change your approach to writing! If you only buy one writing book this year, buy BLOCKBUSTER PLOTS!" -- Melanie Rigney, former *Writers Digest Magazine* editor. May, 2004 A good-looking, important book for writers. -- Literary Agent, Kimberly Cameron 7/15/05 Any writer seeking to produce not just acceptable but superior works must have this guide. -- Midwest Book 10/1/05 If you only buy one writing book this year, buy BLOCKBUSTER PLOTS! -- *Writer's Digest Magazine* editor Melanie Rigney 5/1/04 The appendices alone are worth the price of the book! -- Alderson-Broadbent Colleges Division of Humanities, Barbara Smith 6/1/05 The unique Scene Tracker and Plot Planner system is guaranteed to help writers master this elusive craft. -- McGraw-Hill 9/1/05 From the Publisher An exciting new approach to understanding plot from writing expert, Martha Alderson, M.A., the unique Scene Tracker and Plot Planner system is guaranteed to help writers master this elusive craft. About the Book For most writers, the most difficult part of the writing process is the inability to see the forest for the trees. *Blockbuster Plots* dedicates itself to the structure of plot and has already helped hundreds of novelists, memoirists, and creative non-fiction writers master this elusive craft. Written by an educational expert and award-winning novelist, *Blockbuster Plots* offers writers a firm understanding of scene, and presents techniques that will help them develop a winning storyline. Introducing two innovative tools the Scene Tracker and Plot Planner the author shows writers how to create a visual representation of the layers of their story and consequently see what's missing, and anticipate their characters every move, so that the dramatic action doesn't peter off into the seductive wiles of detail. By effectively demonstrating the relationship between plot and scene and explaining the art of story design, *Blockbuster Plots* offers writers proven techniques for creating more focused and balanced plotlines. Features Unique in the marketplace: no other fiction writing guide offers tools like the Scene Tracker and Plot Planner. From the Author Plot is a series of scenes arranged by cause and effect to create dramatic action filled with tension, conflict and suspense to further the character emotional development and create thematic significance. Are you confused about plot? You are not alone. It took me years to pin down plot. I longed for something more concrete, not a formula per se, but specific guidelines to help bring depth to my story lines. I searched for anything I could find that directly addressed the issue of plot development. Unable to find much, I berated myself for not grasping what everyone else seemed to understand. But the muse continued to haunt me. Over time, I came to realize that everyone else was struggling with plot; they just were not talking about it. Through years of perseverance and determination, I pinned down the elusive concept of plot to the point where I could actually "see" it. Wanting to save others the frustration I had experienced and using what I know about how people learn, I started teaching plot to writers. *BLOCKBUSTER PLOTS Pure Simple (BBP)* came out of that passion. The techniques I offer in BBP have helped hundreds of writers create dramatic action plots and heighten tension and suspense in scenes as well as in the overall project. In workshops and private plot consultations, I have witnessed what happens when writers delve more deeply into the dynamics of cause and effect. If you explore how well-constructed characters in conflict act as the driving

force behind an exceptional story, you will be better able to create your own exceptional stories. Explore the themes of your own life, and your projects will have lasting meaning. My intention in writing BBP is to help you understand plot quickly and effortlessly. Writing is challenging enough. I am passionate about eliminating for writers the frustration of something as basic as plot.