An Especially Interesting Page on Various Subjects

Prepared for all Classes of People in all Walks of Life

Building a Successful Photoplay

A Series of Practical Articles for Those Who Would Write Successful Scenarios.

WHY DO SCENARIOS FAIL?

(By Gardner Hunting, Production Editor Eastern Studios, Famous Players—Lasky Corporation).

First of all, for the benefit of those who do not know we will explain the meaning of continuity which is a technical phrase. It is the script, or scenario written for the guidance of the director, arranged by scenes telling the story in action and titles as it is to appear on the screen.

Continuity writing is as important as writing for the face. It is the basis of the picture and requires in the writer constructive ability and genuine authorship. A continuity writer must be able to tell a story adequately, effectively, dramatically and with power. He must be able to arrange the material in the most effective way, to invent effective incident and supply interesting human business, both in and novel.

The Great Need

The need now is not so much quantity, but continuity, a matter of point of view rather than of straining for unusual efforts. Better result would be forthcoming if writers would watch and write from life about them, the ordinary life, not the unusual life—as they themselves see it, and their pictures would be more alive.

There is a vast difference between merely telling incidents, and making the picture seem like a bit of actuality. Unless the writer puts human stuff into the continuity we see a picture in which actors merely go through bits of motion or exhibiting their so called lines of trick, without a spark of real life of the kind that thrills the imagination and the heart. For this result the writer is to be blamed more than the director.

Most continuities we receive from amateurs have little evidence of careful study and thinking. It seems almost inconceivable that they are serious in their ambitions. They simply watching the pictures on the screen, and have not taken the time to grasp the basic principle of photoplay writing. I cannot understand how one, having ambition to write for the screen, can fail to research a little.

Advice to Writers

My advice to would writers is not to try to write for the screen because it is a more easy profession and sold to be well paid. Study the craft. Don't try unless you are ready to give everything you have to the effort. If there ever was a time when continuity could be dashed off without forethought or afterthought, that time is long since past.

It takes brains, judgment and good hard work to succeed at continuity writing as at any other occupation that is worth while. Occasionally a brilliant fellow may win notice by a fluke, but sooner or later he will have to knuckle down and work. He will have to study, think and create.

The qualities of eagerness, earnest ness, sincerity and purpose are, as a rule, to be preferred in a writer, rather than brilliancy. The best continuity writers are those who have had experience and success in fiction writing, for the reason that they have learned how to tell a story in the most effective way. Knowledge of the technique, and of writing for the screen can be gained in comparatively short time, provided one has the story to tell in mind. But a continuity writer must be a story teller who has a story and can invent, and tell it so that others will love it.

Teachers in our art schools say that anyone can learn to draw. They refer to making lines on paper with pencil or other. But this sort of drawing does not make one an artist, until he is able to put that something into his work that conveys a vision or meaning to the spectator.

Fails to Produce

A continuity writer who merely writes scenes fails to produce a vital entertainment picture, until he put this over—put something right out of life, the kind of life that will carry a message from his mind and heart to the minds and hearts of others. The have been of a keener and more interesting and attractive, but when it comes to the "Good and bad's" [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]