

How to Adapt a Screenplay into a Novel

[by Jeanne Veillette Bowerman](#)

Turning your screenplay into a novel isn't as hard as you think. The biggest challenge is getting past the fear of trying something new. Allow me to walk you through how I take my screenplays and breathe new life into them in novel form.

1. No need to outline! The hard part is done. You already have a script with structure and characters. That's an incredibly detailed outline for a novel!

2. Decide on a Point of View. As screenwriters, we always write in the third person, but if you're writing a novel, you can decide whose point of view you want to tell it in... the antagonist, the protagonist, the third person or the first person. You can even use a different character's point of view for each chapter. Your story could be more interesting told from a specific character's perspective.

3. Start with a skeleton. Take your script and write it out into the prose of a novel, one scene at a time. Don't worry about descriptive prose or crawling into the characters' heads yet. Just get the basic story down into novel form. The average novel is 80,000 word count (but can be more or less, depending on the genre). Once you get the skeleton of your story down, you'll have a better idea of how far off you are from the mark.

4. Beef it up. Now is the time for fun! The benefit we have as screenwriters is our natural ability to write visually. Take off your screenwriting shackles and let loose with the flowery prose and with crawling inside your characters' heads, telling their thoughts and feelings... things we can never do as screenwriters! At first, it won't seem natural, but in time, I promise, you'll start enjoying the freedom to explore your story mentally as well as visually.

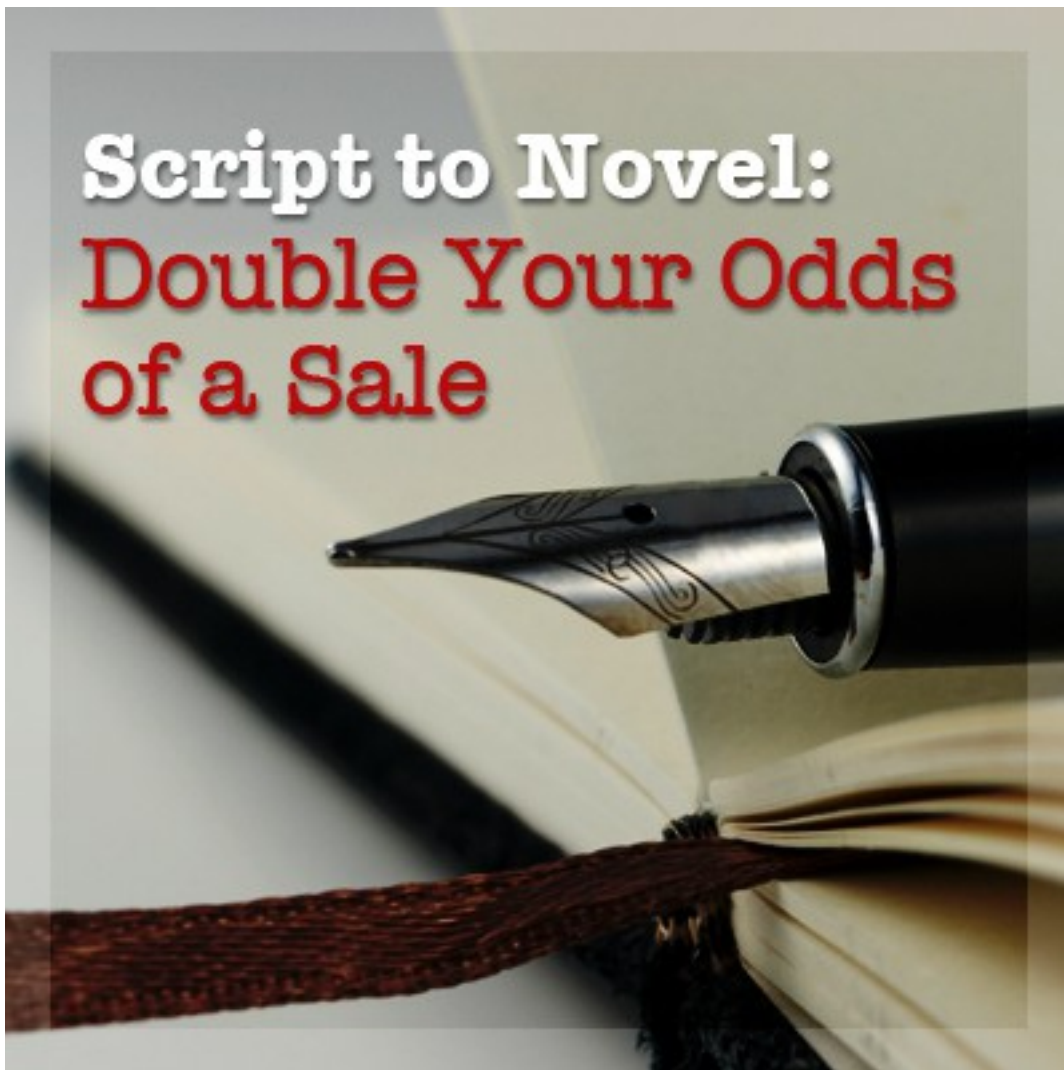
5. Fill in the holes. Screenwriters are trained to write lean and mean. Go back and find those darlings you had to cut in order to get your script to the 110-page sweet spot. Oh yeah, you can add those suckers back in! You can even add other subplots and characters; though I'd still be sure any subplot you add relates to the theme of your story.

To be clear, I'm not suggesting you write the next *War and Peace*. Quite the opposite. A lot of successful, self-published ebooks are written efficiently in order to make the books a quick read. The readers of today often want to read a book in one sitting. As a screenwriter, you're the perfect writer to take advantage of that market!

Bottom-line: It's hard to get a script produced, especially in this economy. But as a novelist, you CAN get your work in the public, even by self-publishing, and possibly get interest in your script from the exposure.

You really have nothing to lose. In fact, you might even discover you're good at being a novelist and branch out into a new form of writing. As I always say, writers write. My new career plan is to write both novels and scripts. I want to move people with my words, and I can't do that if they're sitting on my hard drive waiting to get produced.

Now get writing!



Script to Novel: Double Your Odds of a Sale Webinar

At a Glance:

- On Demand webinar on adapting your screenplay into a publishable novel.
- Learn methodology for identifying critical scenes, and how to create a more compelling story, engaging characters, and evocative setting for the novel.
- Learn how to leverage your story's potential in both film and literary markets to effectively double your odds of a sale.

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