

# Nick Hornby's guide to screenwriting

The author of *About A Boy* and *Fever Pitch* shares five top tips from writing the screenplay for *An Education*.



## 1 STAY FRESH

*An Education* isn't the first screenplay I've written that wasn't based on my work. There have been all sorts of aborted projects in my career. But this is the first script where I've adapted someone else's work that actually got made. It not being mine is an attraction... The idea of spending a couple of years on a novel and then gutting it to create a script is a seriously unattractive prospect now. I'd rather do something fresh.



## 2 FIND INSPIRATION

I read Lynn Barber's piece in *Granta* [An Education's source material] in the bathtub and suggested to Amanda [Posey, Hornby's producer wife] it might make a good film. For me, this is another version of *Fever Pitch* – it's about the relationship between a suburban kid and the city. Lynn's story is only 10 pages so I had to flesh it out. Her ending didn't reach a high enough pitch for cinema. It was more a narrow escape than a crisis. It was a bit pathetic in terms of a screenplay.



## 3 USE PERIOD DETAIL

Britain was right on the cusp of this great flowering in the early '60s, which had already happened in America. The experience of being an English teenager in the '50s was one of waiting for the bus in the rain, not driving around in convertibles. I liked creating a slightly alien world – a bright teenager at that time, their relationship was with Europe, not America. Truffaut, Camus, Juliette Gréco, Alain Delon – that's what was going on for these kids before *The Beatles*.



## 4 EDIT AND RE-EDIT

I saw a cut of the film before it was finished and there were things that needed fixing. The final voiceover wasn't in the script so I wrote it. The next time I saw it was at Sundance, which was a strange but wonderful experience – strange in that it seemed miraculous to me that we'd been invited to Sundance at all. I didn't think we would be their sort of film. Then having got there, I thought we would sink without trace. But suddenly we became a film that people were talking about.







**5 WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW**  
 I will carry on writing scripts but I'll have to come across something that I feel as personally connected to as *An Education*. I wouldn't just take the money to do something willy-nilly and I certainly won't be writing Hollywood blockbusters. Everything I write is about relationships so tends to be small-scale – there's more of a chance they'd ask me to take on a literary novel. But I'm in no hurry. I'll wait for the right thing. **MM**

*An Education* opens on 30 October. For the latest features and video check out [tinyurl.com/tfeduc](http://tinyurl.com/tfeduc)



## THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: VOYAGE OF THE DAWN TREADER

**ETA DECEMBER 2010 Ship ahoy!**

What's this? The new ride at Chessington? Nope – these are the very first shots of *The Dawn Treader*, the ship from the next in the *Narnia* franchise, which has started principal photography on the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia. The *Narnia* franchise was dropped by Disney last year, but under Fox's steerage *Voyage Of The Dawn Treader* could be set to sail. Michael Apted (*Enigma*, *The World Is Not Enough*) takes the helm and, as well as the original cast returning (including Ben Barnes, who's now King Caspian), *Son of Rambow*'s Will Poulter joins the crew as the Pevensie kids' cousin, Eustace. Swallowed by a magical painting, the gang find themselves aboard the Dawn Treader, once again charged with the task of saving Narnia. "He took a nine-year-old boy's imagination," producer Mark Johnson told Buzz of his co-producer Andrew Adamson's vision. "He saw things that are not even in the book." Could be a fun ride. **LO**



**ADAMSON HAS A CHILD'S IMAGINATION. HE SAW THINGS THAT ARE NOT EVEN IN THE BOOK**

## THE INSIDER

**Our man in LA on music, food and... alien love?**

You'll often find actors playing with bands – Jack Black, Juliette Lewis, Jason Schwartzman – but it's not every director who's willing to get his groove on. Jason Reitman, however, is an exception. The *Juno* director has just finished his latest film *Up In The Air* and he's been letting off steam by crafting musical mash-ups as a DJ with regular collaborator Mateo Messina in LA Clubs like Cinespace.

If Reitman get's peckish after a sweaty set he could do worse than getting a snack off a burger van. But we're not talking greasy burgers off a man in a hairnet. LA has taken it to a new level, boasting not only vehicles from famous California chains like In-N-Out Burger, but becoming

a big celebrity favourite as stars have them swing by film sets to keep the crew supplied. Bet the craft service team was thrilled.

No love for excessive burger munchers at a recent LA event though – the French-founded alien-worshipping cult Raëliism held a "topless festival" down Venice Beach (a place known for exhibitionism but not necessarily constant nudity). And it wasn't just ladies. Shudder... Moobs. Just another weird day in Venice, folks...



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