

I've mentioned before that my love for movies slightly outweighs my love for books. There's something special about being able to pop a bag of popcorn, put on a movie you've never seen before (or revisit an old favorite), and watch characters come to life. For those of us who are easily distracted, that's way less intimidating and much less of a time commitment than opening up a novel. Of course, there are others in this world who have the superpower to read with a kind of tunnel vision. Just this past Sunday, I witnessed, yet again, Brenna read two books in the span of eight hours. I wish I had that kind of power; I feel good about myself if I am able to finish just one book in a month! There are readers and there are watchers, and book to movie adaptations are often a middle ground. With every new adaptation that comes along, the purists insist on reading the book before watching the movie, and the more impatient ones (like me) get the reward of watching without the work. For better or worse, movies are an excellent way for many without the time to read every page to still appreciate works of literature.

Some books are so cinematic in style, description, and subject matter that Hollywood producers start seeing dollar signs as soon as they're released. Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy rises to the top of this genre; an instant classic that is universally adored. Other novels turned into masterpieces include Stephen King's *The Green Mile*, Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*, John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. I could list many others, but if this article was only about successful adaptations, it wouldn't be nearly as much fun. For every *Lord of the Rings* there are two others that are so bad it begs the question, "Did the people who made this actually read the book?" This is where, perhaps, skipping the pre-movie book speed read is an advantage - at least you won't know how bad the adaptation turned out!

*Eragon*, the young adult fantasy novel by Christopher Paolini, was adored by many teen readers when it was published in 2002. The combination of magic, dragons, and a sweeping fantasy epic was irresistible and seemed ripe for a cinematic adaptation. However, the 2006 movie of the same name, directed by Stefen Fangmeier in his directorial debut, was an enormous flop. With a plot that barely resembled the beloved book, over-the-top acting, and truly terrible CGI effects, viewers were not impressed and the planned sequels never materialized. Hopefully a new adaptation will grace our screens in the future!

Continuing the trend of young adult fantasy novels not quite translating to the big screen, *The Golden Compass* (2007) wasn't the most successful. Despite an incredibly stacked cast (Nicole Kidman, Daniel Craig, Sam Elliott, and Christopher Lee, plus the voice talents of Ian Mackellan and Kathy Bates), the film didn't capture the magic of the first book in Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy (1995). Fortunately, HBO's TV series - an adaptation of the entire trilogy - received much more positive reviews over its three seasons.

Now here is a Stephen King sized twist. Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) is a great movie. It's actually the perfect movie to watch during the winter. However, it makes this list because it's a terrible adaptation. Let's just say that the director took some liberties; you may be surprised to learn that the iconic twins are an addition, the ending is completely different, and the famous line "Here's Johnny!" was completely improvised. In fact, King hated the movie so much that he developed a miniseries in 1997, which was more faithful to the book, but failed critically - unlike

the film, which received acclaim from critics and audiences alike. I recommend reading the book and then watching the movie to be blown away by the differences.

With the number of book to movie adaptations continuing to grow year after year, you would think these productions would hire someone for quality control! Check out all of these books and movies at the KTL, and form your own opinion.