



Adaptations: From Short Story to Big Screen: 35 Great Stories That Have Inspired Great Films

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An Eclectic Collection of Fiction That Inspired Film

Memento, *All About Eve*, *Rear Window*, *Rashomon*, and *2001: A Space Odyssey* are all well-known and much-loved movies, but what is perhaps a lesser-known fact is that all of them began their lives as short stories. *Adaptations* gathers together 35 pieces that have been the basis for films, many from giants of American literature (Hemingway, Fitzgerald) and many that have not been in print for decades (the stories that inspired *Bringing Up Baby*, *Meet John Doe*, and *All About Eve*).

Categorized by genre, and featuring movies by master directors such as Steven Spielberg, Stanley Kubrick, Robert Altman, Frank Capra, and John Ford, as well as relative newcomers such as Chris Eyre and Christopher Nolan, *Adaptations* offers insight into the process of turning a short story into a screenplay, one that, when successful, doesn't take drastic liberties with the text upon which it is based, but doesn't mirror its source material too closely either. The stories and movies featured in *Adaptations* include:

- Philip K. Dick's "**The Minority Report**," which became the 2002 blockbuster directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Tom Cruise
- "**The Harvey Pekar Name Story**" by reclusive graphic artist Harvey Pekar, whose life was the inspiration for *American Splendor*, winner of the 2003 Sundance Grand Jury Prize
- Hagar Wilde's "**Bringing Up Baby**," the basis of the classic film *Bringing Up Baby*, anthologized here for the first time ever
- "**The Swimmer**" by John Cheever, an example of a highly regarded story that many feared might prove unadaptable
- The predecessor to the beloved holiday classic *A Christmas Story*, "**Red Ryder Nails the Hammond Kid**" by Jean Shepherd

Whether you're a fiction reader or a film buff, *Adaptations* is your behind-the-scenes look at the sometimes difficult, sometimes brilliantly successful process from the printed page to the big screen.

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From Reader Review Adaptations: From Short Story to Big Screen: 35 Great Stories That Have Inspired Great Films for online ebook

Hila says

A strong collection that would be appreciated both by people who love short stories and those who love cinema. Each of the short stories in the collection was the inspiration for a movie - the book discusses how they were adapted for the screen and also (the best part for me) has the full text of each story.

The highlights for me were: Auggie Wren's Christmas Story (by Paul Auster), Babylon Revisited (by F. Scott Fitzgerald), The Basement Room (by Graham Greene), The Harvey Pekar Name Story (by Harvey Pekar and R. Crumb), Killings (by Andre Dubus), My Friend Flicka (by Mary O'Hara), A Reputation (by Richard Edward Connell), The Sentinel (by Arthur C. Clarke), The Swimmer (by John Cheever), Tomorrow (by William Faulkner), and Your Arkansas Traveler (by Budd Schulberg).

I write about these stories on my blog, here: <http://thesiloftheworld.blogspot.com...>

?Kensley? says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. While it has taken me several months to finish this book, that is not due to the lack of enjoyment, but due to having to read this book for two different classes that were separated from one another by a few months. The short stories contained in this book surprised me because most of these movies were ones I knew of from watching them or I know of based on their popularity. Included in this book were two of my favorite stories, which were Minority Report and Memento. I never once knew, before reading these stories for class, that these movies first existed by way of short stories. I recommend this book for any person interested or a part of the writing industry, film buffs, and collectors of great written works. This was quite nicely put together and makes for a great read whether it be for educational purposes or for simple pleasure.

Johnny Trash says

This was a textbook for my son's film studies class at Whatcom Community College. It gathered the original short stories that became films such as The Wild One, Bringing Up Baby, Rear Window, The Fly, 2001 A Space Odyssey, Field Of Dreams, Smoke Signals and a bunch more.

Edward Kidder says

The quality of these stories is mostly fairly high. It becomes clear in the introductory material for each section how much a story really contributed to a film. Sometimes it provided only the most fundamental of starting places, as with Clarke's "The Sentinel" that got fleshed out into 2001: A Space Odyssey in collaboration with Kubrick-- after which Clarke wrote the novel. The story and the film only seem distantly related. Nolan's "Memento" anticipates the film (made by the author's brother) much more closely.

Matt Kelland says

A superb collection of shorts, perfect for a film nut like me. I had no idea that some of my favorite films were based on stories, and of those I did know, I'd read very few. I wish I'd bought this rather than getting it from a library, since it's definitely one to dip into casually rather than read straight through.

Of the many stories in the book, I think I'd pick out *Memento*, *The Wisdom of Eve* (*All About Eve*) and *Mr Blandings Builds His Castle* (*Mr Blandings Builds His Dream House*) as my favorites, partly, I admit, because I like the films. There were a few that I wasn't interested in, but on the whole this is a wide-ranging, well-chosen collection that spoke well to me and covered a good variety of both film and literature.

Highly recommended.

Ashley says

This book was required reading for a college course. I'm happy to say that I loved it. Reading some of the short stories that inspired some of my favorite movies was great. Awesome collection and one college assignment I enjoyed completing.

Sarah Pascarella says

This was a really fun, entertaining collection--probably as entertaining as some of the movie adaptations themselves! Additionally, some of the included stories are so suspenseful, so gripping with just a few pages, that I don't think I'll ever forget them (the stories that inspired *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Smooth Talk*, and *In the Bedroom* immediately come to mind). Both biblio- and cinephiles will enjoy this one.

Stacey says

Interesting book. I skipped about 3 or 4 of the stories as I just didn't have any interest in them. I did read the behind the scenes on those (part of why I decided not to read them). I haven't seen most of the movies, but there are several that I want to check out now.

Elaine says

I'm really enjoying this compilation of stories that have been adapted to film. The stories are organized under either genre categories (like Horror, Science-fiction, and Westerns) or more constructed groupings such as "Five All But Lost Stories" and "The Good, the Bad, and the Unadaptable."

Many of the pieces themselves are good or at least entertaining, and it is interesting to ponder the

screenwriter's modifications to the stories. The story on which Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* was based by Cornell Woolrich, for instance, does not feature the female lead so memorably memorialized by Grace Kelly, nor does it depict the colorful mix of neighbors and their relations with one another. Instead, it focuses pretty exclusively on suspected wife-killer Lars Thorwald.

John Cheever's "The Swimmer" is especially difficult to imagine in its film form. The levels interwoven in this slightly fantastical tale of a man who decides to swim through the pools of his well-heeled neighbors in order to return to his home and the symbolism his interactions with each of them takes on is hard to imagine on screen.

What this book really imparts is that in spite of the adage that the movie is never as good as the book (which itself isn't necessarily true), in fact, the movies are usually better than the short stories. Some of the stories in *Adaptations* are peppered with the sort of narration that can be conveyed in a more interesting and subtle manner with screen images. Other times though, as with "The Swimmer," it is suggested that it is very difficult to convey this image-heavy story on screen. Very interesting book, and I must thank my roommate and her boyfriend for it, since they gave it to me as a holiday gift!

ANIOTUS Marcus Longmuir says

I'll admit to buying this to read the memento and minority repot stories. I enjoy the extra details about conversion to the big screen but many of the movies I had not yet seen. My plan, as with Harry Potter, is to see the movie first then read the stories.

Andrina Murray says

Wasn't voluntary

Joseph Raffetto says

A collection of amazing writing and storytelling. A perfect example is *Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?* by Joyce Carol Oates. This story kicks you right in the gut and follows you around. Some of the short story writers include Raymond Carver, Julio Cortazar, Arthur Clarke, Philip K. Dick, Graham Greene, Denis Johnson, Andre Dubus, John Cheever to name a few. A few of the movies adapted from this collection of short stories include *Smoke*, *Smooth Talk*, *In the Bedroom*, *Memento*, *The Killers*, *The Swimmer*, *The Last Time I Saw Paris*, *All About Eve*, *A Man Called Horse*, *The Minority Report*, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Rear Window*, *A Face in the Crowd*, *Blow-up* and more!

Tony says

ADAPTATIONS: From Short Story to Big Screen. (2005). Stephanie Harrison. ****.

I am not a big reader of short stories, so I kind of fell into this collection. It was a terrific find. There are 35

stories in this collection that were the basis for 35 popular or classic films; films that most of us have seen and enjoyed. I always assumed that somebody wrote the scripts for these films, but was not aware that short stories were a major source of plot ideas. I guess I just never thought about it. The editor sorted the short stories into various genres, in case you didn't know that you might have been reading a mystery or a horror story. This is a great bedside table book. Aside from reading a collection of great short stories, you also get reminded about the ultimate films made from them, and are also provided with some inside information on their production. I could list all thirty-five authors and the films, but I think you would be better served by finding a copy of this book for yourself.

Leigh Ann says

This is a thoughtful collection of short stories that were eventually adapted into films that are then accompanied by write-ups of the history of those adaptations. Particularly unique is the book's mission to include stories from a variety of genres.

Amanda says

This book was a chance find at the Hollywood Regional Library and, what a find! A rare gem of a compilation with almost 100% originally compelling works that are only made more interesting through analysis alongside their adaptations.

The sections were thoughtfully and helpfully divided (I avoided the "Horror" section at bedtime!) and each section was introduced by a well-written, analytical (but approachable) essay regarding aspects of the stories. My favorite part of this collection was definitely "It Had to be Murder" (later retitled "Rear Window"). I studied Hitchcock in college and I read a great deal about the director's infamous way with adaptations -- it was fascinating to see the inspiration for such a brilliant movie.

Definitely a great read, and a wonderfully appropriate first read in my new home in Hollywood.

Jenn says

This book is a collection of short stories that were later adapted to movies. I admit, I am usually the one at the end of a movie saying, "That was NOTHING like the book. The book is so much better," and driving everyone (particularly my husband) crazy. That being said, I liked reading these stories and seeing how they changed and were expanded to make two hour films. I'll even admit that some of the films were better than the stories!

It includes the stories that were the basis for "A Christmas Story", "Rear Window" and "Minority Report" to name a few.

Kathryn says

An interesting mix. Some were old favorites ("Babylon Revisited"); others I didn't realize had been short

stories before they were made into films, like the inspirations for "Memento" and "All About Eve." Some of the slighter stories made great movies, like "Bringing Up Baby," while the best stories seem to have been problematic to adapt (i.e. "The Swimmer," though I haven't seen the film). A fun collection--though I admit to skipping some, esp. in the "Westerns" section.

Bookend McGee says

4.5 stars. Amazing book. Great analysis. Interesting to ponder over what worked better - the film or the story - and how they differ.

"Jerry and Molly and Sam" by Raymond Carver - Short Cuts, 1993 - excellent but preferred film
"Blow-Up" by Julio Cortazar - Blow-Up, 1966
"Your Arkansas Traveler" by Budd Schulberg - A Face in the Crowd, 1957 - loved it.
"It Had to be Murder" by Cornell Woolrich - Rear Window, 1954 - Excellent
"The Sentinel" by Arthur C. Clarke - 2001: A Space Odyssey, 1968 - Didn't like it. Didn't like the movie either.
"Super-Toys Last All Summer Long" by Brian Aldiss - A.I.: Artificial Intelligence, 2001 - Absolutely brilliant.
"The Minority Report" by Philip K. Dick - The Minority Report, 2002 - Interesting.
"Spurs" by Tod Robbins - Freaks, 1932
"The Fly" by George Langelaan - The Fly, 1958 and 1986
"Herbert West-Reanimator: Six Shots by Midnight" by H.P. Lovecraft - Re-Animator, 1984
"Stage to Lordsburg" by Ernest Haycox - Stagecoach, 1939
"A Man Called Horse" by Dorothy M. Johnson - A Man Called Horse, 1970
"This is what it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona" by Sherman Alexie - Smoke Signals, 1998
"The Harvey Pekar Name Story" by Harvey Pekar - American Splendor, 2003
"Hubba Hubba" by Daniel Clowes - Ghost World, 2001 - wonderful
"The Wisdom of Eve" by Mary Orr - All About Eve, 1950 - Movie is better but still a great story
"A Reputation" by Richard Connell - Meet John Doe, 1941 - wonderful story
"Mr. Blandings Builds His Castle" by Eric Hodgins -
Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House, 1948
"Cyclists' Raid" by Frank Rooney - The Wild One, 1954
"Tomorrow" by William Faulkner - Tomorrow, 1953
"Bringing Up Baby" by Hagar Wilde - Bringing Up Baby, 1938
"Babylon, Revisited" by F. Scott Fitzgerald - The Last Time I Saw Paris, 1954
"The Swimmer" by John Cheever - The Swimmer, 1968 - Great story
"The Killers" by Ernest Hemingway - The Killers, 1946
"The Basement Room" by Graham Greene - The Fallen Idol, 1948
"Memento Mori" by Jonathon Nolan - Memento, 2000 - Another great story. Film better though.
"My Friend Flicka" by Mary O'Hara - My Friend Flicka, 1943 - Excellent
"Red Ryder Nails the Hammond Kid" by Jean Shepherd - A Christmas Story, 1983 - Love his writing - so funny and fun
"Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa" by W.P. Kinsella - Field of Dreams, 1989
"In a Grove" by Ryunosuke Akutagawa - Rashomon, 1951 - Interesting, depressing
"The Lady with the Pet Dog" by Anton Chekhov - Dark Eyes, 1987
"Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been" by Joyce Carol Oates - Smooth Talk, 1985
"Auggie Wren's Christmas Story" by Paul Auster - Smoke, 1995

“Emergency” by Denis Johnson - Jesus’ Son, 1999
“Killings” by Andre Dubus - In the Bedroom, 2001

Eva Nickelson says

I was amazed by how the short story provides so much for a movie, without constricting it like a novel would. All of the 35 stories were interesting, if not great. This collection contains stories that were later revised into novels (ie Shoeless Joe Jackson Comes to Iowa) as well as famous short stories themselves (ie The Killers). The preface to each section gave just the right amount of behind the scenes information on the adaptation itself, as well as how the film came out. I now want to see all these movies (well, some of them anyways).

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“Emergency” by Denis Johnson - Jesus’ Son, 1999

Robert says

This is a great collection of short stories that became films. What I really liked about it is that it isn't just a collection of good stories that became good films. Sometimes the film worked better than the short story and sometimes you can see why the film failed and the short story worked. The book is broken down into categories such as Horror, SCI-FI, Westerns, Independents.... There is an introduction to each section that provides the back story on how the short story became a movie. A good example of a short story working better than a film is *Super Toys Last All Summer Long*. Here the back story explains why it was such a problematic adaption (and really why it had no chance of being a good film even when it only involved Kubrik let alone the problems Spielberg brought to the production). This is an absolute must read for anyone who enjoys short stories and film.
