

# Books as Movies – 2

I remembered a book I enjoy yearly that was made into a movie. It was an animated movie, but it was a movie.

Long before Peter Jackson made the “Lord of the Rings” series, Rankin-Bass made “The Hobbit”. This was actually a decent handling of the book. This movie was designed as a family friendly TV movie. That is exactly what it was. There were a number of things that were different from the book, but what can you do in a 70 minute movie.

This little animated movie actually set the stage for the animated movie I wanted to talk about. Rumors were rampant about the quality of the animation for the “Lord of the Rings” in 1978. I think that is the only thing that made the movie interesting. A 132 minute movie trying to fit a trilogy the size of “The Lord of the Rings”. There was a lot of stuff left out in the 10+ hours of the Peter Jackson movies, how did they think they could do any of this justice.

Well, they didn't. For me, the animation had some problems, mainly with the big battles. They didn't look like they fit with the rest of the movie. Other than that, I don't remember much about this. My problems were with the story adaptation. There were many things missing in the story (of course) and the way the characters were drawn and written, made me wonder if anyone read the book. There was no depth to any of the characters. No drive in the Hobbits. Gandalf just seemed like an angry aging wizard (standard issue). And other characters seemed flat.

Before Peter Jackson made his films I thought of getting this movie just for a collection. I'm glad I waited.

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# Books to read...

Stole this one from Tanja's site. It looked like fun.

The Big Read, an initiative by the National Endowment for the Arts, estimates that the average adult has read 6 of the top 100 books they've printed. How about you?

- 1) Look at the list and bold those you have read.
- 2) Italicize those you intend to read.
- 3) Underline the books you LOVE.

- 1 Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen
- 2 **The Lord of the Rings – JRR Tolkien**
- 3 Jane Eyre – Charlotte Bronte
- 4 **Harry Potter series**
- 5 **To Kill a Mockingbird – Harper Lee**
- 6 **The Bible** (multiple versions)
- 7 Wuthering Heights – Emily Bronte
- 8 **Nineteen Eighty Four – George Orwell**
- 9 His Dark Materials – Philip Pullman
- 10 **Great Expectations – Charles Dickens**
- 11 **Little Women – Louisa M Alcott**
- 12 Tess of the D'Urbervilles – Thomas Hardy
- 13 **Catch 22 – Joseph Heller**
- 14 **Complete Works of Shakespeare** (Partially)
- 15 Rebecca – Daphne Du Maurier
- 16**The Hobbit – JRR Tolkien**
- 17 Birdsong – Sebastian Faulks
- 18 **Catcher in the Rye – JD Salinger**
- 19 The Time Traveller's Wife – Audrey Niffenegger
- 20 Middlemarch – George Eliot
- 21 **Gone With The Wind – Margaret Mitchell**

- 22 **The Great Gatsby – F Scott Fitzgerald**
- 23 **Bleak House – Charles Dickens**
- 24 War and Peace – Leo Tolstoy
- 25 The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy – Douglas Adams (Not Yet)
- 26 Brideshead Revisited – Evelyn Waugh
- 27 Crime and Punishment – Fyodor Dostoyevsky
- 28 **Grapes of Wrath – John Steinbeck**
- 29 **Alice in Wonderland – Lewis Carroll**
- 30 **The Wind in the Willows – Kenneth Grahame**
- 31 Anna Karenina – Leo Tolstoy
- 32 **David Copperfield – Charles Dickens**
- 33 **Chronicles of Narnia – CS Lewis**
- 34 Emma – Jane Austen
- 35 Persuasion – Jane Austen
- 36 **The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe – CS Lewis**
- 37 The Kite Runner – Khaled Hosseini
- 38 Captain Corelli's Mandolin – Louis De Bernieres
- 39 Memoirs of a Geisha – Arthur Golden
- 40 **Winnie the Pooh – AA Milne**
- 41 **Animal Farm – George Orwell**
- 42 **The Da Vinci Code – Dan Brown**
- 43 One Hundred Years of Solitude – Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- 45 The Woman in White – Wilkie Collins
- 46 Anne of Green Gables – LM Montgomery
- 47 Far From The Madding Crowd – Thomas Hardy
- 48 The Handmaid's Tale – Margaret Atwood
- 49 **Lord of the Flies – William Golding**
- 50 Atonement – Ian McEwan
- 51 Life of Pi – Yann Martel
- 52 **Dune – Frank Herbert**
- 53 Cold Comfort Farm – Stella Gibbons
- 54 Sense and Sensibility – Jane Austen
- 55 A Suitable Boy – Vikram Seth
- 56 The Shadow of the Wind – Carlos Ruiz Zafon
- 57 **A Tale Of Two Cities – Charles Dickens**
- 58 **Brave New World – Aldous Huxley**

- 59 The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime – Mark Haddon
- 60 Love In The Time Of Cholera – Gabriel Garcia Marquez
- 61 Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck
- 62 Lolita – Vladimir Nabokov
- 63 The Secret History – Donna Tartt
- 64 The Lovely Bones – Alice Sebold
- 65 **Count of Monte Cristo – Alexandre Dumas**
- 66 On The Road – Jack Kerouac
- 67 Jude the Obscure -Thomas Hardy
- 68 Bridget Jones's Diary – Helen Fielding
- 69 Midnight's Children – Salman Rushdie
- 70 **Moby Dick – Herman Melville**
- 71 **Oliver Twist – Charles Dickens**
- 72 **Dracula – Bram Stoker**
- 73 **The Secret Garden – Frances Hodgson Burnett**
- 74 Notes From A Small Island – Bill
- 75 Ulysses – James Joyce
- 76 The Bell Jar – Sylvia Plath
- 77 Swallows and Amazons – Arthur Ransome
- 78 Germinal – Emile Zola
- 79 Vanity Fair – William Makepeace Thackeray
- 80 Possession – AS Byatt
- 81 **A Christmas Carol – Charles Dickens**
- 82 Cloud Atlas – David Mitchell
- 83 The Color Purple – Alice Walker
- 84 The Remains of the Day – Kazuo Ishiguro
- 85 Madame Bovary – Gustave Flaubert
- 86 A Fine Balance – Rohinton Mistry
- 87 **Charlotte's Web – EB White**
- 88 **The Five People You Meet In Heaven – Mitch Albom**
- 89 **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**
- 90 The Faraway Tree Collection – Enid Blyton
- 91 Heart of Darkness – Joseph Conrad
- 92 The Little Prince – Antoine De Saint-Exupery
- 93 The Wasp Factory – Iain Banks
- 94 **Watership Down – Richard Adams**

- 95 A Confederacy of Dunces – John Kennedy Toole
- 96 A Town Like Alice – Nevil Shute
- 97 **The Three Musketeers – Alexandre Dumas**
- 98 **Hamlet – William Shakespeare**
- 99 **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – Roald Dahl**
- 100 **Les Miserables – Victor Hugo**

I counted 41 read from this list. Some of them I had to read for High School or College, and can not remember them. Others on the list I've looked at but could not get through the first chapter. Some I haven't even heard of. The list is lacking Science Fiction, not even Jules Verne or Isaac Asimov. I feel both authors have better books than the Dune Series by Herbert

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## **Back and caught up**

Well, mostly. Anyway, I have returned and ~~apparently the site I thought would link to my HPX page never did so~~ (EDIT: there was a post there- I just missed it and so apparently did everyone else!), so there are no comments there. In the last couple of days I have caught up on much of the internet news I read, though I still have several days of newspapers to read. I really should give those up completely and just go to the paper's website for the local news, and comics.com for the comics. I was a little disappointed B.C. finally ended a few weeks ago and was replaced with a pretty bad comic about a sheep and a dog- Deflocked I believe is the title. Of course B.C. had to go since its writer passed on a few months ago. I

will meet him once I go home myself, along with other figures like C.S. Lewis and of course the many faithful in the Bible. Not for a long time though, God willing.

The cabin I had was quite young and in some cases difficult. There were two who were prone to distraction and I feel the small group time I had with them following lessons was not where it could have been. Mine was the only cabin in fact who did not even make it to the final flag raising on Saturday morning, still cleaning the cabin. We took over an hour to get ready, and even then I still had to go back and finish following breakfast. But enough of the bad. No one likes to read about that.

Every year there is something new at the camp. The first year I was there they were finishing up the lodge where we have meals and lessons. They had a big tent set up outside instead that year. The second year the lodge was finished and they had a new instructional- rock climbing. There is a small room on the bottom floor of the lodge with a rock climbing wall that extends to the roof two floors up. That replaced disc golf as an instructional. More importantly, the lodge was air conditioned, and so were the cabins! Ahh... The third year I was there they added a zip line. It is fun to go down it, but unfortunately after one got to the bottom there was a long hike around a lake to get back to the top. They also added an amphitheater for outdoor worship. This year's addition was small, but it aided the zip line immensely. A bridge over that lake. No more long hike around the lake to get back. Next year, who knows for sure, but there are plans for a baseball field and zip line improvements in the future.

The zip line was the general favorite part of camp for the kids in my cabin, but canteen time (where they could buy food and drinks, as well as have (guided) free time came in a close second. The day was quite organized and there was much to do, including lessons, worship, small group, games, instructionals, meals, etc. This could also be somewhat

stressful as getting the kids to where they needed to be in a timely fashion when they all had needs like going to the bathroom (constantly!) and changing clothes wasn't easy.

In the end it was nice to hear their thoughts on what they learned and enjoyed when handing out their dog tags at the end of the week. My team was air force, so I "promoted" them from cadets to airmen. Too bad I didn't have wings to give them, but I did use some of my stimulus check (which I will receive soon) on t-shirts for my cabin. I still have one left too. Maybe I'll take a picture of it and post it. In fact, I will have to post some of the pictures I took at camp. It should be relatively safe as I will not be identifying them, or the name of the camp (or my church for that matter ☐ ). Besides, too few people actually read this thing anyway. Look for those soon- I have well over 300 pictures and 90 videos to sort through to find some good ones. Well, I have some more catching up to do- like reading my friend's blogs. ☐

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## A Little Fun Everyday

Following the run of any show I am involved in I go through a period of reflection and a bit of depression (just more so for certain shows). I have found that the best way to deal with this is to continue auditioning or until the next audition arrives by putting my thoughts into words. I am often asked by some people what draws me to the theatre so much and why it seem that I audition for **EVERYTHING?!** The best explanation I can come up with is the term *play*, itself. Being in plays allows us to play in new worlds. I find that the best actors and those I really enjoy working with tend to generate a playful persona, but at the same time be able to know when to work (if you want to call it that). The director is the

playground monitor who tells his children (cast) what to do and when to do it... setting the rules for the game/play. When the performers are good they are rewarded and when they goof up and not do as well, they know that as well.

Each person involved in every show varies in experience. There are the more experienced who have been there and done that and can **seem** more comfortable in their surroundings. Then there are those who come along who may never have stepped foot on the stage who may seem shy and apprehensive but hopefully will be able to learn how to play along as well and make new friends. Of course there are those who venture to other play spaces and play in yet other's backyards and once again become the new kid on the block. Even allowing past characters to reemerge in moments of flashback can bring laughter from some while driving others to distraction ☐ Right, Morat? **EVERYONE WINS!**

So, I really do think that the world of theatre is best enjoyed to its fullest by those who refuse to completely grow up. And those who are willing to let their playful sides come out even in the most serious of tragedies there are moments of brevity.

The fun does not necessarily need to end when the curtain drops on the final call. Game nights, cast parties, and other activities can be enjoyed by those involved. As a wise old man once advised a certain android who wished to be more human: "Don't forget... you have to have a little fun every day." Well said.

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# Too Much To Expect?

This is going to have to be a very brief post... We've been SO busy lately, and I would love to make a post or two about all the fun things we've done this weekend, but my 20-month-old is quickly approaching her terrible two's and is constantly spilling things and needing attention; therefore, I cannot sit long enough these days to make any kind of worthwhile post. My 8-year-old is off school for the summer, and started off as a really big help with her little sister, but since it's almost July, her enthusiasm for helping around the house is waning. Part of me feels badly expecting her to help out and babysit so I can get some rest and her father can catch up on work, but then I also feel somewhat irritated that we went to all these fun places all weekend, even spending extra money for her to be able to bring a friend along, with no chance for me to recuperate. I can't help but think maybe we overdid it this weekend... How is she going to learn any appreciation when we're constantly doing fun stuff and she doesn't have to contribute (much) to the work load around the house? On the other hand, being the youngest child when I was growing up, I was never expected to watch over a younger sibling, and I have no idea how much to expect from her – I don't want to use her or take her for granted as a built-in-babysitter...

All I know is, it would be wonderful if I could catch a break around here and have a good week or maybe even a few days to rest before my body must endure the huge ordeal of giving birth – I'm not sleeping at night very much and today the Dr. confirmed my suspicions that the baby has dropped, leaving me feeling constant pain and pressure down below which is exhausting in itself... Time to get off my rear end to make lunch, more later, I hope!

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## 4.5 hours

In 4.5 hours I need to be up and getting ready for work. For some reason I just couldn't sleep. Not much new in this, but it is new that I was asleep and then woke up after an hour or so, and I was wide awake. No strange noises in the house, just the usual late night sounds. Dog is softly snoring. No sounds from the girls' room. Frogs, crickets, and other night time animals are making their voices heard. But I'm used to all this.

I got on the web, hoping that reading the news and such of the day would be boring enough to put me to sleep. No such luck. It was boring, just not enough to make me tired. So maybe I have something in my head that needs to be written. But since I'm writing about not sleeping, could that really be it?

So I'm just going to re-hash some of the news I read this evening. I'm not even going to supply links, you'll have to look it up yourself...

Experts predicting gas at \$7.00 by the end of the summer, this after an announcement that Saudi Arabia found a new oil site. IMHO, panic is driving the current price of gas through the roof. Some of these so called experts should think before they open their mouths.

The Detroit Tigers won today putting them over .500 for the first time this year. The White Sox beat the Cubs, so Detroit didn't advance any... I had such high hopes at the beginning of the season. Oh well, I survived 2003 as a Tiger fan, I can survive this year too

Spain wins the European Football (Soccer) Championship. I find soccer very boring, why didn't this put me to sleep?

Wildfires are still burning in California, flooding still happening along the Mississippi. (I can still spell Mississippi without adding too many "S's" or "P's" or "I's". Not bad from a non-speller, just don't ask me to spell bananananana ☐

Buffalo are roaming again in Minnesota. And we have some not so far from here in Fremont IN.

The Pixar movie WALL-E made 62.5 million over the weekend. It is a cute little movie.

On a somewhat sad note, Southwick Mall in Toledo Oh closed its doors. Once a wonderful shopping area in South Toledo, this 36 year old mall has been going down hill for years. I remember taking dates to what was called "Old-Towne" where there were a lot of small frontier style shops and novelty stores. This later became a movie theater, that added to the theaters already there. It was a very open mall that at one time held a wide variety of stores. One by one the Anchor stores left, and this area became an eyesore. Not sure what will become of it, but I really wonder what they did or will do with the wonderful Carousel they had in the mall.

Uga VI, the University of Georgia Bulldog mascot, died of heart failure. He was only 9 years old... He started as the mascot at the age of 1.

There was a lot of other news that I don't think needs repeating. Politics as usual, and other nasty headlines were prevalent.

Down to 4 hours until I need to get ready for work... I'm still not tired, but I guess I should try to relax a bit.

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# Life lessons at the theater...

I'm not going to write about how good the show was (again). I'm just going to write a little bit about some life lessons I've learned over the years at our little theater.

Many hands make light work. After the shows we usually need to tear down the set to make room and clean up for the next production coming in. This is much easier with a large cast. Many people working on various parts of the set will bring it down quickly. Smaller shows, we beg and plead for people to come and help.

Help others when needed. At times people will forget their lines, or forget to enter when needed. It is up to the rest of the cast to keep the show going. Ad-lib lines here and there, line prompting during a hug, someone else saying the line (if this works), or just smoothly skipping by the flub, are ways we help each other on stage.

Not everyone is a Star. You can't always have top billing. Sometimes you need to support the front people. It is part of theater, it is part of life.

Even the Star needs support. Even in shows with only one actor on stage, usually has many people behind the scenes. From lighting to props there is always somebody looking out for you.

All jobs are important. That backstage manager that never shows up on stage is sometimes seen as unneeded, until the day they can't make the show. Then the props aren't on stage where they should be, and the flow of the show just goes down.

Satisfy the customer. If you don't do a good job, and leave the customer satisfied, they won't be back. Repeat business is essential.

Relax, have fun! One of the most important things I've learned. If you are relaxed and having fun on stage everything flows more smoothly. It works in the real world as well. You can't always have fun in theater or real life (some jobs are just the pits), but you can try relax and make the best of the situation.

Be ready for the unexpected. In live performances almost anything can happen. Be prepared for it. You may never need to know what to do when something on stage breaks, but you have to go with the flow. In life, this makes very good sense too.

Do your best. No matter what job/part you have do your best, it makes it easier for you and for those around you.

Do your job. If your job is telling people what to do, do that. If that isn't in your job/part description, refrain from doing it. Sometimes it is nice for new actors to get a helpful hint from other actors, sometimes not. Make sure that your helpful hints are just that. They should not sound like directives, those should come from the director.

But then again, Share your knowledge. An additional note about the above. Telling someone what you do to help remember lines, or stage directions is a good thing. Helping someone get over a bit of stage fright, also good. Knowledge of any field (except secret stuff) is best shared.

Goodbyes can be hard. We all need to say goodbye to someone every so often. Sometimes you know you may never see the person again. Make the best of the time you have with people, it will show benefits in your life.

Life is a stage, where we are the actors and the audience...

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# Goodnight Little Womans

Well... here is my final post on the great experience that began back in late March. New director, new cast members, new atmosphere, but still great fun. It is rather strange how intimate I have become with the stage in our little corner of Ohio. Twice I have been in shows where I end up lying downstage center. Whether it be sleeping and being pulled into my television or being stabbed in a duel and killed. During our final performance this afternoon, Marmee suggested that I combine Braxton Prendergast with my favorite character (of course many of you who read my blog know who that is). As thrilling as that would be, I decided that I better not although it may have drawn an even larger reaction than normal. The director could not understand why Braxton's death always drew chuckles from the audience. As our lighting tech so kindly observed, he does not know me very well, does he. Actually, I was quite impressed at the amount of time it took to strike the set. It took less than an hour and a half. Everyone really pitched in and helped. So, after that most of the cast and crew went for a final wrap gathering at an area pizza shop and said our final farewells amidst the sadness and joy. Once again, my sincere thanks and congratulations to everyone involved in this marvelous production. I found many ways in which to deliver the line "Who are you?" so it would be different each time I said it. I think I found as many as Jo found to deliver "Christopher Columbus." Plus, my goals for the show were met. I believe that the cast worked hard but still enjoyed themselves, and I got to wear pumpkin pants (tights as well, but that was definitely not on my list).



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# Chris for President?

You guys have to see this...

<https://www.news3online.com/index.php?code=71ovE14FDX74r7XW12U9> (click link)

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## Late night theatrics

I was privileged to work the light booth for another wonderful show. The time is drawing near when the last curtain will be dropped. In most cases, this is a mixture of joy and sorrow. Happy that the show is finally over, but sadness of a cast breaking up.

It is our custom in this theater for some sort of gifts to be exchanged during the run of the show. Gifts from cast to director and/or director to cast. This show was no exception, except for the type of gift. Most gifts tend to be 'gag' gifts or little reminders of the show. This plays gift from the director was a CD full of pictures taken during a dress rehearsal. So we get to see the costumes and actions on the set. The other gift was a well framed cast/crew picture. It is a treasure.

As the light booth guy, I'm preparing my gift for the cast. A little something I hope everyone will like. As there is a cast member or two that read this blog, I can't give too much information. It's just a little something that can be added to the programs most actors keep.

It has been a good run, and I will miss seeing it every night. From the guy who has seen the show for a week longer than its run, that is saying something. From the light booth, I'm generally tired of the show after the opening night. It is a wonderful show, and some what of a challenge to set the lighting just right.

And next week, I can write about different things, and not pay so much attention to "Little Women"