

From Stage To Screen

Last night's final dress rehearsal contained a small, intimate audience including two of my best friends who really enjoyed the performance (even if I am killed by a girl... not my fault that is how it is written). But I was really pleased with the entire evening. The length of the performance actually was about 10-15 minutes shorter than what we had been anticipating most of the week. I even got a crash course in spotlight use to substitute for the irreplaceable light woman who was still ill.

Today, while sitting at my brother's house waiting for a package that was to be delivered, I found the 1994 movie version of *Little Women* on television. Like most works that have more than one form, there were some differences between the stage and movie versions. I believe that both versions contain at heart the same theme: Do not be afraid to be true to yourself. Do not allow society to impact that which you truly feel you are meant to do.

I also was able to dig deeper into some of the characters while watching the movie. I often wondered why Grandfather Lawrence (John Neville) was at first portrayed as a crotchety old man and then have a change of heart by his interactions with Beth. Like Captain Von Trapp in the *Sound of Music*, Mr. Lawrence lost someone close to him which left an emptiness. Hearing Beth (Claire Danes) play the piano filled that void, lifted his spirits, and melted his heart... AWWWWW.

Mr. Lawrence's grandson Laurie ([Christian Bale](#)) is also given more depth in the movie. After his marriage proposal to Jo ([Winona Ryder](#)) is rejected, Laurie runs off to Europe and becomes a womanizing drunk until he encounters Amy ([Kirsten Dunst](#)) painting at school. At first, I believe that Laurie was in love with the idea of becoming a true member of the March family. However, I do believe that through the courtship he

did fall in love with Amy.

Nowhere is the central core of both pieces more substantial than in Jo's venture from Concord to New York where she meets Professor Bhear ([Gabriel Byrne](#)). Although they are both headstrong and stubborn, the professor encourages Jo to write that which is pleasing to her and not to the publishers who keep rejecting her stories. This path may not lead to a great financial career but will in time please her on a personal level.

Another important part of both versions are the wild, imaginative plays the girls perform. In a scene from the movie, Meg attends a party given in honor of Annie Moffett's coming of age. Annie decides to turn Meg into something she is not and Meg foolishly agrees to "play" along by wearing a corset showing off her figure, and experimenting with drinking (Trini Alvarado). Laurie catches her and she immediately hides in a corner, full of shame.

So while both versions are basically true to each other, there are moments in each which enhance both.

