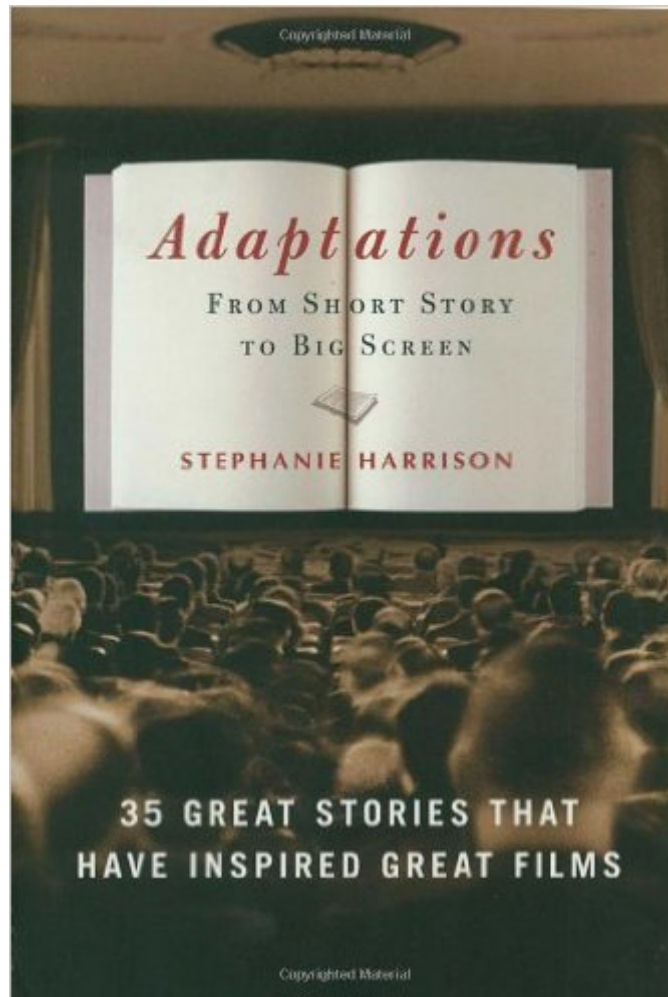


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Adaptations: From Short Story To Big Screen: 35 Great Stories That Have Inspired Great Films



Synopsis

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" 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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Customer Reviews

I just came across this at my local bookstore. Wow! I had no idea that so many famous movies were adapted from short stories. A Face in the Crowd is one of my favorite films, but I never knew it was a short story first. Also, I'm a fan of Harvey Pekar's, so I was particularly happy to see that his graphic story, "The Harvey Pekar Name Story" was included (the film is American Splendor). The introductions to each section are interesting and contain a lot of information I was unacquainted with. Who knew that F. Scott Fitzgerald once tried his hand at adapting his classic story "Babylon Revisited" as a vehicle for Shirley Temple? Good reading for movie fans and people who enjoy short stories.

While the meat of this book is the collection of logically categorized short stories, the introductions to each section are where "Adaptations" really shines. Stephanie Harrison provides the reader with an excellent understanding of the circumstances and timeframe in which each story found its way to the next medium. Her attention to the relationships between the authors and directors and their cooperation (or lack thereof) goes a long way in illustrating the difficulty of creating a successful film, and I came away with a new appreciation for the craftsmanship involved in reimagining a story. The stories themselves are well selected and well organized. Harrison assembled a neat cross-section of the industry, with stories ranging from science fiction to "much to my surprise" comics. Particularly clever was the decision to open the book with a section entitled "The Directors: Translators, Magicians, Collaborators, and Thieves." By beginning with several stories of wildly varying style, Harrison introduces the reader to a range of directorial and authorial methods, giving them a broader context with which to evaluate the rest of the book than would otherwise have been available if she had simply jumped straight into stories-by-genre. All things considered, "Adaptations" is a well-polished book, rich with valuable original content to compliment the stories the reader came for.

The book is wonderful with 35 short stories which are well selected and interesting. The story in this book is similar to the story in the movie but the movie does not meet up to the book narrations. The movie is entertaining in itself though.

Have you ever waited with great anticipation for the arrival of a movie where you love the book? Then you watch the movie and are disappointed because it wasn't anything like the book. Movies and Books are connected through story. The story has to be good in each form for it to achieve the desired result. Stephanie Harrison has written a fascinating look at the connection between 35 short stories and the great films which resulted. This book includes the short stories and insight into how the story was adapted into a movie. The key message which I received is that whether it is a short story or a movie, the foundation of storytelling has to be excellent to achieve the desired result. If you love movies and short stories or just want to learn about the skill of adaptation, I highly recommend this book.

I use this book in a high school Film and Lit class along with "Reading in the Dark: Using Film as a Tool in the Classroom". Mainly, this book is a collection of short stories (by genre) that were converted into movies. It is perfect for a Film & Lit class or could be used in a limited way in a high school English class. From Spielberg to Hitchcock to Multicultural films, this book allowed me to find stories for my class to read and this compare/contrast with the movie.

This is a wonderful collection of stories that have been adapted for film. The book provides revealing commentary from screenwriters and directors and fascinating tidbits of unknown filmography. It is a wonderful find for screenwriters and short story writers and film lovers. Stephanie Harrison writes insightful introductions to each genre. A real treasure.

Met expectations for my film class...interesting to see the differences between the short stories within and the film/screenplay based on those stories.

Used this for my entire class for essays. It was great and the stories are really entertaining to read. Also got it cheaper than the campus bookstore.

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