“They’re as different as peas and apples.”

Have you ever watched a movie based on a book? Have you ever wondered if you were missing important information that is in the book, but not in the movie? If you watch a movie, you are – indeed – missing vital information from the book. Reading the book gives you details that would add too much time, and too many scenes, to the movie; details in the movies are incorrectly presented, Hollywood style; and, with fun details from the book not added to the movie, the best of the funny and serious scenes are missing.

When watching a movie, details and characters are presented to the viewer saying: this is how it is. However, the process of taking a plump, descriptive book and turning into a movie is arduous work for the writer of the book, as well as the producers and directors of the movie. For any book made into a movie, the people in charge have “to keep the running time down,” and, consequently, “cuts have to be made” (Lee, n.p.).

For J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*, the movies are nothing compared to the books. The books describe, with perfect detail, the individual characters and the scenes and events that they take part in. With the books, readers are able to read between the lines and picture how everything fits in a way that makes sense to them. Tolkien’s books “span generations and take lots of scenic detours, and the reader will…stay along with the ride. A movie has to keep on truckin’ down the narrative highway” (Corliss, n.p.). This describes perfectly what kind of effect books can have that movies can never get: individual interpretation.
Movies stay fixed based on what the makers of the movies picture as the best description of the scenes and characters.

In regards to the scene and character cuts that are made for the movies, books are the ideal path to getting the full effect of how the stories should play out. For example, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Frodo Baggins and Samwise (Sam) Gamgee, with the help of Peregrine (Pippen) Took and Mariadoc (Merry) Brandybuck, escaped the Shire from the disturbing Black Riders. The movie portrays that the four Hobbits spent a full night running away from the Black Riders, until they finally made it to Bree. The book, likewise, talks of the escape of the Hobbits. However, they did not spend just one night running away. The four Hobbits had gone to Frodo’s newly bought home, after their first escape from one of the Black Riders, and met with a fifth Hobbit: Fredegar (Fatty) Bolger. It had been decided that Fatty would stay behind at Frodo’s home to warn Gandalf the Grey about the situation with the Black Riders (Tolkien 105-106).

Later that night, the four Hobbits were forced to escape into the Old Forest, a forest that had trees that could move and talk. Frodo, Sam, Pippen, and Merry, after spending a full day lost in the Old Forest, got into trouble with one of these old trees. They were saved by Tom Bombadil, an ancient, delightful man who gave them shelter for the night. Tom Bombadil was a man so old, and of strange origins, he was not influenced by the ring of power. It was Bombadil who helped the Hobbits find their way to Bree, so that they could meet with Gandalf. The movies do not describe any of these short, frightening adventures that the Hobbits were forced to take.

Another way that the books are different from movies are the details, which are incorrectly presented. In the books, Tolkien only briefly shares that there is a major relationship between Aragorn and Arwen. Even more briefly is the detail that the two get married (Tolkien
All three of the movies show scene after scene of the relationship between the man and elf. Not only are there many scenes of them together, some of the scenes are presented as dreams or flashbacks, which confuse viewers, making them have to re-watch the movies in order to make sense of how it all sits in the timeline.

Another incorrectly portrayed scene is when Frodo is speared by the cave troll in the Mines of Moria. According to the book, Aragorn picked up Frodo, not knowing if he was dead or alive. Shortly after, Frodo told Aragorn to put him down: he was alive! After eight of the nine adventurers in the fellowship were out of Moria, the remaining fellowship travelled down the road to get as far as they could before nightfall. Frodo lagged behind, due to the pain from his injury, with Sam staying with him. When Aragorn realized, he stopped the party to treat what he thought was a great wound. That was when he found that Frodo had a Mithril shirt and only a great bruise (Tolkien 319-327). According to the movie, the whole party took precious time within the room of the skirmish to discuss the Mithril shirt. The movie never even went over the fact of the bruise, making viewers think that the Mithril can protect from even bruises, which is unrealistic.

A further problem with the movies is different atmospheric scenes. In the book, one scene that is among the best in humor is when the fellowship is leaving Lothlórien by boating down the Great River. It was discovered before that Gollum was following the group. While traversing the Great River, Sam looked behind the boats to find a log floating along with them. this “log”, however, was discovered by Sam to have feet and eyes (Tolkien 373-374). This scene, which was never given a place in the movie, gave a time for humor. Gollum was so desperate to stay within reach of the Ring, he was willing to camouflage himself, trying to make the people of the fellowship think that he was just another piece of debris in the river.
In the end, reading the books, instead of reading the horribly matched movies, is better for people who care about the facts. Movies leave out important details to save time and scenes, scenes are incorrectly portrayed, and the best scenes are left out. Which would you rather spend time with: a book that gives you every perfect detail or a movie that is changed to please the simple minded, Hollywood fanatics?
Works Cited

