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Lit. & Film

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*The Last Apprentice: Revenge of the Witch*

Due to the timing of the project and the limited number of showings we ended up first watching the movie and then completed the assigned reading afterwards. In this unorthodox approach, I feel that I got more out of the book as a whole. I was able to better appreciate the content, as well as the themes and emotions. The Film adaptation (directed by: Sergei Bodrov) does not represent the whole point of the book. It is a very loose adaptation that in general keeps the feel of the story but throws all of the other plot and thematic elements to the wind.

The story is basically about Tom, who is the seventh son of a seventh son. This makes him extremely strong as a spook. A spook is a magical like person who can communicate with dark and otherworldly creatures that if left unchecked can wreak havoc on the civilized world. The life of a spook is a lonely one. People are afraid of you and even are disgusted by you and what you do, however, spooks put up with this lonely life because they know how necessary their jobs are. Tom is a Spooks Apprentice, but he is not just any apprentice. “Being a seventh son of a seventh son was nothing that special in this line of work—you needed that just to be taken on as the Spook’s apprentice. But I knew there was something else that made me different. I was my mam’s son, too.” (Delaney Location 565). His mother is a Witch, which makes him an extremely strong spook.

The book, *The Last Apprentice: Revenge of the Witch*, by Joseph Delaney, is the first book in the series but is strong enough it could easily be a stand-alone novel. The book contains very little boring exposition and what exposition it contains, is intriguing and unique. I got pulled right in to the story and ended up reading the majority of the book in one weekend when I could not sleep. There is a lot of detail and it is easy to imagine the world which Tom (the protagonist) must endure.

*The Last Apprentice: Revenge of the Witch* focuses the reader on how Tom makes rookie mistakes and learns from them. While in the movie, the mistakes are made by the old and senile spook. In the book the spook is almost ageless comedic master of the trade, he knows how to handle every situation. All of the problems generally occur when he is away; and are at least partially due to the innocence and inexperience of Tom. In the movie Tom is just piece of the plot, not the pivotal character.

The novel, *The Last Apprentice: Revenge of the Witch*, is a book that is driven by emotions and moral dilemmas while the movie does not even hint at that. The book talks about trusting your instincts and forgiveness while the movie talks about conquering evil for once and all. I have enjoyed the thematic elements of novels and movies, that is why I enjoy things like *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* (before they were cool I might add). They tell a story that has a hidden story behind it that makes it interesting to reread over and over, because there is always more to interpret that you have not previously caught.

The Film Adaptation skips over and changes numerous aspects of the story. For example in the book Tom says “I can sense things that others can’t, I couldn’t even work in the north pasture. You see, from there I could hear them. I could hear the ropes creaking and the branches groaning under their weight.” (Delaney Location 205). In the film, the only supernatural ability that Tom has is that he has visions of the future. This power is not even in the book! It is understandable that in adapting the book then needed a visual, but I find this going too far.

Additionally, the pivotal plot piece of the movie is based around a talisman that Mam (what he calls his mom) gives to Tom before he leaves to work with the spook. There is no such talisman

n in the novel. Numerous characters are also missing in the film adaptation as the director skipped around 75% of the books key plot. Most of Tom’s Family is nonexistent in the film and so are all of the intricate and intriguing sub plots that come with them. It is similar to ordering a sandwich and only getting 2 pieces of mushy bread with nothing in-between.

When I just saw the movie I was able to enjoy it; but then I read the book, and made my own visualizations and discovered for myself what the book is about. I appreciate that the movie is the director’s interpretation but he left out what matters to me which is seeing the characters develop and grow by facing difficult situations. The movie is good in its own way, it is not the best movie out there but it has its good qualities. It just in general seems bland and predictable. It does not do justice to the world created by Joseph Delaney. The Movie sets the story in the typical medieval countryside but the world that is created in the book is so much more.

The Film adaptation takes the books story and uses it as a backdrop for its own story. It uses only one of the numerous plot elements that Joseph Delaney employs. Admittedly the novel is not the kind of book that is easily adaptable to a good movie, but it truly could have been much better. This loose film adaptation is lacking in some key elements and the movies monetary success and ratings show it. It is an ok movie but when compared to the book, it is nowhere near the same level.