



Forum: Movies, TV and Entertainment

Topic: Howl's Moving Castle

Subject: Re: Howl's Moving Castle

Posted by: Elinor

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Differences in the Story

As Jones noted, the film is significantly different from her original novel in many ways. Roughly the first third of the plot is similar, after which the movie branches off into original territory, flavored with many of Miyazaki's familiar themes: airships, redemption, cute non-human sidekicks. The focus is still on Sophie and her adventure while being cursed with old age, but the main action of the film's story takes place during a war, reminiscent of World War I and located in a fantastical nation somewhat reminiscent of pre-World War I Alsace. Indeed, many buildings in the town scenes are identical to actual buildings in the Alsatian town of Colmar, which Miyazaki acknowledged as the inspiration for its setting. Whereas the novel is concerned with Howl's womanizing and his attempts to weasel out of locating a lost wizard and a prince, the film has Howl avoiding helping in a national war for pacifist reasons, and deals with the consequences of this decision. The movie also delves into spectacular scenes of radically alternate realities co-existing within the normal reality of the main story, and sequences of hallucinatory visuals and concepts are prominently featured throughout the second half of the film. The book also sees the protagonists detour for one chapter into the 20th century world, where Howl is known as Howell Jenkins. This element is not used in the film.

Many of the book's characters are modified for the film. The character of Howl's apprentice, Michael Fisher, is a teenager in the book but a young boy, "Markl", in the film. Sophie has only one sister in the movie compared to two in the book (although the other sister is alluded to as an aside near the film's opening). The Witch of the Waste, instead of looking young and beautiful, is a huge heavysset woman that later becomes an old crone—as opposed to terrorizing the characters as a frightening villain, she is treated as a "grandmother" character and is even taken into Howl's home. Calcifer, who is a scary looking fire demon in the book, is portrayed as an adorable little flame in the film, although in two instances he blazes up into a wicked-looking blue flame strongly reminiscent of his appearance in the book. Finally, while in the book there is a 'Wizard Suliman', in the film this is changed to a 'Madame Suliman'. Various other characters in the film are composites of the book's characters, with different motivations and personalities. Sophie and Howl themselves most strongly resemble Jones's characters (though Howl has a completely different background), but with gentler personas and less selfish motivations; that is, typical Jones character traits are softened into typical Miyazaki character traits.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howl's_Moving_Castle_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howl's_Moving_Castle_(film))