

Was the book really better?

A "To All the Boys I've Loved Before" Review

Around the time school started back in August 2018, Netflix released a movie based off of Jenny Han's novel "To All The Boys I've Loved Before." At the time, I hadn't read the book, but I had heard about its popularity, and when my friends started buzzing about the new Netflix film, which starred Lana Condor, Noah Centineo, and Israel Broussard, I decided to read the book so I could then watch the movie adaptation.

My first impression of "To All The Boys I've Loved Before," the novel, was that it wasn't the most profoundly written book I had ever read, but it was very engaging and I found myself loving the characters. One of the initial aspects of the book which impressed me was the way Han merged Korean and American culture. The protagonist, Lara Jean Song Covey, had a Korean mother who had passed away and a white American father who was trying to continue incorporating Korean culture into his daughters' lives. I liked how real the struggle to make sure Lara Jean and his sisters were familiar with their heritage was.

I also thought the relationships between all of the characters were well-written. Lara Jean was very close with her two sisters, Margot and Kitty, and the way they interacted was entertaining. When Margot moved to Scotland for college, for instance, Lara Jean found space forming, and I appreciated this writing choice because the book was not all fluffy and optimistic; there were moments of sadness as well.

Lara Jean's interactions with both Peter and Josh met my expectations; she didn't always know what to say, making her more approachable to readers. I do think the premise that she and Peter would successfully pretend to date for so long was

not extremely realistic, but other than that, Han successfully portrayed Lara Jean and her relationships with others to be complex, and the plot was very entertaining.

When I watched the movie, I was pleased for the most part. I have seen many movie adaptations which strayed much too far from the actual book, but "To All The Boys I've Loved Before" did well honoring the original text. There were some aspects I did not like as much in the film, however. For instance, in the novel, Josh (Lara Jean's neighbor) was very likable and prominent in the storyline, while in the Netflix movie, he did not have as much personality and was not as friendly, which I felt reduced the internal struggle Lara Jean was experiencing as she came to terms with her feelings for Josh and Peter.

The movie also cut out most of Lara Jean's traditions with her family, like going to her relatives' house for New Year's Day and maintaining a no-shoes household. In one scene, Margot

even climbed into Lara Jean's bed while wearing shoes, which bothered me because it wasn't something a person would usually do and it went against the culture in the novel.

I did think the movie was well-made, however. The plot aligned with the novel, and the characters were accurately portrayed. One point I didn't realize before reading the series was that the movie also had some content from the second book, "P.S. I Still Love You," but other than that, I was impressed with the continuity between the book version of "To All The Boys I've Loved Before" and the film version. Overall, both formats of "To All The Boys I've Loved Before" are great quality; they are entertaining, almost always realistic, and contain well-written emotions and relationships.

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