
The Main Rules of Fight Club

The first rule of fight club is: you do not talk about fight club. The second rule of fight club is: you DO NOT talk about fight club! Like most novel to film adaptations, there are always differences between the book and the film interpretation. However, in the case of Fight Club, it is not a matter of which is better. While the novel and film as separate works of art are each an engaging and captivating narrative, together they each utilize the advantages of both mediums to convey a more impressive narrative and deliver a world that is compatible between the two mediums while avoiding the age old cliché of the book is always better.

First, in terms of differences, is the introduction and development of the main characters. In Fight Club: the novel, the reader finally discovers the initial meeting of Tyler Durden and the Narrator (who is never given a name) during chapter 3. The narrator wakes up from a nap on a nude beach to Tyler building a large sculpture out of driftwood. After explaining a few things about the strange driftwood sculpture, Tyler introduces himself, gives the narrator his number, and walks off. While they are introduced to the readers as two different humans, they are in fact (spoiler alerts) the same person. Through the medium of writing, it poses the issue of realizing the reality of two characters as actually being one character is less impactful because of the ability to simply alter the perception of the reading by simply deceiving them through words, with not other explanation.

In the film, however, the meeting and development are entirely different. When we first encounter the characters, the narrator is seen blacking in to sitting on an airplane next to whom we soon find out is Tyler Durden, a self-employed soap salesman. After a few exchanges of conversation and Tyler displaying his soaps, he closes his briefcase (which is identical to the narrators), stands up and walks off the plane. This short interaction by itself already sets the scene for the realization of the possibility of dual personality by providing visual clues, like the narrator being visually seen blacking in to sitting on the airplane or the characters having identical briefcases to each other, and Tyler seeming as though he can show himself and disappear at will. Having the medium of film in this instance provides the immediate visuals that the book cannot, providing the audience the information needed without the tricks, allowing the audience to see and hear what is happening and understand how it is possible, thus having the leg up in the competition, because you know what they say, seeing is believing.

Another major difference is the presence of violence between the two forms of the story. When it comes to the moments of violence in the novel, there is a reoccurring theme throughout the novel of the focus being more on the mental state of the characters over the physical aspects, especially when violence comes into play. There are two major reasons for this: the first reason being that the entire novel is written in first person, innately providing the readers an omniscient point of view inside the narrators mind, but nothing of his physical surroundings. The second reason is that the very act of reading is a mental activity by translating the imaginary worlds within the mind eye. The point being that reading Fight Club is an experience that provides the reader a better understanding of what each character is going through psychologically.

While understanding what a character is going through psychologically is important to understanding the larger plot line, the visual aspects of the violence is also incredibly important

in understanding the roles of the characters in the film storyline. While violence itself is not a central theme, the few moments and scenes that it does take place are major keystones for the greater themes on the story. Compared to only reading about a the fight, being able to visually observe the fight provides a more intimate experience of the fight. By being placed into these fights through a camera, the audience is able to become apart of such the intimate aspects that are involved in the brawls“ the adrenaline, the blood splatter, the fear“ and they can better imagine and understand what kind of physical pain in involved.

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