

Title:

The Differences In The Various Versions Of ^I Am Legend~

Word Count:

538

Summary:

Richard Matheson's classic ^I Am Legend,~ widely regarded as being the earliest concrete example of post-apocalyptic science fiction, has notably suffered many alterations in the three movie adaptations of its plot. However, the movies have thankfully retain the concept of a bacterial agents that combines high antibiotic resistance,

Keywords:

antibiotic resistance

Article Body:

With the recent relative success of the third attempt at making a big screen adaptation of the novel, it may be an appropriate time to discuss the merits of Richard Matheson's apocalyptic science fiction novel. The main vehicle of the story, which has remained virtually consistent throughout all the adaptations, is a bacterial agent that combines two dangerous traits. The first is an antibiotic resistance so potent that no amount of bacteriophage could be used to effectively counter it. The second would be the notable effects of the infection on humans, both those who become infected, as well as how the ones who died of the infection continue to ^live.~ Humans who survive exhibit traits associated with mythical vampires, such as an aversion to sunlight and garlic. The bacterial agent is not fully explained in the novel itself, which prefers to delve into the character of Robert Neville, and his research into the effects of the plague. Like most book-to-movie adaptations, the movie is a translation from literary form to on-screen action. The movie adaptations of the original novel, ^The Day After Tomorrow,~ Man,~ Vincent Price's ^The Last Man On Earth,~ and Will Smith's ^I Am Legend,~ all eliminate the infected survivors. Whereas the infected are not divided in the movies, the novel shows that there are two types of infected: the first are vicious, vampire-like killers that consist primarily of the dead that have become re-animated; the second are the still-living infected, who Neville takes pains to kill along with the already dead. The incredible antibiotic resistance of the pathogen is shown by the novel to have made it nearly impossible to cure the human population. The only signs the novel shows of hope for the human race are Robert Neville's discovery of immunity to the infection, and a colony of infected humans who claimed to have found a way to cure the infection's effects. It is noted by some that, while the infected do manage to maintain some semblance of human behavior, it is portrayed by the novel to collectively show signs of psychopathy. The novel does not discuss how the infection's effects are being countered, but the relative absence of advanced laboratories and the bacteriophage suggest that the treatment is herbal in nature.

One final detail about the translations from novel to movie would be the final resolution. In the movie, Neville is granted hope from his despair and loneliness by finding some sort of cure for himself, generally by extracting an antidote from his own immune blood. In the novel, there is no such cure, but he is killed by the still-infected, who have come to see him as a nightmarish monster, and publicly executed. This is explained during Neville's final thoughts, wherein he realizes the rather ironic nature of the situation. In the same way that vampires are a legend to modern humans, Neville had become a legend to the infected, who ruthlessly killed in their sleep.

This is a demo version of txt2pdf v.10.1  
Developed by SANFACE Software <http://www.sanface.com/>  
Available at <http://www.sanface.com/txt2pdf.html>