

Skeleton on the Dunny

By Year 6 Student

The short story hidden inside the book *Unreal*, named 'Skeleton on the Dunny', was written by Paul Jennings. It has been made into a short film. Both are interesting and full of suspense; however, there are some differences between the two. Characters, settings and names have all been changed. From a ghost in limbo who is feeling guilty about his past crimes to an old lady who has been robbed, 'Skeleton on the Dunny' is an impressive read, changes or not.

The book begins with a preamble, explaining many things that would be difficult to represent in the film. In contrast, the film seems to skip straight to a time when it is able to capture your attention. With a creaky door and spooky music exposing the skeleton, the film has the ability to draw you in and promise an exciting view. Going back to the book, Paul Jennings is able to use descriptive sentences to form a picture in the reader's mind that the film has trouble conveying.

One of the main changes that the film has is the number of new characters. Although in the book there is only one main character (Bob), the film changes it to three. Names and personalities are another main difference. Bob, the original character, who in the book is unsure and easily scared, is, in the film, younger and more carefree. Pete, a new character, is a stereotypical teenager who likes McDonalds, playing the guitar and cracking cheesy jokes. Linda, the only girl, is unimpressed with her brothers and practises martial arts. Dad, who is only a minor character, has changed the fact that in the book Bronson (formally Bob) is an orphan. The arrival of Dad also means that Aunty Flo is no longer needed and she has been changed into an old lady called Nell who owns the stolen painting but is no relation to the family. Both the changes around Nell and Dad are from the film.

By adding new family members, the filmmakers are able to put across a new way of showing conversation that would be hard to do with only Bob as the central character. More characters means an easier and smoother series of events, more dialogue and thicker conflict or relationships between the characters.

Slight differences to the plot are also a factor in the changes to the story. By adding new characters, the filmmakers have to spread out the events between the three characters. This slightly alters the plot. The events that happen to the first main character (Bob) are shared out between Bronson, Linda and Pete. This is another opportunity for conflict between the siblings. Each new character means more and more tweaking is made to the plot. However, there are still some similarities. Although the father is brought back, the mother is not.

In the book version, Bob goes to his Aunty Flo's mouldy old house in the bush. In the film however, it is set near the sea in Suicide Leap. The only key part of the setting that is the same is the 'dunny'. In both versions, the 'dunny' is in the same place; at the bottom of the garden. Another similarity is the state of the place that the family lives in. In both the book and the film, the house is described as 'musty' or 'in a dreadful state'.

The director of 'Skeleton on the Dunny' is able to capture Paul Jennings' writing style and make it into a short film. Both the film and the book are equally creative and funny. They are tied in neatly, only leaving one short string undone to create more suspense and leave you wondering. Both are funny, imaginative and definitely *Unreal*.