#### One Who Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest (1975)

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#### **Cast**

#### **Jack Nicholson** as *Randle Patrick McMurphy*, **Louise Fletcher** as *Nurse Mildred Ratched*, **William Redfield** as *Harding*, **Scatman Crothers** as *Turkle Crothers*, **Danny DeVito** as *Martini*, **William Duell** as *Sefelt*, **Brad Dourif** as *Billy Bibbit*, **Christopher Lloyd** as *Taber*, **Will Sampson** as *Chief Bromden*, **Vincent Schiavelli** as *Frederickson*, **Marya Small** as *Candy*, **Louisa Moritz** as *Rose*, **Mimi Sarkisian** as *Nurse Pilbow*, **Nathan George** as *Attendant Washington*, **Alonzo Brown, Jr.** as *Miller*, **Phil Roth** as *Woolsey*, **Michael Berryman** as *Ellis*, **Peter Brocco** as *Col. Matterson*, **Mwako Cumbuka** as *Warren*, **Josip Elic** as *Bancini*, **Lan Fendors** as *Nurse Itsu*, **Sidney Lassick** as *Charlie Cheswick*, **Dwight Marfield** as *Ellsworth*, **Ted Markland** as *Hap Arlich*.

**Director**

**Milos Forman**

**Characters**

**Ken Kesey**

**Novel**

**Ken Kesey**

**Writer**

**Bo Goldman, Lawrence Hauben**

**Cinematographer**

**Haskell Wexler, Bill Butler, William A. Fraker**

**Editor**

**Lynzee Klingman, Richard Chew, Sheldon Kahn**

**Composer**

**Jack Nitzsche**

It's Completely Up to You

**★★★★ |** Sophie Marshall

March 15, 2016 **|**

Have you ever emerged from a darkened movie theatre -- following espying a film that you had yearned to see -- and overheard other individuals sharing that, “the book was better than the movie.” Happens all the time, right? This seems to be the case with *One Who Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*; there are a plethora of details from the novel that are correctly and incorrectly transmitted into the film.Yet, does this make it a terrible motion picture -- obviously not, since it won a handful of Oscars and most people have never read the book to possess prior knowledge to determine if the book is *truly* better than the movie.

Before we begin, it's imperative to plant a quick summary of Ken Kesey’s novel, One Who Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest in the minds of those who aren't familiar with the novel. Basically, the storyline is recounted from one of the asylum’s patients known as Chief Bromden -- he's a voluntary patient who pretends to be deaf, dumb, because he's a Native American who's been trampled upon by other people his entire life. He lacks confidence -- despite his enormous size -- until one day a rambunctious man named McMurphy arrives at the ward. Without sprouting any spoilers -- since the movie, for the most part, follows this summary too -- I'll only state that McMurphy alters the lives of every patient and staff member at the facility, especially Chief, in ways superior to imagination.

In this 1975 adaption, directed by the somewhat unknown director referred to as Milos Forman, it’s crucial to highlight on the casting choices. The executives of this low budget film were able to collaborate with superstar actors; such as, Danny Devito and the notorious Jack Nicholson -- both whom went on to star in Tim Burton films. Honestly, it's impossible to pick alternative actors that would’ve embodied the mentality of the patients better -- each actor was a method actor and most of the film was improv, especially the McMurphy (Jack Nicholson) scenes. In all, these actors spent what seemed like a millennium preparing for their roles with 89 real life, insane patients from the ward where the flick was shot, and their determination, talent really pixelated onto the big screen. Just wow.

Another constituent of this masterpiece that was extraordinary was the soundtrack selection. It was calming, classic, earthy, ironic, ethnic. It was encapsulated with irony as the moments spent at the insane asylum had a background tune of soothing music -- ironic since the patients were cuckoo and could suffer a nervous breakdown at any second. Also, the music did an excellent job of giving Chief Bromden (Will Sampson) a voice -- the tunes had a Native American twist to them -- as his was so lost from the book to the big screen, which was probably the worst mistake of the film and one of the reasons Ken Kesey refused to glimpse the film.

After reading all the marvelous elements of the film above, one who had never scrutinized the book would believe this film is phenomenal. And it is -- just not to the purists who possessed anterior knowledge. They would argue that the plotline was out of whack, as the boat scene was included near the beginning of the film and Chief Bromden (Will Sampson) spoke his words over the sharing of a piece of gum. Now, I'll agree that the scene that incorporated Chief’s first words was disappointing, vacuous -- as it failed to show the original, complex relationship between McMurphy and Chief. However, the scenes of the movie were recorded parallel to the book, even if they didn't appear in the film in the correct order. At least the director attempted to stay true to the original screenplay. Good try, buddy.

Two other angles that most purists seem to grouse about are the facts that McMurphy is not a stocky, ginger -- like scribed in the novel -- and Cheswick (Sydney Lassick) doesn't die at all. Well, all I have to say to that is: so what? Does the absence of a pinch of ruby hair “with long red sideburns” really ruin the movie for you? In my opinion, Jack Nicholson is the perfect loopy person impersonator for the job, and his outfit decision of a ribbed, black beanie and a leather jacket really show his lack of conformity, troubled past, and badassness. Which are all qualities that McMurphy envelopes. As for the Cheswick part, I have no idea why they permitted him to live another day. He was obnoxious, sobbed a lot, and served no purpose for the message of the film. So, I guess purists, you're right to nag on that aspect.

After studying the majority of this article, I hope it's transparent to you as to why most of audience -- who's never read One Who Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest -- adore this feature film. It's remarkable. Yet, it's also justifiable as to why some pedestrians state that “the book was better than the movie.” However, many people proclaimed that opinion with series; like, Harry Potter and Twilight, but does that make those movies horrendous and not worthy to be visualized? No. They pleased most of the public; hence, if you've never read the book, then the movie will hardly ever be a catastrophe to you. So, the inquiry remains: read the book or not read the book, then enjoy the movie? It's completely up to you. As McMurphy would say, “a little dab’ll do ya.”

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| I write a creative, thoughtful, and complete movie review; I bring up new insights and claims that clearly connect the book and film (10pts).    I use specific evidence/scenes from the film and book to support my claims (10pts).   I use proper film vocabulary (including film elements, actors’ names, etc. (5pts).  I have creative organization and capture the movie review genre brilliantly; I have great structure (10pts).  I have inventive and nearly perfect mechanics (5pts). | I write a somewhat creative, clear, and complete movie review; I bring up appropriate (although perhaps cliché) insights that clearly connect the book and film (8-9pts).  I use some specific evidence/scenes from the film (and perhaps book) to support my claims (8-9pts).   \*\*\*    I have somewhat creative organization and capture parts of the movie review genre clearly; I have solid structure (8-9pts).  I have clear mechanics and no distracting errors (4pts). | I write a complete and somewhat clear movie review, but I could push my insights and connections with the book and film more (6-7pts).  I use some evidence/scenes from the film (and perhaps the book) to support my claims, but the evidence is limited and brief (6-7pts).  I may use proper film vocabulary, but there are some minor errors (3pts).   I have basic, but clear organization; I have elements of the movie review genre, but I could push my structure more (6-7pts). I have limited mechanics and a few distracting errors (3pts). | I write a weak, unclear, confusing and/or incomplete movie review; my insights and connections are poor (0-5pts).   I use little, if any evidence from the film (and perhaps book) to support my claims; my evidence is weak, unclear, and/or missing (0-5pts).   I fail to use the proper film vocabulary and/or there are many errors (0-2pts). I have weak, confusing, and/or incorrect and incomplete organization; I am missing several elements of the movie review genre (0-5pts). I have weak mechanics and many distracting errors (0-2pts). |

**SCORE: 39/40**