

Top 10 Awesome Books that Deserve Film or TV Adaptations- Part 2: The Top Five

□ Emma Curzon □ books, film, LGBTQ+, positivity, TV, Uncategorized □ December 11, 2020December 11, 2020 □ 6 Minutes

Welcome to Part 2! A.k.a. the top five books- the last three especially- that I'd really, *really* like to see turned into either a competently re-structured film or the next big Netflix series. Ok, are you ready? Had a look at Part 1 (which you can find [here](https://emmamcurzon.wordpress.com/2020/12/05/5-awesome-books-that-deserve-film-or-tv-adaptations/) (https://emmamcurzon.wordpress.com/2020/12/05/5-awesome-books-that-deserve-film-or-tv-adaptations/)? Let's go.

5. In Order to Live by Yeonmi Park



Yeonmi Park giving a TED talk in 2019.

This one is probably the most unlikely to see an on-screen adaptation in the near future, except as part of a documentary. After all, it's an autobiography with extremely sensitive subject matter including human trafficking and sexual violence, which the real people involved might not want to see fictionalised. This is, however, an exceptionally valuable story, recounting Park's life growing up in North Korea and the long and harrowing process of escaping the country. It's the side of North Korea's people that's in danger of getting lost amidst the ridiculous drama of Donald Trump and Kim Jong-Un's nuclear-based verbal dick measuring (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=125u43BAG9k&list=PL988), and the dictatorship's more ridiculous aspects being played for comedy. What we don't need is another substandard clichéd based-on-real-life movie that no-one ever notices (looking at you, *Harriet*) but with a well-written script, a good production team and a solid marketing budget, a film or show based on this book could be a truly valuable eye-opener to a country-sized human rights crisis.

4. Incidents from the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs



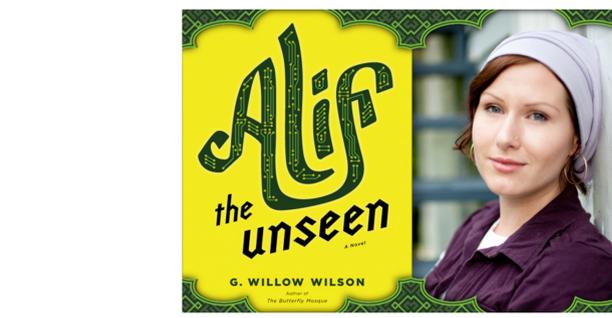
I know- another slavery/racism narrative, for which a studio would mysteriously "discover" all the black actors they see as "not mainstream enough" for a fantasy film or a rom-com. That's not a trend that should be left to continue: black actors, creators and consumers all deserve better, and the prominence of no-slavery-related films like *Moonlight* and *Black Panther* is hopefully just the beginning.

DuckDuckGo. Want the same Internet, but more privacy? We got you.

REPORT THIS AD

But stories recounting the horrors of slavery (still often forgotten, even in history textbooks (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3aukOPEdgg)) shouldn't drop out of the cultural landscape entirely. Some, like that of Harriet Jacobs, deserve to be told to as many people as possible. Which is why it's so disappointing that I only found out a few months ago who she was. Her book is possibly the most comprehensive slavery-based autobiography written by a woman, yet she's spent centuries overshadowed by more famous figures like Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass. Yet her story is every bit as fascinating- and harrowing- as theirs. Prominent aspects include the constant threat of sexual assault from a white male slaveowner, Jacobs' fight to keep her children from being sold and a genius escape plan which involved hiding in her grandmother's attic for seven years. Put simply, Harriet Jacobs was brilliant, and her story is that of a complex, courageous black woman who fought for her life and her autonomy, and who deserves wider recognition. An adaptation of her book, either in the cinema or on Netflix (and preferably with a black female director) would go a long way towards giving it to her.

3. Sofia Khan Is Not Obligated by Ayesha Malik



It was marketed as "the Muslim Bridget Jones", but Ayesha Malik's debut novel deserves way more than being labelled a curious offshoot of a more famous story. Another one I genuinely enjoyed reading for a university module, *Sofia Khan Is Not Obligated* is a witty, heartfelt and absolutely hilarious take on the romance and chick lit genres from a Muslim woman's perspective. Of course, who the protagonist will end up with is one of the novel's main concerns, but issues of career, friendship, religion and culture, and being a (Pakistani) Muslim woman in an at best ignorant and at worst hostile Britain are all integral to the titular protagonist's character development. You could ditch Bridget Jones altogether and say that its about how, having recently broken off an engagement, Sofia gets commissioned by the publishing house where she works to write a book on Muslim dating- meaning, of course, that she has to get back in the field. (For research purposes, obviously.) But even that would be to dilute the book so much that what makes it stand out would be lost. A paper-bound middle finger to those who dismiss "feminine" genres as shallow and trivial, this is a unique and heartwarming book with a flawed but relatable female protagonist which would make the perfect addition to any rom-com fan's "Watch Next" list.

2. Alif the Unseen by G. Willow Wilson



DuckDuckGo. Want the same Internet, but more privacy? We got you.

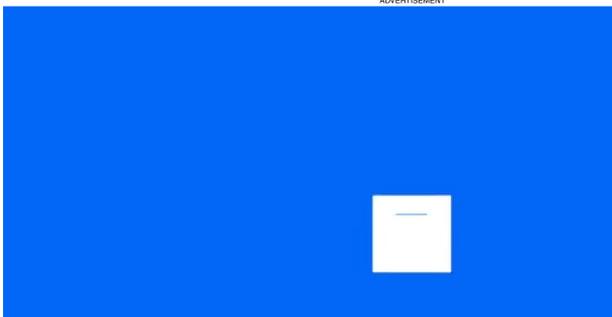
REPORT THIS AD

This is the one I need to press into the hands of my (computer science professor) dad at some point. You like fantasy? You like computers? Welcome to a fantasy novel that's unlike any I've ever come across before or since, because it combines both and does it brilliantly. Oh, and there are creatures from Arabic myth and also a magic book that holds both ancient myths and the secret of quantum computing thrown in for good measure. Set in an unnamed Persian Gulf emirate, Wilson's book follows Alif (not his real name), a hacker who gets on the bad side of the very, very oppressive local government. He ends up on the run with said magic book, his devoutly religious frenemy Dina and a whole cast of misfits and rebels, not all of them human. The special effects budget would be considerable, but a good director could make it work. And never mind quantum computing- what would really be a breath of fresh air in the realm of complex female characters is Dina. She's strict about not touching or having her face seen by men, and dislikes *His Dark Materials* for its "dangerous" messages- but she's also smart, compassionate, brave and generally an all-round badass. By the end, she's taken every negative stereotype about devout Muslim women and kicked them to the curb, with Alif (and the reader) coming to appreciate her for the strong, complex human she is. Put all that together, and you've got the potential for a truly unique and enthralling production.

By the way, another thing about Dina: she's not conventionally attractive. The book literally describes her as "not beautiful". As someone who's had self-esteem issues related to my looks for years now, it's very important that any actress who plays Dina isn't conventionally attractive either. Check out [this video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5oE5jKSUw) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D5oE5jKSUw) for more on why it should be important to you, too.

Still, as much as *Alif the Unseen* deserves all of its accolades and critical acclaim, even it can't hold a candle in adaptation potential to...

1. The Priory of the Orange Tree by Samantha Shannon



I mean... come on. This is one adaptation that at some point has to happen. I only read *Priory* a short while ago, but I think it will probably always be one of my favourite books ever, and it would probably take a much more jam-packed, small-essay-length blog post to explain why there are so many things I love about it. (Oh wait... that's exactly what I wrote back in July! You can check it out [here](https://emmamcurzon.wordpress.com/2020/07/29/book-review-the-priory-of-the-orange-tree-by-samantha-shannon-come-for-the-dragons-stay-for-pretty-much-everything-else/) (https://emmamcurzon.wordpress.com/2020/07/29/book-review-the-priory-of-the-orange-tree-by-samantha-shannon-come-for-the-dragons-stay-for-pretty-much-everything-else/).) Anyway, this fantasy epic would be perfect for adaptation into a visual medium, an ideal next stop for fantasy lovers who are moving on from *The Lord of the Rings*, have found the magic of *Harry Potter* ruined for them by the author's transphobic behaviour (https://emmamcurzon.wordpress.com/2020/06/15/harry-potter-fans-guide-to-crowling-transphobia), and/or were crushingly disappointed in *Game of Thrones*, both for its pattern of systemic racism (https://www.publiksmedicinalist.com/game-thrones-racism-problem/) and for those ridiculous finale episodes. *Priory* would make a lucrative television project because it combines much of what made those "classic" fantasies great, while also incorporating things their creators simply didn't bother with. Which is an elaborate way of saying that the novel has an impressively diverse cast of characters, with the leads being women, people of colour, and/or gay people. There is so much potential here for more on-screen representation of same-sex (especially lesbian) couples, for complex female characters and for complex female and male characters of colour. And no, random "Free Speech" Defending Person, I'm not arguing for diversity over quality here. This is a genuinely good book with incredibly rich world building, interesting character arcs, the full spectrum from light(er) humour to dark, emotional gut-punching drama, good dialogue, high stakes and also some very impressive giant dragons. Done right, a TV adaptation of this book really could be something special.

DuckDuckGo. Want the same Internet, but more privacy? We got you.

REPORT THIS AD

(And yes, I said a TV adaptation. This book may be one self-contained story but it's thick enough to use as a non-lethal weapon. There's no way in *hell* it could be squeezed into a film's runtime without crucial world building and character development being unceremoniously discarded, and since it all builds up to one big climax I doubt it would work as a series of films either.)

If you have any favourite but underrated books which I've cruelly neglected, let me know down there in the comments.

ADVERTISEMENT



REPORT THIS AD

Advertisements. Trying to protect your privacy online? We're available.

REPORT THIS AD

Published by Emma Curzon



[View all posts by Emma Curzon](#)

[Create a free website or blog at WordPress.com.](#)