

# Patricia MacLachlan's Sarah Plain and Tall - Comparing Book and Movie

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The beginning of the movie begins with the exact same scene between Anna and Caleb that appears in the book. However, the movie, Sarah Plain and Tall has a variety of differences from Patricia MacLachlan's children's novel Sarah Plain and Tall. Essentially the movie had to go to a deeper level in order to attract adults to the story. Every event that is in the book happens in the movie. However, the movie adds scenes and complicates the relationships between the characters. The complication between characters is especially shown in Anna and Sarah's relationship. In the movie Anna is mad about Sarah coming to stay for a month. However, in the book she says "I wished everything was as perfect as the stone. I wished that Papa and Caleb and I were perfect for Sarah" (21). In the book Anna has no trouble liking Sarah, but in the movie Anna has a hard time letting go of her real mother and will not let Sarah get close to her. It is not until Sarah comforts Anna after a bad dream and tells her "when I was ten my mamma died" (which was not told in the book) that Sarah and Anna have a close relationship. After Sarah and Anna reach an understanding, Sarah tries to help Anna remember her mother by putting her mother's candlesticks, quilt, a painting, and her picture back into the house. They also put flowers on her grave together.

However, Anna and Sarah's relationship is not the only one that takes a while to develop. With the exception of some small problems with Sarah's strong will, MacLachlan makes the relationship between Sarah and Jacob seem easy. However in the movie, Jacob also has a hard time letting Sarah get close to him because of his love for his dead wife, Katherine. For example, in the movie when they fight about putting Katherine's possessions in the house and going to visit the grave Sarah says "I cannot make a difference until you make peace with Katherine's death". Jacob does not make that peace until Sarah goes to help Maggie deliver her baby. The delivery brings back memories of Katherine's death since she died giving birth to Caleb. It is here that Jacob realizes "I never stopped long enough to tell her that I missed her". Once Jacob realizes this he has room to love Sarah.

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