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In Defense Of...The Dark Tower (Movie) 2017 ([//www.media-dissection.com/metalloud/in-defense-ofthe-dark-tower-movie-2017](http://www.media-dissection.com/metalloud/in-defense-ofthe-dark-tower-movie-2017))

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Warning: heavy Dark Tower book series spoilers ahead.

Having spent the last several weeks sprinting through the audio books of the Dark Tower series (including the novellas “The Little Sisters of Eluria” and “The Wind Through The Keyhole” – I am nothing if not a completionist) in time for the film version of “The Dark Tower,” I found myself incredibly satisfied with the adaptation.

As constant readers know, there are other worlds than these. The film opens in one of these worlds. This film is not a retread of the novels, nor is it meant to be. It seems, instead, to pick up right where the series left off. And, of course, right where it began.

For Roland, the wheel of Ka has spun since we last left him, and he is back in the Mohaine Desert. But his circumstances differ from those of “The Gunslinger” because, though he is destined to endlessly repeat his quest for the Dark Tower (“Death, but not for you, gunslinger. Never for you”), this film establishes that each journey will unfold differently than the last. Ka, afterall, is a wheel, not a rewind button, and it spins ever

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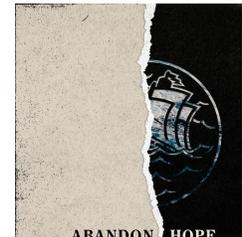
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forward. Now, in place of Cort, Roland's own father is teaching him how to shoot with his mind.

Jake is still of New York, but is no longer the child of absent parents left in the care of a housekeeper; instead, he has lost his beloved father, and is being raised by a concerned mother and a jerk of a stepfather.

And there is still The Man in Black. We don't find Walter O'Dim running across the desert, but rather, using his sorcery to kidnap children with the shine from their home worlds in order to put them to work as breakers.

So everything is different, and yet, in the ways that matter, things are the same. Roland still has his guns. Jake still has "the touch", only in this when, it is known as "the shining." And Walter the sorcerer has what he now calls his "magics." The film, then, represents what "The Gunslinger" represents to the series. It is the new launching point for Roland's next quest, and it is our new compass. And for what it's worth, I think it does this incredibly well.

Idris Elba as Roland is stoic and badass. And he is selfish and single minded in the way we remember. He is, after all, a man who once let Jake die so his dream of the tower could live. But in this iteration, Ka seems to have made Roland slightly smarter than before, and this intelligence has come at a cost. Though he doesn't remember his prior quest for the tower, he carries the emotional baggage of his past journey, and he appears defeated before he has even begun. He is now wary of the forces he is up against. And, following his last encounter with Walter, it seems that he has lost all hope, even rejecting his calling as a gunslinger.

Tom Taylor as Jake is sensitive and full of heart. Like the Jake who Roland once called Son, he is capable of knocking down Roland's walls and will surely be an invaluable asset on the quest. But this iteration of Jake is both more intuitive and more vulnerable than before, as if his journeys have left him wizened yet warried.

Matthew McConaughey as Walter is whimsical and captivating. He beautifully tap dances the line of sanity, much like season two Leland Palmer of "Twin Peaks." He is ever as dangerous as the Walter of the books, and yet, more so, because he is deliciously aware of his gifts, and how to use them to taunt and torture his nemeses. The fact that the characters return to us completely themselves, and yet with heightened sensibilities, is what made this film really work for me.

This is a world-weary bunch. They have been though this wheel before, and this time, they seem to know this at some deep level. They find each other faster. They understand each other more deeply. They manipulate each other more expertly.

This is a worldly Walter who gleefully acts out his destructive nature at a grand scale. This is a savvy Jake who is prepared to carry Roland and who can go toe to toe with Walter. This is an unmoored Roland who may be able to learn the value of Ka-tet at a lower personal cost.

Author: Sarah Luery

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