

I wanted to take a moment and talk about two Stephen King works translated to film. Most of this ground has been covered by other people in years past, but here is my take. First of all many people put King in the "horror" box and that is a strong area for him. However he has many different styles of work. He has a sentimental side (The Body a.k.a. Stand By Me), he has a sci-fi side that is shown in several works, and he has his western/sci-fi/epic in The Dark Tower series. I enjoyed the Tower series and enjoy revisiting it. His works both The Dark Tower and The Stand had an influence on the writers and producers of one of my favorite TV series LOST. Now I want to address two of King's works The Stand and Dreamcatcher.

The Stand takes place in a reality where a virus escapes into the wild and wipes out the majority of the world's population. The story focuses on the United States and the people who are somehow immune to the virus. They are quickly polarized into two camps by two magnetic characters. The first is Randall Flagg a character who in different guises walks through many of King's Dark Tower related works. He is evil and self-serving. The other side is drawn by Mother Abigail, who is the Lord's instrument to draw people together for good. The book is huge and deals with many aspects of society. While having some horror elements and difficult situations, that is not what the book is about. It is about people. While not the first story teller to do this, King does it well. Many have learned from him and we see the results in Lost, The Walking Dead, and other series. The book was adapted into a mini-series in the 1990's. While it suffers from some '90's cheese in the form of special effects, it did a fairly good job telling the story in the time it had. Yes, like most adaptations the book is better and some of the changes I did not care for. But overall the casting was very good. Gary Sinise is who I pictured Stu to be when I read the book. Now I could not picture anyone better playing him. I have a high respect of Sinise as an actor and as a person, thanks to the roles he chooses and his service to the U.S. troops. I think most of the casting was spot on and they did a great job being those characters. Would I mind seeing it re-done? Yes but only if the right people were involved cast and crew. I would want the time and the money HBO could give it, but not how they seem to love to throw abundant sex into everything. So maybe AMC could do it. I like their track record so far.

Dreamcatcher is an aliens coming to take over the earth story, but the real story is the friendship of 4 men over the years. They were boys together in the town of Derry, Maine. Derry is the setting of some of my favorite King books. Their friendship and defense of a special needs boy changed their lives. He is gifted with mental powers and in order to save

a girl he passes some of those on to each one of the four. They each go on to adulthood and careers but Duddits (the special needs man) connects them all like a dreamcatcher. They men are on their yearly hunting outing when the aliens crash and begin to attack in overt and subtle way. The military is brought in and the struggle begins between the aliens, military, and the four men. The cinematography was great and the visual effects were good as well. They really took what I pictured in my mind and put it on the screen. The casting all but one character was spot on from the book. The exception is Morgan Freeman. While I like Morgan and he has shown he can take a character not written for an african-american and make it work (Shawshank Redemption), it does not work here. I saw someone totally different in the roll. But the rest of the cast was great (Damian Lewis, Thomas Jane, Jason Lee, and Timothy Olyphant). Lewis became a favorite after playing Dick Winters in the Band of Brothers series and I enjoyed him in the TV Series, Life. My issue with the film when about mid-way through the movie veered away from the book. It tried to be more and it didn't need too. So you could recast Freeman and re-shoot the movie or the 2nd half it would be great.

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