

The Dark Knight - A Personal Review

Contributed by Izzibeth
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Batman has always been my favorite superhero. Nightcrawler is also my favorite, but in a kind of different way.... he's got super powers. Bruce Wayne doesn't. That being said... of course I went to go see The Dark Night this weekend. And, just like 99% of people who saw it, I absolutely loved it. LOVED IT.

Heath Ledger's (*excuse me while I cry for one of my generation's best actors...*) performance in it was THE FUCKING BEST I have seen in a long, long time. The Joker (and Harley) was my favorite Batman villain and, I think, probably the one who had the most time and effort put into him by his creator. The Joker IS Batman's arch nemesis and I think this film very accurately portrays why. I'm not going to give away any spoilers in this review... because actually.... I wanted to address something that a lot of people have been talking about. That is.... DUN DUN DUNNNNNN! the women (or lackthereof) in the film.

I skimmed one feminist review (and the fucking distasteful comments that followed and are sadly to be expected when a woman points out the fact that a film is sorely lacking in female roles or obviously stereotyping women in general) and noted that the reviewer was disappointed in the fact that there were so few women in the movie. I would like to address this very valid point.

In the film there are only three women with any speaking roles. Rachel, Gordon's wife, and one female cop. Other women are simply extras. It's there. It's a fact. It's not indicative of real life (there is usually more than one female cop on a big city force) but, unfortunately, it is of the Batman comic book. The only way one could have placed more women in that movie would have been to have a more equal opportunity police force. Other than that, the Batman world is full of men. The three female supervillians in Gotham are Harley Quinn, Poison Ivy, and Catwoman and they have not made their appearances yet (sadly, Harley will probably never make an appearance since Heath Ledger OWNED The Joker and the two would have to be together to make any sense) in the Batman Begins series. The male antagonists include The Joker, The Riddler, The Penguin, The MadHatter, Scarecrow, Two-Face, and other randoms. For a comic written by men for men back in the 1950s... that's simply the way the cookie crumbles. It really is a huge shame that Heath Ledger died (in terms of this film.. it's a shame in general) because he is the creator of Harley Quinn and having him continue in a third film to cause her to go insane and become another Gotham maniac would have been great. With his death, I think we lose an awesome plot line and an awesome introduction of a female supervillian. Harley becomes as fucked up as The Joker and was, in the comic on more than one occasion, brutal and vicious and a force to be reckoned with.

On a positive note, Maggie Gyllenhaal's character was strong and smart. While she was "the woman caught in the middle of a love triangle" in this film, she was shown as a professional and she did have a role in helping with the crime and justice aspects of what was going on in the movie. She was not a push-over and she had courage as well. She spent her time worrying about the men in her life as well as what was going on in Gotham. I felt she was a much stronger character than Pepper Potts, for example. I thought Gyllenhaal's acting was great and there is this one scene (which I can't describe unfortunately without giving away a major plot spoiler) where I thought she nailed it. It's a short scene and... you could almost miss it, I guess, but I thought she did wonderfully. It's definitely in that line of scenes that keeps running through my head.

So I suppose this is some kind of weird post in defense of the fact that there weren't enough women in the movie. I would have liked to have seen a more realistic police force, but honestly... there weren't too many other females that could have been applied. I'm pretty sure Gordon has a daughter who was completely obliterated from the world OR is someplace else... maybe college.... ? (I really can't remember the first movie.. did she make an appearance there?) And replaced by two strapping young male children.. but without seeing whether or not they are going to include her later in a film, I can't really say anything. She was college age and becoming a professional so perhaps she will show up. In the movie, Rachel wasn't a stupid woman who had no aspirations in life and jumped all over the men for emotional and financial support. She wasn't weak. She wasn't a waste of space. So I count that as a good thing. There were some typical "oh... I almost forgot that everything is targeted towards heterosexual men" moments, but I didn't feel insulted or anything along those lines. Trust me. Ironman was a much worse offender in such a way that I was noticing it throughout the movie and it detracted from my overall liking of it.

Despite the lack of ladies, The Dark Knight was awesome. I would love to see it again. I was happy with the women who were in the movie and how they were portrayed.... even if there were only three of them.

In conclusion... GO SEE IT!