

500WoL: Wonder Woman

I am convinced that if *Wonder Woman* had been released ten years ago, it would have been rejected by most critics and the majority of audiences. The template had been set: heroes needed to be flawed and conflicted. They needed to have their own personal demons to fight, because that would humanize them. *Wonder Woman* is not that film and most certainly not that kind of hero.

Sometimes, a film is delivered to the world at the perfect time. We live in an era of extremes. Our politics are divisive and partisan. Our cultural conversations are loaded with hostility and vitriol. 2017 is cynical and angry. I believe people are grasping for hope and inspiration; something to help make sense of the world around them. An ideal worth celebrating.

Enter *Wonder Woman*.

Rejecting every modern convention on how to present a hero to the world, *Wonder Woman* opts for something more inspired. Diana, Princess of Themyscira, is not the hero our society deserves, but she is definitely the hero we need. She is brave, kind, selfless, noble, loving, and strong. The film never calls her Wonder Woman, but anyone that sees her in action could not conceive of a more appropriate name. The film wonderfully eschews the need for the hero to grow and overcome internal flaws. Diana sees a need – the slaughter of innocents at the hands of World War I – and she does everything she can to make matters right. All this said, she is not a static character. She still has room to grow and evolve as the story is told. As events unfold, her driving motivation changes, going from a sense of duty to a more profound impetus to help.

The two leads, Gal Gadot as Wonder Woman and Chris Pine as Steve Trevor, have fantastic chemistry and elevate the movie

in every way. The supporting cast does fine work, adding color and humor. The music is epic and moving. The cinematography is excellent throughout. The action sequences are well staged with a fantastic sense of pacing and speed. There are many "hero shots" in the film, and virtually all of them add a true sense of spectacle and awe.

I have enjoyed the DC films up to this point, outside of the completely inane *Suicide Squad*. I am a big fan of *Man of Steel*. I appreciate and even love sections of *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*. I realize that might cloud your opinion of this review, since those films are not loved by most. *Wonder Woman* is better than all of them. It is a film soaked in light, with none of the angst and darkness. It is worth your time and money if you love movies about heroes that are truly heroic. I recommend it as highly as I can.

(The film is rated PG-13 due to violence and frightening imagery. There are also a few scenes that discuss sexuality, but do so in a way that is incredibly tactful and mild.)