

500 Words or Less Reviews: Ready Player One

Time warps our memories of things we once loved in various ways, and when enough time goes by, the exact memories we had begin to slip away from us like sand through an hourglass. When we finally are able to come back to the thing itself, whether a good book or a Nintendo game played with a trusty NES controller, some pieces of time come shooting back up to us through the hourglass. For a moment, we are reconnected to those past memories and versions of ourselves. And yet, we have changed in that time span. Our perception of what we are able to experience again is colored by eyes that have since matured and have felt more of the weight of the world.

I read the book version of "Ready Player One" almost two years ago, so it's fitting that enough time has gone by for me to forget key scenes or details from the plot. It's like my memory of what happened has since dissolved into fragments. During the early screening for the film, I was sitting between a close friend and a random stranger, and all three of us had read the book. We discussed a few scenes, and the plot progression started to come back to me. My anticipation started to build. Would the film deliver, or would it let me down?

When I first heard that the *Ready Player One* movie was in production, I wasn't too thrilled. The book was an ambitious and expansive imaginary romp through 80's nostalgia. "They'll never pull a movie like this off convincingly," I told myself. The trailers left a lot to be desired because it looked like they were going to change the plot significantly. And they did.

But you know what? Somehow it worked.

After the movie, the three of us sat and reflected on what we had just watched. The movie had the overall feel of an 80s adventure flick, Spielberg style. It felt like what author Ernest Cline (who was part of the creative process on the film) might have done with the plot in a parallel universe. My biggest fear going into the movie would be that it would turn out to be a heartless, piecemeal version of what I had experienced and loved while reading the book, but I was quite happy to be wrong. Yes, parts of the movie felt a bit rushed or contrived, and I was still miffed at a few parts of the book that didn't make it into the movie, but overall I was very glad to have seen it.

The movie left me feeling a bit bizarre because it was like what I had once experienced, yet it was different altogether. It's akin to playing a favorite game from your childhood that is now radically different in form, yet still retains the original essence of what you had enjoyed in the past.

8/10

(Parental content advisory: There are a few strong curse words throughout the PG-13 rated film.)