

STEPHEN KING ON SCREEN



Week Five

Werewolves, Clowns and Kathy Bates, Oh My!

Welcome to *Stephen King On Screen*

Week Five

As we coast towards the end of the adaptations of the 80s novels, before a quick detour next week into the novellas and short stories of *Different Seasons*, *Skeleton Crew* and *Four Past Midnight*, you may notice something strange begin to happen.

While there have always been a mixture of critically well-regarded films based on King's work – going right back to Brian De Palma's *Carrie*, there have been an equal number of films that veered into schlocky territory, concentrating, perhaps, too much on the horror *plots* of their source material, at the expense of character, or even veering away from the text into something which loses its essence entirely.

And while we will continue to encounter what are considered lesser films in the catalogue, another thread begins to form:

The prestige Stephen King film.

Arguably, this begins in earnest with the 1986 release of *Stand By Me*, based on the novella *The Body*, published in 1982's *Different Seasons* (the same collection that contains the source material for *The Shawsbank Redemption* & *Apt Pupil*.) By 1990, Reiner would return to King Country with *Misery*, based on the 1987 novel. Both of these stories/films have something in common other than their director – they aren't supernatural stories, although they contain plenty of scares and suspense of their own.

They were proof, on paper, that Stephen King could write – and write well – outside of horror. And on screen, they began the process of convincing audiences that Stephen King movies could be about something other than things that go bump in the night – that they could get under own skin equally effectively by concentrating wholly on that most dangerous of creatures – the human being.

Later years would see King adaptations bouncing between these two extremes, but this is the birth of a strand of King films that posited a writer with far greater range than he had previously been given credit for.

FILMS WEEK FIVE

Silver Bullet (1985) – Dir. Dan Attias

The Talisman (2008) – Dir. Mathieu Rathe

Thinner (1996) – Dir. Tom Holland

It (1990) – Dir. Tommy Lee Wallace

Wob (1998) – Dirs. Glenn Baretto & Ankush Mobla

It (2017) – Dir. Andy Muschietti

It, Chapter Two (2019) – Dir. Andy Muschietti

Misery (1990) – Dir. Rob Reiner

The Tommyknockers (1993) – Dir. John Power

The Dark Half (1993) – Dir. George A Romero