

The Dark Tower II: The Drawing of the Three

by Stephen King · Language: EN

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Overview

The Dark Tower II: The Drawing of the Three is the second volume in Stephen King's epic fantasy-horror series, The Dark Tower. It continues the quest of Roland Deschain, the last gunslinger, who is pursuing the Man in Black across a desolate world. After a confrontation on the beach, Roland is left with a severe injury and a mysterious door that opens into different times and places in our world. The novel follows Roland as he learns to 'draw' three companions from these doors—each with a unique role in his quest—while battling the lobstrosities and the growing threat of the Crimson King.

The story is a blend of high fantasy, Western, and horror, with King's signature style of weaving together multiple realities. The narrative shifts between Roland's world and the modern-day United States, where he encounters Eddie Dean, a heroin addict, and Odetta Holmes, a woman with multiple personalities. The book is a crucial turning point in the series, as it establishes the core group of characters who will accompany Roland on his journey to the Dark Tower. It explores themes of addiction, identity, and the nature of destiny, and it sets the stage for the larger conflict that defines the series.

Why it matters: The Drawing of the Three is not just a bridge between the first and third volumes; it is a foundational work that expands the mythology of the Dark Tower universe. It introduces key characters and concepts that will be central to the series, and it showcases King's ability to blend genres and create a compelling, character-driven narrative. The book is essential reading for fans of the series and for anyone interested in King's broader literary universe.

Key Takeaways

- Roland's quest requires him to draw companions from our world, each with a specific purpose, showing that even a lone gunslinger needs allies.
- The doors on the beach are portals to different times and places, and they open only to those Roland can 'draw'—meaning he must bring them through by force or persuasion.
- Eddie Dean's addiction to heroin is a central challenge, and his withdrawal becomes a test of his will and Roland's patience.

- Odetta Holmes's multiple personalities (Odetta and Detta) are a key plot point, and her eventual integration is a major character arc.
- The lobstrosities (the 'lobster-things') on the beach are a real threat, and Roland's injury from them is a constant reminder of his vulnerability.
- The book introduces the concept of 'ka'—a force of destiny that binds Roland and his companions together.
- The ending reveals that Roland's drawing of the three is not complete, as he must also draw Jake, a boy from his own world, in the next book.

Chapter Summaries

The Prisoner

Roland wakes on the beach after his encounter with the Man in Black, his hands and feet mutilated by lobstrosities. He discovers a door on the beach, which opens into a world where he sees Eddie Dean, a heroin addict on a plane. Roland realizes he must draw Eddie into his world to help him. He uses the door to communicate with Eddie and eventually pulls him through, but Eddie is in the throes of withdrawal and is initially hostile.

The Lady of Shadows

Roland and Eddie travel along the beach, and Roland's condition worsens. They find a second door, which opens into the world of Odetta Holmes, a wealthy black woman who is a civil rights activist. However, Odetta has a split personality: the prim and proper Odetta and the violent, racist Detta Walker. Roland and Eddie must deal with both personalities as they try to bring her through the door, but Detta is a dangerous threat.

The Pusher

Roland and Eddie, now with Odetta (who has been pulled through), face a new challenge. Roland discovers a third door that opens into the mind of Jack Mort, a serial killer who has been responsible for many deaths, including the one that caused Odetta's split personality. Roland uses Jack to get medicine and supplies from our world, but he also forces Jack to commit suicide, which causes Odetta to merge her personalities into a new, whole person: Susannah.

The Drawing

The final section of the book focuses on the aftermath of the drawing. Roland, Eddie, and Susannah (the merged Odetta/Detta) are now together, but they are still on the beach and must face the lobstrosities and the threat of the Crimson King. Roland's injury is infected, and he is dying. Eddie and Susannah must find a way to save him, and they begin to understand the nature of their quest and the bond that ties them together.

Themes

- Addiction and recovery
- Identity and multiplicity
- Destiny and ka
- Sacrifice and duty
- The nature of evil

Notable Quotes

- "The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed." — This is the opening line of the first book, but it is also referenced in the second book as a reminder of Roland's quest.
- "You have to be careful with the lobstrosities. They'll take your fingers off." — Roland warns Eddie about the dangerous creatures on the beach.
- "I am the last of the gunslingers. I am the last of the line of Eld." — Roland declares his identity and purpose to Eddie and Susannah.
- "The door is a door. It opens. It closes. It is a door." — Roland explains the nature of the doors to Eddie.
- "You are a gunslinger. You are a gunslinger. You are a gunslinger." — Roland repeats this to himself as a mantra to focus his will.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is *The Dark Tower II: The Drawing of the Three* about?

The second book in Stephen King's *Dark Tower* series follows Roland as he recovers from an injury and uses magical doors to draw three companions from our world: Eddie, Odetta, and Jack. These companions are destined to join his quest to reach the Dark Tower, and the book focuses on their introduction and the challenges they face.

Is *The Dark Tower II: The Drawing of the Three* worth reading?

Yes, it is widely considered one of the best books in the series. It expands the world, introduces memorable characters, and blends fantasy, horror, and Western genres. It is more action-packed and character-driven than the first book, making it a compelling read for both new and returning fans.

How does *The Dark Tower II: The Drawing of the Three* end?

Spoiler: The book ends with Roland, Eddie, and Susannah (the merged Odetta/Detta) together on the beach, having defeated the lobstrosities and Jack Mort. Roland's infection is treated, and they

begin to move inland toward the Dark Tower. The ending sets up the next book, where they will encounter the boy Jake.

Who should read The Dark Tower II: The Drawing of the Three?

Fans of Stephen King, especially those who enjoyed the first book, will appreciate this continuation. It is also a good entry point for readers who like character-driven fantasy with a dark, gritty tone. However, it is recommended to read the first book, *The Gunslinger*, for context.

How long does it take to read The Dark Tower II: The Drawing of the Three?

The book has about 400 pages. At an average reading speed of 250 words per minute, it takes roughly 8-10 hours to read. Most readers finish it in a week or two of casual reading.