

The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla

by Stephen King · Language: EN

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Overview

The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla is the fifth volume in Stephen King's epic fantasy-horror series, The Dark Tower. The story follows Roland Deschain, the last gunslinger, and his ka-tet—Eddie Dean, Susannah Dean, Jake Chambers, and the billy-bumbler Oy—as they continue their quest toward the Dark Tower. After leaving the wastelands, they arrive in the agrarian town of Calla Bryn Sturgis, a community living under the shadow of a recurring threat: every generation, the Wolves, masked riders on gray horses, descend to take one child from each pair of twins, returning them later as mentally and physically damaged 'roont' beings. The townsfolk, who have never fought back, ask Roland and his companions to defend them, offering a chance to gain information about the Dark Tower and the sinister forces that oppose them.

The novel weaves together multiple narrative threads, including Susannah's pregnancy with a demon child and her dangerous encounters with Mia, a personality who seeks to claim the baby; Eddie's growing skills as a gunslinger; and Jake's telepathic connection to a boy from another world. The ka-tet must prepare for a final showdown with the Wolves, who are revealed to be robotic androids sent by the Crimson King. The story also introduces Father Callahan, a character from King's earlier novel 'Salem's Lot, who becomes a key ally and narrator, revealing his tragic past and his role in the larger cosmic struggle. The novel explores themes of sacrifice, community, and the nature of evil, while advancing the overarching quest for the Dark Tower.

The book is significant as a pivotal installment in the series, bridging the earlier volumes and the final two. It deepens the mythology of Mid-World and its connection to our own world, while also serving as a meditation on the power of stories and the importance of standing against tyranny. King's blend of Western, fantasy, and horror elements creates a unique narrative that challenges the ka-tet and readers alike, setting the stage for the climactic events of the series.

Key Takeaways

- The Wolves of the Calla are not supernatural but robotic androids, a revelation that underscores the technological decay of Mid-World.
- Susannah's pregnancy is not ordinary; the child is a demon spawn, and Mia, a separate personality, seeks to claim it for the Crimson King.
- Father Callahan's backstory from 'Salem's Lot is expanded, showing his exile from our world and his role as a servant of the White.

- The ka-tet must choose to stand and fight for Calla Bryn Sturgis, even though they could flee, demonstrating the theme of responsibility.
- The town's tradition of passive acceptance is broken when the ka-tet inspires them to resist the Wolves.
- Jake's telepathic bond with a boy in our world, Benny Slightman, becomes crucial to the battle plan.
- The novel ends with a cliffhanger as Susannah is pulled into another world, setting up the next book.
- The concept of 'ka' (destiny) is central, as the characters are repeatedly reminded that they are bound to their quest.

Chapter Summaries

Part One: The Calla

The ka-tet arrives in the town of Calla Bryn Sturgis after a long journey. They are greeted by the townsfolk, who are wary but hopeful. The Manni, a religious sect, have prophesied the arrival of gunslingers. The ka-tet learns about the Wolves and the town's history of losing children. Roland is asked to defend the town, and he agrees, seeing it as a way to gain information about the Dark Tower. The part ends with the ka-tet settling in and beginning to understand the town's customs.

Part Two: The Meeting of the Ka-tet

Roland convenes a meeting with the town's elders, including Vaughan, Eisenhart, and Overholser. They discuss the Wolves' history and the town's options. The elders are divided between fighting and submitting. Roland proposes a plan to use the town's resources and the ka-tet's skills to ambush the Wolves. Meanwhile, Eddie and Jake explore the town and discover a hidden cache of weapons, including sneetches and a golden plate. Susannah begins to feel strange movements from her unborn child.

Part Three: The Wizard's Umbrella

Father Callahan, a priest with a dark past, is introduced. He tells his story to Roland, explaining how he was exiled from our world after being attacked by vampires. He has been wandering through worlds, guided by the Beam. In Calla Bryn Sturgis, he serves as a spiritual leader. He reveals that the Wolves are connected to the Crimson King and that the town is a battleground in a larger war. The ka-tet learns more about the town's history and the significance of the rose.

Part Four: The Tale of the Three

Eddie has a vision of a door in the woods, and he and Roland investigate. They find a door that leads to a version of our world where they encounter a man named Calvin Tower, who owns a vacant lot in New York that is sacred to the Dark Tower. Eddie and Roland must protect Tower

from the agents of the Crimson King. Meanwhile, Susannah's condition worsens, and she begins to have conversations with Mia, who reveals that she is the mother of the child and plans to take it to the Crimson King.

Part Five: The Wolves of the Calla

The ka-tet prepares for the battle. They train the townsfolk, including the women and children, to fight. Jake uses his telepathic link to a boy in our world, Benny Slightman, to spy on the Wolves' approach. The Wolves arrive, and a fierce battle ensues. The ka-tet uses their guns and clever tactics to defeat the Wolves, who are revealed to be robots. The town is saved, but at a cost: several townsfolk are killed, and Jake is wounded. The victory is bittersweet.

Part Six: The Door

After the battle, Susannah goes into labor. Mia takes over her body and escapes through a door that appears in the woods. The door leads to a place called the Dixie Pig, a restaurant in New York City that is a front for the Crimson King's agents. Roland, Eddie, and Jake follow, but they are too late. Susannah/Mia is taken through a doorway to another world. The novel ends with the ka-tet in pursuit, leaving Calla Bryn Sturgis behind.

Themes

- Sacrifice and duty
- Community resistance
- Destiny and ka
- Good vs. evil
- Fatherhood and legacy
- The power of stories

Notable Quotes

- "The man in black fled across the desert, and the gunslinger followed." — This is the opening line of the first Dark Tower book, but it is echoed in this volume as a reminder of Roland's quest.
- "I do not aim with my hand; he who aims with his hand has forgotten the face of his father. I aim with my eye." — Roland's gunslinger creed, recited during the battle preparations.
- "The Wolves are coming." — A recurring phrase used by the townsfolk to signal the impending threat.
- "Go then, there are other worlds than these." — Roland's words to Jake after his death in the first book, but also a theme in this volume as characters travel between worlds.
- "Ka is a wheel." — A saying that reflects the cyclical nature of destiny, often used by Roland.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla about?

It's the fifth book in Stephen King's Dark Tower series. Roland and his ka-tet arrive in a farming town called Calla Bryn Sturgis, which is threatened by the Wolves, masked riders who take children every generation. The townsfolk ask the gunslingers to defend them, leading to a battle that reveals the Wolves are robots. The novel also follows Susannah's pregnancy with a demon child and introduces Father Callahan.

Is The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla worth reading?

Yes, if you're invested in the Dark Tower series. It's a pivotal installment that deepens the mythology and sets up the final books. The action is intense, and the character development is strong, especially for Susannah and Father Callahan. However, it's not a standalone; you should read the previous books first.

How does The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla end?

Spoiler: After defeating the Wolves, Susannah goes into labor. Mia, her alternate personality, takes over and escapes through a door to New York City, where she is taken by the Crimson King's agents. Roland, Eddie, and Jake follow, but Susannah is transported to another world. The novel ends on a cliffhanger with the ka-tet in pursuit, setting up the next book.

Who should read The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla?

Fans of Stephen King's Dark Tower series, especially those who have read the first four books. It's also for readers who enjoy epic fantasy with a blend of Western and horror elements. If you like character-driven stories with moral dilemmas and cosmic battles, this book will appeal to you.

How long does it take to read The Dark Tower V: Wolves of the Calla?

The book is about 700 pages long. At an average reading speed of 250 words per minute, it would take roughly 12-14 hours. Most readers finish it in a week or two, depending on how much time they dedicate daily.