

Film Review: Terence Malick's Feverish Dream in 'Knight of Cups'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on March 11, 2016 - 10:50am

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CHICAGO – I've been quoting Martin Scorsese over the years, that he said "movies are a psychotic's feverish dream on display." In searching for those words, I found he never said it. He did say they are "dreams with eyes open." So let us combine the two quotes in analyzing Terence Malick's "Knight of Cups."



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

At first experience – and it's very possible the first will be the last – it would seem that "Cups" is self indulgent, redundant and sloppy. Well, doesn't that sound like a typical dream? Director Terrence Malick is famous for how he communicates his cinema stories, and dreaminess is one of his main techniques, even in a war movie ("The Thin Red Line"). He spent two years editing "Knight of Cups, the story of a screenwriter who wanders through the dreamscape of his life, randomly focusing on both small and large details. The results may be fatalistically uneven, but the nature of it all can be interpreted as righteous, as what is life and memory but a random series of illusionary encounters?

Rick (Christian Bale) is a screenwriter living a high level existence in Los Angeles. His life revolves around his present and past, which includes relationships with ex-wife Nancy (Cate Blanchett), ruined girlfriend Elizabeth (Natalie Portman), brother Barry (Wes Bentley) and father Joseph (Brian Dennehy). His meanderings include empty movie lots, Hollywood parties and idyllic landscapes.

Rick is haunted a bit by his past, especially through the brother he could not save, and with a father he couldn't connect to. His coupling relationships are mostly failures, and he flashes back to the grit and good times of moments within them. He also seems disconnected from what he actually does, as everyone in the film business talks right through him.

"Knight of Cups" continues its limited release on March 11th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Christian Bale, Cate Blanchett, Natalie Portman, Brian Dennehy, Antonio Banderas, Thomas Lennon, and Nick Offerman. Written and directed by Terrence Malick. Rated "R"



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Rick (Christian Bale) Floats Downstream in 'Knight of Cups'

Photo credit: Broad Green Pictures



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