

THE DARK KNIGHT RISES By Lorraine Viade, Psy.D.



The Dark Knight Rises is the most personal of the *Dark Knight* films. An older, truly vulnerable Batman comes out of his cave of personal grief and loss to, once again, be that any man hero we need to believe in. This time, he just can't do it alone. He gets help from an unlikely source and thus begins some twists in the fabric of the legend. There are old friends, new ones and some surprises, all leaving the audience well satisfied. I cheered several times as Batman and his alter ego Bruce Wayne overcame such internal and external battles to fight back.

This time, Batman comes up against a villain who can only be described as the Bane of his existence. Stronger, younger, angrier, Bane has the strength and resources to end our hero's journey. In spite of it all, Batman retains his hope and his belief in the goodness that he sees in others. That is what Batman fights to preserve. That is what he is willing to die for. That sacrifice and nobility are what make Batman so special. He is, after all, only human.

Bruce Wayne is an extraordinary man in extraordinary circumstances. His pain and loss fuel his passion to fight evil because he knows to what limits they will go to destroy the people he loves. That is motivation! Christian Bale owns the dual role and has never been better than in this last chapter of the series.

I feel it is important to address the tragedy in Colorado here. We are challenged every day to help people whose lives have been so shattered that they have lost touch with

reality. The man whose delusions resulted in those terrible actions might have chosen any number of villains to imitate. The actions of those afflicted with such self-destructive mindsets should not be allowed to destroy what Batman truly represents. Batman embodies courage, honor and dignity in the face of evil.

There are so many things to love about *The Dark Knight Rises*. The movie represents the themes of recovery, resilience, faith, hope and belief that life can be better. The lesson here is that you can survive if your will is strong – and evil ultimately loses. Hell, even the Joker knew that. He just didn't care. The Joker gave up hope a long time ago. Interestingly, evil is the reversed spelling of live. To be so hopeless that you want to destroy everything around you and to destroy what is life is what evil does. Sadly, no one can predict what any one person would do – or why they would do it.

Christian Bale chose to visit the wounded survivors of the Colorado shooting in the hospital, not for personal publicity, but to genuinely acknowledge that there is still hope and reasons to go on despite the tragedy in life. I give him kudos for taking that on, not as a fictional character, but as a real man who reached out with true compassion and care to those who became victims of the unpredictable. His gesture of faith and hope is what Batman is all about.

I give *The Dark Knight Rises* five bats. Don't miss it.

