

Warcraft Movie Premiere and Analysis

The US premiere of the Warcraft movie was last weekend and I was given the opportunity to attend!

The movie has now been released in most major countries, so I felt it was time to finally give a full analysis and breakdown of the film. If you haven't seen the movie and want to preserve the story for yourself, this might not be for you. I won't hold back on any of the information that I give.

My Review

Personally, I have now seen the movie 5 times. The more I see it, the more I love it. One of the main criticisms is that the film doesn't explain things properly, but if you manage to pay attention when the characters are speaking, you can actually piece things together for the parts that matter.

In regards to either 2D or 3D, it's personal preference really. As some of you know, last week I was invited to join a group of other news sites and streamers to attend the Warcraft premiere over in LA. It was my first experience in 3D and I enjoyed it a great deal, but there were moments when the battle scenes were incredibly overwhelming. Personally, I preferred the 2D version for the more intense scenes.

I loved the performance of certain actors, but I didn't quite understand the choice of accents.

Lothar, for example, changes his accent about 3 times during filming. The dwarves are another example, where they even sounded English at points. This is a minor problem, but still something that was definitely noticed - especially when Lothar speaks to his son, before Blackhand grabs him and throws him aside in the forest fight. It's a very strange combination of accents.

Visually, the CGI is on-point. The orcs look incredible, the magic is done spectacularly and it just feels... amazing. I can't describe it any other way. This was definitely the high-point of the movie.

All-in-all, I liked it the first time, I loved it the next few times and I really want to go see it again. There are moments in the movie that just feel so epic. Watching Lothar leap off his gryphon into the final battle is simply incredible, especially since it's that Leeroy-esque action of jumping headfirst into a battle you can't win, yet he still walks away.

My first viewing was probably a 8/10, but after a few more viewings, it's up to a 9/10 at least. I absolutely love this movie.

The Premiere

On the whole, it was a hugely enjoyable affair. We left our hotel for a mixer, where we were greeted by everyone's favourite things: food and drink! I managed to meet some serious legends in the Warcraft universe, including Leeroy Jenkins (just saying, incredibly nice guy) and the boys from Songhammer (rock on!).

When we moved on to the red carpet, we stumbled across some truly fantastic cosplayers. We saw a female Deathwing, a Lich Queen and so many more!

Once the sun started to set, the stars started appearing! Jaime Lee Curtis strolled past us in her perfect cosplay, accompanied by her son! Shortly afterwards, Clancy Brown rolled up and gave the cosplayer Varian a small figure of King Llane.

We were also introduced to the wonderful wife of Daniel Wu, who plays Gul'dan. When he initially was auditioning for the role, his wife, who is a huge fan of the game, was so overjoyed. In her words, "her BattleTag will forever be GDogsWife".

As the night went on, the various Blizzard executives and high-profile actors walked the red carpet, being interviewed and having their photos snapped. One person that stood out in the crowd was Mr. Ion "Watcher" Hazzikostas, who was wearing a beautiful Hugo Boss suit (yes, this was asked during a developer interview). We know all the important questions to ask!

We were ushered into the theater to get to our seats and prepared for something epic. There were a few shouts of "For the Horde" and "For the Alliance" from the back, but everything went fairly silent when Duncan Jones walked in. Let's talk about him!

The Director

Behind every great movie is a great director and behind Warcraft is the fantastic Duncan Jones.

I'll start off by saying that I am a huge fan of his previous work, so when he was given the job of director, I was overjoyed. Throughout his time on the project, he has always provided the voice of a "gamer" in the interviews, ensuring us that he is there to do this huge franchise justice.

During the LA premiere, Duncan actually came into our theatre and addressed us fans, thanking us all for being there. He said that the game and movie could never have progressed and come to fruition without the dedicated support of a fantastic fanbase. It was really fantastic to see him come in and speak to us, especially given that he simply didn't need to.

In one of his interviews, Duncan discusses the possibility of a Director's Cut of the movie. Given the problems that many people are having with the film, I really think the 40 or so minutes of deleted footage will fill in those character development gaps. Given the reception in China

especially, one would hope the movie does well enough to bring about a viewing of the full, extended movie. Without that, I don't feel we can truly see the movie in Duncan's vision and appreciate how great this movie is/could be.

The Cast

The movie definitely had a talented set of actors and actresses prepared, so it was surprising when some of those characters fell slightly flat.

We can immediately exclude the orcs from this, given that they are a) done with CGI and b) were simply incredible. I'm addressing my concerns more towards some of the human actors. I am a huge fan of Dominic Cooper, but I think his performance as King Llane was just strange. It wasn't bad, it just left you feeling unsatisfied. Whether this was due to the way which Llane was portrayed as a character or the actor himself, I wasn't a fan.

I thought Travis Fimmel played Lothar well, but his accents leaping around were a distraction when watching him for sure.

Paula Patton was put in the same boat as Dominic Cooper; her character was forced to push a romance that didn't really fit at points. Don't get me wrong, I have no issue with the romance itself, just the way in which it was dealt with.

The Soundtrack

Ramin Djawadi has worked on some truly incredible pieces of music, including those featured on Game of Thrones, and the movie is no different. Even the opening piece for the Warcraft movie is enough to get the goosebumps rolling!

The Story

What is fel and where is the Legion?

For me, this is the first point to address. Throughout the movie, we see constant references to this concept of fel magic. Gul'dan is very obviously controlling a potent force of fel magic, but he is definitely not the sole wielder as he believes. He used the fel magic to corrupt the orcs and then construct the portal, with the help of Medivh.

One of the first differences between the movie and game lore is the origin of the power that corrupts the orcs. The movie seems to point time and time again towards Gul'dan being the origin of the orcs' power, since he decides who receives the fel and who doesn't. In the game, we see a different approach that is focused on the blood of Mannoroth. The orcs drink his blood and are then granted the demonic power contained within.

In the movie, the focus of power is very strongly on the side of Gul'dan here. One would expect that they wanted to make Daniel Wu's character "the" villain, rather than tainting his image with that of a higher power, such as Mannoroth or the Burning Legion.

Once the movie actually moves forward, we see that Gul'dan simply cannot sustain the portal without the aid of Medivh. While the focus of power definitely shifts to Medivh, it moves quickly back to Gul'dan once we see Medivh die.

I'm interested to see if we might encounter the Legion at a later date, now that Medivh is dead. Perhaps the Legion will appear to reinforce the hold Gul'dan has over the Horde, now that they are beginning to rebel.

Another change that happened around fel is the price that has to be paid. Gul'dan describes the price of fel as a price paid in lives taken. This is a slightly different take on what happened in the game lore. When drinking the blood of Mannoroth, the orcs gave up their freedom to the demons, essentially becoming slaves. As soon as they tried to pull away from the bond, they struggled to deal with the loss; this is heavily referenced when Thrall starts to break the orcs free from internment camps in Lord of the Clans. They still survive this and they have managed to combat their fatigue eventually. When Mannoroth is eventually killed, the orcs are freed from their bonds.

In the movie, it seems like the bond is absolute, but not to a demon, nor Gul'dan. While Gul'dan might control the fel within them, one would assume that killing Gul'dan won't stop the bond. Given that they are bound to the actual magic, rather than the blood of a living being, it will be interesting to see what happens when Gul'dan dies.

What's up with Medivh?

Let's look past the initial meeting with Medivh where he looks like an unemployed artist and instead take a look at what's going on in his head. In the game lore, Medivh's mother was an incredibly powerful Guardian. She managed to defeat an Avatar of Sargeras, but the spirit of Sargeras managed to make its way into her body. It waited patiently until the time of Medivh's birth, merging into the child's body.

The wrongdoings of Medivh in the game lore are essentially due to Sargeras' influence, however this isn't really present in the movie. We are told by Alodi and Medivh himself that he simply cannot control the fel energy pulsing through his body. It forces him to do things he doesn't want to, but we're not told if there is a bigger picture being painted here.

When Medivh transforms into a demon in the game lore, he very explicitly states that it is indeed Sargeras working his magic. In the movie, we aren't even told Sargeras exists, so one would assume that Medivh was simply consumed by fel. Perhaps, when exposed to a huge amount of fel, that is what humans turn into?

In the game lore, we know that his mother eventually resurrects him, then he just sort of disappears. Is there a mother to do so in the movie? The lack of Aegwynn seems interesting, especially given that Alodi is female (I'll go into this more later). Could we even see Khadgar be the one to do it?

For Medivh's first death, the people involved are the same, but under different circumstances. In the book, we see Khadgar and Lothar battling Medivh, who is at that point fully under the influence of Sargeraz. Medivh uses a spell to drain the youth and power from Khadgar, aging him incredibly (does not happen in the movie). After this, Khadgar grabs a sword and stabs Medivh. As he is about to die, Medivh begins to transform into a fully-fledged demon, as he does in the movie. Lothar stops this by decapitating him.

The freshly dinged mage, Khadgar!

That's right. You probably heard about this elsewhere. Pretty much everyone on the bus back from the premiere was saying that same thing: did you see Khadgar level up?

Unfortunately, we don't see him level up in-game, but we do see a few differences. One of the first things I want to lay down is to do with his name. When Khadgar first goes to help Medivh, he is told that his name actually means "Trust". I was disappointed that this wasn't included in the movie, because it really gave us an indication of which Medivh was talking to Khadgar. He would often address him in a fond tone, calling him "Young Trust".

It's important to note that, in the game lore, Khadgar never left the Kirin Tor; they actually sent him to study under and keep an eye on Medivh, hoping to find out some of his secrets. Khadgar studies under Medivh for a time, sorting through his library, before he eventually has to confront the reality of what Medivh actually is. While he goes on to become one of the most powerful mages in history, he is undoubtedly still just a young man in the presence of an idol when he meets Medivh. This awe is present when you see Khadgar's eyes light up in the movie whenever Medivh praises him at the start. He begins to doubt Medivh much earlier than in the books, as well as immediately attributing it to the fel in the movie, rather than madness as he does in the books.

The curse from Medivh that is mentioned above wasn't included in the movie, but Khadgar essentially had the power and youth sucked out of him. He is described as being old and frail, with a long white beard, after Medivh is done with him.

Garona - Human or Draenei?

This one is interesting. In the movie, Garona is half-human. In the games, she is half-Draenei. So which one is it?

In the movies, Garona's mother is meant to have been burnt alive by Gul'dan when she gave birth to her. This means that the mother is removed from the equation and instead there is a

human father that, one assumes, is still alive. Garona was already born before the orcs found the humans, so it had to be a character that managed to travel to the "ends of the world" and beyond. Sound familiar?

Medivh and Garona discuss a number of things, including a mate that he finds on his travels. He abandoned her and returned to his world, which fits in perfectly with Garona's story.

In the book and game lore, we are told that Gul'dan knew exactly what her true parentage was, but lied to her, telling her she was a human. This meant that she could gain the trust of the Alliance more easily and therefore set up his disastrous plans more fluidly. She was actually half-Draenei, with Maraad (yeah, that Maraad) being named as her uncle.

Other changes within the movie include the removal of the relationship between Garona and Medivh. Given that they are trying (we think) to push Medivh as her father, a romantic relationship can no longer exist. Instead, the relationship has been forged with Anduin Lothar. In the game lore, she has a child with Medivh, who she names Med'an. He goes on to become a favourite for fans to hate and ended up essentially being ignored and retconned out of the game.

Anduin Lothar - The Lion of Azeroth

Anduin was one of the more heavily altered characters for the movies. We see an energetic young man, ready and eager for battle. In the game lore, Lothar is old. He is well into his fifties and actually missed much of the first war.

In the movie, Lothar is present for much of the war, preparing forces, leading bands of soldiers and ensuring he is there to help his king whenever he can. In the game lore, Lothar actually misses a large portion of the First War due to being captured. When he hears about a sacred tome being stolen from Northshire by ogres, he goes to retrieve it from their hideout in Westfall. He ends up being captured and missing 20 months of the war, before being rescued by Alliance forces.

Upon returning from his capture, Lothar gathered forces including Garona and Khadgar, then went to Karazhan to face Medivh. Together, they ended up killing Medivh and freeing him from Sargeras' grasp. In these scenes, we see a very different dynamic between Khadgar and Lothar. Given that, in the movie, they are much closer together in age, there is a comical, friendly relationship forged between the two. In the books, the relationship is very similar to that of a father and a son. Perhaps we didn't see this as much due to the existence of Callan in the movie. There are scenes later in the movie, like when Lothar tells Khadgar he is proud of him, that we see this father-son relationship develop slightly more. This, of course, happens once Callan is dead, so maybe this will further progress in later movies.

Outside of this, there was a lot of story invention around Lothar's family in the movie. The queen was meant to be Lothar's sister, while in the game he simply doesn't have a sister. His child,

Callan, was also invented for the movie story. The romance with Garona never happened, given that she had a romance with Medivh in the books instead.

In the final scene of the movie, the duel with Blackhand simply didn't happen. We never saw a great battle in the game lore for Lothar to charge into like that, so their Mak'gora never existed.

King Llane I

For King Llane, we never saw an explicit mention of a wife prior to the movie, so we can assume she was invented as a character specifically to try forge a stronger relationship between Lothar and Llane.

The only huge difference between movie and game-lore Llane is the nature of his death. In the movies, he requests for Garona to kill him, allowing her to earn her right to exist among the orcs. This is a better fate than both of them dying.

In the book and game lore, Llane is actually assassinated by Garona. This links into the nature of Garona's existence among the orcs, given that she was essentially "forged" by Gul'dan. His power over her was so immense that he forced her to assassinate the king during the siege of Stormwind (will mention later). She removed his heart and took it to Gul'dan and the Shadow Council.

It was after this that Lothar stepped up, as he does in the movies, to rule until Varian comes of age.

Why is Stormwind still standing?

That's right, I couldn't believe it either. This could have been one of the most visually intense scenes in the whole movie, but it didn't happen.

After Llane is assassinated in the game, Stormwind was put under siege by the orcs and sacked. The humans fled north to the other kingdoms in hopes of regrouping and gathering their forces, led by the newly appointed Regent Anduin Lothar. They fled to Lordaeron, where they asked for the help of King Terenas II and began to prepare for the future wars.

Durotan and Draka

I felt I should include a part about these two specifically. Their deaths in the movie were much more "heroic" than in the books. Draka dies fighting while protecting her child, Durotan dies to serve as a martyr against Gul'dan.

In the books, things weren't quite as pretty. After the whole Frostwolf clan was exiled (refused to drink the blood of Mannoroth), Durotan and Draka met with Orgrim to discuss the potential

atrocities that Gul'dan had planned for the orcs. Orgrim agreed to help Durotan, sending him home with an escort of trusted soldiers.

Little did he know that these trusted soldiers were the ones to bring about the end of Durotan. One of the soldiers was a spy for Gul'dan, who summoned assassins from the shadows. They slaughtered Draka and the guards, leaving Durotan to bleed out. Rather than ending his life quickly, they sliced off his arms and left him to die slowly, leaving his child (Thrall) to be killed by wolves in front of him.

This is a much more primitive, savage death for the chieftain and wife; I actually feel like this would have fit the movie more, given that Gul'dan was made such an inherently evil character in the movie. Don't get me wrong, he is evil everywhere, but Daniel Wu turned that character into this menacing construct of pure, untouched evil. I do wonder if you could include something like that without raising the "age rating", given how graphic the scene would most likely be.

It's also worth mentioning that Thrall/Go'el is found by a human commander, Aedelas Blackmoore, which then begins his life as a human-raised orc. I assume that the final scene of the movie hints at this being present in the next movie.

Orgrim - The Blackrock/Frostwolf/Thunderlord

There's only two major alterations for Orgrim and they actually had pretty large impacts on "removed" parts of the story behind this character. The first is his clan affiliation, given that Orgrim was made a Frostwolf for the movie. One would assume that this was simply an easier way to foster a relationship between Orgrim and Durotan, rather than going through the game lore.

Orgrim was originally a Blackrock orc, serving as the "second" to Blackhand after Orgrim's father died. He met Durotan at a festival for the orcs hosted in Nagrand. They ended up becoming best friends, running off together and eventually encountering an ogre. Together, with the help of a band of Draenei, the ogre was defeated and they spent time with the Draenei, namely Velen.

It's evidently much easier to just say that Orgrim was a Frostwolf rather than having to go through this story explaining why the two are such good friends.

The other major difference was that Orgrim killed Blackhand, not Lothar. I'll discuss this in Blackhand's section below.

Blackhand - The Warchief

There's only a few minor differences here, given that we didn't hear much about his backstory in the movie.

Blackhand arrived on Azeroth having already taken the blood of Mannoroth, so his persistent refusal in the movie is new. He took it willingly, rather than having it forced upon him by Gul'dan. His death in the movie was brought about by Lothar, allowing for the "Lion of Azeroth" to avenge his son that Blackhand had killed. In the game lore, Orgrim killed Blackhand. When Gul'dan fell into a coma (will be mentioned later), Orgrim saw his opportunity and ended up decapitating Blackhand and claiming the title of Warchief.

Gul'dan - The Perfect Villain

Gul'dan's differences were more heavily associated with the differences between the movie fel and his powers in-game. Given that his powers are heavily associated with "fel" in the movie, there isn't really the link to the demons. Garona mentions it briefly when talking to Medivh, but that's it.

The link is instead made with Medivh, that he is the "commander" of Gul'dan. While this is definitely still relevant in the game lore, it's definitely not exclusively Medivh influencing Gul'dan. Throughout the movie, we see no mention at all of Cho'gall, Gul'dan's apprentice and close helper. Throughout the first war in the game lore, Cho'gall was instrumental in Gul'dan's plans. He goes on to become increasingly important, aiding Gul'dan further in the later wars. I do hope to see him introduced soon, since he is a huge part of the warlock's plans.

Towards the end of the first war, Gul'dan actually falls into a coma. He attempts to search the mind of Medivh at the time of Medivh's death, which affects Gul'dan through the mind link. It's at this point when Blackhand is killed and Orgrim becomes Warchief.

Why is Alodi female?

The questions on many people's lips are often referring to the mother of Medivh, Aegwynn, and the female Alodi.

In the initial lore, Alodi was very different. He was a male, half-elven mage that served as the first Guardian of Tirisfal. He was incredibly powerful and was the first person to suggest and implement the introduction of the link between the Council of Tirisfal and the Guardian. This meant the Guardian could wield the power of the Council, while they stayed out of the battles. In the movie, Alodi was made female, as well as being considered an "unknown" entity, rather than the first Guardian. The question now is, are Alodi and Aegwynn the same person for the movie?

We see no mention of Medivh's mother and it seems too coincidental that Alodi was just made female. If this is the truth, perhaps Alodi will be the one to resurrect Medivh in future movies? Given that Aegwynn should do it by game lore, it would make sense for them to combine the characters. They also skip the need to explain all of the lore behind Aegwynn, what she did and how she gave her powers to Medivh.

Dalaran looks... different?

At this point in the history of the game, Dalaran is still a city on land. Many people have sought to find an explanation for the choice to make Dalaran float in the movie, but there's only one that stands out: it looks better.

If you look at how Dalaran was portrayed and described, it was, in Khadgar's words, "the floating city" containing "the most powerful mages in the land". They were essentially trying to push the idea of Dalaran being a purely magical city, so having it float really reinforces this image.

Deadwind Pass and the Crater

This one is slightly confusing, not due to the differences, but because you have to wrap your head around Medivh's explanation of time to understand it.

In the movie, the fel explosion decimates Deadwind Pass and turns it into what we now know it to be. Things are slightly different in-game. Rather than having to explain it myself, I'd suggest reading this passage from *The Last Guardian* by Jeff Grubb:

[Quote from *The Last Guardian* book removed]

The Draenei

This portion ties in to a few others, namely Gul'dan and the fel. In the movie, we see Draenei souls being used to feed the fel powers of Gul'dan, therefore enabling him to open the dark portal. This is meant to be a grim fate, their life force being sucked out of their bodies, but I think they actually managed to receive a less gruesome death than in the game lore.

In the lore, there is something called the Path of Glory. Prior to the opening of the dark portal, the demon-infused orcs went on a rampage slaying every Draenei they could find. The Path of Glory is a long road running through Hellfire Peninsula, made up entirely of the bones of every Draenei slaughtered. The orcs were savage brutes at this point, their veins filled with the blood thirst of the demons.

For a proper look at the period of war, you can watch the 5th part of the *Lords of War*, where Maraad describes it.

Predictions for the future?

There will (hopefully) be another movie on its way in the future, so let's take a look at some of the possible things we might be seeing in the second movie:

- Stormwind will most likely be put under siege and destroyed.
- The remaining Alliance forces will move North.

- We will see Terenas and Arthas introduced, most likely to build upon the 3rd movie's lore about Arthas.
- We will most likely follow Thrall as he grows up under Blackmoore's control.
- Khadgar will most likely become the Guardian, perhaps the choice will be influenced by Alodi.
- Gul'dan will most likely die, I assume at the hands of Orgrim, who will then take control of the Horde.
- We will most likely see more of the story behind Azeroth through Khadgar, given that he will have more access to Kirin Tor and Medivh's libraries.
- Lothar will probably die, as he does in the lore, in the second war.
- I would hope to see Medivh resurrected by either Alodi or Khadgar.
- Khadgar might level up again, who knows? Did anyone keep track of what level he is?

Conclusion

That's it from me! Let me know what you think, questions you might have or corrections anywhere in the post. I'm always open to discussion! If you haven't seen the movie, grab a ticket and go watch it! It's worth it!