

Tin man

Tin Man

Tin Man DVD Cover



Let me first say that I am a Wizard of Oz nut. No, I'm not talking about the 1939 MGM Judy Garland film, which don't get me wrong, is a great film. I'm talking the Oz books by L. Frank Baum and those by Ruth Plumly Thompson and others who wrote about the traditional Land of Oz. However, I am not a purist. I enjoy movies and stories about Oz that are non-traditional. Phillip Jose Farmer's Barnstormer in Oz comes to mind. The miniseries Tin Man falls into this category. Imagine a Land of Oz that, while still filled with magic, lacks the Munchkins, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion. Instead you have The OZ (The Outer Zone) which was once ruled over by a beloved queen and her advisors. The marshals became known as Tin Men because of the tin stars they wore; their appearance is much like that of the modern western lawman with long brown trench coats wearing their guns at their sides.

Tin Man stars Zooey Deschanel as DG, the daughter of the beloved queen of The OZ sent to Kansas as a child to escape the clutches of the wicked queen who has taken over her kingdom. DG is raised on a farm by her aunt and uncle and she has no memory of The OZ. The wicked queen played by Kathleen Robertson has punished and/or exiled all who remained loyal to the former queen. She has removed half of the brain of the queen's main advisor, Glitch (Alan Cumming), leaving him an apparent idiot with a zipper down the center of his skull. DG is forced to return to The OZ and, in a journey that mirrors that of the traditional OZ stories, accumulate an entourage to help her defeat the wicked queen. One of these, of course, is a former marshal or Tin Man (Neil McDonough) of the title who has his own score to settle with the wicked queen.

Tin Man moves quickly with a number of twists and turns, some of them unexpected others telegraphed so you know they are coming. Those familiar with the Wizard of Oz will have no trouble figuring out which of the characters of The OZ correspond to those in the original Oz stories. Tin Man is a more adult story than the Oz books and movies, but still likely to be enjoyed by the whole family. If I had a complaint about the series it is that it is too short by about 45 seconds. It isn't that the ending was unsatisfactory, but I was expecting at least one more line. Everyone I've talked with who has watched this film mentally filled in this line or one like it and it really isn't needed to finish the series, but it would have been nice. (Sorry, you'll just have to figure out what the line is yourself as it would be a definite spoiler.)

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