

## *Stalker* (1979)

Directed By Andrei Tarvosky

1. *Stalker* (1979) details the journey of three men: the Stalker, the Writer and the Scientist into "the Zone." Ultimately, their goal is to reach the "Wishing Room" where a single wish can be granted to any man. In the end, the Scientist reveals that he has only come to destroy the Wishing Room. But the Stalker is able to talk him down, convincing the Scientist that the Wishing Room symbolizes hope. And people need hope. The film ends with the Stalker returning home, and his daughter, Monkey, revealing her telekinetic abilities.
2. The true origins of the Zone are never revealed. Though it is mentioned that it may have been caused a meteorite several decades ago. It is left slightly ambiguous how the Zone affects people, but in the final moments of the film it is revealed that not only is the Stalker's daughter a cripple, but she has telekinetic abilities as well. This is mostly likely a mutation passed on by the Stalker due to prolonged exposure to the Zone.
3. The Stalker is a group leader of sorts, who takes people into the Zone for a price. The Zone is heavily fortified, and once inside, can be extremely difficult to navigate, so a guide is extremely necessary. There are said to be many Stalkers, and their ways must be taught by a preexisting Stalker. The protagonist's mentor was Porcupine.
4. The Stalker is extremely cold, and removed from the world around him. This is expressed through the film's use of sepia discoloration. Once inside the Zone, his world becomes colorful and full of wonder. He longs to spend time inside the Zone, despite boasting that his motives are purely to help others.
5. No anomalies are depicted in the film.
6. No artifacts are depicted in the film, apart from several remnants like the old gun the Stalker finds in the river.
7. The Stalker throws the bolt/nut attached to the fabric for two reasons. The first is to test for traps. There are said to be many traps in the Zone. The other reason to mark his path so they can return home later.
8. Very little knowledge is provided about the world outside the Zone. But what is depicted is extremely bleak and impoverished. Families live in shacks, local establishments look decrepit and hobbled together, etc. It is also depicted in sepia tone, setting it apart from the colorful Zone.
9. The Wish Granter is referred to as the "Wishing Room." It is said to grant any one wish from anyone who enters. However, as Porcupine learned, the wish granted may not necessarily be the wish that was asked for. It grants your innermost desire.
1. Survival fits into the text in several ways. The first, when the Stalker and his groups first interact with the Police, guarding the wall into the Zone. There is obviously high security surrounding the Zone, so the group must literally survive their attacks. Second, the Stalker's family in the outside world seem to be merely surviving. Their family is extremely poor and their daughter is crippled. The Stalker must do his job, which his wife resents, to keep his family surviving. Finally, the Stalker, the Writer and the Professor must survive inside the zone. There are said to be traps, etc.

2. Unfortunately, the film is only somewhat reliable as a text. The narrator, the Stalker, often has questionable visions, which allow the audience to speculate what is actually occurring throughout the events of the film. Likewise, the Zone is a questionable locale, constantly building then defying logic and expectation.
  3. The film tends to stay away from deep psychological and moral issues concerning the nature of knowledge. On one hand, the character of the Scientist seeks to imbue the work with a higher sense of traditional knowledge, but, in the end, since so little is resolved in the work in terms of traditional knowledge, any information pertaining to the subject needs to be viewed as suspect.
  4. The influence of Stalker can certainly be viewed in many recent works, from NaughtyDog's *The Last of Us* to Alfonso Cuarón's *Children of Men*. As a piece of art and literature, the film itself is firmly situated in the dystopian fiction or speculative fiction genre. Though, unfortunately, I do not feel it has much in the way of new knowledge to offer the genre as a whole. But, then again, the period in which it was produced and its country of origin could provide additional information in the way of its credence as a canonical text.
  5. The only prominent symbol that really stands out is the dog. Extremely enigmatic and initially suspect, the role of the dog is left to personal interpretation. It first appears during a dream sequence, while the Stalker is sleeping in a river. Is it real? Is it not? The dog returns home with the Stalker at the end of the film and is ultimately accepted into the family, suggesting it is more real than initially believed. However, apart from fish, it appears to be the only other living organism inside the Zone, the Stalker, Writer and Scientist, not included. The dog could also be seen to symbolize death, due mostly to its all black appearance.
  6. A major theme explored in the work is the notion of faith and held beliefs. The Wishing Room is never revealed to the audience, so many are left to wonder whether or not it actually exists. The Stalker certainly seems to think so. The entire journey through the Zone is long, arduous and tedious, and intended to lull the audience into a false sense of security. Additionally, the occasional shift between sepia and color suggests the Zone, or the outside world for that matter, may not be entirely what it seems.
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1. To be honest, though I can appreciate the film as a whole, and its merits as a work, I was extremely bored with the work. Perhaps that's partly the point, but the finished product was far from what I initially expected. Perhaps, a more engaging work, with a more active protagonist could have proved more effective, but I never truly connected with the character of the Stalker or his plight.
  2. The cuts and transitions between sepia and color stick out most clearly in my mind. They were an extremely bold decision and certainly do not appear very often in modern cinema.
  3. Nope. But that movie was pretty darn boring.