

150 Word Review: 'The Power of the Dog' (2021)

The good, the bad, & the miserable



Photo: Netflix

The most important character in Academy-award-winning director Jane Campion's [new western *The Power of the Dog*](#) isn't credited: the vast fields and towering mountains of rural 1920s Montana, played by New Zealand.

It is a beautiful, lonely, frontier that suffocates those living there. *The Power of The Dog* is about a working ranch owned by a pair of brothers, one of whom falls in love with a local widow.

The widow is a woman exhausted by survival. Kirsten Dunst is heartbreaking in the role. Jesse Plemons is the local

rancher who courts and marries her, he is quiet, awkward and, most of all, kind. His brother, a filthy, swaggering Benedict Cumberbatch, is a brute who snarls at weakness.

The other important character is Kodi Smith-McPhee, the widow's skinny, sensitive son who the cowboys mock and call "Nancy." Smith-McPhee is an exposed nerve. In *Campion's* taut drama, it's a man-eat-man world.