

Review – “The Housemaid”

Intense psychological thriller keeps viewers hooked

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Shallow breaths, record-breaking beats per minute and an ever-present feeling of dread that something’s about to happen. Viewing “The Housemaid,” featuring Sydney Sweeney and Amanda Seyfried, put me on the edge of my seat in only the way a psychological thriller can. Right from the start, the two-hour and eleven-minute film seemed to suffocate me with unease, refusing to go away. For those who enjoy tension with insane twists, “The Housemaid” is a spine-tingling film worth watching.



Image found at IMDb

Based on Frieda McFadden’s novel by the same name, “The Housemaid” follows Sydney Sweeney’s character, Millie, a young woman anxious for a clean slate who takes a live-in housekeeping position for a privileged family. At the start, the job seems like an amazing breakthrough for Millie: financial stability, exquisite living and a way to re-create a life for herself. Before Millie can pick up the vacuum, however, there’s a sense that something is terribly amiss. The rules given to Millie by her employer, Nina, who is played by Amanda Seyfried, seem appropriate, but as the movie continues, they seem less and less reasonable. Nina’s actions are chilling, whereas her husband, Andrew Winchester, is nothing but kind to Millie. But this kindness is not just platonic, and Millie soon finds herself caught between Andrew’s warm ambience and Nina’s demented side. The more Millie adjusts to her new employment, the more she realizes her life is at stake—and she’s not sure she will be able to escape with her life.

One element I loved about the film was its pacing. Unlike other thrillers that rely mostly on action, this adaptation relies on discomfort from start to finish. Each scene builds uncomfortable suspicion that leads viewers to question everything. For example, the viewers’ and the characters’ first glance at the home’s luxurious construction seems to radiate security and comfort, but it later reveals itself to be a deadly trap. The elegant setting is actually a stark contrast to the sinister truth, and the psychological manipulation creates an ever-present sense of dread that follows the film from start to finish.

Another thing that stood out to me was the breathtaking portrayal of the three main characters, Millie, Nina and Andrew. First, Sydney Sweeney successfully showed Millie’s vulnerability and growing paranoia. The facial expressions she used told a story, letting the audience in to understand her anxiety. As tension increases, Sweeney, correctly, appears to be a woman caught between self-destruction and survival, making it very hard not to feel sorry for her character.

The other lead female, Nina, had a lasting emotional response from the audience. Anyone can act crazy, but Amanda Seyfried took it to a different level. She appeared to be monster-like when confronting Millie about all her mistakes as she was able to seamlessly change from acting normal to a full-blown anger attack. For example, when Nina said Millie lost important papers of hers, she went from a quiet calm to smashing plates and anything she could get her hands on. Because of scenes like this, Seyfried’s acting had a chilling effect on the audience.

Another character portrayed by an amazing actor was Andrew Winchester, played by Brandon Sklenar, who stood out the most because his more subtle characteristics were very effective in letting the viewers see his inner persona, or the appearance of it. In a scene where Millie begins to break down, he doesn't react or give comfort to her. Rather, he holds his actions black, his face void of all emotion. The manner in which he stayed calm while Millie starts to unravel spoke volumes about the uncertainty and emotional distance his character experiences. His appearance, restrained and almost void of emotion, caused even more tension, making the audience question if he's actually on Millie's side or hiding something dark. The acting that Brandon Sklenar executed kept me pausing in confusion, never fully confident in what his actual intentions were.

What made this movie even more effective than the pacing and acting was the execution of suspense over shock. An example of this is when Millie is beginning to realize that Nina took to manipulating her instead of confronting her. Nina changes the words she says, moves items around the house and forgets whole conversations. An example of Nina's manipulation is when she tells Millie to pick up her daughter, Cecelia, from ballet class, but it turns out that Cecelia was always planned to be picked up by her friend's mom for a sleepover. After an embarrassing confrontation between the friend's mom and Millie, the mom calls Nina, who then yells to Millie that she never told Millie to pick Cecelia up. When this happened, it built tension because the viewers could tell something was wrong before anything crucial happened. Because of the many scenes like this, the film creates fear from the anticipation, not sudden events.

After watching "The Housemaid," I now fully understand why psychological thrillers forever ensnare audiences. This psychological film doesn't just fascinate—it haunts you forever, and that's exactly what this movie did for me. From the film's amazing performances, chilling atmosphere and undeniable tension, "The Housemaid" is a must-watch for mature viewers who take delight in thrillers that greatly affect the mind. If you're in need of a film that will rattle you even after the credits are over, this one sure executes.



Image found at Westpac OpenAir