Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: «««« out of «««««

Running Time: 92 minutes

The following feature film debuts on Amazon Prime on March 20.

Well, this week marked the delay of, well, just about every movie slated to come to theaters over the next two months. While that isn’t the best of news for anyone looking forward to seeing *A Quiet Place Part II, Mulan, The New Mutants, The Lovebirds, No Time to Die, Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway, Antlers, Black Widow, Spiral, The Personal History of David Copperfield, F9 (Fast and the Furious)*
and many others, it does open the door for a few smaller films to earn some attention. One such example is
Blow the Man Down
, a little mystery flick that is being released on Amazon Prime March 20.

Set in a port town in Maine, the film tells the story of sisters Priscilla (Sophie Lowe) and Mary Beth (Morgan Saylor), who have recently lost their mother. The older sibling, Priscilla, is the level-headed and reliable one struggling to make ends meet as a fishmonger, while Mary Beth is more of a wild child yearning to leave their home. After the two get into an argument at their mother’s wake, the younger girl heads out to get drunk, leading to a horrific event. Priscilla is called in to try and help her sister out.

Their actions set a series of events in motion. A friendly Officer Brennan (Will Brittain) becomes suspicious of them, and over the course of the film secrets about the town and citizens are revealed. Some of the locals involved include a friend of the sisters’ late mother named Enid (Margot Martindale) and a trio of seniors Susie, Doreen and Gail (June Squibb, Marceline Hugot, Annette O’Toole).

The end result feels like an interesting mix of eccentric characters with the cadence you might see in a film like *Manchester by the Sea* placed together in a murder-mystery plot, and backed by a chorus of fishermen who appear at intervals to croon some of the film’s themes. Surprisingly, these elements fit together very snugly. This movie excels at creating a very specific sense of atmosphere. The northeastern docks, stores, homes and shanties with cracking paint and peeling wallpaper are almost a character in themselves.

These backdrops greatly assist in creating an appropriate mood and physically project the frayed, ragged, decaying edges that many of the townspeople are covering up.

While the crime and plot itself may not be anything revolutionary, the eccentricities on display are thoroughly enjoyable to watch. Characters who try too hard to be quirky can be grating, but all of the performers in this feature do it with ease and are exceptional in their parts. As they come into contact with one another, conflicts do arise and plenty of tension is generated. Early on, there are wince-inducing moments as the sisters begin to panic and try to cover their tracks in order not to become suspects in an investigation.

Of course, they can’t help but make mistakes along the way. And while some of the seniors don’t explicitly pressure or threaten others for much of the running time, they most certainly make their own plays as events unfold, subtly exuding menace.

The feature also moves at a zippy pace and never lags as past relationships finally come to light and the town’s most powerful forces exert their influence. *Blow the Man Down* boasts intriguing ideas, some great performances and plenty of ambience. It’s an entertaining little independent film that should certainly please anyone who enjoys watching crime or murder/mystery pictures. And it’s nice to know that while many entertainment options are being limited, there are still some worthwhile features coming around that will provide movie enthusiasts with something new.

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