

‘Get Out’ – a creepy, thought-provoking genre flick

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Rating: ««« out of 4 stars

Running Time: 105 min.

It looks as if the low-budget genre picture house Blumhouse Productions are on a bit of a roll. Last month's *Split* has been an unqualified success at the box office and based on initial impressions, their latest release looks to make a memorable impression as well.

Get Out

combines elements of suspense, horror and dark satire. It's a picture that certainly hits all of the expected fear genre beats, but presents its familiar elements in a completely new and thoughtful way.

Written and directed by comedian Jordan Peele (*Keanu*), the story involves Chris (Daniel Kaluuya), a young African-American photographer who receives an invitation from his girlfriend Rose (Allison Williams) to travel with her to meet her parents. His buddy Rod (Lil Rel Howery) discourages our hero from moving too fast, but the boyfriend decides to accept the offer. Upon his arrival at the family homestead, Chris can't help but feel a little uncomfortable. While Rose's parents Dean (Bradley Whitford) and Missy (Catherine Keener) initially come across as eccentric, increasingly odd and uncomfortable interactions begin to make the lead suspicious. Also adding concern are the servants, all African-American and all behaving in a strange, almost zombie-like manner.

Early parts of the film effectively convey Chris's discomfort at meeting the family for the first time and attempting to get a handle on his new surroundings. There are a lot of cutting observations about the way someone of a different background is treated, often with characters making odd references to famous African-Americans in a bid to show their acceptance. The easygoing Chris

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takes it all in stride, but the strange vibe is palpable and consistently builds with the bizarre behavior of the help, who show no personality and when approached, make statements like, “I should get back to work and mind my own business.”

Of course, something mysterious is up and it isn’t long before sinister motivations are revealed. Naturally, this is a horror film and so one has to allow a few conventions. There are some jump scares early on, and while some of them are effective, not every jolt startles. And admittedly, it does take Chris an awfully long time to suspect that something very wrong is occurring around him. However, the character’s sluggishness at reacting is a technique used to make audiences uncomfortable and nervous. When it is done well, it really amps up the tension and these constant awkward interactions do exactly that.

Additionally, there’s some impressive, nightmarish imagery involving a past trauma that results in memorable shots of a character sinking in water. And when the big confrontations do arrive, the conflict is frighteningly rendered and thrillingly resolved. The screenplay also allows for some fun and levity courtesy of the Rod character, who is dog-sitting for Chris and often in contact with him over the phone. As events become more and more upsetting, the friend has some very funny lines, conspiracy theories and pointed observations.

Overall, it’s hard to imagine a genre film like this one working any better. The acting from the entire cast is compelling and the heroes and villains earn strong reactions. Its tone is right on the mark, deftly mixing eerie and unsettling material with humor. And there’s a lot going on beneath the surface, as the filmmaker plays with concepts like individualism (or lack thereof in the personalities of the help) to the comments on race relations. *Get Out* is a sharp and memorable horror picture that is likely to linger in the brain long after the credits roll.

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