

“Widows”

By Helen Lutz – ♡♡

Every once in a while we have a movie that makes us think. I’m not referring to twists and turns, but one where the next morning we’re still trying to figure it all out. One that was a lot of fun was M. Night Shyamalan’s “The Sixth Sense.” That was one movie where once seen, we needed to watch it again. And then watch the Director’s cut on the DVD (it was before Blu-Ray) to fully understand the clues. Another movie which was a thriller and made us think was “The Skeleton Key.” I still think about this one on occasion, but it was so creepy that I don’t want to see it a second time.



“Widows,” currently playing in theaters, tells a grim tale. Set in modern day Chicago (that alone says a lot) we meet four families. Harry Rawlings and his wife Veronica, played by Liam Neeson and Viola Davis, appear to be a loving couple living in luxury with a puffy, little white dog. The catch, Harry is a criminal – but not just any criminal. Harry Rawlings plans and executes big time robberies so well that it’s impossible to catch him.

Linda Perelli (Michele Rodriguez) owns a nice shop specializing in Quinceañera and party attire. Linda’s abusive husband Carlos (Manuel Garcia-Rulfo) fails to see the real value in what Linda does but takes all he can get out of it. Another couple is Alice (Elizabeth Debecki) and Florek Gunner (John Bernthal). Alice is little more than a floor mat for Florek. Finally we meet Jimmy Nunn (Coburn Goss) and his wife Amanda (Carrie Coon) with a cute little baby. Carlos, Florek and Jimmy round out Harry Rawling’s band of thieves. Harry is the mastermind and they have total faith in his abilities.

But all good things must come to an end ... something goes wrong with the job. Shots are fired; the guys barely escape and make it to their second get-away van when their best laid plans explode – literally. The police have them in their sights when their van explodes into a fiery ball, killing all, burning the two million dollars haul, and leaving four widows.

So that would account for a pretty quick movie. Criminals all buried by their grieving widows – The End. Well, not in this lifetime (nor in Chicago). It seems that the money stolen was from one of the shadier individuals running for Alderman, Jamal Manning (Brian Tyree Henry) and he would like it back. His mean little brother Jatemme (Daniel Kaluuya) pays a visit to Ms. Viola giving her a month to return the money. What’s a woman to do?

Harry’s driver gives Viola an envelope from her late husband. Inside it she finds a lock box key. The box holds Harry’s journal which contains detailed blueprints for all his robberies. The final one is a big one, five million dollars. Where’s Viola going to come up with the money to secure her safety? Why not do it herself with a little help from the other widows who don’t seem to be doing so well either.

Viola, Linda and Alice begin to put the plan in place. All they need is to acquire guns, and the location, a driver, expertise – the list goes on and on. Strange, Amanda shows no interest in the scheme. Director Steve McQueen takes us on an intense adventure with so many twists and turns we need a score card to keep up. It’s unfortunate that during the two hour movie there is no comic relief, just total tension. He tries to encourage an underlying message of political corruption, Colin Farrell and Robert Duval are pretty evil, but it gets lost in the ladies caper. On a scale of one to four Hart Beats I give “Widows” TWO HARTS. Sometimes a movie loses out when it just makes you think too hard for too long.