

Film Review: Daniel Radcliffe Stars in Chilling ‘The Woman in Black’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on February 2, 2012 - 8:58pm

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CHICAGO – The most important element to the opening of “The Woman in Black” is the Hammer Films logo that caused the legendary Roger Ebert to applaud when it appeared in the screening room here in Chicago. This is a Hammer Film through and through complete with unbelievable character action, loud sound effects, extreme shock scares, and other B-movie manipulations. It fits snugly in the filmography of the studio that revived Frankenstein, Dracula, and The Mummy for a new generation. And yet it is also surprisingly effective for modern audiences. There are some overdone elements and the script could have been a bit stronger, but the movie works on its own terms, sending a chill up your spine in effective ways.



Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Hammer Films have become known more for camp due to titles like “Taste the Blood of Dracula,” “Blood From the Mummy’s Tomb,” and “Creatures the World Forgot,” but “The Woman in Black” comes more from the early days of Hammer horror, playing up the melodrama but leaving most of the B-movie elements at home (to be fair, I almost wish it had a bit more whimsy and personality and wasn’t always so straight-faced although a few of the jump scares will make you laugh at their sheer audacity). Based on Susan Hills’ novel of the same name, debut director James Watkins delivers this tale of a bogeywoman in black in a relatively linear line, letting the ghostly activities unfold in an old-fashioned, somewhat predictable manner, but doing so in a way that feels respectful of the long lineage of ghost stories from which this tale was born. Creaking doors, ghostly apparitions, wet footprints on the floor – “The Woman In Black” uses enough timeless devices of the ghost story that it could have been made twenty or even forty years ago. And that’s pretty refreshing in an era overrun by found footage films, Shyamalan twist endings, or other “modern variations” on the genre.



[Read Brian Tallerico’s full review of “The Woman in Black” in our reviews section.](#) [11]

“The Woman in Black” opens on a super-creepy note as three girls are playing in an attic. They turn and look at something off camera and get suddenly serious. They turn back in the other direction, stand, and march toward three windows, which they open and jump from, plummeting to their deaths. The camera pulls back to reveal a shrouded figure in black who clearly forced them somehow to commit suicide. A child-killing ghost? It starts the movie off with just the right amount of dread and unease, into which enters Arthur Kipps (Daniel Radcliffe), who is such a downtrodden individual that his son draws a stick figure of his daddy with a frowny face. Even though it’s clearly been years based on the age of his son, Arthur is far from over the death of his wife (Sophie Stuckey) in childbirth.

Kipps is forced by his employer to travel to an abandoned estate to handle the paperwork necessary to take it over. When he arrives at the hotel, everyone looks at him like he brings the plague. The innkeeper claims that the only lodging is taken, but the innkeeper’s wife agrees to put him up in the attic (which is, of course, the children’s room from the prologue). It’s clear that the townspeople don’t want Kipps investigating or stirring things up and we soon learn that it is because they are trying to prevent the deaths of the few children still in town. Any time that someone sees the legendary “Woman in Black,” a child dies. And, of course, if Kipps goes to her house and goes through her things, a sighting or two seems likely.



[Continue reading for Brian Tallerico’s full “The Woman in Black” review.](#) [11]

“The Woman in Black” stars Daniel Radcliffe, Ciaran Hinds, and Janet McTeer. It was written by Jane Goldman and directed by James Watkins. It will be released on February 3rd, 2012.



The Woman in Black

Photo credit: CBS Films

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