

Film Review: James Bond Returns in Stunning, Spectacular ‘Skyfall’

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 30, 2012 - 10:00am

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CHICAGO – “Skyfall” is a gorgeous, action-packed, superbly structured piece of modern filmmaking. It is not only one of the best James Bond movies in the five-decade history of the beloved character but it’s one of the best action movies of the last decade. Sam Mendes’ film is smart, sexy, dangerous, and, most stunningly of all, beautiful. With Oscar-caliber work from cinematographer Roger Deakins, James Bond finally has a film that looks as perfect as his suave style has deserved for half a century. And the new, modern look for Bond is used to tell the deepest story in his film history. “Skyfall” is an absolute success.



Rating: **5.0/5.0**

As has become trademark for the Bond franchise, “Skyfall” opens with a bang – a breakneck action sequence that is essentially one long chase scene on foot, by car, on a motorcycle, and even the roof of a train. Bond (Daniel Craig) is chasing someone with a list that MI6 needs desperately. M (Judi Dench) is on a headset speaking to both Bond and another agent named Eve (Naomie Harris), stressing the urgency of not letting the list get away. From the very beginning, the heightened dramatic stakes are clear as Bond passes an agent bleeding to death. Stop the hemorrhaging or get the bad guy? Let a good guy die to stop a bad one? These are the questions that will circle the entire arc of “Skyfall,” easily the darkest Bond movie ever made. There are echoes of “The Dark Knight” in the way the film explores the history of its iconic character and a villain looking to cause chaos.



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The explosive opening of “Skyfall” ends with 007 being shot and presumed dead after another tough decision by M. As the leader of MI6 is trying to get over the failure of the mission both politically and personally, a superior named Gareth Mallory (Ralph Fiennes) threatens her with forced retirement. She vows to clear up the current nightmare – it turns out the list was that of undercover British spies around the world that could now have their covers blown – before heading into the sunset. Bond resurfaces and decides to forgive M long enough to get the job done.

Said job involves help from a new Q (a perfect Ben Whishaw), a stunning new beauty named Severine (Berenice Marlohe), and, of course, a new Bond bad guy. The villain this time is named Silva (Javier Bardem) and he doesn’t appear for so long into the film that I’m hesitant to even offer too much character detail. We know from the beginning that the person tormenting MI6 with a personal grudge against M is someone with a history with the spy business, adding a layer of depth to the bad guy here that’s so often missing from Bond movies. Silva is what James Bond could have become with just a few failed missions and a stronger tendency to vengeance. Much like Batman and The Joker used fear to different ends, Bond and Silva are two sides of the same coin.



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“Skyfall” stars Daniel Craig, Judi Dench, Javier Bardem, Ralph Fiennes, Naomie Harris, Berenice Marlohe, Ben Whishaw, and Albert Finney. It was written by Neal Purvis & Robert Wade and John Logan and directed by Sam Mendes. It will be released on November 9, 2012.



Skyfall

Photo credit: Sony Pictures

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