

## Film Review: M. Night Shyamalan Returns, Full of Personality in ‘Split’

Submitted by [JonHC](#) [1] on January 23, 2017 - 4:50pm

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CHICAGO – M. Night Shyamalan is a complicated filmmaker whose work seems to reflect a variety of different sides to the artist. “The Visit” marked a return to a new, yet familiar side of Shyamalan that most of us thought blew away with “The Last Airbender.” it seems “Split” marks the return/re-emergence of the too-long departed Shyamalan that we thought was buried in the past.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

Perhaps I am giving him too much credit, but I believe all Shyamalan films have a quirky charm that either the audience doesn’t appreciate or that Shyamalan can’t refine. We know that Shyamalan can be as mirthfully goofy as he can atmospherically cerebral, but sometimes both elements clash more often than they blend. The humor can overpower the story, creating weird fluctuations in the tone and undermining any attempt at emotional climaxes. Other times the high-concept ideas or themes never feel fully-developed enough to garner our appreciate. If anything, they tend to feel like we’re missing big parts of the story that somehow got trapped in Shyamalan’s and we never fully realized. Fortunately, “Split” shows us every part of its mind and the film is all the better for it.

“Split” explores a severe case of dissociative identity disorder, but in true Shyamalan style, it is explored with a twist. Shyamalan introduces a fringe science element, which is completely in his wheelhouse, to a potentially hackneyed premise that has been done to death. This change in story throws the film into a mysterious metamorphosis that leaves the audience in suspense as to what will emerge at the very end. Shyamalan has finally found a great balance between his tone, pacing, and story. He has never had a problem building suspense in his thrillers but has often led his films to a conclusion that doesn’t come close to rewarding our patience or attention.

*“Split” opened everywhere on January 20th. Featuring James McAvoy, Anya Taylor-Joy, Betty Buckley, Haley Lu Richardson, M. Night Shyamalan. Screenplay by M. Night Shyamalan. Directed by M. Night Shyamalan. Rated “PG-13”*



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James McAvoy and Anya Taylor-Joy have one of many eerily awkward encounters in ‘Split’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures



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