

Too Much Wasted Time in M. Night Shyamalan's 'Glass'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on January 18, 2019 - 5:15pm

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Rating: **3.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Maybe inside filmmaker M. Night Shyamalan's head, his latest film "Glass" works... all the elements of what we need to know about this sequel to MNS's previous films "Split" and "Unbreakable" are within. However, what works inside the director's head may not work for the audience, especially in the first half of the film.

Bruce Willis, Samuel L. Jackson and James McAvoy return from the previous films to reprise their characters, and they all become incarcerated as the film begins. This leads to the perplexing first 70 minutes, that has all the intrinsic story value as reading the ingredients in flour. It's not until the inevitable escape occurs that the film takes on some more electricity, and by the conclusion there is a good sense of where the mystery might go (yes, it is open ended) and some of the supporting characters step up to add there own sense of M. Night weirdness. Half a film doesn't completely cut it, but at least the better half was in the second end. "Unbreakable" is an M. Night classic, and the sequel doesn't move it far along enough. More on "Split" below.

The film begins three weeks after the end of "Split." as the split personalities of Kevin (James McAvoy) are in full "Beast" mode... his super strongest part of "The Horde" (the name for his 23 inner personalities). He has kidnapped cheerleaders, interestingly enough, but is busted by David (Bruce Willis), whose invulnerability and strength was developed in "Unbreakable" ... and is now "The Overseer." In the midst of their struggle, the authorities capture both of them.



The Horde (James McAvoy), Mr. Glass (Samuel L. Jackson) and The Overseer (Bruce Willis) in 'Glass'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

They are sent to a prison institution that also houses Elijah (Samuel L. Jackson), the “Mr. Glass” from “Unbreakable” who has a brittle bone condition, but a super-intellectual mind. A psychiatrist named Ellie (Sarah Paulson) have put the three in those walls, to convince them that their superpowers are moments of coincidence and not actual gifts. It’s up to the trio to escape to the next phase.

I did not see “Split,” and the multiple personalities that McAvoy created in “Glass” were creepy and oddball, but they were also showy and less interesting than the characteristics of Willis and Samuel L. Every time he went into the schtick of his multiple personalities, it reminded me of audience suggestions during an improv show at The Second City (“teenager!” “mother!” “prissy man!”) and the overall result were like freaks at a penny circus. Should I go back to “Split”?

I did see “Unbreakable” and loved that film, especially when the surprise of a “comic book origin story” revealed itself. That’s why the second half of “Glass” came alive, because suddenly the whole nature of that story (and Elijah’s play-by-play of comic book tropes) started to glue the scenarios together. I also liked the mystery of the companion characters to the heroes, diverse and appropriate again to the comic book universe (for the record, Spencer Treat Clark as David’s son, Anya Taylor-Joy as Kevin’s link to the world, and Charlayne Woodard as Elijah’s mother).



Mr. Glass Makes His Escape in 'Glass'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

What I didn't like was the first hour and change of the film. From the goofy cheerleader capture (seemed like an M. Night fantasy), to the private prison institution (which initially seemed like a waste of taxpayer money), to the boring analysis of the three by Dr. Ellie, it is all a muddy slog. Again, I think it made sense to M. Night, but it wasn't audience or story friendly.

I guess one half good is better than all bad, which is why I scored this latest M. Night epic a three out of five, against my better judgement. The super power of the audience may be how they accept both the outcome and the pain to get there. "I see dead box office"?

"Glass" opens everywhere on January 18th. Featuring Bruce Willis, Samuel L. Jackson, James McAvoy, Sarah Paulson, Spencer Treat Clark, Anya Taylor-Joy and Charlayne Woodard. Written and directed by M. Night Shyamalan. Rated "PG-13"



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By [PATRICK McDONALD](#) [21]
Editor and Film Writer
HollywoodChicago.com
pat@hollywoodchicago.com [20]

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