

‘The Invisible Man’ is a True Heart Pounding Thriller

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 28, 2020 - 4:15pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – When I think of “The Invisible Man” the first thing I think of is the special effects... and that’s largely what it’s been about ... from Claude Raines initial portrayal of “The I Man” in the 1930s, all the way through more modern takes like Kevin Bacon in the thriller “Hollow Man” (2000).

But this latest attempt to breath new life into the classic character puts the emphasis firmly on suspense instead. It’s really a haunted-house/domestic-stalker hybrid smuggled inside the invisibility suit of a classic monster movie.



Elisabeth Moss and Friend in ‘The Invisible Man’

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

The film begins with Cecilia (Elisabeth Moss) literally slipping away from her controlling and abusive husband in the middle of the night. He’s a world class tech scientist in the field of “optics,” who is later reported dead and leaves her a windfall of his millions. But unexplained occurrences begin to pile up, and she begins to believe that he’s found a way to stalk her, possibly from beyond the grave. This invisible man’s strong “suit” is when the film makes what you can’t see just as terrifying as the stuff you can.

Elisabeth Moss is just perfect for the role, projecting a strong willed fighter, who is also a tad unhinged herself. As she tries to convince even

sympathetic friends and relatives that her ex husband is in the room, it's easy to dismiss what she says as pure crazy talk, which lands her in a mental institution. The audience knows she's not crazy, but she sounds that way to the characters around her in the film. There's also some serious social #metoo commentary smuggled inside, about how women talking about sexual abuse are easily dismissed as the crazy ones.

This social commentary and commitment to suspense saves the enterprise, which could have easily tipped over into silliness, since there aren't any dazzling special effects. It isn't entirely accurate to say there aren't any special effects, but they're of the minimal kind found in "Paranormal Activity" films. They mostly consist of Moss and others fighting the air and writhing around on the floor pretending to be beaten up by an invisible adversary.



Knifing the Air: Scene Tension From 'The Invisible Man'

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

After Universal Picture's aborted attempt to revive "The Mummy," this more minimal approach works a heck of a lot better. It also earns more genuine scares with a tripped over dog bowl and an errant car alarm than other movies do with severed heads and buckets of blood. "What is essential is invisible to the eye."

"The Invisible Man" opens everywhere on February 28th. Featuring Elisabeth Moss, Aldis Hodge, Oliver Jackson-Cohen, Michael Dorman and Storm Reed. Based on a novel by H.G. Wells. Screenplay adapted and directed by Leigh Whannell. Rated "R"



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