

by Kimberly_Gadette

Movie Review of "PREMONITION"

If only Sandra Bullock had had a premonition about the artistic merit of this film. If only she'd had a premonition that audiences usually don't like to be lulled into a annoyed stupor. Her character, Linda Hanson, receives presentiments from the future. And so did Bullock, who was given ample warning about "Premonition." Was it via tea leaves? Tarot cards? Hallucinations? Nope—all the warning she needed was right there in the script. The plodding, illogical, humorless script.

The story opens with nice, stay-at-home mommy/housewife Linda Hanson being told that her husband has died in a car wreck. But whoa! then he's alive. Sorry, no, he's dead. Linda soon realizes that she's slipped out of a contiguous timeframe, living one week completely out of order, waking up each morning to the question of "What day is it?" For some inexplicable reason, this woman can't look at a paper, turn on a tv, or check with other family members to discern the day of the week. But that's just the tip of this slow-melting iceberg. More mind-numbing elements follow, such as: 1. How can a hard-working husband afford to keep his wife in such a cavalcade of nightwear, and who keeps changing her jammies in the middle of the night? (If only the film kept pace with Linda's costume changes, maybe we would have gotten somewhere.) 2. How does a woman who's skittering on the edge of a nervous breakdown manage to sleep so soundly? Is she viewing the dailies of this very film, substituting them for the less-effective sleep aid Ambien? 3. If she needs to wake up to save her husband from imminent doom, why is there never any thought of using an alarm clock? Is she secretly Amish?

The muddle multiplies. Though she lives in a midsize town, there's only one law enforcement officer who's obviously working overtime as patrolman, sheriff making house calls and intervention expert. Heck, even Mayberry had both an Andy and a Barney. Employing the powerful actress Kate Nelligan as Linda's concerned mother is a waste. Her screaming, "What have you done to your child?" when it's established that Linda's daughter accidentally crashed through a glass window when trying to get in from the rain, makes no sense. (And why does the daughter race from raindrops as if she were about to be devoured by a landshark?)

Other than opting to greenlight Bill Kelly's script, the studio's choice of director is also a puzzle. Mennan Yapo's directing resume consists of two previous German films—a 19-minute short from 1999 and a feature from 2004. Was no one else available? Pacing and tension take a back seat to framing beauty shots of Bullock, who is onscreen approximately 90% of the time. It's as if Yapo were conducting a photo shoot, his camera lingering on every plane of her face in scene after scene. In church with her pastor, he shoots her like a Rembrandt painting, an inner light emanating only from her face. In the wedding and early marriage flashbacks, he washes her in a desaturated white light, as if she's an angel reminiscing upon her time on earth. Question: if her wedding is supposed to be in her POV, why is it shot from the external third-person? Perhaps she's recalling her wedding video, rather than the wedding itself.

After one hour into the film, Linda finally takes action, taking crayon to paper to create a timeline of the week's events. A-ha! The heroine exhibits some strength! Firm resolve and then—nothing. Even the love scene is duller than watching Linda dust the mantelpiece. Twice.

The capper is a "best of" montage at the end of the film. If we weren't bored to tears the first time around, how does revisiting the bad make it better? Unless, like a hammer pounding on our heads, we can now leave happy, delirious that the hammering has finally stopped.

The first words uttered in the film are spoken by Linda, her eyes closed, saying "I hate surprises." Therefore, because the heroine hates surprises, we don't get any? For two hours? Oh, if we'd only known.

Grading this movie on the curve of the Deschutes River: D-plus

Click here to view the movie trailer of "Premonition".

Kimberly Gadette can be reached at gadettek@yahoo.com Production Credits: "Premonition" Directed by: Mennan Yapo Screenplay by: Bill Kelly Cast: Sandra Bullock, Julian McMahon, Nia Long, Marc Macaulay, Kate Nelligan Rated: PG-13 Running Time: 110 minutes Grade: D-plus

The Screen Savor: "Premonition"™ by Kimberly_Gadette