

Assignment 01
Movie Review

Name: Subhi Bhuiyan

ID: 17201116

Section: 01

The Shawshank Redemption

The Shawshank Redemption is a timeless piece of art and it is one of those critically-acclaimed films that stood the test of time as one of the greatest movies ever made. The movie is an adaptation of Stephen King's 1982 novella Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption. So how did a 1994 drama film based on prison go on to become a global phenomenon for decades? Simply because this movie transcends as a transparent yet powerful narrative that has seamlessly woven the themes that define human experience into a brilliant plot that has been beautifully portrayed by a wonderful cast.

Set in the 1940's, the film portrays the story of banker Andy Dufresne played by Tim Robbins, who is wrongfully convicted for the murders of his unfaithful wife and her lover and is apparently sentenced to two consecutive life terms at the Shawshank State Prison. On serving his time there, he befriended a fellow prisoner Ellis "Red" Redding played by Morgan Freeman, an inmate and prison contraband smuggler serving a life sentence, who narrates the film. It is here the movie gracefully unfolds. The protagonist, despite his claims of innocence, slowly overcomes the hellfire tortures of the prison system and frequent sexual assaults, while managing to inspire his fellow inmates to lift their degraded horizons. And finally his harrowing escape attempt to freedom.

The entire movie is laced throughout with beautiful dialogues that inspire hope without sugarcoating the reality. There was a scene where Andy played opera on the speaker for everyone in the prison to hear while he was in the warden's office. "It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away, and for the briefest of moments, every last man at Shawshank felt free." This was one of the most notable and meaningful scenes, where Red fervently quoted how the voices of the Italian music soared higher and farther than anybody in a gray place dared to dream. For the briefest of moments, they felt the taste of freedom.

My personal favorite scene was when Red makes reference to the routined life of prison when fellow inmate Brooks Halten was released on parole. "I'm telling you these walls

are funny. First you hate them. Then you get used to them. Enough time passes, it gets so you depend on them. That's institutionalized." This went on to emphasize how the convicts in Shawshank have become so used to the idea of being in prison, that they can't remember their life outside of it. I really felt the essence of life is captured in this scene. Life hands each and every one of us different cards to deal with and ironically life is fair in the sense that it is unfair to everybody. What I really loved about this quote is how it metaphorically reflects that even when we are handed a card that we might feel caged in, there comes a point in life where we get so accustomed to the walls that we have build and establish our comfort zone around it and therefore get so familiar with the context of it that anything outside of it feels intimidating and daunting.

No list of quotes from The Shawshank Redemption is complete without this gem of a line: "Get busy living, or get busy dying." This line in itself holds the weight of a powerful sentiment and its poignancy cannot be understated. The message of this line is clear: you either spend your life waiting around for something to happen, or you take charge and make something happen for yourself. That is to say, if you don't show up to work on challenging what destiny has handed you and fight for a chance, you might as well let it take hold of you. Beautiful doesn't quite cut it.

The final lines of The Shawshank Redemption delivers a spectacular build-up of the entire experience the movie had to offer. "I hope I can make it across the border. I hope to see my friend and shake his hand. I hope the Pacific is as blue as it has been in my dreams. I hope." Earlier in the film Red warns Andy that hope is a dangerous thing and that can drive a man insane. To see Red redefine his personal rendition of hope and coming to terms with it at the ending of this masterpiece, undeniably delivers a cathartic moment of peace, happiness, and, as the title suggests, redemption.

The film is not just confined as a deeply affecting drama set in the imposing Shawshank prison. But it largely encompasses hardships, hope and human tenacity and at its very core about the impossibility of caging the human spirit. It's a movie about hope. It's one of those movies that stays with you because it not only resonates with you on a personal level but also deeply moves you.