

## Shutter Island

Martin Scorsese has once again used his masterful directing talents to produce an award winning thriller entitled 'Shutter Island.' Starring the widely admired actor Leonardo DiCaprio, the film takes place on the fictional Shutter Island where there's an institution for the criminally insane. The narrative focuses on Teddy Daniels, a U.S marshal who is investigating the disappearance of Rachael Solando with his new partner, Chuck (played by Mark Ruffalo), although it is revealed to the audience that the marshal has ulterior motives for coming to Shutter Island. He's tracking down the man who started the fire that killed his wife, although he tells Chuck that 'it's the smoke that got her. That's important.' As the story unravels, the audience begins to see that everything is not what it seems and there's something very strange going on in Shutter Island.

Scorsese cleverly weaves the motif of water throughout the film to symbolize the reality that surrounds and traps the main character as he eventually faces the truth that he is the 67<sup>th</sup> patient and he's invented a villain 'Laeddis' to blame for his wife being dead. An example of this motif is how he decides to leave the island on more than one occasion, but the ocean is too rough so he is stuck on the island. Water also makes him uneasy which he would subconsciously associate with the murder of his children. While water represents reality, fire represents fantasy – it symbolizes Teddy's fantasy world and recognizes his insanity. Wherever fire appears, Teddy (or Andrew) is hallucinating. Examples of this include when he finds the 'real' Rachael Solando in a cave, lighting matches in Ward C while he talks to someone about Laeddis and when he blows up Dr. Cawley's car near the end of the film. In one of his dreams, his wife is burning and convincing him to find Laeddis but she's suddenly wet as ash surrounds them. This is Andrew's false reality of losing his wife to a fire compared with how she drowned their children.

The lighting throughout the entire movie is mostly dark and gloomy, with few scenes set during the day and it's raining or poor weather for the whole film. This adds to the feeling of uneasiness and hints to the audience that something isn't right. Little colour is shown throughout the film unless Teddy is dreaming – during his dream sequences, the colours are vivid and bright to enhance the feeling of hallucinating and that what the audience is seeing isn't real. An array of camera techniques are demonstrated during the entirety of the film which were clearly each planned for a specific purpose to slowly reveal and hint at what's going on. As the movie progresses, more and more high angle shots are used to give the audience the sense that someone is watching/monitoring Teddy. Low angle shots and medium shots are used to convince the audience that Teddy is the only sane character.

The most commendable production element of this film, however, is the sound. Scorsese weaves an intense and genius soundtrack to accommodate to the feeling of the scenes, repeating a certain track that first appears when they are driving to the institution. This builds suspense and makes the audience think that they're entering an unsafe or dark place. Classic compositions that also remind the audience that the setting is several decades before the present day are executed brilliantly and give the film the element of a classic thriller.

Fellow critics have presented their review of Shutter Island with their own theories on the 'true' ending of the film, as Scorsese riddles the plot with false stories and blurs reality with the fantasy world. This is a true act of brilliance by the writers and is what contributes to make this film a highly regarded piece.