



MOVIE REVIEW

Five Feet Apart

A TFIOS rip-off?

FARIHA S. KHAN

After months of pulling all-nighters and spending my days trapped inside the four walls of my house, my A Levels had finally come to an end, and one of the joys of that came with it was the one derived from binge watching movies I had been longing to watch since March. My days were no longer spent learning contractual laws, or the Raphson-Newton method for numerical analysis.

One sweltering Ramadan night, my loneliness had dragged me to turn on my laptop and switch on the (relatively) newly released Justin Baldoni movie starring Cole Sprouse and Haley Lu Richardson, *Five Feet Apart*. At first glance, the movie seems like a sadder knock-off of John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, but as the story emerges, the audience learns to realise that it's anything but.

The movie tells the tale of two hospitalised 17-year-olds, Stella Grant and Will Newman, with cystic fibrosis (CF) that fall hopelessly in love with each other. Will is at the hospital for a medication trial in order to get rid of a bacterial infection he has in his lungs. The rule for CF patients dictate that they should stay at least six feet apart from each other because of the dangers of cross-infection that may arise, potentially leading to death. The twist in the story is introduced when one of the pair born with a death sentence decide to "take back" something in return for everything CF has taken from them: one foot, just to be a bit closer to one another as the romance starts to develop in full bloom; hence the name – Five Feet Apart.

The sentimental story not only depicts the tale of two star-struck teenagers, but also showcases the everyday life of a CF patient living only to see the corners of the hospital, the strict regimen that they must adhere to, and the battle that they have to fight just to wake up breathing the next day. The film is eminent in its execution and a feast for the hopeless romantics, while being moving, bittersweet and a real tearjerker (seriously, I cried like a baby, three times).

Out of his usual Southside Serpent role, Cole Sprouse's signature smile, the gorgeous Haley Lu, the city lights, and Moisés Arias as Poe all make a movie that will have you bawling your eyes out by the end of it. Of course, no sad movie is complete without a sappy M83 song playing in the background, but the soundtrack to the movie remains one that is unmatched. As is predictable with movies of this genre, the movie has its fair share of sad scenes, but not ones that the audience imminently expect. The movie has its share of twists, turns, and unexpected events, but leaves the audience with a pondering sense of wholesomeness in their hearts by the end of it.



TV SERIES REVIEW

Pretty

"GOOD OMENS"

NUHAN B. ABID

Good Omens is Amazon Prime's six episode miniseries adaptation of the 1990 novel of the same name by renowned fantasy authors Sir Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman.

Hilarious and wonderfully charming, *Good Omens* was long considered unadaptable, until Amazon Prime accepted the challenge to translate it to screen at last. Under a post-humorous request from Pratchett, his co-author Gaiman helped supervise its translation to screen.

The plot revolves around the unlikelyst of partners – an angel and a demon, trying to stop the literal Biblical Apocalypse from taking place. But as serious as it sounds, it's told through the wackiest of lenses. Sir Terry and Neil Gaiman created a story about the grimmest of topics, yet they manage to keep it lighthearted and make it more so a story of friendship and love. This being preserved in the TV series is what makes it succeed. The casting of Michael Sheen and David Tennant as the angel Aziraphale and the demon Crowley is the best thing about this show. Every scene where they interact plays out like a great mix of unlikely friendship and an odd romcom couple. The heart of the show lies in their relationship and how it develops over the course of all of human history, and how it ends up being central to their fight against Heaven and Hell for stopping the end of the world.

The show does tackle some of these heavy-handed questions of morality and how well defined the binaries of good and evil really are, and it does it best through the viewpoints of Aziraphale and Crowley. It's safe to say Michael Sheen and David Tennant's incredibly chemistry carry this show.

Jon Hamm as Archangel Gabriel is another inspired choice of casting, playing an over-the-top bureaucrat from Heaven.

Neil Gaiman does a great job of adapting the original source to script, and it's very apparent having known his co-author well enough that he's able to keep Terry Pratchett's charm alive in the adaptation. Sometimes the script does too good a job of adapting the novel, and it's most apparent in the narration by God (voiced here by Frances McDormand). While Frances McDormand is great and at times the narration really plays off well by keeping some of the monologues from the book, sometimes it just beats you over the head with what's already happened on screen or unneeded information that could've been served better visually. A bit of a waste of Frances McDormand really. The sub-plot revolving around Adam and the Them, the kids around whom the end of the world's starting revolves, is also a bit repetitive. Most times you'll see a scene about them that's basically repeated in another episode, and the child actors can be a little cheesy at times. Jack Whitehall's subplot isn't that great either, and it's far more one-dimensional than the kids.

None of this is enough to really diminish the fact that *Good Omens* is great adaptation nonetheless, that still keeps the core of what made the novel good in its televised form. Go watch it now, if only just for the angel-demon buddy duo that makes this show as good as it is.

Nuhan's back after realising the philosophical significance of that painting with the dogs playing cards, and decided to channel out his existential dread caused by it by writing. Send him mildly morally questionable food choices at nuhanbaid@hotmail.com