

Example of film analysis: the visitor essay

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



The Visitor is an incredibly strong character-based drama, centering around a fantastic lead performance by Richard Jenkins as a tremendously relatable man dealing with a loss of self and a lingering sense of mortality as he contemplates middle age. His interactions with the Syrian immigrant couple who come to occupy his house with him - Tarek and Zainab - form the heart of the film, providing a very heartfelt look into the kinds of scenarios that come with the specter of illegal immigration and post-9/11 Islamophobia. As Walter learns to talk and connect with these immigrants, Walter finds a new way to belong and Tarek finds a sense of community and friendship in a nation that largely does not want him there.

Like *Once*, music is an important source for connection between these disparate people; Walter takes piano lessons in order to feel close to his dead wife, and the visitors help him learn to play the drum, which lets them bridge their substantial communication and nationalistic divides. These moments are fantastic, and Jenkins and the two Syrian actors play their scenes perfectly. While it doesn't quite elevate itself to the status of something like *The Shawshank Redemption*, I find that the understated nature of the film's focus on its characters is what stood out for me the most. I will always remember Richard Jenkin's perpetual look of abject sadness and melancholy, mixed with the wonderful dry humor that brings his character to life. While the subject matter can be a bit treacly and sentimental at times, the film manages to avoid any clichés or melodrama, instead making everything feel very real and natural.