

Sherlock holmes: a game of shadows film reveiw essay sample



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Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows (2011) is the long awaited sequel to the first Sherlock Holmes film. Robert Downey Jr and Jude Law star in this thrilling action packed film. The storyline is carried on from the previous film; Sherlock Holmes (Robert Downey Jr) and his sidekick Dr. Watson (Jude Law) join forces to outwit and bring down the fiercest enemy yet, Professor Moriarty (Jared Harris). They face tough challenges to this notorious criminal. Like in the first Sherlock Holmes film, the director Guy Ritchie has produced a brilliantly thought out and detailed film. Ritchie is also the director of six other films, including RocknRolla and Revolver, but these don't reach the high standards of the Sherlock Holmes' films. He has surpassed himself in the creativity of the screenplay and overall presentation of the film. The background mood is appropriate, showing a seemingly upbeat 1890's with some considerable energy, but with something dangerous rumbling underneath. A vast conspiracy is beginning, thanks to the great mathematician Professor Moriarty.

The apparent aim of this criminal mind is to make himself rich through establishing himself in many different industries, through any means necessary. But while the intrigue of this film is persuasive and related to the politics, that were around at the end of the century. The exaggerated literature of the explosion immediately interests the audience and shows them the amount of action they are about to see, from fights on trains and complicated battles that result in the world war that Holmes is desperate to avert. The device of sudden flashbacks using high speed editing are used to explain how the great detective has anticipated, and then performed a series of clever moves that result in a violent triumph. This is a complete contrast

to other view of Sherlock Holmes as these don't have an active part in violent fights. There is not, however, too much time in this dynamic narrative for the development of the character.

The character of Irene Adler (Rachel McAdams) who played a major role in the previous Sherlock Holmes film as Holmes' lover appears to be less involved in this film as she is replaced by Dr. Watson's wife, Mary (Kelly Reilly): in a major part in the film which makes the audience draw a breath and laughs Holmes throws his best friend's new wife off a train into a viaduct that they are crossing at night. This scene is full of both seriousness and laughter. The general conversation between the doctor and Holmes is amusing while the situation they are faced with sheds a more serious aspect in the severe predicament they find themselves in. The fact that Dr Watson and his new wife are on their honeymoon is significant. A honeymoon is when the bride and groom is meant to spend the beginning of their new life together. But in the film Dr Watson spends his honeymoon with Sherlock, not his wife. This shows the relationship between Sherlock and Dr Watson. Sherlock is jealous that Watson has someone special because he has lost the women he loved.

Music is often used in the background of the action scenes of the film which adds both tension and anxiety that are felt by the audience. This tension and anxiety plays a key part in both the development and overall image of the characters. Not only does the music play a key role in the link between the film and the audience, but so does little things that the audience may not pick up on immediately but will realise them later on. Ritchie often uses

anchorage to engage the audience. Throughout the entire film, Holmes
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focuses on little things that make up his character. These are shown as quick flicks on screen, which means that the audience doesn't really see them but remembers them unconsciously until later on in the film when the purpose of the shot is revealed. It is these tiny details that alongside the bigger, more noticeable features that give this film a unique atmosphere. However it is not only music, which adds to the effect Ritchie, has created; the mise-en-scene also does this.

The mise-en-scene creates feeling with both character and the audience as well as adding to the already detailed atmosphere. Both the film's arts and costume designer give us an attractive version of the late Victorian society, but with a modern slant. Holmes' stubble is not usually associated with the Victorian fashion; however its presence along with his "smart casual" clothing is there to represent Holmes' personality as an eccentric detective who acts far beyond his time. Every scene is thought through to the last detail. One scene in particular, shows Ritchie's attention to detail. This is the scene when Sherlock and his comrades are retreating from a gun factory. Guns are firing everywhere which gives Ritchie to play his favourite trick-bullet time. Bullet time adds to the effect of the scene in making the audience feel closer to the character by showing their feelings. By not fully focusing on the character in the shot and also showing where the bullet lands adds emotion and suspense for the audience. However, when the camera does focus on the character it is always their facial expression, which brings out feelings in the audience. The pain and sufferings that are seen in these facial expressions give an element of seriousness to the film that is otherwise quite humorous.

These expressions show the quality of acting in this film which makes the link between the actors and the audience. Again in this scene, music plays a big role in creating the atmosphere for the scene. The bold and dramatic music in the background adds to the character's feelings and emotions as well as creating tension and concern for the future of the character, as they try and escape their fate. The screenwriters, Michele and Kieran Mulroney, have used qualities from Conon Doyle's novel "The valley of fear", for Moriarty's character and background. They have done this very cleverly by concealing Moriarty in the previous film, to build up the suspense in awaiting his entrance. By revealing him early on in the film, the Mulroney's achieve their aim of revealing part of Moriarty's character, but only a glimpse so the audience is still shocked by some of Moriarty's acts of terror. Another resource for the Mulroney's is the story of "The Final Problem" for the film's climax, in which Holmes and Moriarty, in which Holmes and Moriarty encounter at a "summit conference" beside the Reichbach falls.

There are many metaphors in this film, one of which is the chess game that is not only played on a board but with the characters of the film. The film is directed rather like a chess game with Sherlock and Moriarty exchanging moves that structure the entire film. The chess game becomes more significant near the end of the film as it becomes more obvious. The fact that some characters are killed during the film represents the necessary losing of players in a chess game. The chess game also related to the entertainment of the time which makes it harder for the audience to see how it links with the rest of the film because at the turn of the century there was no television or anything that we take for granted nowadays. In my opinion, this is Guy

Ritchie's best film and one of the best films of the year. Its humourous side shows an element of fun, while its seriousness comes through as an undertone, giving the film depth and structure. This film is amusing and intriguing all rolled into one. The continuous line of clues stretches both the audiences mind and imaginations as they strive to keep up with Holmes while he discovers more clues and find out their significance to stop Moriarty. Overall, this film provides a thrilling, action-packed, interesting and mind-boggling view on the traditional Sherlock Holmes.