

# Not Just Another Prison Flick

Don't let the title fool you. *The Shawshank Redemption* is not another tedious journey into the world of unconvincing drama, but is instead, a richly moving tale about the strength of the human spirit and explores the heights and depths to which it reaches when confronted with extraordinary circumstances.

The movie opens with the conviction of Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins) to a double life sentence for the murders of his wife and her lover, a crime that he is entirely innocent of. Dufresne, a mild mannered New England banker, is sent to Shawshank State Prison, a maximum security penitentiary.

There, he befriends fellow inmate Red (Morgan Freeman), who is widely known by the others as a man who knows how to get certain things from the outside, a 'prison fixer.'

As you can imagine, life is not particularly easy inside Shawshank, and one of the new inmates loses control. Captain Hadley, a vicious prison guard, hears the prisoner's screams and subsequently beats him to death for not following the rules. Later, Dufresne painfully learns that

the other inmates pose an even greater risk to his safety.

Amidst all this brutality, Dufresne manages to keep his sanity and is even able to maintain a strong sense of hope. This makes his character unique from all the others in the film. In this nightmarish atmosphere, the other prisoners become conditioned to accept their fate and lose all hope of redemption, in short, they become institutionalized.

Dufresne's hope enables him to survive with his spirit wholly intact in an otherwise unbearable situation. He refuses to be caged in, and attempts to maintain his connections with his former life on the outside by becoming a financial counselor to the guards, and by improving upon the prison library. It is this refusal to be just another institutionalized inmate that ultimately leads to his redemption and survival.

Although the film is set in a prison, the movie deals more with character and thematic issues rather than the fist fighting and brawls that one might ordinarily expect in such a setting. In fact, a sufficient summary of the film

could be done in just three words: friendship, hope and redemption.

Surprisingly, the movie is based on a short story by Stephen King entitled "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption." As you might have guessed, the film is not a horror picture in the conventional sense, but could be thought of as such if you consider the gravity of Dufresne's situation.

Those of you who are still debating on whether or not the film has enough merit to justify paying the seven dollars for admission should consider that very few movies nowadays are made well enough to elicit such a heartfelt response.



BY JAMES KIM

*The Shawshank Redemption*  
(1994, 130 minutes)

Cast

Tim Robbins  
Morgan Freeman  
Directed by Frank Darabont

(out of 10 possible)

Art Direction/Cinematography: 9

Acting/Character Development: 9

Soundtrack & Sound Effects: 9

Overall Rating (Not Averaged): 9

The Ticket Price: \$7.00

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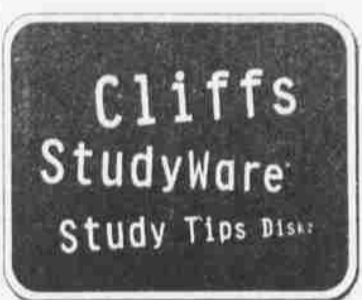
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