

It's action, action, action in Quantum of Solace

Once upon a Bond movie, Sean Connery would dust off his immaculate silk suit and purr, "My name's Bond, James Bond."

There was never a speck of blood on his white shirt, never a hair out of place, never a flush to his cheek. Bond, whether played by Connery, George Lazenby, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton or Pierce Brosnan, was the epitome of "cool," the master of manipulation, the essence of suave. Now, with Daniel Craig in the name role, he's the Quantum of Solace.

The Ian Fleming short story of the same title tells a different tale from that on screen in the 22nd Bond movie (Towne Theatre). Although both the Fleming's version written in the '60s and the recently released movie deal with revenge, that is where any similarity ends ... apart from the name.

And what is in that name:



CHRISTINE
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At the movies

Quantum of Solace?

According to Webster's dictionary, quantum means the amount. For instance: the quantum theory in physics is described as "a theory advanced to the effect that absorption and radiation of energy occur in certain amounts called quanta." As, according to that same dictionary, solace means "comfort in grief," the title of the movie means "an amount or measure of comfort in grief."

It relates directly to the 21st movie in the series, Casino Royale, where Bond (Daniel Craig) loses the love of his life.

(In Connery's and the others' day, Bond never indulged in love. The glorious females in those episodes were just work, work, work.)

Quantum of Solace picks up the Casino Royale story only an hour after its end.

It starts with the wildest of car chases where it's difficult to see who is chasing whom. The shots and sequences come fast and furious. Director Marc Forster (The Kite Runner and Finding Neverland) once promised that the action would be twice as fast as in Casino Royale, and it is. But to what end? After you've seen one car hurtle over a cliff, you've seen them all.

Men swing from chandeliers and break through glass windows; there are countless explosions with boats

and bodies flying into the air; people are shot and dumped in dumpsters; there's rape - of the worst kind; flames leap heavenwards; and there is noise... so much noise! Music by David Arnold assaults the ears as bloody images follow one another in rapid succession.

But there are some beautiful moments too. The narrow streets and terra cotta tiled roofs of Italian cities and the palm treed sands of Haiti make perfect escape backdrops in these chilly winter days, while Olga Kurylenko who plays Bond's current sidekick, Camille, is a feast for the eyes.

This is the only 007 movie so far when Bond doesn't have his way with his partner, perhaps in an attempt to give him more depth as a character.

But do we want depth in an escape movie so fatuous? Surely if that were the case, the reality of the violence that has become intrinsic

to the plot would be too hard to bear.

Dame Judi Dench has more to say as M. However, anyone waiting for the distribution of those outrageous, highly amusing bits of gadgetry still remembered from past movies will be disappointed. There's a great deal of frowning, intense delivery, but the laughs are few and far between in this, the latest of the James Bond movies.

However, if chasing and killing, fast boats, planes and cars with lots of flashing and banging are up your alley, and if your idea of solace is revenge, then Quantum of Solace is the movie for you.

To my mind, the quantum of solace is minimal.

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