

# Review: Glass

2019-01-18 20:00:00 by [Chris Compendio](#)

## Half-empty



I have one line from *Unbreakable* in my head after viewing *Glass*. David Dunn (Bruce Willis) has accepted his status as a superhuman being and calls Elijah Price (Samuel L. Jackson), asking him what he's supposed to do. "It's all right to be afraid, David, because this part won't be like a comic book. Real life doesn't fit into little boxes that were drawn for it."

In watching this super-sequel to *Unbreakable*, a film I cherish and admire, and *Split*, a film that I have mixed feelings on, I kept seeing *Glass* bounce back and forth between being true to and betraying that line of dialogue. There was so much of M. Night Shyamalan's film that I liked, but eventually, it all barreled towards a conclusion that left a sour taste for the entire experience overall.

After a long wait, I think *Glass* might be the most disappointing film in my lifetime—but to be honest, I'm not quite sure how it could have worked in retrospect.



## ***Glass***

**Director:** M. Night Shyamalan

**Release Date:** January 18, 2019

**Rated:** PG-13

One thing that *Glass* has going for it is successfully merging the worlds of *Unbreakable* and *Split*. It would be a fool's errand to watch this film without watching either or both of its predecessors, but *Glass* picks up where they both leave off in a very natural and organic way. David Dunn is now known as the Overseer, running a security store while operating as a vigilante with his son Joseph (Spencer Treat Clark) as his "guy on the chair." It's a wonderful way to pay off of their relationship from *Unbreakable*.

Dunn is in pursuit of Kevin Crumb (James McAvoy), a man who suffers from the condition known as DID. His split personalities, as in his own film, serve the persona known as "The Beast" in kidnapping young women for the Beast to feast on. A skirmish occurs, and Dunn and Crumb are thrown into a mental institution by a new character named Dr. Ellie Staple (Sarah Paulson)—this institution also happens to house Dunn's archenemy and former mentor Elijah Price.

There are several contrived moments and complete coincidences, but somehow, Shyamalan is able to weave *Unbreakable*, a film that is basically an existential crisis, and *Split*, an attempted treatise on trauma and abuse, into a single narrative. One moment where Price and Crumb's various personalities bounce off of each other is particularly satisfying.



But as the story unfolded, I had a hard time not comparing this 2019 film with Shyamalan's 2000 film. There's something about the way Shyamalan conducted himself at the peak of his career that enamored me; rewatch *The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable*, *Signs*, and *The Village* (the latter two films that I admire while still disliking for the most part) and you will notice this unique brand of patience that the

director conducts. Sure, those movies are slow as hell, but they let you revel in so many subtle character moments.

*Glass* had no patience. Despite being the longest film in this trilogy, I was surprised just how quickly scenes would transition to the next, and just how little several moments got to breathe. All was better once Elijah Price became more of a focal point in the story, but so much time was devoted to making events happen, to get characters from one place to another, to set up a big revelation later on, than to actually let the characters be.

I think some of the best moments of the film were when the characters thought back to previous memories, and the film would sidestep into a flashback. It could be my *Unbreakable* bias, but seeing where the characters were then compared to now was powerful. But boy, do I wish the movie would slow down. The entire cast, McAvoy especially with his several roles as Crumb's identities, gives it their all, and I wanted more time to enjoy them.



*Glass* operates with an entirely different visual palette than the previous two films. *Unbreakable* was glum and grounded, *Split* was dark and a bit horrific, while *Glass* had a lighter, more modern sensibility. Each of the three lead characters has their own unique color to stick out, going with the comic book-sensibility of the characters. There's a lot more camera motion than I'm used to in Shyamalan films, and while again, I prefer the patience of his earlier films, techniques like 360 shots were utilized well in showcasing the switching of personalities with McAvoy's performance.

The one scene where the colors stood out the most also happened to be my favorite scene—perhaps one of my favorite scenes amongst all three films. It's that group therapy session that we've seen in all of the promotional materials. Why Dr. Staple would think it's a good idea to sit these dangerous individuals all next to each other is beyond me (like everything she does and says in this film), but it was a wonderful journey to see Paulson's character get Dunn and Crumb to spiral into self-doubt about their own abilities.

It's where I thought that I knew what this movie would be about—*Unbreakable* and *Split*, in their own different ways (though I am wary how *Split* did it), were about accepting the person you are inside. At

this point, I thought *Glass* would be about how *others* can accept you for who you are. Unfortunately, that scene, and most of the movie itself, I felt was ruined by the last act of the film.



Everything I dislike about the movie goes back to Staple for me. Her color palette and her demeanor attempt to make her as the "neutral" character here, a final arbiter. But man, is this performance *bad*. I compliment pretty much everyone else (including Anya Taylor-Joy, returning as the final survivor of *Split*), but while every single Shyamalan movie has had the issue of stilted dialogue (even the ones I like), Paulson's delivery represented the worst of it.

She is, of course, pivotal in the final act of the film, and I doubt that 20 years after *The Sixth Sense* that it is a spoiler to say that one or more twists occur. One such was already heavily implied in a previous movie, but the big one is a development that literally anyone could guess from watching the trailers—yet it is somehow not set up by the movie itself *at all*. It is unearned, and while most movies benefit from rewatches after knowing the ending, this ending tanks the entire movie, because most of it doesn't make sense to me anymore.

I get it. I get what's happening here, and what Shyamalan is going for. He's trying to go back to that quote. I cannot say what the ending is here, but it lacks any stakes whatsoever and the more I think about it, the more confused I get. Couple that with just how awkward the final act is staged and blocked, and *Glass* ends feeling less solid and more flimsy like rubber. These are celebrated as more "realistic" superhero movies—*Glass* sets up a red herring to make you think it will be more comic book-y, subverts that expectation, and then turns into a B-movie.

I think Shyamalan played his hand long before this. Ultimately, *Glass* feels like a novelty—it's cool and attractive to stealthily turn *Split* into a secret *Unbreakable* sequel, but seeing where he ended things, I'm not sure if it needed to happen at all.



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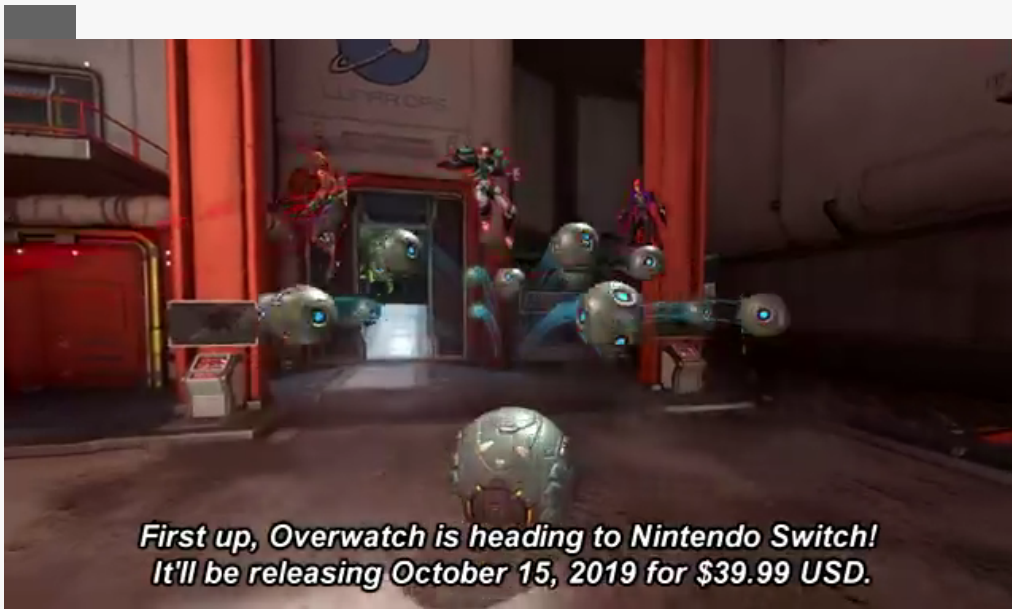
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# 5 MEDIocre

An exercise in apathy, neither solid nor liquid. Not exactly bad, but not very good either. Just a bit 'meh,' really.

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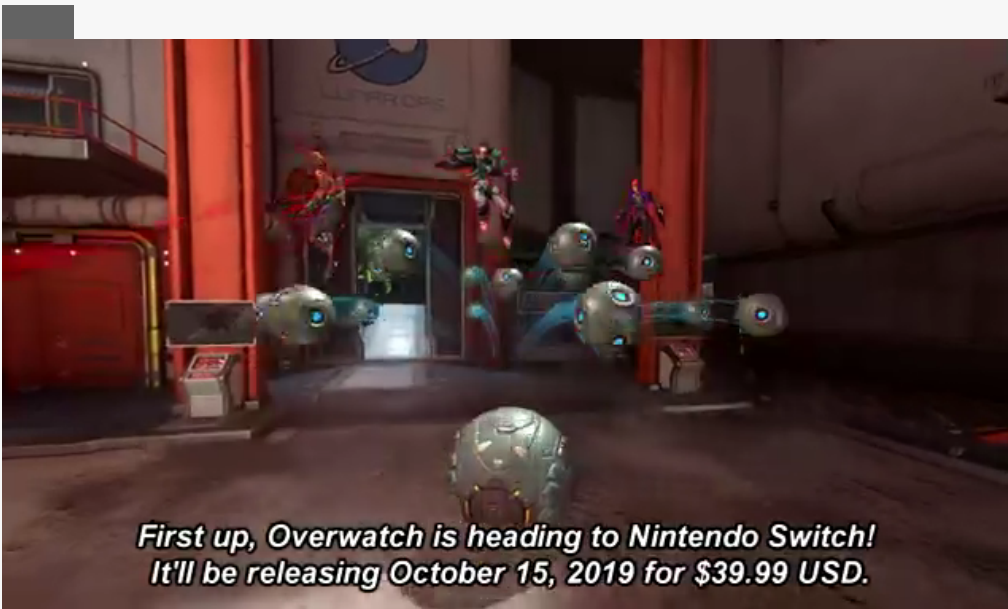
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Our 2019 Golden Cages



With Oscar season over and all of our staff voting finished for this year's Golden Cages awards, we here at Flixist wanted to take the time to recap everything that won and let you know what else was in the running. There were a ton of movies that got overlooked and we even had a moment

where it was possible *Avengers: Endgame* might win "Best Picture" and "Most Overrated" at the same time.

But more importantly, 2019 was a landmark year for cinema. With the historic win of *Parasite* at the 92nd Academy Awards, it seems like the future of representation in Hollywood might finally be changing. Maybe I won't need to be so grumpy about mainstream movies if mainstream stuff becomes a bit weirder. I like weird.

Anyway, here are all of the categories, nominees, and winners of The Golden Cages 2019.

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