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A Quiet Place: Shattering the Silence

Amanda Stewart · Wednesday, May 9th, 2018

Warning: Contains spoilers

As mom to a rambunctious yet charming two-year-old son, I was forewarned about the emotional turmoil I was about to experience upon seeing *A Quiet Place*. The film is directed, co-written and stars our favorite office boy, John Krasinski, as a nameless man, who with his wife (played by real-life wife Emily Blunt) and their three children, fight to survive a post-apocalyptic world taken over by creatures who hunt their victims by sound.

It didn't help that right before my husband and I left to see the movie, our son had a complete diva meltdown, which only heightened my sense of horror when the family's youngest son is killed by the creatures within the first ten minutes of the film. When I wasn't glaring at fellow moviegoers who apparently didn't get the memo about NOT chomping on snacks throughout the movie, I was captivated with fear considering what I would do in the parents' situation. Spoiler alert: we'd all be dead – my son is only quiet when he's asleep or hypnotized by Elmo. I went into the theater with the pre-conceived notion my reaction would be solely based on my role as a mother. I was wrong.

While the movie repeatedly reminded me of the boundaries I place in my son's life for his protection, and the continuous and ever-growing fear that something horrific will happen to him, I didn't watch the movie just as a parent, but also as a spouse/partner, someone's child, and a human being surviving the daily obstacles placed in my way.

I mourned when the parents' youngest son was stripped from their lives by their daughter's innocent mistake. However, it was more so the guilt and pain endured by the deaf daughter who I related to the most. How was she to know that giving her a brother a toy to cheer him up would lead to his death and forever change their family dynamic? At that moment, her objective was no longer just survival, but redemption and forgiveness as well.

Throughout the film, the daughter constantly relives her error in judgement and exhausts herself seeking her father's love and approval. He goes out to hunt food and refuses to let her go for fear of her safety. She sees it as rejection. He works away in their basement manufacturing one new hearing aid after another for her with the hope that this one will finally work. She thinks he's hiding from her. His actions of love were unrecognizable to her. She only saw blame and neglect where he saw devotion and protection.



It's not until the father is forced to sacrifice his life for his children that his daughter sees the truth of his efforts. I've never been one to tear up lightly, but *A Quiet Place* evoked emotions of hurt and disappointment I've so desperately refused to admit existed in me. As Krasinski's character stands feet away from his son and daughter while his wife watches helplessly from inside the house and signs "I love you. I've always loved you," the wall I'd so carefully built all these years was suddenly shattered. Even as I write these words down and recount the scene, tears stream down my face. I'm not crying for him sacrificing his life, I'm crying because he's setting his daughter free from the pain and guilt she's suffered with. He's finally telling her what she's always needed to hear: he loves her unconditionally and always has.

How many times have others forgiven and shown me grace without me knowing? Who in my life needs to hear that I forgive them and will always love them? These are the questions this movie still has me contemplating.

A Quiet Place is effective as a horror film, but it's so much more than that. It's the key to a well of pain, disappointment and insecurity I'd managed to hide from myself – a key that has taken me so long to find. For those who need to decompress after delving into this psychological abyss, I highly recommend watching "The Injury" episode of *The Office*. You might still be crying, but this time from laughter.

Images courtesy of Jonny Cournoyer/Paramount Pictures

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