***The Dressmaker* – directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse**

**From the novel written by Rosalie Ham**

The cast/characters Teddy – Liam Hemsworth, Tilly (Myrtle Dunnage) – Kate Winslet, Sargent Farrat – Hugo Weaving, Molly - Judy Davis

Opening scene – exposition:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What do you see /how is it being constructed | Issues/ideas presented – e.g. | Response / how are you positioned to feel |
| The wide expanse of an outback location, different shades of brown are used to depict the distance away from the city – a lone bus is shown in an aerial shot – with most poignantly the music of drums/signifying an emergence of some kind…something will be revealed especially coupled with the aerial shot -  | The bus is a potent signifier of arrival – the modern day ‘horse’ which carries the ‘hero’ |  |
| A series of disparate shots of a young girl twirling, a boy with blood on his face, (c/u shot) and then a cut to the bus which approaches an intersection – the drum and guitar soundtrack continues – which reinforces the genre and this reminds us of the genre – we make connections immediately  |  |  |
| A montage of close up shots of skipping, shoes, boy making a ‘bull’ gesture, the windmill, the actual drum being struck, | The innocence of children /childhood – but could also suggest – a haunting past |  |
| The rows and rows of wheat – signals the Australian outback – golden, beautiful, rich - in stark contrast to the town which is grey, decrepit and bleak | The town and outback will form the backdrop of the action of this film – its remote location  |  |
| The boy –who at this stage we are not sure about – but he is still presented in a menacing way – threatening, hostile, aggressive… |  |  |
| Wheat fields alongside, wheat silo and the bus as it makes its way to the town, we assume – the bus too (a side shot) which identifies the era |  |  |
| The arrival of the ‘visitor’ happens at night, the ‘golden fleece’ is illuminated as we look at the enigmatic figure which emerges from the shadows of the bus…she is the last passenger on the bus – the assumption that she has perhaps literally come to the end of the world….the middle of nowhere |  |  |
| A close up shot of the machine as she places it on the ground – a significant moment – this is her ‘weapon’ the gun which she will use to gain her revenge/superiority/power |  |  |
| There is a focus on the sign – Pettyman – signifies a good deal about the owner – ‘I’m back you bastards’ |  |  |

Set in the 1950s – haute couture – the height of fashion – inspired by Milan, Paris etc…Balenciaga, Christian Dior (designers)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Aspects of the western genre | How it is presented? E.g. from the text | Your reaction or response to this |  |
| The arrival of the hero/protagonist | The music from the outset signals a western |  |  |
| Good vs evil |  |  |  |
| The revenge tale – the outcast |  |  |  |
| The costume/s |  |  |  |
| The small country town – removed, isolated – in the middle of nowhere – the wheatbeltDungatar | Dry, desolate, the use of colour suggests somewhere elsewhere. It mirrors the politics of these towns, the staid values that often take many years to shift.  |  |  |
| The use of weapons – sewing machine |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

The film is really about the unearthing of lies..

Kate- her strength, her beauty

It’s a comedy, drama, a love story, but the emotional connection/relationship between mother and daughter…

The names used in the film:

Farrat

Pettyman

Almanac

Dunnage

Miss Harradine

Uma Almanac

There is an incongruous element to the entire film – from the outset

The immaculate dress, hat and gloves amidst the degradation, despair and bleak nature of the town – her arrival suggests a shift, change and so on…from the time she starts using the golf club and hits various items in the town as she asks her mother whether or not she remembers various people in the town. She deliberately targets these homes, and we are made painfully aware that she has a grudge against them, she has a motive, something to settle or to clear up. Why else would she have returned to this ‘godforsaken hole’ town, that has nothing to recommend it. The flashback to school life and the change in lens/colour also highlights this. We could be getting the backstory –this happens from the opening and sets the tone for the rest of the film.

The brother Barney says – ‘she moved’ and this refers to the accident /incident which took place in the school yard which he witnessed, but no-one really pays close attention to him although he speaks truth..

The town’s folk are introduced slowly – with William from WA visiting his mother, the shop-owner, they converge in the middle of the street, looking up toward Molly’s house, where Tilly resides….with her mother and sewing machine. The fire that is made by Tilly attracts their attention.

The parents of Stewart Pettyman are shown in a dubious way – the wife is not present, the husband feeds her an elixir to sedate her from the loss of her son 25 years ago.

The Gran final is in town – Tilly wears a striking red dress and smokes a cigarette –she is obviously a distraction to all the men – the red dress stands out amidst the subdued, fairly ordinary colours… The town shows up – Tilly changes into a black dress/gloves (accompanied by Mexican/South American music) indicative of the Spaghetti westerns - which further distracts the players…’watch and learn Gert, watch and learn’.

Tilly gives Uma Almanac some cookies to help with her arthritis, and she goes to the school yard, where she remembers the day that Steward Pettyman harasses her, blocks her mouth and threatens her – stand really still Dunnybum, or else I will come to your house and kill your mother and when I am done I will get you’…

The night celebration in the town is presented with the Sargent dancing in the street, in a marvellous black and white suit with hat, gloves and cane…In the meantime, Tilly tries to feed her mother some soup – Molly does not remember Tilly – obviously traumatised by what happened to Tilly when she was young…Molly throws a picture of Balenciaga away and accuses Tilly of murdering all the designers she worked for….

Say my name mother -…Stewart Pettyman…you are a murderer, you are cursed, so fuck off….taking a trip down memory lane with Lizzie Borden…Gertrude comes by and wants Tilly to make her a dress…Did you tell Stewart Pettyman where I was hiding that day…I can make you the most striking girl in the room…sorry that I told, but I figure it was rather you than me…A murderer and a lesbian…

The silo scene – Teddy as daredevil, risk-taker…the rats etc…boy’s behaviour…

Pettyman and the photo in the paper...

Tilly rescuing rubbish at the tip

Mrs Dunnage it’s me…Barney - …are we related...?

You didn’t come home to help us win the grand final…for revenge or me…still busy…stirring a cauldron….you never came back for me, you came back for them…well make them their dresses, make them classy…your centre lines off…stay there….it’s still my house….

In trouble is she…Molly has a flashback to young Tilly being taken (back of a car)

Tilly – certain accusations have been made, thorough examination of the tea chest…the sargent is os overwhelmed with the products, fabrics etc, in the case…the music mirrors his excitement, and in this he is exposed to Molly and Tilly – well frankly, this is how I prefer you remember me…the mirror tree outside….the sergent parades …I have always managed to live discreetly…but when Steward Pettyman died….send you away…he knew about me…somehow he managed to find the designs I had drawn, and threatened to send them to the deputy inspector. I would have lost everything, my career, home…betrayed for a wardrobe.

Tilly approaches the caravan – Teddy…’Saturday night then…’

Gert appears at the local dance – stunning dress and all heads turn towards her….she makes an entrance…and asks if the band could please play a love song…slow motion film…she approaches William…

No-one can believe that they dance together – you look like someone out of a movie…

In the movie theatre – ‘popcorn’….Molly comments throughout the film…drinks Teddy’s alcohol from his flask…’she’s trying to kiss him…RUNNNN’ you shut up pervert…no-one told me that this was in the picture….

New play from a America, South Pacific – Molly – sounds very romantic – cup of tea…how can I resist?? Oh, Macbeth….you like this…’hark, someone wicked this way comes’…

Billy Holiday – sounds like she needs one….oh you degenerate…get your hands off me…drank all my whisky Moll….Tea…yes please…so where did you go from here…away –to Melbourne, to boarding school...I ran away to London, Spain, Milan and Paris – then back home…they will never forgive me for that boy’s death…

I remember you boys…you and Reg and Barney on top of that silo – looking for rockets…you don’t scare me Tilly Dunnage, ….Tilly I will look after you if you want me to

I’d like to see Myrtle Dunnage please…there you are….mad mother…these days she is far from neglected…well I would like to order some day wear, if it is as at all possible…

Train arrives in town – we assume the antagonist…with her own machine she places deliberately on the ground – in the same fashion as Tilly did…am I in the right place….so far from the station…a parade ensues, with all the gowns/outfits etc…the women of the town are wearing all her designs, outfits…beautify colours, textures…etc…the local girl, up on the hill….

I’m a dressmaker, and a seamstress…I would like to see what is in your work room…you will be familiar with my work soon enough….did you think they wouldn’t fight back…Una Pleasance….considerable dressmaking skills….

Welcome to the Grand opening of…..style and decency, some people don’t know the dfference…

You are wasted here…but here is where I am….I think we should run away together Till…leave them to themselves and fate…

The wedding day – Miss Harradine and Tilly in the classroom – where she speaks her truth…’that file is police property’…who could forget that vivid sickening crack…I wouldn’t do that if I were you…Tilly ‘cross-examines the old school teacher as Barney and Molly aim golf balls at the school house…I was ten years old I couldn’t have done any of this…I cam around the corner and saw Steward Pettyman, lying on the ground...you lied, you didn’t see any of it…try and hit her fat arse…

Gert looks exquisite…..they move in commercial circles….everybody looks so beautiful…good day Evan, still up to your old tricks are ya?? That’s right girls, run for your life….she lied,…she lied…Bulah Harradine lied in her witness statement…he had a right…he had a parental right….Evan Pettyman is your father….the brawl ensues...this statement is just a pack of lies…it doesn’t matter what I believe, I investigated the statement, everyone was here…the fact is that you were the only one there….I want to press charges….

Tilly…Tilly…you moved Tilly….but she moved….you moved Tilly….shut up Barney…I saw him, he done it himself….I saw who done it Teddy, she moved…I saw him Teddy…she moved….(Barney)

Issues – domestic abuse – the town’s mayor, the pharmacist and his wife, cross-dressing of the policeman, ambition, bullying, lies/truth, justice, honesty, the law, loss of innocence, death and despair, redemption,

Teddy follows Tilly on the road and picks her up with wedding car…takes her back to school house….to relive the incident…’stand really still Dunny bum and I will come to house and kill your mother and you….’ I was waiting for…to die…to die…He was a bully remember….he used to ram straight into your gut…not this time, it was just you and him…the re-enactment of the scene where Stewart attacks Tilly…I MOVED…you moved…Barney saw the whole thing…broke his own stupid neck…afraid they would say he was lying and send him away….instead, they sent you away…you didn’t kill Stewart Pettyman, he killed himself…

They kiss and finally Tilly can be herself with Teddy – I suppose we should get married now…rub their noses in it…to a better place..what about my mad mother…we will take her too…what about my…brother…we will take Barney too…see any space ships…it’s a bird, a plane, it’s superman…cant’ be he’s here…fearless…what about my curse…told you I don’t believe in curses…jumping into the silo – that’s for men…what if it’s empty…say it…I am no longer cursed…say it… Teddy..Teddy….very funny….Teddy, I am no longer cursed….Teddy…the silo seems empty…reverberates…

Help me somebody….they cut a hole in the silo…Teddy wouldn’t jump into sorghum, Teddy wouldn’t …you can drown in sorghum…he was trapped in there too long…he suffocated…my beautiful boy…. (Tilly helps Teddy’s mother wash his body)

The funeral…she murdered him…she’s cursed….(back to thematic music…as Molly enters the grocer’s …Pratt’s) anyone would have died trying to prove it…he died proving his love for her….10 shillings….12 shillings… Teddy was wrong….you can’t be left to yourselves…you’re the curse…you gotta be stopped…

Thank heavens, you have Una…you make frocks for them, what about your own mother….

Molly tries to feed Tilly soup as she tells her about how she met her father…I thought he would just leave us in peace….Evan just swept her off her feet…he had you sent away….I came back for you…it was I who needed you….

Teddy’s family are seen leaving town….it’s the Dungatar theatre…the town may forgive....everyone calls me Trudy now…plays are such fun, they bring out the best and the worst in people….she means it will cost you…vile idiots…how could you invite them up here…they sent me away from you….you were better off away from here…you would have been stuck hiding with me at the top of this hill…instead you can create, transform people…use it, use it against them…

You are looking lovely Molly – go easy on the cakes Erma…she doesn’t understand pain…the overhead bird, signals something…the music shifts and Molly is seen crossing the main street in her finery…she suffers a stroke…Evan Pettyman sees it and ignores her…she must have broken something when she fell….you can’t do anything for stroke…mum it’s alright…Molly dies and Tilly and the Sergeant are the only ones at the funeral/cemetery…

Sergeant and Tilly are drunk and playing dress-ups….no wonder poor Molly got into trouble…there will be no more singing…Molly’s dead, they are alive and I want them to suffer…

Take you to the sanatorium…I mean ….

Old Mr Almanac goes all the way to his death….in the pond…she’s going to jail for this…this is hashish…we received your letter and we accept, your rather extravagant terms, but we accept…is that your signature…

Will you be more comfortable in uniform…the sergeant takes the blame for everything…the hashish, fate has caught up with me at last…perhaps I can finally make it right…glad to have met you Tilly Dunnage you have enriched my life…

French marigolds…what do you want…to tell you a story…’Pet…Pet…Pettyman says…are you ill? I was ill, you were making me ill, you followed Molly here and used her as you used me…you mean Tilly your daughter, murdered your son…you are a monster….bloody ….you stole your mother…and I can have you committed anytime I want to….and I am unstable…everybody knows that…I will bleed to death…eventually…not as sorry as I am…

Who’s idea was these fucking costumes….the bus shows the town for who they really are…dressed up with ridiculous costumes that Una made…as the cast appear at the play – Tilly sets her home on fire…she is seen pouring petrol throughout her home…

Tilly Dunnage is NO LONGER cursed..she is shown lighting a cigarette and setting alight her home..and the red carpet that extends into the town…he is actually dead…Marigold killed him….fire is seen ravaging the entire town…as a train stops for Tilly to embark…the town burns…as the players (the town fold) watch in absolute disbelief and horror…where are you heading Miss….Paris…Melbourne then…burning off rubbish were they…you never met the rubbish…

Review: from *Rolling Stone*

'The Dressmaker' Review: Kate Winslet Returns to Sew Up Loose Ends

Star plays a social pariah who returns to scene of a crime for revenge — and makeovers — in A-list Aussie drama

Kate Winslet plays a social pariah who returns to a crime scene for revenge (and makeovers) in A-list Aussie drama 'The Dressmaker.' Read our review.

By [Peter Travers](http://www.rollingstone.com/contributor/peter-travers)

September 23, 2016

Kate Winslet can do anything ... except save this movie from quirky overkill.*The Dressmaker,* based on a 2000 novel by Rosalie Ham, gives the actress a hell of a role. She's Tilly Dunnage, a 1950's fashionista who's decided to return home to dusty Dungatar (an apt name), the small Aussie town that spawned her. Tilly got run out of Dungatar 20 years ago, when she was just a 10 year-old, for allegedly murdering her schoolmate Stewart Pettyman. Everyone believes she bashed the kid's skull in – including her snaggle-toothed old mum, Molly (Judy Davis, deep bows), who the townsfolk call Mad Molly and not for nothing. Tilly decides to open shop and do fashion makeovers on the town's dowdiest women. "I'm back, you bastards," the pariah says, busting out a trunk of fabrics from Paris. Some are thrilled. But not Evan Pettyman (Shane Bourne), the dead boy's father who lords it over the town and his put-upon wife (Alison Whyte).

You might be wondering why Tilly, who looks absolutely fabulous, is bothering to spiff up her former tormentors. Simple. She wants to know what *really* happened. Tilly was so traumatized back in the day that she can't remember if she killed Stewart or not. It's a potentially gripping set-up, concocted by director Jocelyn Moorhouse with her co-writer husband P.J. Hogan. *The Dressmaker* is a homecoming — not just for Tilly, but for Moorhouse who hasn't directed a movie in almost 20 years. After a smashing Aussie debut with 1991's *Proof,* Moorhouse worked in Hollywood with scant success on *How To Make an American Quilt* (1995) and *A Thousand Acres* (1997). The filmmaker's vitality hasn't dimmed with the years. It's good to have her back.

The problem with *The Dressmaker,* both the book and the film, is that it doesn't know when or how to stop. One bizarre character after another is introduced. It's an eccentricity pile-up, played by a team of Aussie all-stars. I was fine with Hugo Weaving as Farrat, the cross-dressing police sergeant. And Liam Hemsworth, of all people, has some sweet moments as Teddy McSwiney, the hottie football hero who falls for Tilly. But, oh, the crazyass parade: a religious fanatic (Barry Otto), a spinster school teacher (Kerry Fox), a dressmaking rival (Sacha Horler), an amateur production of *Macbeth,* an accidental death, a not-so-accidental murder, an explosion, and various events all set to a relentlessly irritating score by David Hirschfelder. It's too much. The scenes between Winslet and Davis, especially a visit to local a movie house to see *Sunset Blvd.,* almost make up for it. But with this A-list crew, *almost* doesn't cut it. It's not good news when a movie called *The Dressmaker*doesn't hang together.

‘The Dressmaker,’ by Rosalie Ham

**By KATE CLANCHY**AUG. 14, 2015



Rosalie Ham CreditStarshots

Rosalie Ham’s novel “The Dressmaker” was published in Australia in 2000 and later this year will be presented as a movie starring Kate Winslet. What’s surprising is that a film version took so long to appear. From the moment the book opens, with a long shot of “wheat-yellow plains” around the “dark blot” of a hill in the small country town of Dungatar, we sense that we’re on our way to quirky-indie-movie land; and once the camera closes in on the “tumbling brown house” of Mad ­Molly, “leaning provocatively on the grassy curve,” it’s clear we’re visiting a small 1950s town not of history but as imagined by Tim Burton: the gothic, polarized world of “Edward Scissorhands.”

And here we stay. The novel’s quirky, pale heroine, Mad Molly’s daughter, duly arrives on the next bus. “Myrtle Dunnage had alabaster skin and her mother’s eyes and hair. She seemed strong, but damaged.” Rapidly, Ham’s arch, polished prose fills in the rest of the map: Here is the oppressive schoolhouse of grim Miss Dimm; here the dismal department store of the frightful Pratts; there the chemist shop of sinister Mr. Almanac; and downtown the dump, presided over by the cheery and fecund McSwineys, including their handsome eldest son, Teddy.

All of these characters conform to name and job as tightly as a pack of Happy Families cards and are as stout and badly dressed as any of the supporting cast of “Muriel’s Wedding” — and often as close to the camera. Ham’s pen is never sharper than when digging into someone’s bouncing “adipose apron” and “grimy arm” or noting a “tweed beret” sitting on top of a head “like a dead cat.”

Fortunately, Tilly (Myrtle’s preferred name) has spent her years away learning dressmaking in Paris and has brought her sewing machine home with her. There will, we anticipate, be makeovers in this story, along with the other key ingredients of a teen movie: a young man in a leather jacket, a prom and a symbolic revenge taken by the town outcast. Ham doesn’t disappoint — in fact, we get all of those things several times over. Having committed herself to symbolic, one-dimensional characters, Ham has no choice but to produce florid quantities of story, shuffling and reshuffling her highly colored cards.

The makeovers are the best of it. Ham has real gifts as a writer of surfaces and pictures, bringing Tilly’s frocks to surprising, animated life: a succulent gown in fine silk taffeta, “apricot pink, scoop necked — not too scooped — with sheer off-white tulle” sleeves makes a peach of a stolid bride; another lady’s “tightly sprung and trembly form” is swathed in “long, soothing lines of pastel blue silk crepe” with a high fine net “to hide her rash.” The venues for all of this finery — dances, social club gatherings, weddings, funerals — become pleasingly more elaborate as the novel progresses, culminating in a truly baroque production of “Macbeth.”

The revenge theme, though, is more problematic. Seeing the folks of Dungatar get their comeuppance in Ham’s pictorial prose is a pleasure: They’re cardboard villains to start with and have been allowed no remorse, and their punishment is as camp, ingenious and specific as anything Lemony Snicket ever devised. But Ham also proposes a real, oppressive past for Tilly, with tragedies in both her childhood and young womanhood, and they sit uneasily, even queasily, in this taffeta-thin, tulle-bright world. A movie, and the excellent Kate Winslet, may well lend them more credibility. Rosalie Ham, meanwhile, has gone on to find a better home for her serious concerns in two further, equally elegant novels.

**THE DRESSMAKER**

By Rosalie Ham

275 pp. Penguin Books. Paper, $16.

Review

September 23, 2016

In the dark of night, a striking figure decked out like a film-noir femme fatale materializes along a road side, toting leather luggage and a Singer sewing machine. She is clearly dressed to impress with her crimson lipstick, white gloves, cocked-just-so chapeau, wavy blonde locks and a black-and-white ensemble that conforms to her womanly shape as if it were her birthday suit.

She takes a slow drag on her cigarette and issues this statement of intent that is more of a warning than greeting: “I’m back, you bastards!”

If that weren’t enough, a car stops and a uniformed constable gets out. He briefly stares before inquiring, “Is that, uh … Dior?”

It's quite an entrance in quite a movie. However, when it comes to “The Dressmaker,” nothing is ever enough. And that is its main problem.

Another woman who can rightfully proclaim, “I’m back,” is Australian director and screenwriter [Jocelyn Moorhouse](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/jocelyn-moorhouse). She made a splash in the ‘90s with “Proof,” “How to Make an American Quilt” and “[A Thousand Acres](http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/a-thousand-acres-1997),” before taking time off to raise her family.

Now, 18 years later, she has adapted a book by [Rosalie Ham](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/rosalie-ham) with a script co-written by hubby P.J. Hogan of “Muriel’s Wedding” fame that is positively exploding with a surfeit of pent-up creative energy that unfortunately doesn’t know when to stop.

Not that “The Dressmaker” is ever dull and is even more than occasionally delightful in its nuttiness. This ultimately exhausting tilt-a-whirl of a revenge tale set in 1951 that takes place in the mythical dusty Down Under hamlet of Dungatar embraces all manner of influences—spaghetti Westerns, a Tim Burton-esque aesthetic, a warped world view that rivals [John Waters](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/john-waters), a small mob of morally corrupt Dickensian-style eccentrics and a story whose wild tonal shifts range from Tex Avery cartoony to [Douglas Sirk](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/douglas-sirk) melodramatic.

The lady above is one Myrtle “Tilly” Dunnage ([Kate Winslet](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/kate-winslet), providing a captivating harbor in this storm of kookiness), who has returned to the community that once banished her as a child. She is ostensibly there to care for her dotty crank of a mother, Mad Molly (a cantankerously cagey [Judy Davis](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/judy-davis), nearly unrecognizable until her character regains her wits and pretty much steals the movie), who has been living in pungent squalor. But Tilly also is clearly out to right some wrongs while shedding a light on a tragic incident from the past that she can’t quite recall.

All that sounds quite logical, until Tilly, who learned how to make haute-couture designs while in Paris, hauls out her sewing machine and starts a business doing fashion makeovers for Dungatar’s frumpy female citizenry. This budding Edith Head also has an unusual way of attracting her first customers: She disrupts a rugby match by showing up in a curve-clinging scarlet gown before changing into an even more striking Rita Hayworth-inspired black dress—eventually causing the opposing team to lose by simply stripping off its matching jacket. It’s as if “Project Runway” took over the Super Bowl.

In the midst of all this, we are rushed through introductions to a raft of quirky characters. Some make an instant impression, such as Hugo Weaving's slyly campy rendition of a cross-dressing police sergeant who can’t help but hungrily caress Tilly’s luxurious fabrics with his eyes (shades of his drag queen in “[The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert](http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-adventures-of-priscilla-queen-of-the-desert-1994)”). Then there is [Liam Hemsworth](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/liam-hemsworth) as hunky farmer Teddy, who quite fancies the reluctant Tilly. Until now, I have primarily thought of this actor as [Chris Hemsworth](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/chris-hemsworth)’s younger, less talented but equally strapping brother. But working in his native Australia seems to have unleashed a very fetching devil-may-care nonchalance that casts quite a masculine spell. Also, please note that although they are meant to be contemporaries, Winslet’s a luscious 40 years old while Hemsworth is 26—and it doesn’t make a whit of difference. Gender parity at its finest.

Naturally, evil also lurks in Dungatar and it takes several forms, including a hunchback town pharmacist and wife abuser who greets Tilly by hissing, “Your mother’s a slut and you’re a bastard,” the rumor-mongering female schoolteacher whose lies caused Tilly to be forced out of town and the womanizing councilman who torments his clean-freak wife. By the time a rival seamstress strolls into town slinging her own Singer, Moorhouse is clearly guilty of over-accessorizing her already jam-packed fable.

Still, certain individual scenes are gems and stand out like statement pieces. Davis is at her riotous best when she accompanies Tilly and Teddy on a date to see “[Sunset Boulevard](http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-sunset-boulevard-1950)” at a local cinema. Molly’s repulsed reaction to the gorgon-like visage of Gloria Swanson’s aging movie queen is beyond priceless—especially when the silent-screen diva puts the moves on [William Holden](http://www.rogerebert.com/cast-and-crew/william-holden)’s gigolo of a screenwriter, which leads her to shriek, “She’s trying to kiss him. RUN!”

It is heartening to see Winslet, whose big-screen efforts after her Oscar win for “[The Reader](http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-reader-2008)” have been uneven despite her supporting nod last year for “[Steve Jobs](http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/steve-jobs-2015),” get a chance to rip into a juicy lead role. And, for a while, “The Dressmaker” pays off with its out-of-nowhere developments, until it collapses into a pit of death, destruction and despair. I can’t say this is the best film you will see all year, but I can assure you won’t see another one like it again for a long time.

Comparison between the two films:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Aspect of the film | High Noon (1952) | The Dressmaker (2015) |
| The exposition |  |  |
| Representation of good vs evil |  |  |
| The use of music |  |  |
| Women |  |  |
| Men |  |  |
| Costume |  |  |
| Setting/landscape |  |  |
| Village/town |  |  |
| The hero |  |  |
| Villain/s - antagonist |  |  |
| Issues/ideas |  |  |
| Conflict |  |  |
| Props/symbols |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Take at least 4 ideas from the above list and write an extended paragraph about it – using textual references to support this reading/interpretation.