



April 23, 2015

## 1915



*1915* is a difficult movie to understand if you are looking for some illumination about the Armenian Genocide because it does not take place in 1915, but rather current day Los Angeles, 100 years after the event. The story takes place in the old Los Angeles Theater. A playwright named Simon has brought together a cast of characters, including his wife Angela for one performance of a play whose main character is an Armenian woman who makes a hard choice in order to survive. She allies with a Turkish soldier and decides to leave her family behind. As the play is about to open, there is a strong protest from Armenians outside the theater. They are outraged at the fact that the woman in the play leaves with the enemy, and they are trying to stop the play from opening. Simon insists that only one performance will be needed to put the ghosts of the past to rest. There are many ghosts being exorcised on that one

night. Simon insists that the show must go on.

Angela seems to have a supernatural connection to the subject matter and seems to be reliving the events of 1915 until you find out that Simon is simply manipulating his wife's memories. Simon's deception is what makes this movie complicated to watch and to understand. Angela seems to be channeling some memories that at first make you think are those of the woman in the play, but as the tale unfolds, you learn that Angela has been overwrought for the past seven years since the death of her own son. *1915* is a parallel process between a large-scale horrific and tragic loss and a deeply personal loss for a married couple. There is no happy ending. Simon is really setting the stage for his own destruction.

*1915* is about denial, loss and grief on a mass and individual scale. It is also about self-preservation, survival and letting go. It is not a documentary about what happened between the Turks and the Armenians, and it does not tell the whole story about what happened then and there. It is about one woman's decision to leave a hopeless setting and another one's decision to let go of her personal grief and mourning. The ruse of having the interpersonal conflict play out within a play, while interesting, does little to educate or inform us about what happened in either case.

*1915* leaves out more than it gives. It is better viewed as a metaphor for how to walk away from the traumas in our lives, and that sometimes we need to leave our pasts behind in order to make it into the future. The movie is also fuzzy regarding the relationships between all the actors and how those relationships and characters are playing their parts in those parallel worlds. I was hoping for more.



I give 1915 two golden tickets.

