

Review: The Falling (Carol Morley, 2015)



Maisie Williams has taken the valiant nature from her role as Arya Stark in Game of Thrones and applied it to her part in Carol Morley's *The Falling*. It is a film that embraces humour and morbidity in equal measures, and deals with a toss up between emulation and coincidence, leaving its characters in dismay.

In a 1960s all girls school, a group of pupils have been fainting without warning recently. But the reasoning behind it is rather unclear, and exactly who is affected is something they're struggling to answer too.

The film itself centres around the relationship between William's character Lydia and her best friend Abbie, played by newcomer Florence Pugh. The skilled rebel and deity to this sisterhood, Abbie is the film's most complex character and the young woman behind her is one undeniable talent. Pugh comes across as the powerful one from the moment she steps on screen, and you're in her grip throughout. Abbie and Lydia's tight knit relationship borders on suggestive. In actual fact, it's a bond that Morley seems has created to define the relationships between women, as the barriers break down and the outsiders come in. This relationship replaces the one Lydia has with her mother; a single parent afraid of the outside world, who doesn't connect with her daughter on any level whatsoever. It's a frustrating one to watch, but adds to the already clashing nature of the film.

Fascinating and almost daunting, it feels like an early Iain McEwan piece; an air of *The Cement Garden* to be exact. It uses ambiguity and ideas in a manner that, whilst intriguing, begin

to falter slightly as the film develops into its third act. Its inability to tie up loose ends, and avoid stereotypical hysteria allows the tantalising work that came before it to be let down in the final moments.

It may be a little too hysterical to know when's best to stop, but Morley's depiction of sisterhood and intimacy is both twisted and arresting.



The Falling opens on Friday April 24th, and plays at the Cameo on Home Street