

SHEILA CARTER IS NOT DEAD ON "BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL"!

By Donald Thompson

HOLLYWOOD—I suspected it, but the audience finally got confirmation months later on "The Bold and the Beautiful." If you thought the villainess Sheila Carter who has caused all sorts of chaos for the Logan, Hayes and Forrester families was dead, think again. Yes, in a semi-epic cliffhanger last week, the thing EVERYONE who watches the soap has been discussing unfolded. We all know, Sheila tried faking her death a while back by getting rid of one of her toes. Well, the toe saga is back.

As Sheila's body was about to be cremated, the sheet flew back and Deacon spotted 10 toes. That is right 10 toes, which means that was NOT Sheila Carter, it was someone else. The question everyone is asking is who was the person who broke into Steffy's home posing as Sheila? I keep hearing this name Sugar, who is a woman that had plastic surgery to look like Sheila all those years ago. I don't remember that character that much, but even if it is true, why would Sugar want to pose as Sheila unaware that it could lead to her demise?

Sheila had been teasing she was communicating with someone from her past for quite some time, but it was a person the audience didn't get the opportunity to see. Was it Sugar? It very well could have been, but we don't know the answer to that question at the moment.

This is welcome news for me because the narrative on the soap has felt quite dry of late without much drama unfolding and if there is drama it is nothing to salivate about. Steffy has been reeling as Finn recently attended Sheila's memorial that was planned by Deacon. Steffy needs to try to



Kimberlin Brown portrays Sheila Carter on "The Bold and the Beautiful." Photo by Kathy Hutchins/Shutterstock.

understand Finn's predicament. Yes, Sheila tormented him and her, but at the end of the day that is still the woman who gave him life. So while Steffy was commiserating about the issue with her ex, Liam, Finn was getting chummy with Hope.

Yes, Hope is recovering from heartbreak after Thomas severed things after Hope refused to accept his second marriage proposal. Thomas took Douglas and fled to Paris; I'm assuming to spend time with Taylor? I don't know, but the character of Thomas Forrester seems to be out for the time being. This seems to help writers in their

mission to pair Hope and Finn and to be honest, I'm all for it. Do I want to see Steffy and Liam back together? Not really, but if it means Hope and Finn have a chance at romance, I'm ok for it. One it would be poetic justice for Hope and Finn after their significant others cheated on them with one another years back and Steffy was preppers and didn't know who the father was.

With Steffy out of the neck of the woods for any criminal charges in 'Sheila's death' her world is going to be rocked whenever Sheila makes her return to Los Angeles and whatever she is planning has to be

huge. Sheila is going to want to stick it to Steffy and I fear we might see a kidnapping or such unfold in the near future as a result.

Deacon was frazzled with the news and before the week culminated he started to share his theories with Finn and anyone who would listen, but it was falling on deaf ears until the big question arose: but what if Sheila is indeed still alive? Hate to say it, but it's needed because "B&B" is as stale as a bag of potato chips at the moment so any revitalization is much-needed in the narrative department.

"THE FIRST OMEN" IS A MESMERIZING THRILLER!

By David Miller

HOLLYWOOD—This movie really surprised me. I have NEVER been a fan of prequels because you kind of already know how they will end, especially in the horror genre. Unless there is some twist that is a game changer (there rarely is), you're watching a movie where you know what the end result will be before you even start it. Well, enter "The First Omen" which is a prequel to the 1976 classic starring Gregory Peck and Lee Remick as they battle the spawn of the Antichrist. Truth be told the original "The Omen" is a damn spooky horror flick.

This time around we learn a bit more about how Damien is conceived and who his mother is. There have been plenty of comparisons between "The First Omen" and the recent horror flick "Immaculate" starring Sydney Sweeney of "Euphoria" fame. I enjoyed "Immaculate," but I was enamored with "The First Omen." The tension in the latter was just more captivating for me.

For starters the opening is quite wicked with a nod to the 1976 classic. There are a few scenes in this prequel that tip its hat to iconic moments in the original that as a viewer if you've seen that movie you know exactly what is transpiring. Similar to "Immaculate," "The First Omen" follows novitiate



"The First Omen" is quite scary. Photo courtesy of Amanda Haller via Unsplash.

Margaret Daino (Nell Tiger Lee) who arrives in Italy from America to work at an orphanage for little girls. Margaret arrives at a time where political discourse is heightened with left-wing protests.

Lee is fantastic in the role and truly carries this movie from start to finish. She is poised, confident and brings a fascinating maturity to a character that is more layered than you expect. I mean I've never witnessed someone planning to become a nun go out to a club and actually party, but perhaps there is more to the story there. That is where "The First Omen" works quite well. You have this narrative that you absolutely believe is leading you in one direction then 'boom' out of nowhere it redirects and your eyes are open to a

mystery happening behind the scenes that you should have realized, but you're too enamored into what is unfolding to catch those subtle hints.

Are the thematic elements of the church, religion, pregnancy and a woman's right on whether to carry a child or not a focal point of discussion? Absolutely, and with all the legalese unfolding in this country with the abortion debate the movie totally makes males and females in particular discuss that issue of a woman's right to choose. I enjoyed that the movie is not laded with blood, but when it does happen it delivers. There is also this interesting bond between Margaret and Carlita (Nicole Sorace), a child at the orphanage who is deemed 'bad,' but all is not as it seems. There is so

much more to the story and director Arkasha Stevenson builds that tension quite well.

My one gripe with the movie is the lighting. I get it is a horror film and things are to be dark, but not so dark whereas a viewer cannot tell what is unfolding. I get if that is the purpose to build tension for something big that is about to be revealed, but if major plot points are taking place and I can't see what is happening that is a problem for me. The camera work is not the most pristine in those moments.

Overall, "The First Omen" might be the best flick since the original and after six movies in the franchise; I can totally see a sequel in the works that I would be so eager to see what unfold next.

"THE MCBEE DYNASTY" IS A REALITY TV GUILTY, MESS

By David Miller

HOLLYWOOD—Talk about stumbling on a reality TV mess. I just happened to be surfing through my streaming service Peacock, and found the reality series, "The McBee Dynasty." It follows Steve McBee and his four sons who are managing the McBee Farm and empire in Gallatin, Missouri. Look, I have never been interested in farming, but I watched the first episode and I was hooked. Why? This family is a mess. I mean, could some of the drama be scripted? Without a doubt, but it was still fun to watch people, it truly was.

Steve is the father, and he transformed this empire after coming from nothing. I appreciated that element of the series that this guy who grew up with nothing, went for something and built an empire as a result. However, all is not great. Steve recently got divorced after being married for 28 years. Steve makes it crystal clear to his son and anyone who will listen; he NEVER intends to get married ever again.

As for his four sons, we have Steven McBee Jr., who is the brains of the company, Jesse McBee who I would call the heart and most level-headed of the sons, Cole McBee, who is the party animal, similar to his father in more ways than I can explain, and then Brayden McBee who only makes a few appearances. There is indeed a reason for that people because Brayden still lives with his mom and has a fractured relationship with his father that Steve is trying to repair. The brothers are extremely close and that is an element that I enjoyed seeing unfold on the series, but they also have girlfriends and each of them are interesting. Steven Jr., you might remember him from the FOX reality series "Joe Millionaire" on the reality series.

He has a bit of an ego and is more focused on himself and his girlfriend, Calah, than the farm at times,



"The McBee Dynasty" is one hell of a guilty pleasure. Photo courtesy of Unsplash.

which is something his brothers resent. However, his smarts are a massive help with farm operations and dealing with government issues. He does clash with Cole a bit who is the muscle on the farm; he handles things that Steven doesn't have the skillset to complete. Cole is his father personified. He likes to drink, he likes to party and he has an on-again, off-again relationship with his girlfriend Kacie who is quite sweet.

The girlfriends of these farmers do indeed share a bond, but I found the relationship with Kacie and Allie (Jesse's GF) to be the most authentic. They have been around the longest and they are in relationships with guys who are not just smitten with them, but in love. Jess and Allie is indeed interesting because they have been together for over 10 years. The question everyone wants to know is when they are getting married. It is apparent Allie is annoyed by the lack of commitment from her boyfriend, who wants to pop the question, but wants to do it at his own timing, not the pressure from others.

Calah is in and out of Steven's life, she doesn't live on the farm with her significant other like the other ladies. She lives in Texas and travels occasionally to see Steven who some might argue is her sugar daddy. Why?

Calah lets it spill to the other women that Steven just randomly gives her \$10,000 to \$20,000 on occasion. Yeah, Allie and Kacie didn't like hearing that, and those details were shared with Jesse and Cole who were a bit surprised.

Cole in particular was upset because he wants a raise considering all the hard work he does on the farm, but is constantly told there is no extra money to go around. Could Steven be dabbling in company funds? He notes it is his own personal money and not the farm, but who knows. Let's talk about Steve because the dad is a character. I mean a character. He is in his early 50s, but he operates like he is Cole's age. He loves to plan these guy's trips with his sons as a way to let loose. It is disguised as a business trip, but most of the ladies are well aware that is not the case. I don't like that the dad gets his kids intermingled with his mess. I mean they have significant others and putting them in situations where temptation abounds can be hard to resist.

Cole gets caught up in a situation, but he manages to control himself thanks to Jesse looking out for his younger brother. Whereas, Steve, guy is in a hell of a predicament. He is very single, but he mingles at times with the CFO of the farm

Galyna, who is smitten by this guy. Steve has made it clear to her he doesn't want a relationship, but Galyna doesn't seem to understand that. Steve doesn't help by sleeping with her and letting her stay over at his place. This woman wants Steve and Steve doesn't want her, but she is not hearing his coy cries.

The situation is made worse because Galyna has been working on a massive deal that would yield over \$100 million to Steve to help battle a lot of the impending debt the farm has taken on in recent years. So Steve really can't kick Galyna to the curb even if he wanted to because it would jeopardize that deal that as Steve puts it (could be the beginning of the end for the farm). Making matters worse Steve has been sneaking around with Brooke, a woman Galyna has no idea about. Talk about messy.

The dad is messier than the kids! It is a train wreck to watch, but as a viewer you cannot take your eyes away because it is so fascinating to witness. It also does hurt that you learn a bit about farming in the process. I found myself so intrigued by the series I watched the entire season over a two-day period and I loved every moment of it. "The McBee Dynasty" can be watched in its entirety on the Peacock streaming service.

"MONKEY MAN" HIGH-OCTANE ACTION, LITTLE STORY

By David Miller

HOLLYWOOD—A lot of you might be thinking, where in the world did the title "Monkey Man" come from? Trust me after watching the high-octane action flick it will all make perfect sense. The movie is the directorial debut for actor Dev Patel and while NOT critically amazing, it is damn entertaining as a spectator. Think of "Monkey Man" as a clash between "Fight Club" and "John Wick" on steroids.

The movie is a revenge tale, that is the best way to sum it up. You have the journey of Kid (Patel), who is out to find and kill all the people involved in the murder of his mother Neela (Adithi Kalkunte) when he was a kid at the hands of Rana Singh (Sikandar Kher), a corrupt police chief who brutalizes Neela as Kid watches from a distance.

"Monkey Man" is not for the faint of heart people. The blood is relentless and the violence is in your face and does NOT apologize, and I love the movie for that. Kid earns a living participating in fights in an underground world where he gets beat to a pulp, while wearing, you guessed it a 'Monkey Mask.' Patel is real-



"Monkey Man" is a brutal tale about revenge. Photo courtesy of Engin Akurt via Unsplash.

ly great in the role and we get these chaotic flashbacks that gives the audience a slight glimmer of Kid's upbringing and the bond he shared with his mother.

The audience is also introduced to a horde of characters that will ultimately be targets that Kid battles through in his quest for vengeance, but we don't get much story on those individuals. I mean we have drug lords, prostitutes, political figures, spiritual leaders and corruption. At times "Monkey Man" felt like a tale on morals, integrity and in that mix was an element of a vigilante doing his best to fix the corrupt system.

The only difference is he was not a superhero with powers like Batman; he was an ordi-

nary man who developed a skill set to fight and uses those skills after being pointed in the right direction to his advantage. I did want to know a bit more about the Baba (Makarand Deshpande), who has all this control over people and gets them to do his bidding while keeping his hands clean in the process. As a villain, he didn't give me that "Oh, I should be scared of you feeling" that you want in a movie.

"Monkey Man" has all these other plotlines lingering throughout the main narrative, where you get small slices, but not as much as I prefer, but I suspect that is what Patel was going for. He wanted the audience to be in this adrenaline-fueled fight fest from start to

finish, and the choreographed fights are stellar. I loved watching them and I was glued to seeing the hand-to-hand combat. You have gun fights, car chases, explosions, stabbings and just a ton of action that you expect in a movie like this.

As for character development, it is virtually flat. The audience is purely going to care about Kid and only Kid; of course we want more backstory about his mother Neela and some of the other villains in the flick, but maybe a prequel might explain those loopholes.

"Monkey Man" is simply a movie that is aimed to entertain you for two hours and it does just that. Simple, mindless fun, you're not supposed to be thinking, just enjoy the ride.

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