

Hotel Artemis (2018)

Rated R. Running time: 1 hour 34 min.

Our content ratings (1-10): Violence 7; Language 2; Sex/Nudity 1.

Our star rating (1-5): 3.5

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

*a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;*

Ecclesiastes 3:1-3



Everest argues with The Nurse against taking in the injured policewoman. (c) Global Road Entertainment

Writer/director Drew Pearce's dystopian sci-fi tale is set a few years from now in Los Angeles where the troubled populace is rioting in the streets in protest of the recent privatization of water by greedy entrepreneurs. As several riots move closer to the fortress into which the Hotel Artemis has been transformed, the woman known only as The Nurse (Jody

Foster), carrying an old-fashioned doctor's bag, scurries through its Art Deco halls with mincing steps on her errands of mercy, assisted by her towering assistant who truly deserves his name, Everest (Dave Bautista). She may be just a nurse, but she knows how to use the latest medical devices that are so automated that under her guidance the most complex surgical procedures are performed.

The hotel is both a haven for its wealthy criminal clientele and a hospital when they are injured. To be admitted one must have a wrist implant providing personal information, check guns at the door, and not assault anyone inside. The lavish rooms, each decorated with a large mural of scenes from around the world, are named for tourist destinations, which also give their names to their inhabitants. For instance, Sherman (Sterling K. Brown) and his brother Lev (Brian Tyree Henry) are known as "Waikiki" and "Honolulu." They arrive after Lev is badly injured during a botched bank robbery. "Acapulco" (Charlie Day) is an arrogant coke-addicted arms dealer who thinks he can order everyone around. The beautiful "Nice" (Sofia Boutella) is a high-priced assassin equipped with a tiny camera in her eye that provides a snuff video for her clients who enjoy watching an enemy die.

As we learn their back stories we see that Nice and Sherman were once romantically involved. Also, that they will be connected to the ruthless Malibu kingpin traveling in a motorcade to the hotel following an attempt on his life. Orian Franklin, known as "the Wolf King" (Jeff Goldblum), is the principal financial backer of Hotel Artemis, he apparently seeing it as the answer to the problem presented by legitimate hospitals being required to report all suspicious injuries. He is the next target for Nice, and Sherman will be *his* next target because during the bank robbery Sherman had taken from a customer, who is a member of the Malibu mob, a writing pen containing some valuable diamonds belonging to the Wolf King.

Adding to the mix is a badly wounded police officer Morgan

(Jenny Slate), for whom the Nurse unlocks the vault-like doors, even though she knows she is breaking her rigid rules. There is a back story connecting them, one involving a personal tragedy.

There is the expected high energy action that should satisfy adventure lovers, but of more interest to some is the development of the Nurse's character. In a welcome return to the screen after too many years, Jody Foster can still command the screen. Once a mother and worker at a clinic for the poor, the Nurse is calm and methodical, totally dedicated to her craft of healing, even though most of her patients are ruthless mobsters. At the end, with the lavish hotel ruined by the violence, we see her dedication as she flees, telling Everest that she will somehow continue her work, "I'm old. Fixing people is all I know." For her it will always be "a time to heal."

This review with a set of discussion questions will be in the July issue of Visual Parables.