

The Unborn Gran Torino

Luckily for us, Tuesday's date night was not hindered by the recent barrage of snow in any way. We ventured to the larger town nearby to see what all the Golden Globe fuss was about Clint Eastwood's latest movie, [Gran Torino](#) (they didn't have [Slumdog Millionaire](#)). But after the previews and especially when the movie started, it became painfully obvious that there was something wrong with the theater's sound – you couldn't hear the dialogue. My husband went to report it, and all that did was cause several loud popping noises and lengthy annoying electronic burps while they tried to fix it. There were 3 other people in the theater with us, and we all left – seemed like a movie where you really need to hear what the characters are saying. They offered our money back, but that wasn't really enough because we had spent \$7 on pop and popcorn that we wouldn't have bought if we weren't going to a movie. The incredibly flustered but sensible kid working the counter saw our point, and apparently his manager agreed, so they let us go into another movie AND get a refund – COOL! Earlier in the day, we had been up in the air trying to decide between seeing Gran Torino and The Unborn anyway, so I guess the choice was made for us – We only had 20 minutes to kill before a showing of [The Unborn](#).

The Unborn was just as I expected – a PG13-rated supernatural horror movie, not quite as good as others in the genre like The Ring, Shutter, or One Missed Call. There were some jump-out-of-your-seat moments in The Unborn, but it was obvious when they were coming, at least to me. I don't want to give away too much like an article did that I read in the newspaper, so I'll just say that if you like the supernatural horror genre, check out The Unborn because it's entertaining. Back to the newspaper article I read... seems the little boy who plays a scary kid in the movie is from the area where I grew up, so they featured him in the suburban Chicago

newspaper I sometimes like to read online – but they spilled a major spoiler about the movie at the end of the article! But anyway, that's another thing I enjoyed about *The Unborn* – it is set in Chicagoland, so I enjoyed the sweeping overhead views of the city and some of the familiar sites in suburbia. Apparently the screenwriter of *The Unborn*, David Goyer, has a fancy for Chicago since he also wrote *The Dark Knight* which was filmed in Chicago, although set in Gotham City. But anyway, enjoyable movie for what it was – I might have liked *Gran Torino* better, but I guess I'll have to see that one another time.

And that brings me to the Applebee's saga. We don't really like Applebee's. They try to tell us we belong there, but I don't buy it. Their food seems pricey for what it is, and we stopped going there when the kids are with us because their food takes *forever* to come out (that and the small fortune it would cost our family of 6 to eat there). My husband was given an Applebee's gift card for serving on the board of a local non-profit agency (no, I am not talking about the community theater – did you really have to ask?), which is really nice of the agency of course. We got the same gift card last year, and so back then we decided to give Applebee's another chance. Last year, we got some sort of bland pasta dish and an appetizer sampler and shared everything, but we left there hungry AND having to add money to our gift card in order to cover the check. Flash forward to now, and we find ourselves with another gift card. Time to give Applebee's another try, we decided; after all, how bad can it be? They have lots of corporate suits overseeing those kinds of places, so maybe they've implemented lots of changes in the past year to make it a better establishment. Not the case. First, our food took forever to come out. I had gotten a soup-and-sandwich combo, and the waitress came to tell me they burnt the soup and it would be a few minutes while they made a new one. My husband wondered if that meant his food was sitting under a warmer while mine was re-prepared, and his concerns

were legit because when he got his food, the shrimp was cold. Not only that, but they had given him the wrong kind of buffalo wings. So they apologized, and that's another thing about places like Applebee's that really bug me – the pesty fake gushy niceness. I do appreciate a friendly server, but the people who work at these places are way over the top... I will cite an example in the hilarious movie [Office Space](#) – there's a character in the movie who is Jennifer Aniston's coworker at a TGIFriday's type of place who acts just like these people... annoyingly and unrealistically enthusiastic about his job – funny stuff, but only in the movies.

So anyway, we're waiting for my husband's new wings when the manager comes out to say that they have now put the wrong sauce on them, and they'd have to make him yet *another* order. Honestly, what is the cook *doing* back there? Again, for the second time this day (see my Dawn's Great Idea post), my fears of starring in a hidden camera show run rampant... And what has happened to all the food that they've messed up? From just our party of 2, they must have had 2 orders of wings and a bowl of soup all go to waste. I've often thought that restaurants should have a deal with local homeless shelters, giving them their leftovers and food mistakes, but I guess that wouldn't be considered sanitary. I wish they'd change this; something tells me that food is food and many people would be very grateful for restaurant "leftovers"...

We calculated our bill correctly this time, and we were about to rid ourselves of the entire giftcard, when the waitress showed up to tell us that because of all the errors, they were going to give us the employee discount on the bill. That was really really nice of them, but that means we STILL HAVE \$ LEFT ON THE GIFTCARD for another trip to Applebee's! I told my husband, maybe we'll just stop in for a couple drinks sometime, but of course, you can't use a giftcard on drinks, at least on alcoholic ones, and after trying their flavored tea yesterday, I won't be stopping in for any more of that –

yuck! And in case you're wondering, both my sandwich and my soup were virtually tasteless, save for the cheese on top of the soup – that was really good!

[poll id="7"]

Betcha I've Seen Shutter More Than You!

Not that it's anything to brag about, but I saw the new movie [Shutter](#) not once, but twice this weekend! It was pretty good, if you like movies like [The Ring](#) and [The Grudge](#). There are a few other movies people say Shutter is like, but I haven't seen them. It did remind me a lot of The Ring – they were both super-natural ghost stories. I should have known I'd like it, at least that I'd like it better than [Doomsday](#), because the guy who gave Doomsday an "A" rating on [movies.com](#) gave Shutter a "D"! I'm starting to think he's a moron. I gave you the quote he made about Doomsday in a previous post of mine; he talked about how great all the violence was, yada, yada, so just to prove his idiocy, here is a snippet of what he thought of Shutter:

"As unfrightening PG-13 horror films go, this unfrightening PG-13 horror film is the most unfrightening of the year. It's even more unfrightening than [The Eye](#), which featured such unfrightening scenes as [Jessica Alba](#) yelling into an oven. This one has unfrightening scenes of [Joshua Jackson](#) sitting in a chair. Okay, there is one jumpy moment. That happens when Joshua Jackson turns around really fast in that chair. All the 11 year-olds in the audience went, "AUUGGH!" when that part happened. So if you're 11, then that part is really going to

freak you out."

So according to the movies.com review guy, a movie is not good or scary if it doesn't have at least 3 decapitations, exploding animals, and some cannibalism. Whatever. He does have a point though – the 11-year-old in the theater with us was scared silly – which brings me to the reason we saw it twice in one day...

Grandma was in town for a visit. Despite the impending snow storm (again), she was able to travel the 200+ miles to see her grandchildren, thank goodness. Who would have believed that we'd have to deal with Grandma almost having to cancel her spring break trip to Ohio because of still more SNOW! Thank you, Grandma, for taking the time and energy it took to come early to ensure the special time you were able to spend with the girls wasn't ruined by yet another snow storm. So anyway, with Grandma being in town, that left Hubby and I with a whole afternoon and evening to ourselves! Snowstorm or not, we were going to make the most of it... So we saw a matinee of Shutter, which we enjoyed. It wasn't scary, comes no where close to the creepiness of The Ring, but it was entertaining, and it saved itself from getting unbearably cheesy several times... A lot of the reviewers didn't like it, but I think they're just sick of the whole PG13-Asian-horror-movie-remake genre. As a side effect of the PG13 rating, during our matinee, there were obnoxious teenagers in the theater. Their laughing and running up and down the aisles wasn't totally obscene, but it did take away from some of the enjoyment of a horror movie. When they left the movie at the end, they had a younger boy with them who looked scared beyond belief. I think maybe all the laughing and whatnot was because they were actually really nervous and scared. So, when we explained their antics to the movie theater manager, they were completely understanding and told us we could go ahead and see it again. I didn't really catch anything that I missed the first time (except for one itty bitty scene where I dozed yet

again), but it was fun to watch a horror movie again that no one else in the theater had seen yet because it was its first day out in the theaters – you knew when the scary parts were coming and could watch the whole theater jump and gasp.

If you are a fan of the PG13-Asian-horror-movie-remake genre, I think you'll like *Shutter*. If not, it might not be what you're looking for in a movie, unless you're between the ages of 14-23.

Be Careful What You Watch

Last weekend was quite eventful: a wonderful performance of *Murder with a Silver Spoon* at Orchard Hills followed by a gathering to watch a movie. I have seen parodies and spoofs of the suspense movie *The Ring* on television almost since the movie was released in 2002. WOW... it is that old and I had yet to see it?! I have always enjoyed a good suspenseful film and this is definately a very strange one. You really need to pay attention and not drift to catch all of the nuances.

Naomi Watts plays Rachel, a young journalist who investigates the mysterious death of her niece. At the wake, Rachel overhears a group of teenagers discussing a video which a number of students watched 7 days prior to mysteriously dying... all at the same time on the same date. After watching the video herself, Rachel begins to see the exact images which were on the recording. These images lead the investigator on a race against time to prevent not only her death but also those of her young son and his father.

Perhaps the most mysterious character in the film is Rachel's son, Aidan (David Dorfman). The child seems to have a very eerie connection to the mystery. He draws pictures of people's

deaths days before they occur. It is almost as if you expect him to utter the much quote phrase "I see dead people."

Several pieces of trivia about The Ring caught my attention. Primarily the fact that the movie is a remake of the recent Japanese film, Ringu. Also, the movie was directed by Gore Verbinski who directed the "Pirates of the Caribbean" trilogy.

The Ring is an intriguing suspense thriller which holds the viewers attention. Although it does have one scene of (I'm sure and would hope) simulated animal endangerment, it is relatively devoid of gore. It is a fairly intelligent mystery.