



Search for...

Black Panther

BY TOMMY MCCORMACK

There are plenty of superhero movies these days but, right now, few can boast to have pulled off the super-heroic feat of giving black audiences...

Trailer Tease: Venom

BY MICHAEL DEVINE

So a week ago the new Venom trailer was released; yet another Marvel project millions of people wanted to get a glimpse of, curious of...

The Shape of Water

BY TOMMY MCCORMACK

Ever heard the one about the mute who falls in love with a fish monster? Yes, that is essentially the punchline of Guillermo del...



ADIFF public interview with multi award winning costume designer Sandy Powell

BY PURE M MAGAZINE

Warner Bros. Creative Talent today announced its support of the Audi Dublin International Film Festival (ADIFF) public interview with multiple Oscar and BAFTA award-winning costume...



The Lodgers to be released in Irish cinemas on March 9th

BY PURE M MAGAZINE

The Lodgers, a gothic ghost story directed by award winning filmmaker Brian O'Malley comes to Irish cinemas on March 9th 2018. Written by musician and...



The 15:17 to Paris

BY SHANE O'REILLY

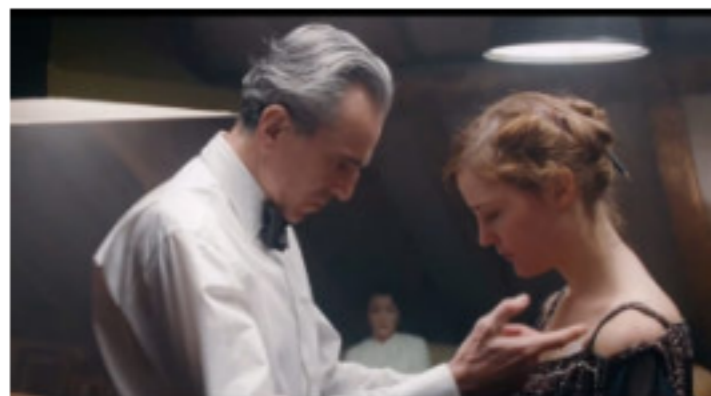
Pure M Magazine ★★ Right from the offest, The 15:17 to Paris managed to raise a fair amount of intrigue, with the creative and experimental...



Trailer Digest: Solo – A Star Wars Story

BY MICHAEL DEVINE

The resurgence of Star Wars in recent years has rekindled the spark of a globally adored franchise. Besides from The Force Awakens trilogy, spin offs...



Phantom Thread

BY MARIE-LOUISE CLOGHER

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★ I went into Phantom Thread not knowing what to expect. I deliberately avoided any mentions of Paul Thomas Anderson's latest creation...



A Fantastic Woman

BY TIM HANAN

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★ A Fantastic Woman is a Chilean drama about Marina Vidal (Daniela Vega), a transgender waitress and nightclub singer, whose older boyfriend...



First Look: Oceans 8

BY MICHAEL DEVINE

It's been eleven years since Ocean's 13 was released, and now the franchise is making a return with a fresh look and an all-female cast...

Book Review: 'Oh Dear Sylvia' by Dawn French

BY PURE M MAGAZINE ON MARCH 6, 2016

Rachel Casey

Sylvia Shute is in a coma after falling from her third storey balcony. She is visited in her hospital room by her ex-husband, Ed, her sister, Jo, her estranged daughter, Cassie, her housekeeper, Tia, her friend/lover, Cat and her nurse, Winnie. Through the eyes of this eclectic bunch of people, we find out about Sylvia's life, why she left her husband and kicked her daughter out of their home. Why she is seen as cold and unloving in the eyes of those closest to her. And what exactly happened the day she ended up in this hospital bed.

I've heard a lot of criticism for this book so I was apprehensive to start reading it. When Dawn French writes a book you expect to fall out of your chair, laughing, at every turn of the page, but this isn't a laugh out loud kind of book, which I think is what a lot of people didn't like about it. It doesn't meet the expectations set out by the fact that it's written by a well-known comedian. But that's the only bad thing about it. If you go into this book with none of those expectations, then you'll really enjoy it.

That being said, there are some funny bits in the book. Sylvia's housekeeper, Tia and her use of the swear words her children have taught her, and the fact that she pronounces Sylvia's last name as 'Shit' are all chuckle-worthy moments. And Jo's persistent efforts at waking Sylvia, including some animal therapy and a male stripper, are definitely worth laughing out loud at. But it's not a book that's based around laughs. It's much deeper than that and it shows in the character development. Each person who comes to visit Sylvia knows a different aspect of her. We find out something more about her every time a different character talks. The fact that we never actually meet Sylvia, who is in a coma for the entire book, yet we end up knowing her so well, shows French's talent for writing about people, and makes Sylvia's ending that much more emotional. You feel for all of the characters, not just Sylvia. You can understand Jo's desperation to be the one to wake her sister up, Ed's overall forgiveness towards Sylvia and the way she treated him and Cassie's trepidation at visiting her mother at all. Overall this is a very human story.

There are a couple of parts that don't match the quality of the book as a whole. Winne's chapters are written in a Jamaican dialect which can be a bit difficult to understand at times unless you read it out loud (bit awkward when you're sitting on a train). Tia's chapters are similarly written in her Indonesian dialect and this can be a bit jarring when you're trying to immerse yourself in the story. But these are just blips on an otherwise perfectly written screen. Hardcore fans of Dawn French may be disappointed with this book, but if you start with an open mind and realise that it's not just a comedy book, then you'll definitely appreciate it.

More from **Books**

[More posts in Books »](#)



Interview – Bridgett Devoue



Interview: Anne Cassidy



The 500 Hidden Secrets of Dublin – book review



Do You Remember? By Alice Taylor – Book Review

More from **Cultural**

[More posts in Cultural »](#)

Sabrina Benaim live at The Academy 2, Dublin

Keith Barry adds two extra shows at The Olympia Theatre, Dublin

Trainspotting Live at The Olympia Theatre

Celebrity guests confirmed for The Grand Tour series 2

Comments are closed.



Haiz: Talking Sh*t (Single Review)

BY DAVE SIMPSON

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★

Following a few years spent perfecting her songwriting skills in London, Bristol born singer Haiz burst onto the British music scene...



OUTDrejas – Promise (Single Review)

BY DAVE SIMPSON

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★ Drawing influence from the likes of AC/DC, Green Day and Red Hot Chili Peppers, American alt-rock ensemble OUTDrejas have been making...



Sonic Cartel (EP Review)

BY DANIELLE HOLIAN

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★ by Danielle Holian Sonic Cartel's debut extended-play has four-tracks featuring 'Fires', 'Point of View', 'Consumed' and 'Tell Me What You Mean'...



Æ MAK – Glow (Single Review)

BY DANIELLE HOLIAN

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★ by Danielle Holian Æ MAK's single 'Glow' surrenders a bright light at the end of a tunnel in a time that...



Eminem ft. Ed Sheeran 'River' (Single Review)

BY DANIELLE HOLIAN

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★ By Danielle Holian Eminem has released his new single 'River' featuring Ed Sheeran from his ninth studio album Revival. The album's...



Chris Haze: Recipe (EP Review)

BY DAVE SIMPSON

Pure M Magazine ★★★ 2017 was certainly a successful year for Irish artist Chris Haze. After unleashing a well-received five track EP entitled We Are...



The Stooges: Age of Deception (Album Review)

BY DAVE SIMPSON

Pure M Magazine ★★★ Following a fruitful 12 months that saw them unleash three singles, embark on two tours around Ireland, and get playlisted on...



Hailee Steinfeld, BloodPop 'Capital Letters' (Single Review)

BY DANIELLE HOLIAN

Pure M Magazine ★★★★★ by Danielle Holian - Hailee Steinfeld and BloodPop collaborated on the single 'Capital Letters' for the soundtrack of the Tell Fifty...