

Movie Titles that begin with “Q”

Quantum of Solace * Quartet * The Queen * Queen and Country * Queen & Slim * Queen of Earth * Queen of Katwe * The Queen of Versailles * The Quiet American * A Quiet Passion * A Quiet Place * Quills

QUANTUM OF SOLACE: James Bond is pissed! His true love was killed in the previous film and our favorite secret agent is out for revenge. He dispatches a host of bad guys, fighting them on land, on the sea and in the air. He visits a number of countries leaving a trail of bodies, explosions and fires behind, but he still manages to look great in a tux. The action/thriller genre isn't usually our cup of tea, but this, after all, is Bond—James Bond. We think Daniel Craig is terrific, and Judy Dench is absolutely irreplaceable as his handler and surrogate Mum, M. In **Quantum of Solace**, even M begins to think that Bond is so consumed by thoughts of revenge that he may have lost it. There's not much humor in this one; Bond isn't interested in quips—he's only interested in killing people. But, after all, that is his job. As usual, the plot is convoluted and the fights and chases can be hard to follow, but it is all done at a breakneck pace and with great style. Ukrainian actress Olga Kurylenko is a worthy comrade and Mathieu Amalric as Dominic Greene, is a worthy adversary. Greene is the head of an international group determined to control the world's most precious resource. Bond must stop him. Marc Foster (*The Kite Runner* 2007; *Finding Neverland* 2004) directs his first action film with a sure hand, and we were interested to note that Paul Haggis shares writing credit. **Quantum** is probably a B movie, but we enjoyed it a B+ worth. **GRADE B+**

QUARTET: (2013) In his directorial debut, 75-year-old Dustin Hoffman delivers a poignant, but ultimately warm and charming light comedy about a nursing home for retired classical musicians. The targeted audience would be over 60 film lovers and possibly classical music lovers. A bevy of talented actors with decades of experience make filmmaking look easy and fun, but in lesser hands this movie could have been lost in the forgotten film archives. Maggie Smith, Tom Courtenay, Pauline Collins, Billy Connolly, and Michael Gambon may not all be names you remember, but believe me they have a wealth of experience and bring life to each of their roles. The smaller roles were filled with real life retired musicians and all are featured in the closing credits. Dozens of aging English artistic egos are packed into one elegant retirement home (Beecham House) that might be right down the road from Downton Abbey. The residents are aging, their talents are waning, and their egos are fragile, and Barbara and I were reminded of what an impending performance can do to the endocrine system. The movie is based on a 1999 play written by Ronald Harwood who also wrote the screenplay. Harwood is a three times Oscar nominated writer and he won the Best Adapted Screenplay Oscar for *The Pianist* in 2002. The film will probably not see wide release, but if you are in the target audience, you may want to seek it out. **GRADE B+**

THE QUEEN: Helen Mirren won an Emmy for her portrayal of Elizabeth I, but I think her job in *The Queen* is more difficult because she must portray a living person. We have all seen Queen Elizabeth II in photos and on TV, and a lesser actress might settle for a close impersonation. But Mirren manages to create a three-dimensional character while staying true to the public image of the British Queen. Mirren is skilled at letting us see thoughts. With an ever so slight tightening of her jaw, the actress is able to communicate the emotions that Queen Elizabeth has spent her life trying not to reveal in public. Much of the film is set at Balmoral Castle and it's a bit disconcerting to see the Queen of England driving a jeep on the rough country roads of the estate. (I learned that During WWII, the Princess Elizabeth was a trained mechanic.) The film makes us aware of how isolated the royal family is and how clueless they seem to be about public relations. Michael Sheen is especially good as Tony Blair. The week following Princess Diana's death made a hero out of him, and, because of her refusal to react publicly, a villain out of the Queen. Blair was eventually successful in persuading the Queen to return to Buckingham Palace and to make a personal tribute to Diana on national television. And we see how difficult that was for her. We were particularly impressed with a scene where Blair makes an impassioned speech to his staff in defense of the Queen. James Cromwell plays Prince Philip as a rather dim bulb. Alex Jennings is believable as Charles, the Prince of Wales. Sylvia Syms, whose 50-year career encompasses 89 films, is the Queen Mother. Director Stephen Frears has an impressive filmography including *Gosford Park*, *Dirty Pretty Things*, *High Fidelity*, *The Grifters*, *Dangerous Liaisons* and the recent *Mrs. Henderson Presents*. He directs *The Queen* with a sure hand and kept us engaged throughout. Helen Mirren and Michael Sheen's performances deserve an A. We give the film a B+. **GRADE B+**

QUEEN AND COUNTRY: (2015) This old-fashioned tale is director/writer John Boorman's follow-up to his 1987 award-winning movie, *Hope and Glory*. In that earlier semi-autobiographical movie, the hero is a nine-year-old boy growing up during WWII's London blitz. In *Queen and Country*, that young boy is nineteen, living with his family on an island in the middle of the Thames. He thought perhaps the War Department couldn't find him, but they did and conscripted him into the army. After basic training, he expected to be sent to Korea, but instead wound up teaching typing to other young recruits. What follows are scenes that are sometimes amusing, sometimes sweet, and sometimes bittersweet. We didn't see Boorman's earlier film but that really didn't have any effect on our enjoyment of this sequel. Callum Turner, who plays Bill Rohan, the film's protagonist, is an English actor & director. Though not someone we recognized, we thought his screen presence was natural and appealing. During the movie, Bill and his family watch newsreel footage of Queen Elizabeth's 1953 coronation on their first, and very small, TV set. That brought back memories. *Queen and Country* probably won't win any awards, but it is another pleasant afternoon at the movies. **GRADE B**

QUEEN & SLIM: (2019) This is a stunning debut feature film from 38 year-old director Melina Matsoukas. Matsoukas is an American music video, commercial and television director and a two-time Grammy Award winner, but this film should establish her credentials as an accomplished feature film director. *Queen & Slim* tells a gripping “lovers-on-the-run” story that is reminiscent of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), though some critics point out that the basic plot is not far removed from a Shakespearean tragedy. While on a forgettable first date together in Ohio, a black man and a black woman are pulled over for a minor traffic infraction by a white cop with a chip on his shoulder. The bullying cop discharges his gun, wounding Queen and setting off a chain of events that go by in a blur. The action swerves into an act of self-defense that's bad for everybody and the cop ends up dead. Not surprisingly, the couple flees the scene, knowing there will be no fairness for them in the criminal-justice system. But the incident is captured on video and it goes viral, turning Queen and Slim, overnight, into cultural icons. It is a gripping, thoughtful, and timely drama. The two leads are excellent and work well together. Daniel Kaluuya (Slim) was nominated for an Oscar for his role in *Get Out* and Jodie Turner-Smith (Queen) is a British model and actress playing her first major role in this country. Barbara and I liked the film, though I rate it marginally higher. **GRADE A-/B+**

QUEEN OF EARTH: (2015) This is a slow moving and bizarre movie that bills itself a psychological thriller/drama with a touch of dark comedy. It will not be for everyone and neither Barbara nor I liked it well enough to recommend it. The film had its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival earlier this year and was picked up for a limited release in theaters and made available on TV through *On Demand*. Written and directed by Alex Perry, ***Queen of Earth*** received mostly favorable reviews from critics earning 93% on Rotten Tomatoes Tomatometer compared to 69% Audience Score. Catherine, well played by Elisabeth Moss, has entered a particularly dark period in her life. She has been traumatized by the death of her father who was a well-known artist whose affairs she managed. His death was quickly followed by her boyfriend dumping her and she is near emotional collapse. Moss is a talented actress who played a significant role on TV's *Mad Men*. The heartbreaking events leave Catherine devastated and she seeks the help of her "best friend," Virginia, who takes her to a secluded and tranquil lake house. I deliberately put "best friends" in quotes because even though they have been friends since childhood, Catherine and Virginia have a strained relationship that borders on love-hate. They have reached a point in their closeness where each of them knows where the other is most vulnerable. It is not a pretty picture and it gets uglier. Catherine's behavior becomes more bizarre and she has a "nervous breakdown." For us, the 90 minute runtime seemed much longer. One professional critic wrote, "Perry may never make a movie for the masses, whoever they are." Given my review, I guess I must be one of them. **GRADE C**

QUEEN OF KATWE: (2016) The movie is the real life story of Phiona Mutesi, a girl who grew up in the slums of Katwe, a crime-ridden area in the capital city of Kampala, Uganda. According to *History Vs Hollywood* the movie stays remarkably close to Tim Crothers' nonfiction book of the same name, on which the movie is based. The poverty of Katwe is astonishing but the real Katwe is even worse. Apparently the filmmakers toned down the stark realities of life in the slums. When Phiona was 9 she followed her brother to a meeting of the Sports Outreach Institute where she observed him playing chess. Missionary Robert Katende, portrayed by David Oyelowo in the movie, welcomed her and taught her how to play. The rest is history. In 2007, at the age of 11, she won the Uganda women's junior championship. She held the title for three years until the Uganda Chess Federation ran out of money to stage the event. In 2009 she and her two teammates won the team championship for Uganda in Africa's International Children's Chess Tournament, and in 2010, Phiona was selected to represent Africa at the World Chess Olympiad in Siberia, Russia as the second-seeded player for the Ugandan Team. She was 14 and her nine teammates were all in their 20s. Madina Nalwanga is first-rate as Mutesi, and Lupita Nyong'o is exceptional playing Phiona's mother. The real Mutesi told CNN's News Room that "Chess gave me hope, where by now I'm having a hope of becoming a doctor, and I'm having now a hope of becoming a grandmaster." The power of this true story almost made up for the difficulty we had in understanding some of the dialogue. Gary and I give Phiona an A, but can only give the movie a B+. **GRADE B+**

THE QUEEN OF VERSAILLES: Billionaires David and Jackie Siegel were living in a style only the very rich can even imagine. He was the head of the world's largest time share company, and she was very good at spending money. They were building a mansion inspired by the French Palace of Versailles that had mushroomed to 90,000 square feet with 23 bathrooms, 13 bedrooms, 10 kitchens, three pools, a bowling alley, an indoor-roller rink, a movie theater, a video arcade, a fitness center, a baseball field and two tennis courts. And then came October 2008. As David Siegel says, this is sort of a riches-to-rags story. Now, Siegel has lost his Westgate Las Vegas dream palace, the Versailles is up for sale--75 million, unfinished--and Jackie is trying to economize. Theirs is not the typical depression story and they have no clue as to how to live within their reduced means. They reminded me of the old joke about the rich kid who writes a story about a poor family. It begins, "The father was poor, the mother was poor, the kids were poor, the butler was poor, the maids were poor. . ." This documentary is frequently entertaining and brutally honest, and Jackie's clothes are hilarious. However, we couldn't dredge up much sympathy for them and by the end of the movie, we were tired of hearing their tale of woe. We saw this one on the same day that we saw ***The Imposter***, and ***The Queen of Versailles*** definitely suffered by comparison. **GRADE C**

THE QUIET AMERICAN: You just can't beat a movie made from a really good novel, and this movie is a prime example. Taken from Graham Greene's novel of the same name, ***The Quiet American*** is set in Viet Nam in the early 1950s. It stars Michael Caine as Thomas Fowler, a London correspondent, and Brendan Frazier as Alden Pyle, an economic aid worker. Fowler declares himself to be an "uninvolved observer" of the on-going war for independence between the French and the Vietnamese. He refuses to take sides, but he has taken Phuong, young Vietnamese girl, as his mistress. She is played by the very beautiful Do Thi Hai Yen. Everything in Fowler's life changes when Pyle enters the picture. At first the quiet American appears to be exactly what he says he is, but gradually Fowler begins to suspect that there is more to his presence in Saigon than humanitarian concerns. Pyle falls in love with Phuong and that adds romantic complications to the political intrigue. The combination makes for an absorbing story--a story that is beautifully told. Michael Caine is at the peak of his considerable talents in the role of Thomas Fowler. You can't take your eyes off his face and the multitude of emotions he can express by doing almost nothing. He certainly deserves an Oscar nomination for this film. ***The Quiet American*** is directed by Phillip Noyce who also directed ***Rabbit-Proof Fence***. A 1958 version of the same Greene novel was directed by Joseph Mankiewicz, but, in that film, Fowler was the bad guy and Pyle the hero. This version is truer to the original novel. **GRADE A**

A QUIET PASSION: (2017) Terrance Davies has created a film of beautiful imagery that brings Emily Dickinson to brilliant albeit quiet life as a reclusive and unrecognized poet. Fewer than a dozen of her nearly 1,800 poems were published during her lifetime, and those that were published were altered to fit the conventional poetic rules of the 19th Century. (Wikipedia) Cynthia Nixon is stunning as the adult Dickinson. We were first impressed with Nixon when we saw her as a teenager in the 1982 American Playhouse TV version of ***The Fifth of July***, a play by Lanford Wilson. We have been equally impressed with all her subsequent appearances and especially enjoyed her as Miranda in ***Sex and the City***. However, it is as Emily Dickinson that Nixon reaches the heights of her considerable acting skills. I will forever see her face as the face of the famous poet—a face that is often still but nevertheless burns with passionate intelligence. Keith Carradine is Dickinson's stern father, a man of his time who didn't like to see women on stage but was surprisingly tolerant of his daughter's eccentricities. Those eccentricities included not attending Church, writing at night, and an integrity that could, at times, be ruthless. The fact that Dickinson never married is not surprising since she considered marriage akin to death, or, at the very least, slavery for a woman. At the end of her life, suffering from Bright's disease, she became a recluse, rarely leaving her bedroom. ***A Quiet Passion*** has received critical praise, but audiences are less enthusiastic. Perhaps, accustomed to constant action, audiences are not prepared for the slow quiet beauty of the film. For those who love poetry, though, it is poetry come to life. Gary says that for him the emotional impact of the movie was not as great as it was for me. **GRADE A/B+**

A QUIET PLACE: (2018) The unseen has always frightened me more than the seen. Steven Spielberg knew that in **Jaws** and John Krasinski knows that in **A Quiet Place**. That one abrupt sighting of the creature in the beginning of the movie is not enough to dull the apprehension. But Gary and I weren't as frightened as most of the critics were when we saw the creature up close. The story is simple: A family is forced to live in silence while hiding from creatures that hunt by sound. But the concept is unique and Krasinski's capable directing make for one creepy movie. The fact that the daughter is hearing impaired adds an interesting element. She is played by Millicent Simmonds, who is hearing impaired in real life. (She starred in last year's **Wonderstruck**.) Krasinski's real life wife, Emily Blunt, plays the mother and he plays the father. They are committed to protecting their children and in this quiet world that is a fulltime job. The sight of Blunt silently giving birth in a bathtub will linger in the mind long after the movie has ended, although one wonders why anyone would bring a child into that horrifying world. The script did raise some other questions for us, not the least of which was why the corn was at the same height for over a year. Movies that feature scary CGI creatures are ubiquitous these days, and we remain unafraid. One critic wrote, "If there's anything that makes **A Quiet Place** worth seeing, it's that it is a rare experience to sit in the cinema in complete silence." Our theater was eerily quiet except for the disruptive rattling of popcorn bags. However, we recognize the uniqueness of the idea and applaud the acting and directing. **GRADE B-**

QUILLS: *Quills* is a well-made movie. The question is why would anyone bother to make it? Or watch it? This movie goes beyond unpleasant--it is nasty. Even the fine performance of Geoffrey Rush cannot make this dark tale entertaining. The film doesn't even begin to paint a true picture of the man whose name is synonymous with sadism. The real Marquis was an aristocrat who believed that he had a right to commit murder for his own pleasure. He was one sick puppy! Believe it or not, in *Quills*, Rush actually gives De Sade a bit of charm. The Marquis is not the only despicable person in the film. Michael Caine is equally distasteful as a doctor who attempts to "cure" the author of his pornographic proclivities. Joaquin Phoenix is a Priest who befriends De Sade. Kate Winslet is Madeleine, a chambermaid in the Charenton Asylum who helps the Marquis get his writing published. Roger Ebert is one of many critics who have praised the film. He said in his review, "Kaufman (the director) finds a tone that remains more entertaining than depressing, more absorbing than alarming." I disagree: I found it both depressing and alarming. Ebert can say, "It is more about the mind than the flesh," but it is the flesh we see in this film and it is repugnant. Gary is willing to go as high as C- for a grade, but based solely on my enjoyment of the film I'm going to give it a D. **GRADE D/C-**