

3C Lam Pak Hei, Kanez

A Citizen's Handbook

Title: V for Vendetta

Cast: Hugo Weaving (V)

Natalie Portman (Evey)

Stephen Rea (Chief Inspector)

John Hurt (Adam Sutler)

Director: James McTeigue

Suitable for: aged 10 or above

Rating: 4 out of 5

Reviewed by: Chris Wong

V for Vendetta is a political action film directed by James McTeigue and produced by Silver Pictures and the Virtual Studios. The story is written by the Wachowskis based on a DC limited series of the same name by Alan Moore and David Lloyd.

With a flashback opening, Evey, one of the main characters, gives a speech which narrates the story. She introduces the setting and the story of the film. The speech explains the background of V, a masked, charismatic and skilled terrorist. Evey says, "Remember, remember. Remember the 5th November." It literally means a lot, with the Gunpowder Plot Revolution held on 5th November, 1605, which marked the opposition to the absolute monarchy. It tries to tell people not to forget the exhortation 400 years ago. V blows up the parliament.

He rescues Evey, who is an employee of the state-run British Television Network (BTN) and subsequently gets involved in V's life. Under the circumstances of the fracture of the US because of its second civil war and the pandemic of "St. Mary's Virus" spreading over Europe, the United Kingdom is ruled a Nordic supremacist and neo-fascist police state by the Norsefire Party. The High Chancellor of the Norsefire Party, Adam Sutler has absolute power. Under his leadership, all political opponents, Jews, immigrants, and other "undesirables" are imprisoned or executed. V stays out the curfew and makes the demolition of the Old Bailey possible. The investigation of V's activities conducted by the inspector Finch of Scotland Yard is in vain. V successfully hijacks the BTN to clarify the responsibility for all the destruction. He also encourages people to rebel against the government and to meet him on next year's Guy Fawkes Night outside the Houses of Parliament.

The story is not trying to heroize V. "Beneath this mask there is more than flesh. Beneath this mask there is an idea, Mr. Creedy, and ideas are bulletproof", said V. It states that everyone with this idea can be V. The audience is told to remember the idea, not the man, because a man can fail. He can be caught, he can be killed and forgotten, but 400 years later, an idea can still change the world.

The political message of the film is particularly impressive. This film creates parallels between *Vand Guy Fawkes*. Similar to Edmond Dante's adventure novel "The Count of Monte Cristo", both V and Edmond try to escape an unjust, oppressive imprisonment and revenge their oppressors. It elaborates a citizen's political rights and responsibilities. It clearly raises the awareness of totalitarianism, for example, Nazism and Fascism. It reminds the audience that any immoral regimes should not be tolerated. As the saying goes, "Our integrity sells for so little, but it is all we really have. It is the very last inch of us. But within that inch, we are free."

However, the fundamental problem with *V for Vendetta* is that the plot is not innovative. It is like a combination of different political novels. The background and the setting are similar to those of "1984" written by George Orwell.

All in all, this movie is worth watching. It is essential for us to know our identity in society, to clarify our rights and responsibilities, and to study the distance between tyranny and us.