

# For Your Review...

In this age of the Internet, social media, apps, and instant knowledge gratification and expression, we have become a country (indeed a world) of reviewers and critics. From Yelp to Rotten Tomatoes to TripAdvisor to Amazon to Metacritic and many, many others, there are countless sites to visit to get analysis and opinion on books, movies, restaurants, video games, music, and pretty much anything else you want to get the skinny on.

As a result, we have to become much better readers and writers of reviews, able to put together and disseminate important information from our encounters with various products in our culture.

**Assignment:** Our mission, then, in this assignment, is to choose something to critique, learn the tricks of writing a responsible review, read reviews from a number of publications and sites, and then write our own 1-2 page review of a chosen product.

**Due Dates:** Review topic is due **Friday, September 8, 2017.**

**What can I review?:** Well, really, just about anything. Here are some ideas:

Restaurant	Video Game	Stage Performance
Movie	Travel destination	TV show (whole season)
Music (a whole CD)	Concert	Your idea?

## What to consider?

What's a new restaurant/movie/book/video game/etc?

What's a TV show that is getting all the buzz?

What is a vacation place that I visited that I would recommend or not to someone?

Is there an upcoming concert or play that I'm going to be attending?

## Review FAQs:

1. Do I have to like what I'm reviewing?

NO

2. How many times should I listen to, observe, experience what I'm reviewing?

At least once whatever it takes

3. Do I have to be an expert in the field for what I'm reviewing?

NO!

4. What if I have a strong opinion on what I'm reviewing (love it or hate it)?

YES!

5. What type of tone should I take?

You should sound like you and match the product

6. Who is going to be reading this?

Your peers

7. Should I use the vocabulary that this genre uses?

Yes

8. Can I review my favorite album/movie/book/video game?

Yes-is there a reason why?

9. Should it be new in general or new to me?

Try for NEW TO YOU!

**Brainstorm:** What do I want to review? Use the space below to consider three things that you might want to critique:

Product (name and describe what you already know)	Is there interest in this product? Who do you imagine would read your review? Who is the product's target audience?	Describe the level of background knowledge you have about this product. What more do you need to know/do in order to write a responsible review?	Do you already have an opinion on this product? Is so, what is your existing opinion and how did you develop this opinion?
	Y/N		

Popular Sites to Read Reviews (you can access these sites via a click through Google Drive):

[Rotten Tomatoes](#)

[Pitchfork Media](#)

[Metacritic](#)

[Zagat's \(Restaurants\)](#)

[IGN \(video games\)](#)

[Amazon Book Reviews](#)

[Hitfix \(TV Show Reviews\)](#)

[Vacation Reviews](#)

**Part 1: What do I need to get ready for my own review:**

1. Brainstorm what you already know about this product.
1. Research your subject. Take notes on it.
2. Read THREE reviews of your subject.
3. Find one review that you like and imitate its structure and style.
4. Experience your subject and take notes (this can happen whenever)

**Part 2: What does my review need in it? This is just to get you started, but feel free to add!**

1. The name of the CD, movie, book, performance, etc.
2. The name of the singer, director, stars, producer, chef, and any other important players involved.
3. Background information on number #2, especially if it's important.
4. The location of the performance or restaurant (if applicable).
5. The length, number of songs, number of pages, etc. This could be important.
6. Verdict, opinion, thesis statement, or bottom line; whatever you want to call it, the reader should leave your review with a takeaway of whether or not to buy, read, watch, listen to, or visit your idea.
7. The reasons why for #6 and plenty of them
8. Many, many, many exact examples, lines, notes, and details regarding your idea. Many.
9. Use of the language or vernacular that reviewers of this genre use.
10. Introduction
11. Conclusion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Rubric/Checklist

	<b>Exceeds</b>	<b>Meets</b>	<b>Making Progress</b>	<b>Does Not Meet</b>
<b>Introduction-make yourself and your motive be known</b>	Writer establishes the product, makers, angle, and verdict in the first paragraph(s)	Writer accomplishes three of the tasks necessary in the introduction.	Writer accomplishes two of the tasks necessary in the introduction.	Writer only introduces product or hints at purpose of the review.
<b>Claim-your position is clearly stated in the second paragraph</b>	Claim or take-away from review of product is identifiable and distinct.	Claim or take-away from review of product is identifiable.	Claim or take-away from review of product is identifiable, but may be muddled.	Claim or take-away from review is not present or very difficult to understand.
<b>Evidence/ Support (x 2)</b>	Review is written with numerous pieces of evidence that logically support claim(s)	Review is written with some pieces of evidence that logically support claim(s)	Review is written with limited pieces of evidence that logically support claim(s)	Review is almost completely free of evidence that supports claims
<b>Reasoning (x 2)</b>	Writer clearly establishes why evidence is relevant and effective in establishing claim/verdict	Reasoning is presented and supports the claim/verdict	Reasoning is present, but relevance or connection to claim/verdict is inconsistent	Reasoning is largely missing or not relevant
<b>Conclusion</b>	Conclusion provides logical and satisfying ending to review, reinforcing claim and reason for review	Conclusion provides logical ending to review, though it may not provide satisfying reason for review.	Conclusion does not fully support the review written.	Conclusion is non-existent or simply a one-sentence summation.
<b>Organization- each paragraph has a clear focus</b>	Organization is logically based around genre and features of product.	Organization is based around genre and features of product.	Organization sometimes deviates from genre and features of the product.	Organization is non-existent.
<b>Voice- choose a tone and consistently use it throughout the review</b>	Writer displays an effective use of voice that is appropriate for the review and enhances the reader's enjoyment.	Writer displays a consistent use of voice that is appropriate for the review.	Writer displays an inconsistent use of voice appropriate to the review.	Writing is largely free of voice and/or voice used is inappropriate for the review.
<b>Grammar/ Mechanics- evidence of literary present and appositives</b>	Uses grade-level conventions. Errors are minor and do not obscure meaning	Generally uses grade-level conventions. Errors are minor and generally do not obscure meaning.	Errors are numerous, but do not totally obscure meaning.	Errors are numerous and make comprehension of review difficult to comprehend.
<b>Hyperlinks and multimedia- A variety of hyperlinks and media is used to ENHANCE the review</b>	Review has at least five examples of the best possible multimedia clips and links			
<b>Extras:</b> <b>Ordering and contact information</b> <b>Tag lines at the beginning and end of review</b> <b>Headers</b>				

## SAMPLES



The not-so-Dark Knight returns in the joyously bonkers *The Lego Batman Movie*, and he's not only the hero we need right now but also the one we deserve.

From the moment Lego Batman (voiced by Will Arnett) shouts “Wanna get nuts?!” at his arch supervillain the Joker (Zach Galifianakis) — a nod to Tim Burton’s 1989 *Batman* film — the family-friendly animated superhero comedy (\*\*½ out of four; rated PG; in theaters nationwide Friday) maniacally blisters the screen with loving homages to past Bat-flicks, wacky baddies, wickedly clever references (including a great jab at Marvel) and one very unsubtle message: Don’t be a jerk, be a pal.

Directed by Chris McKay (*Robot Chicken*), *Lego Batman* leans hard into the “Yay, best friends!” ethos of 2014’s hit *The Lego Movie*, though its main man has severe loner tendencies: After saving Gotham City for the umpteenth time, billionaire Bruce Wayne’s masked alter ego retires for yet another night of lobster thermidor for one and an unwanted emotional chat with loyal butler Alfred (Ralph Fiennes).

Change is afoot for the big guy, though: New police commissioner Barbara Gordon (Rosario Dawson) implores Batman to be a team player — much to the hero’s disdain — and he’s got a lovable and doe-eyed new orphan son in Dick Grayson (Michael Cera), aka sidekick Robin.

Before you can say, “Holy tuxedo dress-up party, Batman!” the kid slips on colorful togs and gradually wins over his new Bat-dad. Their bonds solidify just in time to team up with Barbara and Alfred to stop Joker and his evil army’s latest epic assault when it threatens the very foundation of Gotham.

The movie features a few insanely busy action sequences that, while hugely entertaining, can’t be maintained without leaving heads spinning. The slower, more expositional material may have some little kids squirming but for grown-ups, it allows for some of the best content.

While *The Dark Knight* won’t be supplanted any time soon as tops among Bat-movies, the new film makes a strong argument for second-best simply by taking time to explore the core of Batman that others haven’t: He’s a complicated mess who can’t get out of his own way long enough for the greater good.

Arnett plays Bats’ growly dudebro vocals with infectious energy, Cera nicely inhabits the naïve Robin, and Dawson is super as Barbara, a heroine who’s easily the Caped Crusader’s equal (and superior in a few ways). They’re supported by a large ensemble of various baddies, though Galifianakis’ surprisingly down-to-earth Joker is a standout: He gives the Clown Prince of Crime a huffy attitude and hurt feelings when Batman tells him he’s not his greatest enemy.

Taking a cue from *The Lego Movie*, *Lego Batman* borrows from pop culture in over-the-top fashion — movie nerds will need a second viewing to spot all the surprise cameos. Everything is also awesome on the soundtrack: Batman raps his way through *Who’s the (Bat)Man* (“Who never skips leg day? BATMAN!”), and the happy-go-lucky *Friends Are Family* has everybody dancing into the credits, leaving even the grimmest vigilante with a huge grin.

Chief Keef  
*Two Zero One Seven*



7.3

There's something fitting about [Chief Keef](#) and Lex Luger collaborating in 2017. Luger, one of the architects of modern trap production, broke out with eight Top 20 rap hits in 12 months (beginning May 2010) and has had only one since ([Wiz Khalifa](#) and [Travis Scott's](#) "Bake Sale"). Today, Luger has more or less been forgotten by the rap industry at large, washed away amid a sea of imitators and surrogates. His sound was explosive and opulent, and it was wholly singular—until it suddenly wasn't, first becoming recyclable, and then disposable.

Keef, meanwhile, should be considered nothing short of a prodigy. In 2012, at 17, he released the drill opus [Finally Rich](#), and in the years since he's continued to grow bolder and more daring, experimenting without concern for who likes what and distancing himself further and further from the sounds that made him so popular in the first place, losing two deals in the process. Keef's refusal to produce a proper sequel to what may forever be hailed as his masterwork has caused interest in him to wane. Chief Keef is now just 21 years old, at least a year younger than current it-rappers [Lil Uzi Vert](#) and [21 Savage](#)—contemporaries Keef inspired when he was still in high school, who have already been tapped to succeed him. Both Keef and Luger are hugely influential, with elements of their sounds and aesthetics still impacting radio today, yet demand is down for both, just for different reasons. Rap is one of few genres where artists can be deemed obsolete before turning 23. It churns out new models fast.

But with someone as mercurial and talented as Keef, moments of brilliance can materialize in an instant. They're likely to happen when no one is looking. This is the case on his latest mixtape, *Two Zero One Seven*, where Keef proves he can produce more dynamic songs than any of his progeny while sleepwalking. And instead of attempting to reclaim lost territory, he dares to venture even deeper into open space.

The 17-song tape is weird and expansive, and it reintroduces many of Keef's most compelling quirks. On some songs, he's almost deadpan; on others, he's excitable. His sing-songs can scan as theatrical: near the start of "Fix That," he warps his vocals into something resembling a cartoon voiceover, but by the end he's unleashing a creaky falsetto. "Running Late" presents a rousing rendition of the creepy lullaby from *Nightmare on Elm Street*. Sometimes he mumbles, sometimes he chants. He often uses his voice as another instrument in his productions—it can be percussive or melodic or even amelodic in service of structure or flow.

No matter how they're delivered or what their purposes, his raps are packed with refreshingly bizarre non sequiturs and stream-of-consciousness one-liners. His flows sputter, stagger, or just flat out drill. He's a much better writer than his heirs, dropping gems like "My watch tried to take your bitch from me" ("Empty"), "Bitch, I'm still with the street shit/Clip longer than a selfie stick" ("Falling on the Floor"), and "the diamonds in my ear giving me a brain freeze" ("Trying Not to Swear"). He seems uninterested in honing the skills he already has, opting instead to try and figure out new ones. With every passing song, he moves onward.

Luger produces a handful of tracks on *Two Zero One Seven*, and the best, "Control," is like the audio version of a miniature *Tron* light cycle race. But it's Keef himself who produces the majority of the project, and it's this aspect of his creative repertoire that's grown the most. Earlier beats were unhinged, but these do more than just move in unorthodox ways; they pop and glow. Keef seems to have little use for traditional "bangers" and he's no audiophile (the quality of his sounds can vary dramatically), but he is willing to try just about anything and he has remarkable instincts. He isn't afraid to induce sensory overload with busy arrangements, but he'll also strip sounds bare and leave them exposed.

One minute he's tinkering with piano chords, the next he's making minimalist 8-bit trap, the next he's channelling late '00s Shawty Redd. He's impossible to predict. On "Trying Not to Swear," the beat bottoms out and the sample gets muffled and distant, lined by the sound residue from the hum of a vibrating 808 kick. "Knock It Off" and "Dope Smokes" utilize keyboards with different intentions—the former as a pulse, the latter as an accent—and both have bite, cacophonous but never discordant. These songs on *Two Zero One Seven* are microcosms of the artist who made them. They can be difficult to read and sometimes even harder to understand on a functional level, but they're quite exhilarating.

## *Divide*

Divide kicks off with a firefight—a chaotic squabble where sentry robots resembling metallic metroids snipe at two protagonists who fire back with guns that bark lightning. It's glorious and promising, if a little tough.

But it's the followup moments I find more representative of my time with [Divide](#), in which I roamed aimlessly through a sprawling train station with roomy passages that go nowhere with only an easily missed verbal clue from a past conversation for directions. It's that confused wandering that I remember most about Divide, and it overshadows this isometric RPG's moderately lively dual-stick combat and decently fascinating science-fiction story; strengths which are further tarnished by a clump of bugs and a few iffy design decisions.

I enjoyed the story well enough, even when the voice acting swung wildly from decent to awful. This is the story of David, a widowed Mr. Normal from modern-day Los Angeles whose armor takes hours to get any more substantial than a blue blazer, and whose little daughter who goes missing after he dons a pair of high-tech contact lenses found in a mysterious package from his late wife. Divide is at its best when it highlights the difference and distance between David's humdrum reality and the trippy metallic fascist police state he lands in, and there's a believable build in tension as he meets new people and finds new data about his wife in terminals he hacks with his nifty lenses.

Yet awkwardness creeps in even here, whether it's in the voice work that often doesn't match up with the subtitles or in the occasional shifts from an isometric perspective to eye-level view for a cinematic effect in conversations. Sometimes these shifts work, particularly when the camera opts for a 2D view requiring nothing more than left and right flicks of a thumbstick, but they tend to cause confusion when they shift to more artsy angles. In the first such sequence, I spent a few moments bumping into chairs and invisible walls before I realized I was supposed to aim at a very tiny, specific spot and pull the right trigger in order to chat with the chap seated at the table. From there, I was greeted with a good number of conversation topic choices with the guy (although slightly awkwardly on account of Divide's insistence on using only the DualShock 4's thumbsticks, bumpers, and triggers for every action).

I always looked forward to these little snippets of story, and in hindsight after completing the 11-hour campaign I wish there were more of them. Instead, the bulk of Divide consists of lonely, repetitive hours aimlessly walking through a labyrinthine underground complex, steering David with the left stick and clamping down the right trigger to aim his contact-lens scanner in order to uncover hackable terminals (which yield "hashes" to power even more hacks) or boxes filled with credits for upgrades. Very early on, I geeked out when I discovered the scanner sometimes revealed ghostly messages on the walls and cheered whenever I at last amassed enough hashes to unlock a terminal that opened a new door. But Divide excessively relies on this concept to the point of boredom. By the time I'd moved to the second big area I'd grown weary of backtracking to dig through every terminal and box for more credits and hashes and recoiled at the idea of the doing it again. Most of the time, I was more concerned about figuring out where in the hell I was supposed to go, which Divide makes much harder than it needs to be.

Hacking into specific workstations unlocks floor plans that are accessible through the DualShock 4's touchpad, but even then the often-vague objectives left me backtracking over acres of narrow territory for some clue as to what I was missing. Sometimes, the only hint as to what was terminal or door you're supposed to find next gets dropped in a snippet of dialogue so quick that you'll miss it if you sneeze – and even if you hear it clearly it sometimes isn't much help.

Complicating matters further still is a recurring bug that blacks out a whole level when David marches up certain stairs, leaving you to guide him blindly through experimentation. Important stairwells often end up hidden behind walls or furniture. The maps David downloads have zoom buttons that apparently don't work. At other times, Eris – the key NPC companion who tags along with David and shoot things when he needs her to – would completely disappear from the screen. (She's definitely not supposed to.) She's essential to furthering the plot, and yet sometimes I could only find her by carefully scanning for signs of a conversation box with the right trigger.

Perhaps all this backtracking and rummaging wouldn't be so bad if Divide sprinkled these long searches with a greater variety of gameplay and enemies. Exploration is supposed to be one of the chief attractions here, but hours go by when it's just David against variations on the same metallic corridors and the same metallic bots. On the few occasions when

David instead finds himself in a cozy apartment or on a thin bridge showcasing the decayed highrises of a future Los Angeles, the visual shifts feel almost merciful.

Fortunately, it's usually fun to kill the bots. David never gets more to use besides a upgradeable super-powered stun gun of sorts, but – when I could get it to work properly – I enjoyed using it to blast apart the robots or (later) knock out human enemies. Much of the fun comes from the risk created by the gun's need for a several-second recharge, and that quickly forced me to learn how to use corners and other environmental elements to line up good shots. The options get more lively as David picks up upgrades or buys them from vending machines he reactivates, giving you abilities like causing the robots to explode remotely or commanding one to fight against the other.

Sadly, the combat never feels fluid no matter how many upgrades David stuffs into his device. The twin-stick controls are prone to misses and skips, and always feel fiddly at best. Sometimes the flighty A.I. causes the drones to sit there while David jogs around them. Divide also encourages you to avoid combat altogether if you can, but this has nothing to do with interesting stealth mechanics. Instead, it merely involves running past drones or running up behind them and hacking them into hibernation. Early on, I enjoyed toying with the approach, but as the hours flew by I found that combat became effectively unavoidable. Worse, stripping the exploration of action just rubs in the repetitiveness of the scenery even more.

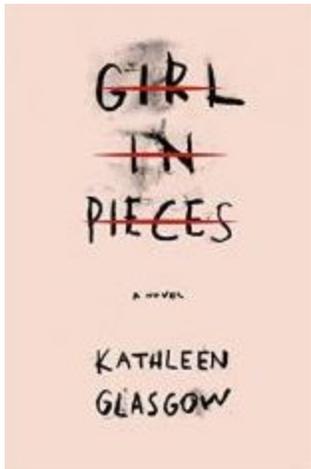
As a saving grace, the music's fantastic. Chris Tilton, known for his musical work on *Assassin's Creed: Unity* and *SimCity*, wears the caps of both composer and co-game designer for Divide, and he's clearly in his element in the former. The subtle orchestral music drenches Divide's abandoned darkened corridors in ominous moodiness, and stirs emotion even when the voice acting falls flat. It's therefore strange that it's not more more generous with its use. Looking back, nothing convinced me of the awfulness of those long, half-aimless backtracks through Divide's corridors like the occasional absence of musical accompaniment, which left me alone with nothing but annoyance and David's ceaseless footsteps on the tiles.

## **The Verdict**

There's a decent science-fiction story holding all of [Divide](#)'s pieces together, but it's not quite strong enough to outweigh the disappointments of excessive backtracking through repetitious metallic levels that barely look different from the last. A great musical score and

a moderately interesting combat help keep it interesting, but bugs and repetitive encounters made the campaign feel much longer than it needed to be.

## Book Review



From debut author Kathleen Glasgow comes **GIRL IN PIECES**, an unflinching look at the life of a young girl and the numerous issues she faces as a teen, both with others and herself.

by [Kathleen Glasgow](#)

Although she is only 17 years old, Charlotte Davis has faced her share --- and probably a whole town's share --- of trauma. For years, she and her widowed mother have been at odds with one another and prone to violent outbursts, but when her very best friend attempts to commit suicide, that is the last straw. Charlotte, already a self-injurer, seeks comfort in the streets, risky relationships and, of course, her beloved shards of glass. At the start of **GIRL IN PIECES**, Charlotte is recovering from her worst bout of self-injury yet, one that very nearly killed her and landed her in a treatment center with other struggling girls.

Broken down by life and her own brand of assault, Charlotte begins her story as a mute. Although the narrative is dense and fully fleshed-out, Glasgow keeps her chapters short during this segment --- pieces, if you will. Readers watch as Charlotte struggles to come out of her shell and speak about what has happened to her, but this is not an ordinary "issue" book. Instead, Glasgow begs readers to see Charlotte in her entirety, with all of her scars, secrets and taut emotions --- especially when she is unable to describe them herself. She does not present Charlotte as an angst-ridden cutter, but rather a girl who has been filled with so many horrible memories and emotions and so few coping mechanisms that she can see no way out but to cut.

Soon Charlotte finds her voice, but her progress acts as a double-edged sword, as responding to treatment means that she will be sent home to her mother and her dangerous life of drugs, alcohol and bad decisions. Fortunately, she has a few friends on the outside and one, Mikey, approaches her mother with a plan to take Charlotte away from her past and into his new, sober life in Tucson, Arizona. As a reader, it is painful to see how easily

Charlotte's mother can allow herself to be separated from her daughter, but the hope that Charlotte's future will be better propels the narrative without bringing down the tone too much.

When Charlotte arrives in Tucson, she is alone for probably the first time in her life, but she promises herself that she will follow her doctor's orders and refrain from self-injuring. In an uplifting turn of events, she even finds work and a place of her own. The next step in any young adult novel is, of course, love, and this is where Charlotte's progress gets hairy. Like any teenage girl, she dreams of being "rescued" by Mikey, since he has gone to such great lengths to bring her to Tucson and care for her. Of course, Mikey has his own life and, while he desperately wants to help Charlotte, he is unwilling to get wrapped up in their shared past --- particularly the love triangle they shared with Charlotte's former best friend. Instead she sets her sights on Riley, a pseudo-rock star who works with her at her job. Older readers will easily spot Riley's inconsistencies and flaws, but to Charlotte, he is just a person who does not balk at her scars and treats her like a human.

Charlotte and Riley's relationship is initially heartwarming. He clearly cares for her and makes her feel like she could be loved again, even though her body is covered in "ugly" scars. Still, there is no foundation in their bond: Riley's constant refusals to talk about his past and inability to ask about hers make their relationship extremely one-sided and ungrounded. Soon, Charlotte will be forced to decide if she can finally put herself first and accept the love that so many people have tried to show her.

What follows is a wild ride through romance, addiction, identity and, of course, love. As Charlotte strays further and further from her days as a frequent self-injurer, readers will be horrified to learn that she has only replaced her vice with something just as dangerous. Throughout it all, Glasgow's raw, passionate prose brings Charlotte to life, elevating *GIRL IN PIECES* from your typical YA "issue" book to the strong, expertly-written piece of literature it is. This is not an easy read by any means, but it is one that will stay with you for days after you finish it and it is possibly one of the most important YA books published this year. Glasgow is bursting with talent and her willingness to share a story so dark and so full of pain speaks volumes to her potential. I cannot wait to see what she writes next.



<http://www.npr.org/2017/02/23/516869364/get-out-offers-sharp-satire-along-with-t-he-scares>

## 'Get Out' Offers Sharp Satire Along With The Scares

As the shorter half of the sketch-comedy duo Key & Peele, Jordan Peele was ever on the lookout for distinctive ways to tackle ethnic stereotyping, so it makes sense that he'd leaven his film directing debut with more than just a dash of social satire.

*Get Out*, billed in its opening credits as "from the mind of Jordan Peele," is a horror-flick with a decidedly Peelean take on genre and on race — one that subverts familiar horror tropes while encouraging audiences to simultaneously react to them, and step back to look at them more closely.

As Chris (Daniel Kaluuya) is packing to accompany his girlfriend Rose (Allison Williams) to her parent's country house for the first time, she has lots of questions — about whether he remembered his toothbrush, his deodorant, his cozy clothes — while he has just has one: "Do they know I'm black?"

Rose says no, but that it won't matter. Her dad, she tells him, will take him aside to say he'd have voted Obama for a third term. And indeed her folks (Bradley Whitford and Catherine Keener) welcome Chris with open arms, even if at times they seem to be trying too hard.

"How long," asks dad, "has this been goin' on...this thaaaang."

Chris laughs that off, as well as later references to Jesse Owens and Tiger Woods. He figures dad's trying to make him feel comfortable, though it's having the opposite effect. Other guests at what turns out to be a big family gathering are also welcoming... though

in a way even Rose has to concede is a little much. As when one woman accompanies a compliment not just with a sampling-the-merchandise-type squeeze of his biceps, but also a glance at his crotch, and the question for Rose, "So is it true? Is it better?"

Chris decides to let Rose deal with her, while he tries not to be paranoid about the fact that the family's oddly robotic maid and gardener, are the only black folks around.

Well, not "the only." There's one guy, but when Chris introduces himself, this outwardly calm, studiedly preppy black guy starts screaming "Get out!"

Jordan Peele's made a career of subverting genre expectations to comic effect. Here, he's not going for laughs...or at least, not *always* going for laughs. But he clearly knows well the horror movie tropes he's undercutting — the one where, say, black characters always seem to be the first to die. Or where it's a pale white woman who slowly realizes something about her surroundings is terribly wrong.

As a writer and a remarkably accomplished first-time director, Peele layers other notions on top as he's inverting those — about servitude, about social privilege, about law enforcement and *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner*-style liberals.

Before long, Chris's paranoia starts to seem downright understated. Why is Rose's dad talking about "black mold" in the basement. What is it about that spoon stirring tea that feels so alarming. Should it bother us that the cleaning lady spends so much time smiling at her reflection in the mirror.

*Get Out* is more a very smart satire with scares, than a full-on horror movie. But if it makes you think while it's making you jump there's much to be said for that. The film's

tone may be light, but its take on race feels true — which in this day and age, is kinda... scary.